

MULTIFACETED EXPERIENCES OF TURKISHNESS:  
A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH TO BELONGINGS  
OF ARABS, KURDS, AND SYRIACS

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **MULTIFACETED EXPERIENCES OF TURKISHNESS: A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH TO BELONGINGS OF ARABS, KURDS, AND SYRIACS**

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This dissertation addresses the processes of formation/deformation of national belonging in Turkey, concerning the experiences of Arab, Kurd, and Syriac peoples in Mardin, Diyarbakır, and Urfa. The purpose is to understand if, when, how, and with what consequences do they relate to Turkishness and to explain how their belongings and subjectivities were formed within this context. The research method is grounded theory aiming at theory-building. Belonging itself emerged as a complex, multiple, and multidimensional process in the research findings with positional, emotional, and economic aspects being definitive to it. Findings were grounded in the participants' experiences, practices, and perceptions. The conclusive argument is that there are basically three social-historical processes, interplay of which play constitutive role in making and unmaking of belongings for the participants of this research. These are violation, access to and mobilization of social relations to one's good, and inclusion/exclusion in the running economic system. The variation in the experiences of these processes and how they interacted for each participant and

each named group were defining in the consequent variation of belongings and subjectivities that are formed. Turkishness emerged to be a multifaceted experience that had three constitutive pillars, which were namely the state, Turks, and home/land. In conclusion, grounded in the research findings conceptualizations of *Vionation*, *Cautionation*, *Modernation*, and *Localination* were proposed to stand for the four fundamental forms that 'nation' forms in the experiences of the participants. These basically referred to formation of Turkishness through processes of violation, caution, modernization, and localization.

**Keywords:** National Belonging, Violence, Social Capital, Economic Exclusion / Inclusion, Turkey

## ÖZ

### TÜRKLÜĞÜN ÇOK YÖNLÜ DENEYİMLERİ: ARAP, KÜRT VE SÜRYANİLERİN AİDİYETLERİNE BİR TEMELLENDİRİLMİŞ KURAM YAKLAŞIMI

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Bu tez, Mardin, Diyarbakır, ve Urfa’da Arap, Kürt, ve Süryanilerin deneyim ve pratikleri bağlamında Türkiye’de ulus aidiyetinin formasyon ve deformasyon süreçlerine işaret etmektedir. Amaç Türklükle ne zaman, nasıl ve hangi sonuçlarla ilişkilendiklerini anlamak ve bu bağlamda aidiyet ve öznelliklerinin nasıl biçimlendiğini açıklamaktır. Araştırma yöntemi teori oluşturmayı amaçlayan temellendirilmiş kuramdır. Araştırma bulgularında, aidiyet olgusunun kendisi karmaşık, çoklu ve çok boyutlu bir süreç olarak ortaya çıkmış ve konumsal, duygusal, ekonomik boyutların aidiyetin tanımlanmasında etkili olduğu bulgulanmıştır. Bulgular katılımcıların deneyimleri, pratikleri, ve algılarına temellenmektedir. Sonuç olarak iddia edilen, bu çalışmanın katılımcıları için aidiyetlerin inşası ve bozulmasında üç temel toplumsal-tarihsel süreç ve onların birbirleriyle ilişkisinin kurucu rol oynadığıdır. Bunlar, ihlale uğrama, toplumsal ilişkilere erişim ve fayda sağlayacak şekilde harekete geçirme ve ekonomik sistemde içerilme/dışlanma süreçleridir. Her bir katılımcı ve bahsi geçen gruplar için bu süreçlerin deneyimlenmesindeki farklılaşma ve



aralarındaki iliřki, bunlara baęlı olarak oluřan aidiyet ve 6znelliklerdeki farklılařmada belirleyici olmaktadır. T6rkl6k, katılımcılar i7in 67 kurucu ayaęı olan 7ok y6nl6 bir deneyim olarak ortaya 7ıkmıřtır; bunlar, devlet, T6rkler ve yurt/vatan'dır. Sonu7 olarak, arařtırma bulgularına temellendirilerek *Vionation*, *Cautionation*, *Modernation* ve *Localination* kavramsallařtırmaları 6nerilmektedir ve bunların ulusun katılımcıların deneyimlerinde 'ulus' kuran d6rt ana bi7im olduęu iddia edilmektedir. Bu kavramsallařtırmalar temel olarak, T6rkl6ę6n ihlal, ihtiyat, modernleřme ve yerelleřme s6re7leri yoluyla kurulduęuna iřaret etmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ulusal Aidiyet, Őiddet, Sosyal Sermaye, Ekonomik Dıřlanma / İ7erilme, T6rkiye

to the Light and to all those who bear it  
to Maya, Gölge, and Luz  
to my grandmother

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Framing the Question and the Purpose of the Research

This dissertation addresses the processes of formation/deformation of national belonging in Turkey, concerning the experiences and practices of people of different ethnic and religious affiliations. It explores into the question of how belongings, with a specific focus on the context of ‘nationness/nationhood’, are shaped and conditioned for individuals of three social groups historically inhabiting south eastern Turkey. More specifically, the research question is how do Kurd, Arab, and Syriac people of three neighbouring cities, namely Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa, relate to ‘the nation’ in their everyday practices and experiences and how that relation conditions and is conditioned by their belongings in their multiplicity.

This is in a way an exploration into the complex and two sided relation between the structure and agency. The question is, on the one hand, how the structure that the nation sets forth, which will be named here as *the national order of things*, form and condition individual belongings; and, on the other, how participants, as individual agents related to the proposed national order of things. In other words, it is to understand if, when, how, and with what consequences do they relate to Turkishness. It further tries to explain the conditioning context that makes Turkishness “us”/“ours” or “them”/“theirs” in their everyday experiences. Yet, it is not solely about an abstract sense. It is about practices, relations, possessions, and inclusion. Put in this way, the question is not whether the participants feel themselves as Turks, or alternatively Kurds, Arabs, or Syriacs. It is by no means juxtaposing the identities. Nor it is any attempt of measuring how much they

belong. The question rather is, in what ways individuals of different ethno-religious affiliation, with multiple belongings and subjectivities, encounter with Turkishness and what comes out of such encounter. How their belongings and subjectivities were reformed, and in what ways did they crystallize within the time-space context of research. Turkishness in this dissertation, moreover, is not assumed to be something fixed, homogeneous, or singular phenomenon. Yet without going into any detail of the historical or discursive variation in its very constructions and expressions, here it will merely be taken as the officially proposed form of national belonging however it was experienced by the participants. It is indeed that variation of experiences on which the arguments of this dissertation are based.

At the onset of the research, the academic curiosity was that if, how, and why the relations of the respective three groups to Turkishness were experienced differently by the named groups. Initially, it aimed at exploring into the relative distances of the groups to a centre defined around 'the national' however it was experienced by the participants. Yet, as the fieldwork had commenced various patterns of relating to the national have crystallized; and the need to explain such variation became apparent. In tune with the premises of grounded theory, through constant comparison of all cases, experiences, and narratives, there emerged a more complex framework during the fieldwork. Rather than 'distance' the focus turned to 'belonging' which itself emerged as a multifaceted process, leading to a reconceptualization of it as *be-long-ings*. Such reconceptualization reflects into positional, emotional, material, and dynamic aspects of the phenomena, which emerged during the research as vital components of any relations established with 'the national'.

Belonging being the pivotal problem of the research, the question is how be-long-ings, as multiple and multidimensional processes, are constructed for Kurds, Arabs, and Syriacs in their relation to Turkishness. Which socio-historical processes condition such construction; what, when, and how are the other

manifestations of be-long-ings for the participants; and how are those related to each other are the accompanying questions. The sub-questions this study aspires to answer are as following: in what context and with what consequences do individuals with different ethnic and religious backgrounds encounter with the larger society; if, when, and how do they experience themselves as part of it or on its margin; which other collectivities do they attach themselves; in what context do they articulate “we” identity; whom that “we” refers to; do people have a projection of common destiny in Turkey; what is the role of their citizen status, ethnic origin, migration background, generation, gender and socio-economic status on those experiences; what is the role of space in terms of locality, national territory, and border/trans-border for them; what is the role of official discourses and symbolic representations of ‘Turkishness’ within their everyday lives. In search of answers to these questions, this dissertation applied grounded theory as the research method, which is briefly explained below.

## **1.2. Methodology**

Based on qualitative research methods, this dissertation adopted an interpretive approach, using grounded theory as the method of generating and analysing data during and after the field research. The purpose being to reach at a conceptual explanation of national belonging in Turkey, grounded theory was an appropriate research method as it is defined to be a theory generating methodology (Glaser and Holton, 2004). With such aim, the research tried to let the natural organization of substantive life emerge (Glaser and Holton, 2004), here of be-long-ings, with the intention to reveal the fundamental patterns and to engage in a conceptual account of them (Glaser, 2002). Focusing on the venting issues in the participants’ lives was an important way followed in this goal. In the split between the founding fathers Barney G. Glaser and Anselm Strauss, I followed the coding pattern that Glaser (2002) proposed, namely the open, selective, and theoretical coding.

Grounded theory is claimed not to be a specific method or technique, but a style of doing qualitative analysis having a number of distinct features and utilizing certain methodological guidelines such as theoretical sampling, constant comparisons, and a coding paradigm to ensure development and density of concepts (Strauss, 2003). Arguing that all theory should be grounded in observations of data, to which the researcher approaches with as few preconceptions as possible, grounded theory as a method was developed in opposition to the grand theories of its time, in 1960s (Glaser, 2002). In this research, I follow a constructivist approach to grounded theory, which was put forward by Kathy Charmaz since the mid-1990s, accepting the invitation from the founders of the grounded theory to use its strategies flexibly and embracing a reflection on the interaction between the researcher and the participants (Charmaz, 2006). In such perspective, the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts are important, thus rather than data providing a window on reality, the “discovered” reality arises from such process. Accordingly, “the potential strength of grounded theory”, is claimed to lie “in its analytic power to theorize how meanings, actions, and social structures are constructed” (Charmaz, 2006: 151). This dissertation is an attempt to analyse and explain how meanings, actions, and social structures around Turkish national belonging are constructed in the experiences of the participants.

Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1998: 25) put it that “theorizing is the act of constructing from data an explanatory scheme that systematically integrates various concepts through statements of relationship”. In its search for a theorization of the relation to Turkishness as a socio-historical process, this dissertation is after abstraction of the processes, relations, and interactions coming out in the field. It is after a thorough conceptualization, with the intention of explaining how Turkishness is experienced by the ordinary people, who are ethnically non-Turk yet are deemed to become ‘nationals’ and to belong to the nation by the state, the very constructor of the nation in Turkey. Thus, the emphasis of the dissertation is to point out and explain the genuine ways in



which national belonging is experienced by people in their everyday lives, rather than inferring the meaning of it from a political design. To refine it further, the goal is to specify and explain the ways that participants adopted, adapted to, allied with, negotiated, opposed to, or rejected Turkish national belonging. In this way, Turkishness is grounded in the spatial, material, performative, and representational processes of the everyday life experiences of the participants of the research. Doing this an inductive and not deductive strategy is followed.

Bottom-up perspective and the focus on individual experience, however, do not mean embracing a pure individualistic account of action, or a voluntaristic assumption of individual. Although the unit of analysis is individual, the study pays specific attention not to ignore the group dynamics; discourses of the identity politics pursued by various collectives; and importantly the state policies, deeds and discourses, which may target groups in most reifying and homogenising manner. In this manner, the study grounds the individual in socio-historical, spatial, and discursive relations and processes.

Both the data collection and interpretation processes were conditioned through my own positionalities and social locations as the researcher. My age, gender, occupation, original hometown, religious/ethnic/political affiliations and my coming from a 'western' city, even the capital city were all matters of questioning and negotiation through interviews. Although I tried to maintain reflexivity all through the research process, the findings on which I will be elaborating in this study should be seen to have emerged within the limitations of my own locations and positionalities.

### 1.3. The Scope and Context of the Research

The research was conducted in 2011<sup>1</sup> in three neighbouring south eastern cities, namely Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Urfa, with individuals identifying themselves or identified by others as Kurd, Arab, and Syriac. The former two being Muslim and the latter being non-Muslim populations, all three are ethnically non-Turk and yet are Turkish nationals. Kurds and Arabs of the research sample were Sunni in creed, the former being overwhelmingly Shafi and the latter mostly Hanafi but also Shafi. Syriacs were Orthodox Christians, and only few Catholics were included in this group, as in the case of a Chaldean participant. A differentiation of creed in the sample was not viable in terms of the actual demographic characteristics of the groups, and it was not aimed at. Still, as will be detailed in Chapter 2, I interviewed with persons of different ethnic or denominational affiliations as the opportunity arose during the fieldwork; used them for furthering knowledge of the field sites and doing constant comparison in line with the premises of grounded theory; yet retained the three as the basic subject groups of the research.

The named three are the most populous inhabitant groups of the research places. The reverse is also valid. These three cities are among those whereby the highest numbers of Arabs and Kurds, defined through the language they spoke, have inhabited in the Republican period (Arslan, Gürpınar, Arpacı and Yardımcı,

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<sup>1</sup>Crucial to note on the date of the research is that as many fundamentally transformative socio-political events have been lived at all local, national, and transnational scales after the research was conducted, the conclusions arrived here need to be taken in time specific context. There stands the need to conduct further similar research to achieve a comparative perspective on the field sites and acquire a more recent grasp of the research problem. One such event was the Syrian War, whereby it was still at a very early phase when the research was conducted, thus the reflections and effects of it were only minor on the research. To undertake any current research as the war ended with all its devastating effects including the massive refugee problem, would be valuable for comparison. The fact that Arabs, Kurds, and Syriacs of Syria, among many other groups, have all been directly hit by the war; and the research fields of this dissertation, being at or close to Syrian border, were affected by it at a great degree strongly necessitates such comparison.

2013).<sup>2</sup> Syriacs have also historically inhabited in the area around Mardin.<sup>3</sup> Kurds are the most populous Muslim ethnic minority group, with Arabs following them in the second line (Arslan et al, 2013). Although there is no definite census information showing the number of ‘ethnic’ groups in Turkey, proportion of Kurds in the total population is estimated to be between 15-18%, Arabs 1, 15%,<sup>4</sup> non-Muslims 0, 06%<sup>5</sup> (*Konda Araştırma*, 2011). Being monolingual was a rare case among the participants, mostly exclusive to the elderly women who in this case could be speaking Kurmanji Kurdish, Zazaki, or Arabic. Yet, this still did not mean that all elderly women were monolingual. In other cases many of my participants were either bilingual or trilingual, speaking two or three of Kurdish, Arabic, Syriac or Turkish. There were very few participants who could speak all four.

Identical for each of these groups are their long standing co-habiting and claim of indigenous existence in the same geography that historically extends the current state boundaries and is attributed various historical, symbolic, cultural meanings in collective memories of these groups. Named groups, however, are historically positioned differently in the hierarchy of power relations with the state and among each other. Arabs, for instance, were addressed by the early

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<sup>2</sup> The research conducted by Şükrü Arslan and others (2013) covers the period between 1927 and 1965, as the census data on language and religion was available at that period on which the authors define ethnicity. No data on Syriacs is available in the census data analysed.

<sup>3</sup> Tur Abdin, the historical home to Syriacs, covers a large extent of the provincial boundaries of Mardin, and part of Şırnak and Batman (Özmen, 2006)

<sup>4</sup> Arab-Der Association in Urfa claimed the number of Arabs in Turkey to be around 6 million; however, I could not verify the number in any other source. Wikipedia gives the number to be around 1.630.000, 1.118.000 of which are of Syrian and Lebanon origin; 513.000 of which are of Northern Iraq origin. <http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Araplar> accessed on 27.6.2017

<sup>5</sup> The number of Syriac people living in Tur Abdin region is given to be 2.000 (Özmen, 2006: 164). I was given the same number by the Syriacs during the field research. Notes taken in Midyat/Mardin, 2011.

Republican state as more eligible to assimilation and often as a buffer or counter-group vis-à-vis Kurds in the region (Öztürk, 2008). Syrians, on the other hand, by means of being Christians were exposed to discriminatory policies, at best to negligence by the state. Kurdish identity and political claims have long defined the political agenda in Turkey, with the long-lasting armed conflict, and the more recent parliamentary political participation becoming pivotal in its course.

Naming the groups as such should not lead to the conclusion that this study takes these groups as fixed and homogenized categories, situated vis-à-vis a similarly fixed and homogenized Turkishness. I will certainly be identifying patterns most visible and widespread along these categories, and compare them with each other in terms of the ground and context of differences from and similarities to each other. The analysis will be pointing at the historical, political, social and economic processes, which were determinate in formation of those differences and similarities. Yet, at the same a within-group analysis will be revealing the moments, where belongings of various “members” of each group converge to and diverge from each other. Such approach, I suppose, is important to confront the assumptions of uniqueness, homogeneity and fixity of the Kurd, Arab, Syriac ‘Identities’ vis-à-vis a uniform ‘Turkishness’. It will serve, moreover, for the purposes of this study in understanding the “positionalities” of the participants along the power axe (Yuval-Davis, 2011) defined through national belonging in Turkey, and see how, under what conditions and with what consequences the participants embody, identify with, adapt to, negotiate, or challenge Turkishness.

The research was conducted in three neighbouring south eastern cities, namely Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa. All three are ancient cities with rich cultural, social and economic histories. All three had gone through Assyrian, Arab and Kurdish administrations in their histories. All three had multicultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic socio-demographic structures up until the establishment of Turkish Republic. Starting from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, culminating in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, continuing during the Republican Turkification policies such existence

was vanished almost altogether. Today, Mardin is the only city where the remnants of the multicultural demographic structure continue to exist. One may also mention the non-visible existence of Islamized Christian groups in Diyarbakır and Urfa, which I had no contact with; and a very small Christian group in Diyarbakır that I visited in the Syriac Orthodox Church and informally interviewed, yet not included in this research. Still, the imprints of the past multicultural existence continue to exist in all three cities, however partially it may be, in the urban architecture and in collective memory.

Mardin and Urfa lie on Turkish state border with Syria, and Diyarbakır neighbours them on the north making a triangle. Having gone through divergent historical processes, by 2011 the cities were all subjected to different degrees and forms of migratory movements towards their city centres; all with recently urbanizing, enlarging and developing trends –to different degrees and upon different resources though. In the last decades, Urfa has been more integrated into the national economic system through South-eastern Anatolian Project (GAP), which is an integrated sustenance, development, and irrigation project; Diyarbakır is marginalized as the pioneering bastion of Kurdish political movement and most recently of rising Kurdish middle class; and Mardin is being pushed for commoditisation of its multicultural existence. The three cities as research fields have provided this dissertation with the opportunity to understand the variation in formation of belongings at local, national, and trans-national scales, through varying individual experiences that are exposed to divergent economic, political, cultural, and social processes.

Within such framework, 89 in-depth interviews, 26 informal interviews, 3 focus groups, 9 informal group interviews, 49 expert interviews were conducted.<sup>6</sup> Details about how these different data gathering techniques were undertaken will be given in Chapter 2. Overall, three basic processes emerged, in the experiences

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<sup>6</sup> For the interview questions please see Appendix I. For the Profile of the participants please see Appendix II.

of participants, to best explain how their belongings were formed, with a specific emphasis on Turkishness as the officially framed form of belonging at national scale. These were namely, being exposed or non-exposed to violation; mobilization of social networks and relations, and economic inclusion/exclusion. I returned to the related literature and drew the concepts ‘violence’, ‘social capital’, ‘economic exclusion’ as my “theoretical codes” (Glaser, 2002) in the analysis.

The preliminary assumption of this research that demographic (ethnicity, age, gender, socio-economic status) and geographic (place of residence) variables were important in making individuals’ belongings was verified. Yet, the findings of the research show that these variables are mostly in interaction with the processes of violence, social capital, and economic exclusion/inclusion and they define and affect if and how one person does experience these processes. Moreover, violence, social capital, and economic inclusion/exclusion always play at gendered contexts; age/generation is important in various experiences as it is related to different historical periods through which state policies and other socio-political structures have altered; and place of residence has an impact in terms of local power and opportunity structures. These latter are closely related to the social capital formations, economic activities and resources, various violent events, acts, deeds and representations being influenced, not exclusively but significantly, by the policies of the state.

The main argument of the dissertation is that Turkishness is not experienced as a single, identical, holistic phenomenon by the participants. It emerged to be a multifaceted process. To ground the argument in the specific area of the research four main conceptualizations was proposed. Accordingly, *Vionation*, *Cautionation*, *Modernation*, and *Localination* are the four fundamental forms that ‘nation’ forms in the experiences of the participants. *Moder(n)ation* stands for the notion of the *Nation* being constituted through negotiating and taking advantage of the *modernizing* processes of the state in the everyday life

experiences of citizens. In other words, it refers to the construction of *nation through modernization*. **Vio(n)ation** refers to the construction of *nation through violation*. The argument is that be-long-ings at national level are constituted through multiple processes of *Violation* in everyday experiences of the participants. **Cautio(n)ation** stands for the argument that cautious attitude and restraint, the most visible pattern of subjectivities among the Syriac participants become the main basis for articulating into the nation. **Locali(n)ation** is a conceptualization of the *Nation* being constituted through *Localization*, which basically manifests in withdrawal into locality. It is, in other words, the *nation through localization*.

The first three concepts became the respective titles for the three chapters where the findings of the research are presented for Arab, Kurd, Syriac participants basically from a comparative perspective. These chapters focus what is most peculiar and visible for the named groups. In other words, the three concepts are only ideal types for these groups and they are not mutually exclusive. The fourth concept, on the other hand cross-cuts all the three groups and the respective chapter titled with the concept covers mostly similar experiences of the participants.

I believe this dissertation is important in its comparative and holistic approach; its research with ordinary people or non-dominant groups; its focus on everyday life; its emphasis on practice, relations, processes; and its attempt at letting “emergence” of grounded theory at substantial level. It has some limitations however, first and foremost being the research field was conducted in 2011 and this research does not have any factual data on period aftermath in terms of the research question. Secondly, the research and the conceptualizations emanating from it are limited to the substantive area of the field work and the subjects groups. Thirdly, a comparison with the larger Turkish society would be important to deepen the arguments posed in this dissertation. For further study, a similar research could be repeated to check if the proposed concepts are still

relevant and valid for the substantive area; the influence and role of the proposed concepts can be measured through a quantitative research based on the findings of this research; and to reach a formal theory of Turkishness similar research should be conducted in other areas with other groups in Turkey.

## **1.4. Basic Conceptual Framework**

### **1.4.1. Belonging**

Belonging is a significant issue in sociology for it is directly related to the very construction of society, the boundaries, the processes of inclusion and exclusion, participation, social and economic relations, hierarchies, and representation. In this study, a critical approach to the concept is adopted; and by no means is a normative value attributed to belonging. It is taken as a social fact emerging in the field, and to be able to comprehend and explain the complexity, multiplicity, and multidimensionality encountered during the research a reconceptualization of the concept is proposed. In this context, *Be-long-ings* is proposed as a deconstructed analytical tool through hyphenation and taking the opportunity of the compound meanings the word implies. Drawing from the related literature that engages critically with the issue of belonging, what I do here is to divide the word to give the meanings of *be-ing*, *long-ing*, *belonging*, multiplying the word with 's' to refer to such multiplicity of the fact. In other words, *states of being*, *emotions of longing*, and *possessions as belongings* are pointed at through deconstruction, with the 's' bringing in the multiplicity, and the emphasis on 'ing' indicating it as a process. What I argue is that through this triple set-up, one can identify respectively *the states of*, *the lacks of*, and *economies of* belonging as *processes*. *Be-long-ings* in such reconceptualized manner emerged as “the core category” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) of the attempt of theorization this study aims at. It is grounded in the experiences, perceptions, and reflections of the participants, and takes the issue from the standpoint of individual rather of a defined politics of belonging. Being, longings, belongings specified throughout



the analysis emerged as multifaceted experiences of the participants. The study is after the question of how they are constructed in relation to the larger socio-political, historical, economic, and discursive contexts. Below are specified how I operationalized existing literature in such deconstruction.

First part of the hyphenation, **be-ing**, derives basically from Linn Miller's (2003) argument that belonging entails a particular kind of relation whereby who and what we are is at stake; a relation that makes us feel good about our being and our being-in-the-world; a relation that is taken to be fitting, right or correct. Accordingly, belonging is a state of being from which wellbeing is derived (Miller, 2003). Perception of the correct relation to social, historical and territorial connections by oneself and confirmation by others (Miller, 2003), thus relation of belonging to social inclusion, through which a sense of a stake and acceptance in a society is created and maintained (Anthias, 2005), become important in this framework. In such approach, belonging is acceptance as part of a community, feeling safe within it, having a stake in the future of it, as well as sharing values, networks and practices, and not just a question of identification (Anthias, 2005). It is about "locations", locating oneself within the social world and "positioning" along gendered, classed, ethnicized discourses (Yuval-Davis, 2006). It is about rights and obligations related to citizenship, yet as citizens are differentially included and excluded along the lines of gender, ethnicity, class, and age belonging is about boundaries about hierarchies within and across those boundaries (Anthias, 2005). Nira Yuval-Davis's (2003) "elements of participation" referring to citizenship is also taken here. The spatial aspect could also be inferred from the arguments that belonging is about distinguishing claims to a locale between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'; or making claims to reside in (Rutherford, 2011). Although belonging may be about a very specific locality, or be enforced to be so, it is always entangled in trans-local processes (Rutherford, 2011)

Second part of the hyphenation, **long-ing**, is adopted from Yuval-Davis' (2006) reference to the constructions of belonging as emotional investments and desire for attachments, since "individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by yearning rather than positing of identity as a stable state (Elspeth Probyn, 1966, ascited in Yuval-Davis, 2006). This again is related to her differentiation between "elements of identification" and "elements of participation" in her suggested model of belonging, whereby the former relates to the more emotive dimension of association, while the latter is signified by citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 2003). I take the latter in the category of be-ings. In this separation the argument is, importantly, that a feeling of being a part of a collectivity, a community, a social category, or a yearning to be so, might not denote actually taking part in a political community with all the rights and responsibilities involved (Yuval-Davis, 2003). In such context, it is very much related to the politics of redistribution of resources, not only material but also cultural and symbolic as in the pursuit of representation (Anthias, 2005).

Third part of the hyphenation, **belongings**, takes the opportunity of the material, economic connotation of the word as *possessions* (Cons, 2012). Added in this dissertation also is the role of *dispossessions*. In this way, I try to stress that the politics of membership is inseparable from debates over, and claims of, ownership. Such conceptualization is important to locate the issue of belonging not purely in terms of cultural initiation or cultural identity, but in terms of requirements for quality of life, with a focus on experiences of enablement in society, as well as experiences of hurdles (Anthias, 2005). Belonging is taken to be about political processes, often efforts, to exclude others from access to the new circuits of riches and power; as well as about claims to access means of livelihood (Rutherford, 2011).

#### **1.4.2. Nation**

This study, does not presume the nation to be a reified bounded reality or an externally existing entity. It is primarily concerned with the array of practices through which the ‘nation’ comes to be (Campbell, 1998). Such concern is based on some premises of the existing literature. Firstly, I agree with the now classical argument that nations are imagined into existence (Anderson, 1991); and I deal with the question of do Kurd, Arab and Syriac individuals participate in such imagining of Turkish nation into existence, in what context and ways, and under the influence of which processes. Secondly, although I embrace this view in its constructivist approach to nation, I simultaneously take up the criticism of Andersonian “empty homogeneous time”, whereby it is argued that people can imagine themselves in but not live in it (Chatterjee, 2005). In line with my emphasis on practice, I agree with Partha Chatterjee (2005) who claims that it is the heterogeneous and unevenly dense time, whereby fullness of the nation’s life takes place. Accordingly, I try to understand the flow of the “heterogeneous” and “unevenly dense time” as well as space for the participants of this study. Thirdly, I draw on Stuart Hall’s (1992) conceptualization of nation as a “symbolic community”, which, more than a political entity appears to produce meanings and a system of cultural representation. Accordingly, I seek to grasp the meanings and ways of representations that Turkish symbolic community produces in the experiences of the participants of this study. Lastly, I take up the emphasis “on nationhood and nationness” that is “on nation as practical category, institutionalized form, and contingent event” as was suggested by Rogers Brubaker (2009:7). In this line, I look for the ways Turkishness/Turkishhood was practiced, encountered or came into shape in the specific context of this study. From such a perspective, this study deals with the questions of when and how is a nation, rather than what is a nation.

Adopting a bottom-up perspective, therefore, this study focuses on the ways that individuals, nationally framed to be on the ‘margin’ of the ‘national territory’

and ‘national community’, “appropriate, internalize, subvert, evade, or transform the categories that are imposed on them” (Brubaker, 2009:12). Such perspective also draws from Eric Hobsbawm’s (1992: 10) assertion that nations, for him “constructed essentially from above”, “cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist”. Therefore, trying to avoid cultural accounts of the nation, I try to define the specific political, social, and economic processes that condition nation in the experiences of the participants of this research.

One more point to be made concerning how nation is approached in this study relates to the conceptualization of “methodological nationalism” (Chernilo, 2006; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). Concerning how we conduct our studies, it is defined as equating the concepts of society and the nation-state in modernity (Chernilo, 2006), assuming that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). Some forms of methodological nationalism were mentioned as following: taking nationally bounded societies to be the naturally given entities to study, without problematizing the national discourses, agendas, loyalties and histories; analyzing social life as spinning within the container of the national society, being cut off everything extending over its borders, and not having any reflection on what consequences may flow from methodologically limiting the analytical horizon in this way; and defining ethnic groups as culturally different, rather than seeing differences as a consequence of the politicization of ethnicity in the context of nation-state building itself (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002: 304-307). Within such framework, this dissertation tries not to do methodological nationalism in its approach, methods, and questions. In this study, rather than as a naturally given entity, nation was taken as a construction, a process that comes to be through practices, experiences, and perceptions of the participants; specific attention was paid to the trans-border, trans-national, trans-ethnic context as well as the local scale as they emerged significantly relevant for the purposes of the

study; and most importantly the overall argument is that ethnic differences and variation in their relation to the national context was a consequence of the social, political, and economic processes within the historical context that nation-state building had a decisive role.

To conclude, this dissertation is an attempt to provide a theorization of nation as a social-historical process, conditioned by the processes of violence, social capital, and economic inclusion/exclusion. In this, it challenges the nationalistic discourses that de-historicize and hide the political, economic and social context of the multiplicity of belongings and that forge a naturalized image of ‘The nation’, whereby a connection between people, territories and states is constructed as immutable.

### **1.5. Emerging Conceptual Tools of the Analysis**

Three processes emerged in the analysis to be defining the making and unmaking of be-long-ings for the participants of this study. They are namely, experience of violation; mobilization of social relations to one’s benefit; economic exclusion/inclusion. To relate these categories with the existing literature, I integrated the concept of violence, social capital,<sup>7</sup> and economic exclusion as part of theoretical coding, which Glaser (2002) proposes as part of the process of grounding your concepts. The related literature on these concepts is briefly mentioned below within a context this study relates to them.

#### **1.5.1. Violence**

In accordance with the findings of the research, the argument of this dissertation is inline with a ‘comprehensive conception’ of violence as Larry Ray (2011: 9) defines it “to include anything avoidable that impedes human realization,

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<sup>7</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Anthony Heath for calling my attention to the concept ‘social capital’ during my visit to University of Oxford, Department of Sociology, under his supervising.

violates rights or integrity of the person and is often judged in terms of outcomes rather than intentions”. Such conception is also very much parallel to how Johan Galtung (1990: 292) sees violence, which is “avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more generally to life, lowering the real level of needs satisfaction below what is potentially possible”. For him threats of violence are also violence.

This study agrees with the criticism of taking violence as an instrument of broader social and political processes, more specifically, as residual to questions of social integration, redistribution of resources, the state, power and conflict, very often a mere level or a quantitative degree of conflict (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998; Corradi, 2010; Ray, 2011). Instead, findings of this study are in line with approaches seeing violence as an agent of social formation (Ray, 2011); as endowed with a capacity to structure reality, charged with meaning, culturally shaping the bodies of the victims and the aggressors, and defining the relations between enemies (Corradi, 2010); and as a form of social or political action in its own right and with its own dynamics (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998). Secondly, this study agrees with criticisms of taking violence as a social phenomenon which is a break from the presumed civilizing progression of modernity (Stanko, 2005), which is taken as exceptional, external, and threatening us from without, in specific places and events, notably armed conflicts, civil disturbances and violent crime (Ray, 2011). Violence in this study emerged to be a very modern process.

Here violence emerged to be in political, structural, symbolic, and collective forms, which are explained when necessary throughout the analysis.

### 1.5.2. Social Capital

Bourdieu, who provided the first systematic contemporary analysis of the term in early 1980s<sup>8</sup>, defines social capital as:

the aggregate of the actual potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition -or in other words, to membership in a group- which provides each of its members with backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu, 1986:51).

For Bourdieu, these relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them. This is so even when they are socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of a common name, be it the name of a family, a class, a tribe, a school or a party and by a whole set of instituting acts designed simultaneously to form and inform those who undergo them (Bourdieu, 1986). In this analysis, the size of the network of connections one can effectively mobilize and the volume of the capital (economic, cultural, or symbolic) possessed by each of those to whom one is connected, define the volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent (Bourdieu, 1986). For him, "the profits which accrue from membership in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible", though "this does not mean that they are consciously pursued as such" (Bourdieu 1986: 52). Moreover, the existence of those networks of connections is not a natural or even a social given, but is the product of an endless effort at institution, individual or collective investment strategies, an unceasing effort of sociability, and a continuous series of exchanges (of gifts, words, women) in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed and mutual knowledge produced (Bourdieu,

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<sup>8</sup> Andy Blunden (2004) reminds that the term "social capital" was used incidentally by way of a metaphor by Jane Jacobs in her 1961 *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, concerning the problems of poverty and disempowerment as first and foremost political problems that could be overcome only by communities that were able to organise themselves into a self-governing "Thing." For an analysis pointing to the roots and the links of the concept to classical sociology, e.g. Durkheim, Marx, Simmel, see Portes, 1998.

1986). These processes are also the ones reproducing the group, reaffirming its limits, defining the criteria of entry and instituting each member as a custodian of the limits of it. In Bourdieu's analysis, all forms of capital are linked to each other; and all other forms can be reduced to economic capital ultimately, defined as accumulated human labour.<sup>9</sup> Social capital is "the connections needed to make the most of economic and cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1989: 337). In his analysis, however, this is the base where social capital acts as a "resource for individual social mobility that works in tandem with other capitals to reproduce social inequalities in various class-specific forms"; showing "the daily sufferings of the powerless, denied the means to adapt to the changing conditions of their lives and to find a socially dignified existence" (Cheong et al, 2007: 37). Bourdieu's analysis of social capital is critical in the context of my work, shedding light on the processes whereby inequalities are reproduced through social relations. Social capital provides for tools to better grasp such processes.

James Samuel Coleman defines social capital by its function. Social capital, inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors, facilitating certain actions of actors - whether persons or corporate actors- within the structure, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible (Coleman, 2012). Still however, it may be specific to certain activities, in that a given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others (Coleman, 2012). Three forms of social capital he examines are obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms, in the existence and proliferation of which closure and trustworthiness of social structures play crucial role (Coleman, 2012). Aspects of social structures, thus, are identified in Coleman's analysis as being resources for actors that they can use to achieve their interests.

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<sup>9</sup> Bourdieu states that "the different types of capital can be derived from economic capital, but only at the cost of a more or less great effort of transformation, which is needed to produce the type of power effective in the field of question" (Bourdieu, 1986: 53-54).



Social capital, in Robert D. Putnam's policy oriented analysis, is defined as features of social life that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam, 1995). Stocks of social capital, in his analysis trust, norms, and networks, tend to be self reinforcing and cumulative, in that successful collaboration in one endeavour builds connections and trust, social assets that facilitate future collaboration in other, unrelated tasks (Putnam, 1993: 4). He sees social capital, at least horizontal networks of social relations forming as a consequence of individual choice (Putnam, 1993; Lake and Huckfeldt, 1998). He is primarily concerned with forms of social capital that serve civic ends and uses the term "civic engagement" to refer to people's connections with the life of their communities, not merely with politics (Putnam, 1995: 665).<sup>10</sup> He puts overall that a society that relies on generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society (Putnam, 1993: 3). Though his basic point is that social capital is important in sustaining community life; he, still, puts a reservation about the "benefits" of social capital pointing that social inequalities may be embedded in it that norms and networks serving some groups may obstruct others, particularly if the norms are discriminatory or the networks socially segregated (Putnam, 1993). Thus, how a community is defined that is who is inside and thus benefits from social capital, and who is outside and does not is an important question, the answers to which must be determined empirically and not definitionally (Putnam, 1993, 1995).

Overall, a difference made in the literature between two forms of social capital, the structural and cognitive, may be helpful in the face of such a range of definitions. Accordingly, the former is linked with diverse forms of social organization, networks, and social structures in which people are embedded; while the latter is more linked to mental processes and resulting ideas, reinforced by culture and ideology - trust, values, norms of obligation and reciprocity- all contributing to cooperative behaviour and mutually beneficial collective action

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<sup>10</sup> Putnam argues that there is a correlation between social trust, civic engagement and political participation, while the one between the latter two is in a narrower sense; the one between former two is a strong one independent of other variables (Putnam, 1995: 665-666).

(Uphoff, 2000). Evolution of such categorization could be understood in Alejandro Portes' (1998) explanation that while primary sociological analyses conceptualized social capital as the potential benefit accruing to actors because of their insertion into networks or broader social structures; a conceptual twist was introduced by political scientists equating social capital with the level of "civicness" in communities such as towns, cities, or even entire countries through networks, norms, and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit. The field research I conducted revealed indicators of existence of the phenomenon in both understandings of the term.

### **1.5.3. Economic Inclusion/Exclusion**

The phenomenon of economic exclusion/inclusion is discussed in the existing literature widely within an immigration context, and mostly by means of the concept social exclusion. Having its roots in classical sociology, social exclusion research refers to more than simple lack of material resources, which Tim Dertwinkel (2008) saw as an attempt of one status group to secure for itself a privileged position at the expense of another group, through a process of subordination. The term, however, has expanded its meaning over time to capture more or new social problems to cover all possible kinds of discrimination and marginalization minority groups might ever encounter; and increasingly adopted an economic meaning with the rising levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality in the face of modernization processes (Dertwinkel, 2008).

Still, there is a reasonable tendency to focus specifically on economic exclusion and take it as a main dimension of social exclusion, though it is defined and measured variously. For Grace-Edward Galabuzi (2006) indicators of economic exclusion are low level of income attainment, unemployment, racialized labour market entrapping some people in low-end jobs and occupations, or underrepresentation in public-sector employment. For, Renahy and others (2012) economic exclusion is measured by material deprivation and by economic

hardship, the former referring to the inability to afford some basic goods, lifestyle or opportunities to participate in a way identified generally as appropriate in a given community, while the latter to deprivation in possessing goods, accessing services, inability to pay bills, or difficulty in meeting basic needs such as food and shelter. Another term to be taken into consideration in terms of economic exclusion is 'ethnic penalties', referring to "any remaining disparity that persists in ethnic minorities' chances of securing employment or higher-level jobs, or income; in other words, it is "all the sources of disadvantage that might lead an ethnic group to fare less well in the labour market than do similarly qualified [majority]" (Heath and Cheung, 2006: 19).

Tim Dertwinkel (2008), in a systematic attempt to specify the concept of economic exclusion, defines it as one of the three most obvious dimensions of social exclusion, together with political engagement and cultural interaction. Focusing specifically on historic ethnic minorities, he develops a model whereby the two dimensions of economic exclusion are "non-participation" or "denial of access", on the one hand, and "discrimination", on the other. Indicators for the first are "no access to higher education" or "no access to labour market" or "no access to land, housing, finance, credit"; whereby the indicators for the second are "under-paid job" or "mobbing at work due to ethnicity" (Dertwinkel, 2008: 15). For him economic exclusion to be present, it is enough if one of the dimensions and one of the indicators of that dimension comes true. Economic exclusion in Dertwinkel's (2008: 10-15) conceptualization is relational, a group is excluded by 'the rest of society', the 'rest of economy', or simply 'the average'; it is continuous rather than discrete, thus it is more about intermediate steps of vulnerability in between than a binary categorization of 'the excluded' and 'the rest'; and it is more an issue of being in or out, rather than rich or poor, and in this context it is about the capabilities and the real quality of human lives.

Moreover, not belonging to the group in political power, being relatively small in size, and residing geographically concentrated in remote areas of a country are characteristics to make economic exclusion more likely (Dertwinkel, 2008).

## **1.6. Plan of the Dissertation**

In Chapter 1, the research question, the purpose, the methodology, the scope and the context of the research are introduced, with a brief framework on the basic concepts that were utilized and emerged during the analysis.

In Chapter 2, the research design and process was explained. Epistemology and methodology of the research was detailed, and the field research was described in detail.

In Chapter 3, 4, and 5 the research findings were analysed respectively for each research group, namely Arabs, Kurds, and Syrians. These chapters basically cover dissimilarities between these groups. Chapter 6 compares and contrasts three groups specifically in terms of spatial belongings. Here mostly similarities are underlined.

In Chapter 7, conclusion of the dissertation is made through some propositions which are abstracted from the findings of the research. The emerging concepts in the analysis are explained and finally, four basic patterns emerging in the experiences of the participants' relation to the 'nation' are described.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS IN THE LIGHT OF GROUNDED THEORY**

In this chapter, I will give details about the epistemological and methodological positions adopted; describe research design in the processes of sampling, data generation, and data analysis. I will be giving a detailed account of the research design and process quoting participants and referring to specific instances, to be able to provide a wider perspective of how the research was actually conducted, of the context and meanings of the interaction between me, as the researcher, and the participants.

#### **2.1. Epistemology and Methodology of The Research**

In terms of theoretical perspective, this dissertation takes on an interpretative stance in understanding and explaining social reality, looking for contextually derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world, taking individual and her action as its unit, and searching for the meanings the actors attribute to their actions (Crotty, 1998). The study shares, moreover, the basic assumptions, motivations and theoretical perspective of feminism, in its inclusion of the researcher as a person, attempt at developing a special relation with the people studied, developing more egalitarian forms of social research, strive to represent human diversity, aim to create social change, and in challenging prevailing power structures (Reinharz, 1992). Concerning their own study, which they argue to “start with the study of nondominant groups, and then move to the study of dominant groups” Auerbach and Silverstein mentions two principles to be at work: First, “the experiences of nondominant populations are just as important and worthy of study as those of the dominant population”;

second, “nondominant groups can contribute knowledge that is relevant to the dominant group as well” (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003: 126). Although, I do not take the ‘dominant’ versus ‘nondominant’ dichotomy at its face value, rather underline the heterogeneity, contextuality and fluidity of both categories in my own assumptions, I agree with their claim that the two principles can make a “contribution toward shifting the balance of power in society by bringing marginalized groups from the margin to the centre of scientific discourse” (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003: 126). Here, in my study of ‘nondominant groups’ and their relation to the ‘dominant’ forms of belonging, I take up a pluralist and anti-nationalist position in an effort to deconstruct the alleged, so often nationalistic, meanings of Turkish national identity and belonging; and reconstruct it via people’s own perception and experiences of it.

The research follows inductive strategy, and aims at theory-building rather than theory-testing using the principles of grounded theory in generating and analyzing data. Grounded theory is defined to be a theory generating methodology, which aims at letting the natural organization of substantive life emerge (Glaser and Holton, 2004), with the intention to reveal the fundamental patterns and to engage in a conceptual account of them (Glaser, 2002). I basically adopt Katy Charmaz’s (2006) constructionist approach to grounded theory, whereby she defines its potential strength to be its analytic power to theorize how meanings, actions, and social structures are constructed.

I try to let the natural organization of be-long-ings emerge specifically at Processes of making and de-making ‘nation’ and ‘nationness’ are assumed to be grounded in the spatial, material, performative, representational experiences in everyday lives of the participants of the research. In such effort, I used qualitative methods for data generation like interview, focus group, non-participant and participant observation, field notes, and diary collection.

Interviews included semi-structured in-depth interviews, through which the main bulk of the data; expert interviews; informal interviews; and informal group meetings, details for each of which I give below. Interviews were tape-recorded except a few cases where I only took notes; whereas in all interviews some amount of note taking accompanied tape recording. For data analysis I followed procedures of grounded theory as I explain below under the title data analysis.

I sought for the consent, willingness, and comfort of the participants in their involvement in the research; and tried to engage with them in a non-exploitative manner in my interactions to them including the interviews. Following the ethical guidelines, I explained the aims of the study to the participants at the beginning, tried to ensure that they fully understood the nature of the study; answered all their questions about the research and me at the beginning, during, and after the interviews; and before concluding the interviews, I tried to allow space for them to decide what to add more, what to include and what to exclude. I explained the participants how I will represent them referring to their gender, age, ethnicity, and location in brackets. Some participants stated that I can use their names if I wanted to, but as a principle I used none of them.

I treated the data confidentially during and after I conducted the field research and will do so hereafter. In the transcriptions I erased the names spoken out in the interviews; I maintained only initials or some nicknames to identify the transcriptions in keeping them. In the written text, I used the initial of the city and a number together (e.g. [D3], [M5], [U7])<sup>11</sup> to signify the participants and a table for the socio-demographic profile of the participants signified via that numbered system in the appendices.

The research is reliable in that it can be repeated by other researchers at other times. It is valid in that the design and methods utilized are able to assess what the research sets out to do. In accord with the nature of the qualitative research,

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<sup>11</sup> "D" stands for Diyarbakır, "M" for Mardin, and "U" for Urfa.

this research does aim at generalizing its findings. Yet, still, tools and premises of grounded theory make room for a degree of generalization in its purpose of abstraction, conceptualization, and generating theory. Generalizability of the current study should, thus, be taken in the context of the concepts it generated, and the theoretical framework it constructs.

## **2.2. The Field**

In grounded theory, sampling, data collection and data analysis are interwoven and simultaneous processes; still for practical reasons, here I will explain them separately, trying to point at their intersections.

### **2.2.1. Framing and Locating the Research**

Originally, the scope of the research was broader than it ended up being. The purpose of understanding the relation of individuals of various ethnic-religious background with Turkishness though remained alike. Departing from the pre-acceptance that Turkish national identity was officially defined as a ‘Turk’ and ‘Muslim’ identity, I aimed at elaborating on the experiences of the non-Turk and non-Muslim population who were ‘invited’ to that identity- not always so gently. My aim was to try to place these different peoples into a larger picture displaying their respective relations to Turkishness.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Circassians, Bosnians, Arabs and Kurds were the Muslim; Armenians, Greeks and Jews were the non-Muslim categories composing the preliminary sample of my research project. At this initial phase, I paid visits to a Circassian NGO in Ankara, collected documents/books and interviewed with the authorized people there; also visited a Greek Orthodox Church and interviewed with authorized people and some community members in Arnavutköy, Istanbul. I am grateful to all for the sincere interviews and helpful attitudes of them which provided me with valuable insights throughout the subsequent study I conducted. Here is my apology to them for not being able to go on with the early plan of the study due to the limitations of time and scope of the research.



Being aware of the difficulty of visiting all places that I wanted to conduct my research, I decided to carry out a pilot work in Ankara with persons affiliated to the defined ethnic categories. Friends or their contacts helped me at this phase and my interviewees turned out to be persons, whom I already know personally, though to different degrees. Consequently, I interviewed with four graduate students and an undergraduate.<sup>13</sup> This eased the communication between us and gave me the opportunity to explore and dig for the details to clarify the questions in my mind, reframe the problem and interlink the various stories to make comparisons at a very early phase of the research. Importance of the personal experience, the issue of generation, relevance of the context and most significantly a premature form of one of my later analytic concepts that is violence appeared during these interviews. As a result, also, I rephrased some interview questions and reorganized the guide for a clearer and more efficient version.

The original extent of the study, however, proved for me to be unfeasible to pursue within the time and space constraints of a doctoral dissertation and it waits to be fulfilled by further research in the future.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, I turned to a more specifically defined area with the same research question in mind. Accordingly, individuals of Kurdish, Arabic and Syriac affiliation in three cities in south east Turkey, namely Diyarbakır, Mardin, Şanlıurfa were targeted. Thus,

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<sup>13</sup> The pilot research was conducted in October-December 2010 with a Bosnian, a Circassian (Kabartey/Asetin), a Kurd, an Arab, and an Armenian student as the initial research sample aimed at including all these groups.

<sup>14</sup> I initially had planned to conduct the fields in Siirt and Hakkâri sequentially after the Urfa field. However, the political and social turmoil continued for a while after I prematurely abandoned Urfa, and within a few months I had to leave Turkey for a visiting position in the UK already scheduled for a one-year period. Time constraint for the overall research, and the relative conceptual saturation of the data generated to that point in the three cities at hand, made me drop Siirt and Hakkâri to be the other fields. This should be counted as a limitation of the research. Further research in those two cities would, doubtlessly, add important dimensions to my analysis; however, I believe limiting the research with its current frame gave me the opportunity to elaborate more on the inner dynamics of the three cases.

at the very beginning a region is specified with three cities being defined as the field of the research. My choice of the three cities was made by taking into consideration the political, socio-demographic, economic processes basically defining those cities by 2011. Their similarity of being neighbouring cities in the same region on/near the border area, having low socio-demographic and economic indicators like lower GDP per capita,<sup>15</sup> high poverty and unemployment rates, high illiteracy and low education rates, and intense migratory movements. Yet, on the other hand they have their distinct characteristics in terms of socio-demographic structure, dominant political attitudes, socio-economic organization and relations of production, and centre-periphery relations. The purpose being to understand and explain the conditioning context of the relation of the participants to Turkishness, I took three ethnic groups cohabiting in the same region to be able to see the similarities and differences between them, and conducted the research in three cities to grasp the specificities of structural, contextual, and socio-historical processes within a relational and comparative perspective. Thus, at the very beginning I already predefine ethnicity and location as principle independent variables. To be able to attain a broader perspective, moreover, I included a wide range of age groups arranged of people above 18 years-old; included women and men<sup>16</sup> with different socio-economic indicators, thus age, gender, and socio-economic status becoming the additional independent variables.

Consequently, the fieldwork was conducted intermittently between February and October 2011, collecting qualitative data mostly through in-depth interviews,

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<sup>15</sup> GDP per Capita in 2011 was \$11205 for Turkey, \$5500 for Southeast Anatolian Region, \$4337 for Şanlıurfa, \$5296 for Mardin, and \$5349 for Diyarbakır. Retrieved from <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/bolgeselistatistik/degiskenlerUzerindenSorgula.do> accessed on 8.2.2019

<sup>16</sup> No specific question was asked to participants on the gender since it was beyond the problem of the research; and there were no participant visibly defining herself/himself with a third gender. Yet any research on be-long-ings of LGBTQ individuals in a similar context would be most valuable as a future project.

interviews, focus groups, group gatherings, observation and participant observation. I visited Diyarbakır between February the 9<sup>th</sup> and March the 1<sup>st</sup>; Mardin and Diyarbakır during ten days in April; Mardin between June the 25<sup>th</sup> and July the 26<sup>th</sup>; Urfa between October the 13<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in 2011. Just within a week after I arrived in Urfa, October the 19<sup>th</sup> 2011, 24 soldiers of different ranks in Turkish Armed Forces were killed in an attack in Hakkâri. The event had a pervasive effect on the discourses of people in my field site, and made it difficult to go on with the usual mood of interviews. Although I kept on interviewing in an effort to understand the effect of the event and the changing narratives of the people, pervasiveness of the temper, frustration, anxiety coloured the narratives in black and white, or perhaps ‘red and white’, and deprived them of intensity, depth, and inner tensions. The next in chain was, unfortunately, the disastrous earthquake taking place in the city of Van, which was felt in the nearby areas, also in my field site Urfa. The event, whereby hundreds of people lost their lives, thousands were injured and many more were victims of material loss, had an immense effect on the country’s agenda and likewise on my field site. It accelerated the already tense atmosphere in the field, and I consequently decided to leave the field. To that point, however, I had as much as necessary space for my research.

Still one point to note on the sources of research data is that the interviews with various institutions and informed persons, which I together name as expert interviews, emerged as a requirement of the ongoing in the field. They should be taken an example of theoretical sampling that grounded theory proposes. Accordingly, “beyond the decisions concerning initial collection of data, further collection cannot be planned in advance of the emerging theory”, in the process of which “the researcher discovers codes and tries to saturate them by theoretical sampling” (Glaser and Holton, 2004: 52). The requirement followed the fact that, various institutions and informed persons emerged as defining actors of organization of life in the research field with their active roles in various areas of everyday life. In this framework, expert interviews were

conducted with the NGOs, community-based organizations, associations, governmental or municipal institutions in order for a better grasp of the social, economic, and political structures of the field sites within the specific context of their specialized experiences. The institutions were usually in close relation with specific categories of people like elders, children, youth, women, poor, forced migrants, artists, or victims of human rights violation. Or else they were specialised on matters like development, poverty, employment, empowerment, rehabilitation, education, research, social or economic support, and arts and culture. They reached to a large number of people directly or indirectly. These interviews brought a more comprehensive understanding of the ties and tensions between the local, national and transnational spaces; were helpful for practical reasons like finding participants and reaching them. Moreover, I took the opportunity of the fact that there is a state university in each of the three cities, and interviewed professors in departments like geography, law, sociology, or anthropology that helped deepen the perspective on various topics of the research. Specifically, moreover, I got some information on the student profile of those departments and universities at large; their university entrance preferences; the geographical dispersion in those preferences; and the geographical dispersion of the students in those cities and the region at large. Though a separate analysis of the expert interviews is not conducted, they are used as supporting data for the overall analysis.

As a result, I conducted the research in Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Urfa. In total, I came up with 89 in-depth interviews<sup>17</sup>; 26 informal interviews; 3 focus groups<sup>18</sup> (composed respectively of 8, 5, 5 persons); 9 informal group interviews (composed of persons ranging from 5 to 20 people); and 49 expert interviews. Of expert interviews, 34 were conducted with informed persons of many Non-

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<sup>17</sup> One of these interviews was conducted as a post-field interview in Ankara in 2013 with a participant from Diyarbakır.

<sup>18</sup> For the details of the focus groups see Appendix II.

Governmental Organizations and some governmental institutions, various associations and some municipalities;<sup>19</sup> and 15 with knowledgeable persons affiliated to various university departments, as well as some professionals, artists, and religious leaders. Two in-depth interviews, though properly conducted, were not included in the sample. In one case the interviewee withdrew from the research; in the other the record was irredeemably damaged for technical reasons.

During the in-depth interviews I used a semi-structured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions that are developed around various themes to

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<sup>19</sup> A list of institutions I conducted interviews and or collected documents are as following: Diyarbakır Sur Belediyesi (Sur Municipality); Sur Belediyesi Çocuk Kütüphanesi (Sur Municipality Library for Children); Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi Sümerpark Çocuk Şube (Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Sümerpark Branch for Children); Hasırlı Çamaşır Evi Diyarbakır (Hasırlı Washing House Diyarbakır); Bağlar Kadın Kooperatifi Diyarbakır (Bağlar Municipality Women Cooperative Diyarbakır); DİKASUM Diyarbakır Sosyal Hizmetler Müdürlüğü (*Presidency of Social Work Diyarbakır*); KADEM Sur Belediyesi Kadın Destek Merkezi Diyarbakır (Sur Municipality Centre for Support of Women Diyarbakır); KAGİDEM Kadın Güçlendirme ve İstihdam Destek Merkezi Diyarbakır (Centre for the Support of Women's Empowerment and Employment Diyarbakır); Diyarbakır Baro Başkanlığı (Presidency of the Diyarbakır Body of Lawyers); Sarmaşık Yoksullukla Mücadele ve Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Derneği Diyarbakır (Sarmaşık Association for Struggle against Poverty and Sustainable Development Diyarbakır); Karacadağ Kalkınma Merkezi Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa (Karacadağ Development Agency Diyarbakır/Şanlıurfa); SOHRAM Sosyal Hizmet Rehabilitasyon Ve Adaptasyon Merkezi Diyarbakır (Centre for Social Service Rehabilitation and Adaptation Diyarbakır); GABB Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi Belediyeler Birliği Diyarbakır (Union of Municipalities of Southeast Anatolian Region Diyarbakır); DSM Diyarbakır Sanat Merkezi (Diyarbakır Centre for Arts); DİSA Diyarbakır Siyasal ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Enstitüsü (Diyarbakır Institute for Political and Social Research); Kadın Akademisi Derneği Diyarbakır (Women Academy Association Diyarbakır); Mazlum-Der İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar İçin Dayanışma Derneği Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa (Association of Solidarity for Human Rights and the Oppressed); Dicle Fırat Kültür Merkezi Diyarbakır (Dicle Fırat Culture Centre); KAMER Mardin and Şanlıurfa (Centre for Women Mardin and Şanlıurfa); ÇATOM Gül Mahallesi/Mardin and Parmaksız Mahallesi/Şanlıurfa (Multi-Purpose Community Centre Gül Neighbourhood/Mardin and Parmaksız Neighbourhood/Şanlıurfa); İHD Mardin and Şanlıurfa (Human Rights Association Mardin and Şanlıurfa); Eğitim-Sen Mardin and Şanlıurfa (Education and Science Worker's Union); Mardin Gençlik ve Kültür Evi (Mardin Youth and Culture House); Şanlıurfa Kadın ve Kadın STK'ları Güçlendirme Projesi (The Project for the Empowerment of Women and Women's Non-Governmental Organizations Şanlıurfa); Şanlıurfa Belediyesi Hayati Harrani Kadın Destek ve Eğitim Merkezi (Municipality of Şanlıurfa Hayati Harrani Centre for Support and Education of Women); Yasam Evi Kadın Kooperatifi Şanlıurfa (Yasam Evi Women's Cooperation Şanlıurfa); Arap-Der Şanlıurfa (Arab Association Şanlıurfa); T.C. Kalkınma Bakanlığı Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi (GAP) Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı Şanlıurfa (Republic of Turkey Ministry Of Development Southeastern Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration); Şanlıurfa Belediyesi (Şanlıurfa Municipality)

elucidate different dimensions of the research topic. The themes were *demographic characteristics, migration, economic/professional life, language, religion, marriage patterns, the city and neighbourhood life, perception and experience of territory, self-definition and belonging, and sites of encounter with the state.*<sup>20</sup> These themes were chosen to be able to cover the everyday life experiences of the participants, as the dissertation targeted at getting a grasp of those experiences with an attempt to understand and explain their relation to Turkishness. I was flexible in the order and phrasing of questions and in further probing when necessary. I mostly used the guide simply to check if I had covered all I wanted to ask. This, I observed, created more spontaneous, conversation-like interviews making the participant stop thinking about the guide. I commenced the interviews expressing my interest and motivation for listening to their life stories; and tried to order and link the questions to what was already said. This provided space for the participants to take the lead in their narrative and in many cases helped them to express themselves more openly and in detail, bringing a sense of context, some grounds, and concreteness to the there and newly constructed relation between us as the researcher and the participant. In some other cases, however, they waited for more questions and sometimes expressed this openly, telling “*you ask I will reply*”. I was always keen to allow space for interaction and clarification, both for them and for me. These I believe resulted in what is called the interviewee oriented interviews (Reinharz, 1992).

I tape recorded most of my interviews, all with the consent of the interviewee. Only a few participants did not consent for tape recording; in those cases I took notes trying my best to catch up with the interviewee. An unfortunate event was that one of the interviews was partially deleted in my recorder by accident and I only had the remaining part, the notes, my observation and memories of it. Still, however, believing that they provide me some ground for its analysis, I counted the interview in the total number. During the expert interviews I took notes and

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<sup>20</sup> For the Interview Guide see Appendix I.

where appropriate also tape-recorded the interviews. In informal group interviews as well I tape-recorded with the permission of the participants.

In the expert interviews I used unstructured thematic guides to elicit what they had to offer within their particular area of their expertise. Thus, details of their professional purpose; ways of relating to various segments of society; problems they faced concerning the specific area of their activities and means of solving them; as well as their reflections about their own sites of work provided important data and insight for the current study. In many interviews with institutions, the focus was solely on the professional area of interest and facts about institutional practices, in these cases that it is an expert interview will be noted when referred or quoted. In others, life stories, personal experiences and narratives came to fore, so I decided to also conduct in-depth interviews with the persons and include them in the main bunch of participants, in these latter cases institutions are not identified, since I rely on personal interviews in my analysis.

Personal interviews in the institutions were helpful for me to get an insider perspective, since the participants, mostly educated locals of the communities or groups I was working with, could contextualize their experiences within a larger framework. In many cases, it became apparent that accumulated, multiple, and multidimensional problems that people were facing necessitated more than that specific institution could ever offer. Here personal initiatives and motivations of the persons in charge gained significance. Thus, institutional interviews provided me with the opportunity to see the connections between the personal and the institutional, or the private and the public. Besides, these interviews were helpful to observe the processes of social capital formation through these institutions. Thus, the expert interviews gained further importance than I could foresee, in that their role was a critical element of social capital formation, which emerged as one of my analytic concepts. In sum, the very existence, practices, relations of the institutions and reflections of the informed persons became part of the data, as well as sources of important insight for the analysis.

In focus groups as well I used unstructured thematic guides drawn from the main interview guide introducing them to the participants as was necessitated. Focus groups were homogeneously composed for the purposes of this research, with the informed consent and voluntary participation of the group members. I tried to ensure equal participation of all group members and be reflexive on any hierarchical positioning between me and the participants. I did not have difficulty in stimulating or moderating the discussions as the participants were eager to talk, exchange with, and listen to each other. Observing the interaction between the participants was fruitful in revealing important insights about collective experiences, memories, and perceptions. In the written text, I tried to reproduce the interaction between the participants in quoting the multilogues with details of turn takings, reactions, interruptions, etc. In analyzing the data generated thereof as well the premises of grounded theory were applied, yet the inferred meanings of the interactions were included where they were telling in themselves in terms of the purposes of the study.

On some occasions, I just could not cover the entire interview guide but still gained important amount of knowledge and insight from the participant concerning specific topics. I refer to them as informal interviews. Usually demographic information was not totally covered in these cases, and they were sometimes recorded, other times noted down. I did not include as informal interviews the chats here and there, but included them as field notes when necessary.

Informal groups, moreover, were those group of people I usually ended up meeting without any prior organization, and could not in all cases secure equal participation of all the group members, or got all demographic information from each. They were in cases stable with the members, while in others there was entrance and exit. These interviews were usually recorded, and occasionally noted down.



In terms of signification, for focus groups, or informal group interviews I used the city initial (D, M, U), “FG” for Focus Group, “IGI” for Informal Group Interview, numbered the group (1, 2, 3), and added a number in square brackets to define the participants as in (FG1 [3]) or (IGI1 [5]). Informal interviews were noted accordingly, date, location, and details of the participant being given. Expert interviews were signed with reference to the date and the city the interview was conducted. The field notes, diary notes, and expert interviews were also dated to concretize the data.

### **2.2.2. Entering the Field**

Before I conducted the fieldwork for this study, my experience in the region was not more than a few rather short visits earlier<sup>21</sup> and I had no connections other than one friend in each of the three cities. These friends, two of them being non-locals, were so helpful for me in becoming familiar with the field sites both at the earlier phase and all throughout the fieldwork. Moreover, as I spent more time in the field, I gained access to the wider circle of friends of my initial friends. Our naturally occurring interaction and conversation in those circles, both during and after the fieldwork, became for me a space for scrutiny and an important means of comprehension about the details of the research area.

I tried to establish connections prior to my visits to each specific field site; yet, most of the connections came in the field through references of each new person I met. I tried to keep as many entrance points as I could, visiting various

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<sup>21</sup> Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa were not totally new places to me, since I visited all the three, together with five other cities and towns in the region within a week time in 2001, and Urfa once again in 2009 for a week. The former was a professional trip, whereby I accompanied a team training the students and the civil servants about the risks of the earthquake; and though I did not have much time in each place, I came together with various groups of people and had an intense, telling and rich experience. The latter was a visit to some acquaintances, with less opportunity for sociological observation. After 2001, moreover, I had several occasions to visit many other eastern and south eastern cities for different reasons. This past experience, I suppose, has helped me, among others, in my effort to be reflexive on my own perceptions in a way to provide more space for a critical grasp.

institutions in each city, both to interview them and to get help in finding participants; and also spontaneously knocking on doors of especially shopkeepers at the central city spaces. This was simply to be able cover, as much as possible, the range of diverse segments of the social-structure I was facing. Institutions referring me to people they worked with or were related within their specific area of interest, be it women, poverty, forced migration, youth, or empowerment, provided me with the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the specific problems the participants were facing within the defined context. Reference of the institutions to which they were already connected somehow had helped people to feel relatively secure in their relation with me. In one case its potential drawbacks became visible, as the participant complained about the referent NGO -a social service centre- for not having helped her family ‘properly’, yet fortunately the reference did not become an issue encumbering the interview.

Especially among Kurdish participants many referred or introduced me to their contacts not as a researcher per se but as a “friend”. This might be seen as a simple, daily gesture; but I believe it was more than that. Unlike “in Western cultures”, whereby “friendship lacks canonical status” in contrast to “romance and kinship” (Tillmann-Healy, 2003: 730); during the field research I was told on many occasions that friendship had an important weight and value in Kurdish culture, denoting almost a “canonical status”. Only now, in retrospect, I see that my being introduced as a ‘friend’, might have had a meaning beyond my comprehension at the time of the research. I was imbued with tones of reliability and trustfulness in their calling me ‘a friend’. This was helpful in many cases for sure; but there were also some cases where it could be constraining. In one case, in Midyat, one potential Syriac participant, to whom I was referred to by a trusted person in Mardin, had told me that *“we’ll speak differently if it will be typed down, otherwise differently among us. We speak the whole thing among*

us”.<sup>22</sup> No recording, no notes, it would be just a ‘chat’, yet I had no other options. As we started speaking, he got a call making him busy, so I left his workplace to come back in the afternoon. Meanwhile, I met the grandfather of the young woman who accompanied me in Midyat for some hours. Without naming, I mentioned that people may behave reserved in their attitude towards the research; it was kind of a sensitive topic and it was understandable for me that a Syriac in Midyat to be retained. I then understood that the man I was talking to was one of the prominent figures of an important *aşiret* in Midyat that controlled some Syriac villages as well. Knowing that I had an important reference from Mardin, he insisted in calling my potential participant, though I was firm that there was no need for this. He had the upper hand, phoned him, spoke in Kurdish and asked him not to fear because I was one of his fellows: “*ne tirse, ewmirowa min!*”<sup>23</sup> Although it was an important occasion for me to observe local power relations, I felt ashamed against my potential interviewee because of the peremptory tone in my referrer’s voice and was reluctant to bother him once again for the interview. Torrential rain, unusual in the area in summer, succored me and I called him to apologize for not being able to come in the rain. As my being a ‘friend’ was potentially imbued with a practice of power exertion within a predefined hierarchical relation of which I was indeed not a part, I opted not to appear as a ‘friend’ nor as a researcher.

I conducted most of the interviews in Turkish. Three interviews were conducted solely in Kurdish, one mostly in Arabic, with the help of the children or grandchildren of the participants as translators. Prior to my field work, as part of preparation to it, I had Kurdish language courses for a year, though intermittently. Thus, I had a basic level of Kurdish in understanding and speaking at the time of the research. I believe this had helped me not to feel out of place within daily life; to establish familiarity and trust with people; to

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<sup>22</sup> (M, 50s, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin, Craftsman/Storekeeper)

<sup>23</sup> “Don’t be afraid, she is my man” in Kurmanji Kurdish. (M, 70s, Kurd, Midyat/Mardin)

understand and talk to them, though not still for in-depth conversations. Moreover, I came to experience that even a basic degree of knowledge on the logic of a language facilitates one in understanding the way of thinking and expressing by the native speakers of that language, which further helps the researcher gain insight and grasp the field more comprehensively. I did not know any Arabic, however, and was only taught some basic Arabic expressions for daily conversations by a friend, which I only used in my conversations with few elder people mostly as an expression of courtesy rather than for practical reasons.

Syriac was currently not a spoken language among the Syriac of Mardin; who were mostly bilingual in Turkish and Arabic, some mostly men also having some command of Kurdish. Syriac was spoken in Midyat and in villages, yet there as well Arabic, Kurdish, and Turkish was the other languages overwhelmingly used. I certainly did have no problem with not knowing any Syriac in terms of conducting the interviews. Yet, any degree of knowing it could have absolutely made a difference in establishing relations. Thus, although most of my participants could speak and understand Turkish well, and thus language being not an indispensable criterion of entrance into the field for this research, I still believe that further command of the vernacular languages would have provided me with opportunities that now I can only speculate on. Still, lack of comprehensive knowledge of Kurdish, Arabic and Syriac languages, or not using a professional translator may be seen as a limitation for the current study.

I am in line with the argument that instead of ‘speaking for’ or even ‘giving voice’ to the subjects of the study, researchers get to know others and engage with them in meaningful and authentic ways, which enable both the researcher and the researched in exploring the complex humanity of both self and other (Tillmann-Healy, 2003). Concerning how interviews are quoted, accordingly, my aim was to help the participants in making a space for their voice to be heard. To be able to reproduce that space, crafted by the interaction between the participants and me, further on this written piece I will try an “exact reproduction

of people's speech" as feminist methodology offers (Reinharz, 1992: 45). This is also because I value the opportunity of access, that interviewing offers us, "to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words" (Reinharz, 1992: 19) and to the "variations in experience, rather than a universal norm" (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003: 126). Although, what I try to end up with is "a generated abstraction from [participants'] doings and their meanings, that are taken as data for the conceptual generation" as grounded theory calls for (Glaser, 2002: 25); I still suppose that the rich ground such reproduction would supply is important in making clear how the analytic conceptualizations were generated finally.

### **2.2.3. Sampling: Whom, Where, in What Context**

I agree with Anthias (2005) who argues for the importance of relating the notion of belonging to the different locations and contexts from which belongings are imagined and narrated, in terms of a range of social positions and social divisions such as gender, class, stage in the life cycle, and ethnicity. This is why I interviewed people of different social locations. Doing this, still, I did not take those divisions "as constructing permanent fixed groups but involve shifting constellations of social actors, depending on the ways the boundaries of a denoted category are constructed" (Anthias, 2002: 278). Accordingly, in the initial phase the research sample was identified purposefully, checked with socio-demographic variables namely ethnicity, age, gender, location, and socio-economic status. In this context, I interviewed in Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa with individuals of Kurdish, Arabic and Syriac affiliation; of three age groups, defined through the clusters of 18-30, 31-55, 56 and higher; of both men and women; and of both relatively deprived and wealthier people.

To further go on with interviews I used snowball non-random sampling, spreading out on the basis of links to my initial participants. I believe the technique had helped me establish a degree of trust with the participants, as I was referred by their personal contacts in many cases. On several occasions after the

interviews, I was offered help spontaneously by the participants concerning anything I may need in the field, which I also took as a sign of trust we could have established in our interaction. To avoid being jammed in a loop, however, I tried to start with as many different gatekeepers as possible. This provided me with the opportunity to cover up a wide range of positions in terms of political allegiances and ideologies, concerning both the participants and the institutions or experts. Seemingly competing, conflicting, or simply different positions were contained, including politically unengaged or nonaligned ones, to be able to reach an unbiased perspective. As I continued with data collection and jointly coded and analysed, the concepts and different dimensions of the question I was dealing with started to emerge; so did the need for more comprehension on specific processes, relations or structures. This called for “theoretical sampling” to enter into the research design for further sampling and data collection as grounded theory champions it especially in the later phases, for the analyst to decide what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop the theory as it emerges (Glaser and Holton, 2004). My inclusion of various institutions and knowledgeable persons as expert participants; of Midyat as a field site in addition to the Mardin city centre; of Alevi, Turcoman, Turk, Chaldean and Armenian people as further participants of the research; of some children I came across here and there and had chat with were all parts of such theoretical sampling process, which deepened insight, saturated codes as I discovered them, and enabled constant comparison during the field research.

As the above sampling process indicates social positions and social divisions such as gender, class, stage in the life cycle, and ethnicity intersect at many points whereby multiple processes of belongings and identifications are experienced. Thus, instead of taking social divisions in isolation, I analyze belongings constructed in an intersectional way in relation to a range of boundaries. As Ferguson (2003) puts it a person is not merely a member of a particular ethnicity, but an individual of specific gender, age, residence, occupation, religion, etc., with each dimension of her position in society

affecting her practical interests, the way she interprets the world around her, and the symbols she responds to. Still, moreover, I conceive intersectionality not merely “as interplay in terms of people’s group identities”, but as “a social process related to practices and arrangements, giving rise to particular forms of positionality for social actors” (Anthias, 2005: 27). Positionality being the space at the intersection of structure and agency is “about the lived practices in which identification is practised/performed as well as the intersubjective, organisational and representational conditions for their existence” (Anthias, 2005: 27). Consequently, an intersectional perspective permeates my analysis of differing social locations and positionalities in forming, negotiating, challenging a multiplicity of belongings.

Below, I will try to explain my initial criteria for sampling and how criteria for sampling were redefined as theoretical sampling was realized throughout conducting of the research.

### **2.2.3.1. Location**

All three cities in my research sample are located to south east of Turkey, and are part of the South East Anatolian Region which is one of the seven geographical regions making up Turkey’s territory. What constituted my primary motivation to study in this region, at the outset, were the concentration of my target population there; my attempt to understand the centre-periphery relation within national territory, which could be conceptualized in spatial, as well as socio-economic, cultural and political terms; and to comprehend on the affect of the long ongoing political dispute on the multiple belongings of people. As I conducted the research and as concepts and theoretical codes of the analysis started to come out, other peculiarities of the region and of the three cities turned up as the ground for further incentives of the research that well coincided with my initial motivation. Accordingly, relation to political, structural, symbolic violence; historical and symbolic significance of the specific territory for the

subject population; specific demographic constellations; exposure to divergent economic and cultural policies; significance and the role of the border with Syria in terms of trans-border social, economic, intra-ethnic/intra-communal relations all materialized as important aspects of my analysis. Thus, in my analysis, spatial context “emerge[d] as a relevant category”, even, “as a theoretical code”. This was in accordance with what grounded theory approach argues, that context “cannot be assumed as relevant in advance”, but must emerge to be so (Glaser and Holton, 2004: 35).

As Ferguson (2003) puts it location situates people in relation to ecology, resources, production regimes and markets, and places them in the hierarchy of controls, as it determines how they relate to whatever is being contested. Location emerging as a relevant context during the research provided me with the opportunity to focus on all those relations, regimes, hierarchies, and contestation. More specifically, the cities Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa endowed me with the locale where I could witness the tension between the hegemonic national project and the dealings of every-day life in different forms. The tension between the border and trans-border, the centre and the periphery, the national and the local/communal, Turk and the non-Turk, Muslim and the non-Muslim, the urban and the rural, the East and the West, the modern and the non-modern, and many others one could formulate in these terms. Put in these terms, however, such tension should not be understood as one occurring and replicating the already significantly overburdened dichotomies and dualities, which could easily reproduce an orientalist, even nationalistic, and say a Turkish ethno-centric approach to the region and the people. Rather, the tensions should be understood as processes and not once and for all facts. What I want to note is that these locales provided me with the ground to see the making and unmaking of those processes; the conditioning context, mechanisms and consequences underlying them; and their presentation and representation.



Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa were drawn in the sample both for their similarities and differences. Besides being located in South East Anatolia region, they are all cities subjected to rural-urban migratory movements towards their city centres in the last decades; all with current urbanizing, enlarging and developing trends; and all bearing the imprints of a multiethnic and multi-religious past both on urban architecture and in collective memory. All three cities had witnessed forced migration, though to differing intensities with Diyarbakır centre receiving the most populous forced migrants and Urfa centre the least. These are neighbouring cities to each other; with Mardin and Urfa standing on national border with Syria. When Turkey's state boundaries were drawn, existing populations of the Ottoman geography were divided across the newly established states in some cases; and Mardin and Urfa are two cities which were directly affected by the process with trans-border ties all among the Kurd, Arab and Syriac population. During the fieldwork, I came across many families, *aşiret*, village people who claimed to have experienced such process and collected many stories, which then immensely contributed to my conceptualization of the relation between social capital and belonging.

Besides the processes the cities are similarly exposed to, Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa have been subject to different economic, political, demographic, symbolic and social formations; and different processes of constraint and structures of opportunity with regard to the state policy making and its consequences. Broadly speaking, initial motivations of mine to conduct the field research in these cities were as following: Diyarbakır has gained a central role for the Kurdish political movement and identity claim, thus in the political agenda of Turkey especially in the last decades. Demographic, economic and spatial restructuring of the city in and after the process of internal displacement targeting mostly Kurds in 1990s had an accelerating impact on that role. Urfa is taken to be “the capital city of GAP”<sup>24</sup> in the popular discourse, has vast agricultural land through irrigation of

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<sup>24</sup>GAP (The Southeastern Anatolia Project) is a large scale, integrated, multi-sector, regional socioeconomic development project, dating back to late 1970s. The project area covering 9

which it has been exposed to wide rural-urban migratory movements with social, economic, cultural, and spatial consequences ensuing. Socio-political attitude in Urfa is often defined, by its inhabitants as well as in popular and official discourses, to be pro-state or pro-establishment regardless it has positive or negative connotations. Thus within the framework of this study Diyarbakır and Urfa, display some contrasting characteristics, at least on the surface and only in general terms though. Mardin is peculiar for its still alive multi-religious and multi-ethnic structure, significantly visible in its entire social, linguistic, cultural, architectural, and economic composition. Rural-urban migration, meaning mostly Kurdish migration, recently added to its complex social structure transforming the hegemonic discourses, spaces, and practices. Thus, it is important to comprehend the old and changing patterns for the purposes of this study. All three have complex social, economic, spatial, and political structures and it is important to comprehend them in a relational and comparative framework for the purposes set out in this dissertation.

While conducting the field research, however, the need emerged for a deeper understanding of the often referred difference between Syriac population of Mardin and of Midyat, which motivated me to broaden the Mardin site to include Midyat, following the proposal of grounded theory about theoretical sampling. Though the field research was mainly carried out in the city centres, Midyat, a small town within the administrative borders of Mardin, was included therefore following a theoretical necessity as the research proceeded. I did not replicate the complete research design in Midyat in contrast to the other three field sites

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provinces (Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa and Şırnak), is stated to constitute 10.7% of Turkey in both geographical and population terms. Initially aiming at developing water and land resources of the region, launching dams, establishing irrigation systems, hydraulic power plants, and energy production; its objectives came to cover a larger framework which are named to include improving the level of income and life quality of local population by utilizing region's resources; eliminating development disparities existing between the region and other parts of the country, and contributing to national economic development and social stability by enhancing productivity and employment opportunities in the region. Retrieved from <http://www.gap.gov.tr/en/> accessed on 16.02.2019

however, because my purpose there was to dig for the details of what I came across in Mardin, and to understand the conditioning context for it. Consequently, my interviews with Syriac and Kurdish people in Midyat helped me to gain further insight about the multiple dimensions of belongings and inter-communal relations within a different context of power relations.

Spatial context emerged as relevant for the research and further became part of the data with regard to how the city space was organized and transformed in terms of neighbourhoods; to what extent the architectural heritage of the old multi-ethnic and multi-religious past was preserved; and what was the meaning of many signifiers I had the chance of observing both in the public and the private places. These too were included as data for analysis throughout the dissertation, yet specifically in the chapter on territorial/spatial be-long-ings.

#### **2.2.3.2. Ethnicity**

This study draws on the idea that ethnicity is an ‘embodied knowledge’ (Bottomley, 1991), rather than seeing ‘ethnic identities’ as unique outcomes of ‘cultural difference’. In doing this, it agrees with Brubaker (2004) who names many sites whereby ethnicity is embodied and expressed besides political projects and nationalist rhetoric, such as everyday encounters, practical categories, commonsense knowledge, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, interactional cues, discursive frames, organizational routines, social networks, and institutional forms. Such framework is related not only to how ethnicity is defined, but also how ethnicity should be studied analytically. Calling for a study of “ethnicity without groups” Brubaker (2004: 2-3) defines “groupism” as “the tendency to take bounded groups as fundamental units of analysis and basic constituents of the social world”, whereas he tries to open up ethnicity studies to ways in which ethnicity ‘works’ other than in modality of bounded and solidary groups. One can infer that in this way of thinking, it is not ethnicity, race, and

nation to be analyzed but ethnicization, racialization, and nationalization as political, social, cultural, and psychological processes.

In dealing with three ethnic categories this study tries not to fall into the trap of “groupism”, by having some pre-acceptances: One is that I focus on the practice, experience, and perception of the individual. Second, my participants are individuals with affiliations to the defined groups as well as with many other affiliations and belongings. Third, I am clear not to take these categories as homogeneous units, or treat them as bounded entities and actors. This, still, does not mean that individual choice is the alternative to the substantialist idiom of bounded groups; rather, I try to understand the experience and perception of the individual within its structural, historical, cultural and social context and in a relational and analytical language. Doing this, I try to provide space to understand the role of a variety of social group affiliations on the individual perception and experience, be it familial, ethnic, religious, national or any other. Such approach is concomitant to the findings of the field, where I witnessed multiple processes among which national belonging was merely one of a complex set of belongings, and I simply had to understand the role of Turkishness within that complex, as well as the ways, contexts, conditions and consequences of relating with it.

Dealing with the problem in this way can also be placed within the context of a criticism directed toward sociological studies of race, which are argued to “have often been distorted by having been centred in the perspectives and experiences of dominant group members” (Andersen, 1993: 39). Accordingly, for instance, “blacks have always been measured against an alien set of norms; [and] as a result they have been considered to be a deviation from the ambiguous white middle-class model, which itself has not always been clearly defined” (Ladner, 1973, as cited in Andersen, 1993: 39). Bearing such criticism in mind, I will not be measuring ‘Kurds’, ‘Arabs’ and ‘Syriacs’ against “a set of alien norms” of Turkishness. Looked in this way, my research question is not whether the

participants of the study feel themselves as Turks, or alternatively Kurds, Arabs, or Syriacs. The attempt rather is trying to understand why, how, when, and with what consequences do the individuals identify with what they identify. Which of those identifications become prior in different contexts, why, and how? How do those different identifications and belongings interrelate to each other; and how are they crystallized within the time and space constraints of my work. The question, once again, is not who identifies with Turkishness; it is instead when label of Turkishness or national belonging is invoked, in which context they come to fore, and with what consequences. Inspired by an early anthropological work (Merman, 1974, as cited in Silverman, 2010), the question then is “when and how is Turkishness”, instead of “what is Turkishness” or “who is Turk”?

My field sites had, historically, been home for a variety of ethnic, religious, linguistic groups such as the Kurd, Arab, Syriac, Armenian, Chaldean, Ezidi, Zaza, Alevi, Dom (Gypsy), Jew, Greek, Turk, and Turcoman. Currently, however, Jews and Greeks are non-existent, whereas Armenians, Chaldeans and Ezidi are very few. I took creed as a constant variable among the Muslim groups, so I have not included Alevi people in the sample, be them Kurdish Alevi or Arab Alevi/Nusairi. Alevi Kurds or Arabs are actually not among the inhabitants of the three cities where the research was conducted, at least not as visible social groups. So, in this work, Kurd refers to Sunni Kurd and Arab; Kurds being overwhelmingly Shafi, and Arabs being mostly Hanafi but also Shafi in creed. Further to note is that Zaza people were not sampled as a research subject category of this research. Yet there were a few participants, who identified themselves as Zaza that are included in the research. This is because, Zaza people whom I interviewed with were referred to me as Kurdish people, and so my assumption before interviewing them was that they were Kurmanji Kurds. In all cases, only during the interview it became apparent that they defined themselves to be Zaza, with a special emphasis on the Zaza language, but they were mostly not refusing identification as Kurd, at least expressing their Zaza

identity not as exclusively but in parallel to the later.<sup>25</sup> As I had not predefined them as a subject group, and as I interviewed with only few of them I have not included Zaza in my sample as a separate category, but counted the Zaza participants within the category of Kurds. Still, however, in a wider context I am aware of the debate on the separation of Kurd (Kurmanji) and Zaza people and identities in Turkey and here I do not position myself within the debate. Not taking Zaza as a separate category follows only practical reasons within the limits of this research. Still, however, I signified Zaza in the table of participants' profile as "Kurd/Zaza" to make them visible if only to a limited extent. I, moreover, interviewed, formally or informally, with Turk, Turcoman, Alevi (only one -in Diyarbakır- identified her to be a Kurd, all others in Urfa- identified as Turk), Dom (Gypsy), Armenian and Chaldean people as the opportunity or a need for further clarification and comprehension arose within the specificities of the research.

In two cases, I interviewed with people who defined themselves to be ethnically Turks and have moved into Mardin and Diyarbakır after their marriage with men in these cities; the man was Arab in the former case and Kurd in the latter. In a third case, I had an informal interview with another woman defining her to be Turk, who had to move to Urfa upon the governmental institution she works for was moved from Ankara. These provided me with a different perspective, whereby the 'dominant ethnicity' was in close relation with the non-dominant ethnic groups in terms of the national context; but ironically the relation was turned upside down in the local context, at least in cultural, social, linguistic

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<sup>25</sup> During the fieldwork few had deliberately defined themselves to be Zaza. One in Diyarbakır, a municipal security force, herself a Zaza, defined Zaza as a separate people/group from Kurds. Others were women in Urfa and a youngster in Diyarbakır, defining themselves to be Zaza among their peer of different ethnic backgrounds, but mostly Kurds. The possible reasons for those identifications should be discussed separately, which is far beyond the purpose of this study. One telling occasion on self-identifications came in the fable night organized by Sur municipality in a village of Diyarbakır, when one of the children present in the chockfull room was asked by the Major to sing a Kurdish song. The boy's hesitation, silence, and shyness were striking, since it seemed not to be his usual manner. Only after a while he could say in a timid smile that "I'm Zaza". Singing a 'Kurdish song' for him meant singing in Kurmanji language, which he simply couldn't. Field notes, Diyarbakır, 2011

terms. I, also, interviewed with people who defined themselves to be Sunni Turcoman and Alevi Turcoman in Urfa as the need to grasp further about the interrelations in this city oriented me towards these categories. I informally interviewed with a few Dom in Diyarbakır, as the opportunity arose in a *kahvehane*(coffee shop mainly for men) in the district of Dışkapı. I interviewed with an Armenian and a Chaldean participant in Mardin and Midyat as the opportunity arose to include the experiences of these already very few people in these locations. In these cases, however, I will not give details of the participant during the analysis, but count them as Syriac to maintain their anonymity. This is for two reasons. First, it is the participants' own decision as they wanted not to be differentiated from the general category, be it Christian or Syriac. Second, it was beyond the limits and the purpose of this research to comprehend the specificities of these already very few peoples in the field site. Often they are invisible publically, known only by the members of the Christian community itself, attend to the same churches and share community practices, and are treated in an undifferentiated manner by the surrounding larger society.

The three categories I mainly focus on are the Kurd, Arab and the Syriac people. These are the largest populations within the named places and are defining the cultural, social, political and inter-communal relations thereof. Identical for each of these groups are their autochthonous existence and long standing co-habiting in the same geography, which historically extends the current state boundaries and is attributed historical, symbolic, cultural meanings in collective memories of these groups. Moreover, in many cases, ethnicity was articulated through spatial divides as rural-urban, western-eastern, highlander-lowlander, and local-migrant; or sometimes through temporal divides as modern-backward. Thus, although the prior target of the research is not to define what 'ethnicity' is for the participants; it will be referred to as part of the larger question, to the extent that it helps us understand when and how 'the ethnic' relates to the 'national'.

### 2.2.3.3. Age/Generation

The research aimed at reaching participants with a variety of different stages in their life cycles to be able to see the variation of experiences according to age. Accordingly, the sample was defined through three clusters of age that are 18-30, 31-55, 56 and above.<sup>26</sup> In this basically the younger, middle age, and older age perspective was pursued. Still, moreover, these clusters were assumed to would converge with the generational specificities regarding the political history of Turkey. Thus, the first cluster targeted persons who lived their childhood in early 1980s and 1990s, during which the problem of identity in Turkey arose as a hot issue, with a challenge on the established understanding of Turkish national identity and citizenship, due mostly to the increasing pressure of the Kurdish political movement.<sup>27</sup> 18 is the legal age in Turkey defined in the civic code, the voting age, and is accepted to be the age of achieving maturity or adulthood. It is taken to be the minimum age for the participants of this study.<sup>28</sup> Concerning the last cluster, I initially aimed at interviewing people above 61; yet I had to pull back the lower bound to above 56, because of the lower life expectancy in the region,<sup>29</sup> and the problem of language I would face speaking elder people. The

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<sup>26</sup> Throughout the text I will be giving the age of the participants according to the date of the interview. Date of births are included in the Profile information of the participants, see Appendix II.

<sup>27</sup> Besides “the ethno-political resistance of Kurds”, such challenge is also attributed to factors like “Turkey’s declared aim to be a member of the European Union” (Yeğen, 2004: 53); as well as “increasing international migration since 1960s, and the new increasing vocal and powerful religious, ethnic and sectarian movements especially since 1980s”, namely the Kurdish, Islamic and Alevi movements” (İçduygu et.al, 1999: 197).

<sup>28</sup> Only one participant is at the age of 17, in which case the interview started spontaneously as an informal chat in the social centre where the participant was a trainee, and then turned into a full interview. As she was willing to speak; consented the recorded interview; and her interview provided important details and a difference of perspective I decided to include it in the sample.

<sup>29</sup> It is pointed out that life expectancy in South East Anatolian region is among the lowest ones in Turkey and the human development index is the lowest (Ünal, 2008).



last cluster targeted persons who were born in mid-1950s and before, whereby the era of political turmoil was still far away, Syrian border was rather easier to trespass, modern conditions of life were relatively less compelling, and everyday life was much less fragmentary. Still, however, these were rather broad and flexible categories not to be strictly analyzed in comparison.

Many assumptions of mine about age were challenged during the field. An objection was raised concerning the minimum age of 18 especially by some Kurdish participants. A bold suggestion was that even children under age 18 could have been part of my research, the minimum age of the children being defined differently by different people to be 7, 10 or 11. One argued that “18 would be taken [as base] in trouble-free societies, it is 7 in societies like ours!”<sup>30</sup> The same person gave her childhood as an example, stating “*I don’t remember my childhood; it passed by visiting my uncle in the prison. My stance was defined by then, in my adolescence*”. It was a call for inclusion of children in my research, claiming that the children have a direct effect on the politicization of the family in some cases. This was also related to the perception about the younger Kurdish generation being more uncompromising, radical, and rigid in terms of political engagements. Taking the suggestion into consideration, I tried to chat with children around age 10 to 15 wherever I had the opportunity. In two cases in Diyarbakır, I was escorted by children, both aged 14, on my way to the participants, in one case the daughter, in the other a youngster neighbour of the participant. These two were important occasions for me, where I had time for extended chats and learned much about the children’s fears, preferences, and future projections. In these and other occasions, I came to better understand the objection that the children were not much like ‘children’, but almost like adults in that they were mostly highly aware of what was going on within the larger socio-political scene. Very much related to this, I suppose, was the fact that many young people perceived themselves to be more mature than those

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<sup>30</sup>Field note taken in Diyarbakır, 2011

youngsters in the ‘west’, and were perceived to be so by others, older people, too. These should be taken in the specific context and conditions of their life, which being brief in time were intense in experiences.<sup>31</sup> Still, however, for the current project, age 18 was retained as the lower bound for interviewing, basically because it is the full legal age and had practicality in terms of my questions about belongings, identifications, and experiences.

Another observation of mine was that middle age seemed to start earlier. Many people in their 30s, especially women seemed older than one would assume. I should confess, for sure, that my assumptions were mostly shaped with regard to where I came from, that is an urban, educated, western background. Yet these were important observations revealing the relativity of age and due appearance, whereby all the reservations about ‘childhood’, ‘maturity at younger ages’, and early-bird middle age should be understood in relation to the larger socio-political context, such as harsher life conditions, lesser opportunity structures one faces in life, traumatic life experiences, urban-rural conditions of everyday life, and child bearing in the case of women.

One last observation was that elder people were not so open to be interviewed on a topic which they most probably found kind of threatening, dangerous, or at least sensitive. I could feel a sense of fear in their reactions, an effort to disguise what they would say, speak through ‘codes’, which they seem to share through experience, and surely not to reveal much dissatisfaction. In this attitude they were different from the younger and the middle age group of participants who were in most cases willing to speak up for a variety of issues concerning their lives.

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<sup>31</sup> This, actually, is an important area where to think on the meaning of childhood and adulthood in relative cases; and this could be another interest for further research.

#### **2.2.3.4. Socio-Economic Status**

This variable was basically inferred from the information on the participants as it was included in the participants' profile tables in Appendix II, namely the data on their education, occupation, form of employment, social security, social help, house ownership, (forced) migration background and dispossession if applicable, and occupation of the spouse/father if applicable. I was not able to get any data on earned income levels of the participants, thus it was not used as a ground for socio-economic status.

The relation between the economic status and belonging is a crucial one. Current scholarship has elaborated on the macro processes such as the correlation between the level of industrial development at the time of a nation's founding and character of national identity -civic or ethnic (Tilley et al, 2008); as well as micro processes such as economic contingencies of migration defining the migrants' understandings of the nation (Fox, 2007). The labour market is accepted to be critical site of identity construction (Cornell and Hartmann, 1998). In terms of various non-dominant ethnic and gender groups, who often have unequal access to economic and political resources, Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) argue that state has an important role in structuring the conditions of their exclusion usually in favour of dominant ethnicity, gender and class. Many indicators like employment rate, level of poverty, housing conditions, access to services, financial well-being and stability, benefit dependency, absolute and relative incomes, consumption patterns, education are counted to measure social exclusion (Lessof and Jowell, 2000). Socio-economic position, on the other hand, is taken to be a multidimensional concept, being often operationalized by education, income, and employment-based social class or social status (Renahy et al, 2012).

Assuming the decisive role of economic status on belonging, I initially aimed at interviewing with both well-off and lower-income groups as well as the poor or

deprived people. Educated, regular income-professionals were included as well as those irregular income, unemployed, getting social help, or poor people. It came out during the research that defining “class” in my field sites was a complex matter which was beyond the limits of this dissertation, and I by no means engaged in such a rigorous route. A research on class positions and formations in the region waits to be undertaken. As a way out of the problem, I tried to conduct my interviews in various neighbourhoods which I was referred to as cases of rather well-off, deprived, or middle income inhabitants lived. But it was not always a real solution, since neighbourhoods could well be more heterogeneous than they seemed or perceived to be. As I continued with the field research, I was troubled with class positions, even if I tried to think economic and symbolic capitals together. Big landownership and informal economy were two important factors complicating the presumed categories. High economic capital did not always coincide with equivalent cultural capital, and peculiarity of such cases should be grasped accordingly. Generational effect in those cases should also be taken into consideration. Undeclared income or gain, smuggling, and informal labour appeared as separate issues to take into consideration.

In one case, I ended up at a house in a relatively deprived neighbourhood in Urfa, on the wall of the living room of which hung a widescreen LCD TV, and the landlady was keen on showing off her numerous kitchen gadgets when she had the opportunity. There was no furniture in the living room except carpets and cushions arranged all around. Such furnishing itself, though, might be taken as a symbol of high status as the interview with the participant<sup>32</sup> revealed. She mentioned her father, who was an *aşiret* leader, who have built a large “*guest room*” for himself to receive and host his guests, which he furnished with carpets and cushions just as her own living room. Further complicating the matter the participant had not completed her primary school education; worked with her husband in their real estate agency; ran for candidacy for the 2011 general

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<sup>32</sup> (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2])

elections -could not get the candidacy though; and was engaged in a dense network of clientele relations like having people appointed to the place/position they wanted as she held the symbolic power of being the daughter of an *aşiret* leader, and having the economic capital.

Again it was difficult to determine social security beneficiaries and substantiate the formal and informal economic relations. I encountered many ostensible insurance registers especially for the construction workers, as the employers legally have to pay for the insurance of their employee, yet in order to escape the regulation they make the entry, pay for the first day, and do not continue with further payments. In order to be employed some accepted the conditions, but lost his/her right to hold green card<sup>33</sup> for free health service since s/he appeared to have social insurance coverage for it. There were some other cases, whereby one lost his right to green card because of a fake register, this time to help an employer -usually a close relative- to get the state payment for insurance payments the employer 'did' [actually did not] for 'his' employers. Seasonal labour; transnational or trans-border allegiances and trade relations were other complicating factors in terms of determining economic exclusion/inclusion. In some cases, class positions and rural-urban divide converged. In others, ethnicity and class divisions converged. An ethnically homogeneous location could well transform into one visibly divided along class lines.

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<sup>33</sup> The Green Card program, a non-contributory health insurance scheme for the poor, was initially launched in 1992 in Turkey and funded through national budget. Under the program, a certificate called "*Yesil Kart*" [green card] providing benefit from health services free of cost, is granted to those who are not covered by any social insurance system and whose monthly income per person in the household does not exceed 1/3 of the Minimum Wage in Turkey as specified in the Law. The program covered only inpatient treatment costs up until 2004, while in 2004 benefits were expanded to cover both outpatient and inpatient services at public hospitals, and in 2005, outpatient prescription drugs were included. Retrieved from Menon, Mollahaliloglu, and Postolovska, UNICO Studies Series 18 Toward Universal Coverage: Turkey's Green Card Program for the Poor, The World Bank, Washington DC, January 2013. Retrieved from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/02/04/000333037\\_20130204152023/Rendered/PDF/750120NWPOBox300for0the0Poor0TURKEY.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/02/04/000333037_20130204152023/Rendered/PDF/750120NWPOBox300for0the0Poor0TURKEY.pdf); <http://yesilkart.nedir.com/#ixzz3f1WcEvRy> accessed on 7.7.2015

In any respect, be-long-ings, as defined in this study in a deconstructed manner, is directly related to possessions; well-being; economic security; ability to realize one's potentials in material as well as immaterial terms; being enabled to use one's full capacity in physical, mental, and cognitive terms; being free from violation in all terms; and having the opportunity to own, save, maintain all forms of property. All these are related to structural context, thus structural violence as deal with the concept here, as they are to the process of economic inclusion/exclusion. By the latter, which emerged as relevant in research findings I mostly refer to the economic relations directly affecting individuals in their immediate lives. Indirect structural processes preparing conditions of which could be seen in the long term and its effects being more encompassing are observable for larger categories of people. It is important to look specifically at the processes of economic inclusion/exclusion on individual base to grasp the role of various actors, relations, and discourses acting out in those processes.

During the interviews, income level was not asked in most cases, as it proved to be difficult to get an answer at my initial attempts and seemed to be disturbing the already fragile trust relation established with the participants. Though I asked credit card usage at the very beginning I did not continue with it for the same reasons. Nevertheless, I tried to cover a variety of topics such as occupation; form of employment; sector of employment; main source of livelihood; house ownership; social insurance; before and after migration process in terms of dispossession and deprivation; social help; seasonal labour; willingness for public employment or being civil servant.

Throughout the analysis, I defined the economic conditions of the participants when emerged as relevant for the analysis with basic material references like well-off, deprived, dispossessed, regular income, having/not having social security, or getting social help.

### 2.2.3.5. Gender

To be able to see gendered experiences and narratives of belonging, I interviewed both men and women<sup>34</sup>. During the fieldwork, I came to realize that gender relations and gendered narratives were decisive in the definitions/hails of the ‘other’; intra community, trans-border community, or interethnic marriages; inter-communal relations; and in understanding memory and experience of religious conversion. Gender appeared to act a crucial role in shaping experiences of education, work, marriage, and opportunity structures. Gendered language was revealed in many contexts. For instance, to be precise about my ethnicity a participant asked “*what [ethnicity] is your father?*”<sup>35</sup> This was a sign that paternal lineage was accepted to define the ethnic identity of a person. In another meeting the same person, who got divorced from his ex-wife a Meskhetian Turk, told about his plan to marry a woman “outside” [from Ukraine] for the [maternal] uncles to be from “outside”- outside the community and outside the place of their residence. He explained the reason in that:

Here, in our region, despite we are all Arabs there is hoodlumism when things get worse. I love my current children very much; I want to get one [marry] from outside, so that [maternal uncles] of both sides [uncles of the current children and the projected children] shall be outside. We saw it many times; if the maternal uncles are strong the children get in trouble [in case of divorce].<sup>36</sup>

The expression “*from the side of my maternal uncles*” [“*dayıların tarafından*”] was frequently used when one defined himself in all the field sites, but especially

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<sup>34</sup> Defining only the categories of man and women within the research design, does not follow from a hetero-normative understanding of sex; but from the fact that the research did not specifically investigated self-definitions of sex and gender, and no data on the issue was generated through the interviews as a by-product. In the lack of empirical data, I use these boldly assumed categories as analytic devices.

<sup>35</sup> (M, Arab, Urfa) Expert Interview, 17.10.2011

<sup>36</sup> (M, 37, Arab, Urfa) Expert Interview, 20.10.2011, Urfa

in Mardin and Urfa. It is not the women/mother but the uncle/men who defines the lineage.

Moreover, my experience as a woman helped me to develop a better understanding of gender relations in many contexts. In the old city space of Mardin, for instance, I could see that I was being watched by many, always men, sitting by the main road in the old city, while I was pacing up and down the road. The experience provided me with insight to grasp the similar experiences of some female participants stating that “*we could not pass through the downtown [çarşı] for the second time after we did once, for there’ll be gossip*”<sup>37</sup>; or in other case that “*it is a very small place. Should you pass the street for two or three times everyone will know you*”.<sup>38</sup> Another experience of me was that one of my participants<sup>39</sup> insisted in arranging one younger male member of his family to give me a lift to my home after our interview had ended “*late in the evening*” - around 9 or 10 pm. Yet in another case, my expression of the term “*woman*” for an unmarried young participant was firmly corrected to “*girl*” by herself. In other contexts, my very travel there, far away from my usual place of residence, was met by surprise and admiration by some female participants, and I was defined to be “*different*” for this very act of mine as a woman. These were all revealing experiences in terms of gender codes. Importantly, gender crosscuts the divergences along ethnic, generational, classed, and spatial lines. As one participant noted “*what lives stood behind the closed doors, the women haven’t seen the light of the day*”.<sup>40</sup> Gender, thus, emerged to be a relevant category

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<sup>37</sup> (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M, 17])

<sup>38</sup> (F, 21, Syriac, Mardin [M30])

<sup>39</sup> (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26])

<sup>40</sup> (F, 51, Arab, Mardin [M38])



during the field and was conceptualized in the specific context of violence, body, and belonging throughout the analysis.

Below, I will detail about the generation process of the data, upon which I base the arguments and analysis of this research.

### **2.3. Data Generation: ‘All is Data’**

The proper target for qualitative researcher is claimed to be “naturally occurring data”, whereby “it is thoroughly mistaken to assume that the sole topic for qualitative research is ‘people’ rather than say interactions, texts and even broadcasts” (Silverman, 2010: 217). In broader terms, Glaser and Holton (2004) put that for grounded theory ‘all is data’, including literature, new data, or collegial comments. In this respect, I can define my data sources in a wider framework to be interviews, whether in-depth, focus group, expert, and informal personal or group interviews; observation, whether participant or non-participant; documents, brochures, and any text I collected in the field; my position and being in the field; my life-long experience in western Turkey; mouth of the world; the landscape itself; and finally the existing literature. Below, I will try to give details on some critical processes about these sources and data generation.

#### **2.3.1. Interviews: In-depth, Focus Group, Expert and Informal**

My primary source of data generation is semi-structured in-depth interviews, which became “the principal means by which feminists have sought to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives” (Reinharz, 1992: 22). Another source of data generation for me was focus groups and informal group gatherings. Focus group is valued by feminist methodology for “obviate[ing] many ethical concerns raised by feminists about power and the imposition of meaning” and for its potential “to inform us about

the co-construction of realities between people, the dynamic negotiation of meaning in context” (Wilkinson, 1998: 112). Focus groups are also cherished for supporting “non-hierarchical relations” in terms of their adequacy in enabling feminist researchers to engage in “a more equal and reciprocal relationship with their informants” (Graham, 1984, cited in Wilkinson, 1998: 225). I tried to conduct all interviews and group interviews with an awareness of power relations, context and the importance of interaction. I transcribed most of the interviews conducted in Diyarbakır myself; but for most of the Mardin and Urfa fields I got professional help, anonymizing the interviews beforehand.

All interviews were conducted personally, in a face-to-face relation with the participants and in a variety of places of their choice. These were houses, offices or work places, tea gardens, cafés, restaurants, a variety of associations or NGOs, municipalities, university departments, and a party building in one case. The interviews usually lasted from one and half an hour to three hours. With some I came together more than once; and though not interviewed thoroughly in the later occasions, I took notes in each case. Interviews were usually conducted in a supporting atmosphere. In some cases, participants suggested me books, offered research topics, and referred contacts. Often, I was invited to have meal, tea or coffee with the participants and their family members or colleagues present during the interview or thereafter. I usually accepted them kindly, since it would be rude to decline the hospitality offered. In one case, however, I did not want to bother the landlady with her offer to prepare *çiğ köfte* at home and tried kindly to decline the offer; while simultaneously reminded my contact person, against his alternative offer to take me out for a meal, that I was thankful but unfortunately I would conduct another interview afterwards. The answer of my contact person was as following: “*not always will it be as you like, we will offer you a meal, only after then...*”<sup>41</sup> I was being reminded the limits of my ‘freedom’ via a

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<sup>41</sup>Field note taken in Urfa, 2011

customary practice. I conformed, postponed the next interview, and accompanied the landlady in the kitchen trying to help as she prepared the *çiğ köfte*.

In most cases, I conducted the interviews alone with the participant, usually with a spontaneous consent of all potential companions. In others, when family members, friends or colleagues were present and welcomed by the participant herself, I did not insist in interviewing with the participant alone not to disrespect the inclination emerging in that specific context. This usually provided me to see the interaction and to observe hidden competing perspectives among generations or ethnicities. Gender relations were sometimes decisive in the very constitution of the interview context. Usually, when I was interviewing a man in his home, women members of the family also accompanied the interview. In their office or other workplace, however, I often interviewed with men without any company. I could be alone with the women at home, on the other hand, though sometimes in the companion of their children; and were left alone by the husband who in some cases accompanied at a later phase of the interview. In one case, I, kindly, had to explain the husband and the contact person bringing me to the house of the participant<sup>42</sup> that I would prefer conducting the interview alone with my participant if they would not mind. My reservation was that a hierarchical and restrictive atmosphere could emerge in the presence of the contact person, as well as the husband, and the participant may not be at ease with their company. I turned to be right; she also expressed them her will to be alone with me. Later she explained her motivation as to tell me about the details of her marriage. She was the fellow wife without official marriage and she did not want to speak about this in her husband's existence despite her insistence that she was content with her current position.

One of my interviews in Mardin, although conducted and recorded properly, was not included in the total number of the interviews, because the participant wanted me not to use, even to delete, the interview after a few days we had conducted it.

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<sup>42</sup> (F, 25, Urfa, Arab [U2])

I was surprised by his decision, because we were introduced by a common friend whom I knew he trusted; we often saw each other in a youth centre where I repeatedly visited to be able to reach participants, to observe their activities, or just to give a short break to have some tea and organize daily notes and memos in the interlude between the interviews. So, we had almost become friends. I believed his interview was a rich one, with some brilliant expressions especially about language and home. He provided me with a different perspective, because he currently lived in a European country, worked there and seemed to project his future thereof. Although place of residence was a criterion for my sample, I did not hesitate to include him with a note on my mind to write it in my methodology. Now, ironically, I am writing for why I could not include him. Some days after our interview, he called me and stated that he wanted to see me urgently. I was confused, but respected the call and went to see him in the same centre. He seemed hesitant, bashful and uneasy; and this was not how he usually was. He apologized, required me not to take it personally; and explained the reason as he “*did not trust the state in this country*”. That was ok; I could already infer such distrust from his interview, but I still could not fully figure out the reason for his withdrawal. I tried to convince him that I won’t be using the names or any other information to identify the participants, or make any other thing to harm them, at least intentionally. His fear came out to be that the records could be seized and, thus, he could be identified. Ironically though, he was using a pseudonym in everyday life -perhaps his name in the country of his residence- and I never knew what his real name was, as I still donot. To negotiate, he first gave me the option of taking notes of his interview to be completed that very day, and wanted me to delete it afterwards. I could of course take notes, but I could not have made the whole transcription that day, while I still had a scheduled interview waiting to be conducted. He seemed a bit undecided, but I would not insist in using the interview unless he confirmed willingly, so I added I will consent his will and let him take his time to decide. His mind did not change, however, as he called me back in the evening and wanted me to delete the interview. That was draining for me but I had no other option. I complied

with his will, took some notes and decided not to use his interview and not to count him as a participant. Bearing on his permission, I used very few of those notes and field notes taken during the interview where I found it significantly important in terms of the analysis. I believe, however, his giving up his initial consent and dropping out the research itself provided crucial insight on his perception and experience of Turkishness and his be-long-ings. In this context, I take his consequent absence as part of the data and accept it as a case of extreme distrust and feeling of insecurity.

### **2.3.2. The Way I and the Research was Perceived as Data**

Based on the now established assumption of interpretive and feminist understanding of social sciences that “all knowledge in the field is produced through the interactions between a researcher, who is socially situated self with particular life experiences, and her respondents, who bring to the dialogue their own embedded assumptions and meanings” (Davidman, 1999: 84), here I reflexively point at how interaction between me, as the researcher, and the participants was essential to the comprehension of the subject matter as well as on the narratives produced. What I claim is that the reactions, perceptions, and forms of behaviour that my very being ‘there’ and/or conducting this research became pieces of data for this work. Those perceptions and reactions, moreover, were often independent of how I perceived or identified myself.

About many research project, the researchers reports that the participants thought of themselves to be ‘just ordinary’, so they did not understand why anyone would take an interest in them, and were reluctant to be interviewed (Andersen, 1993: 48). To my surprise, it was not much the case with this research. Reactions of the participants proved that my focus was on venting issues for them. Many of them were eager to be interviewed, and almost all had burning stories to tell. I think they all knew that they were not so “ordinary” at least not in the context of the topic of interest; with all their experiences of violence, history, geography,

culture. What was stunning among these reactions was that even young people had much to tell. Still, however, some feeling of resentment, weariness, and hopelessness usually imbued the eagerness to tell specifically among the Kurdish participants. In one of the focus groups, for instance, one stated that “*this wouldn’t come to an end; even if we speak for days here, this would not come to end*” and the other continued “*yes, everyone is fed up*”.<sup>43</sup> A statement similar in meaning was: “*we’ve seen so much... I don’t know where to start*”.<sup>44</sup> Some saw the interview as a chance to speak up as apparent in the statement “*since I hold the opportunity now, I will speak*”.<sup>45</sup> In another case, though we have spoken for hours either with a group of other female family members or alone, the host woman stuck in bed due to her sickness, continued to speak for another fifteen minutes after I stopped recording and stood up to leave.

Of course not all reacted so eagerly; luckily though the reluctant ones were relatively few. One example was a participant’s unwilling response to my wish to interview him: “*believe me I did this for five or six times before; I don’t know what it is good for!*”<sup>46</sup> The prior interviews of him were either for an assignment, or just out of curiosity, or else for journalistic reasons. Thankfully, he accepted to do it once more! Another expression was not about the subject matter of the research but about conducting it in present conditions as the participant told “*you have stepped in a good area, but today everything is jumbled up*”.<sup>47</sup> Being an urban local he was referring to the intermingling of different cultures and groups

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<sup>43</sup> (F, 19, Kurd, Diyarbakır [1]), (F, 19, Kurd, Diyarbakır [2]) FG2, 20.02.2011

<sup>44</sup> (F, 46, Kurd, Mardin [M5])

<sup>45</sup> Fieldnote taken during informal interview (M, Alevi, Urfa)

<sup>46</sup> (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33])

<sup>47</sup> Expert interview, 17.10.2011, Urfa (M, 63, Turk, Urfa)

of people in the city, which he did not fancy much. Reflecting on the context of the specific interviews these expressions were enabling for gaining further insight about the research site and the participants. In yet another case, the participant started telling: *“I suppose the time to be afraid of is over now, [one] should not get afraid anymore”*.<sup>48</sup> This was reminding me that my research concern was, indeed, a frightening one for its potential participants. I witnessed that fear was already there for some. One of my elderly participant, although I was referred to him by one of his close friend’s son, and despite he was so kind to meet me in the bus stop as we walked to his home, he did seem anxious, was sceptical about the genuineness of my reference and did not want me to record. After he left the room for prayer, he turned speaking on his cellular phone with his friend that is my friend’s father. Only after I, too, spoke to him, a person I have never met, he seemed more relax and did not interrupted the tape recorder, which was permitted by the women after him. The case, when fear pervaded all the ground to establish or maintain the trust relation was the one whereby the participant withdrew his interview as I mentioned above. *“This means that they are afraid of you somehow. Of the state, yes, but they are also worried about you one way or another”*<sup>49</sup> commented another participant, whom I interviewed just after this incident. Disappointing though, the remark was revealing in that I was moving on a shaky ground. In another case, the participant<sup>50</sup> regretted it much when she recognized that she had uttered her son’s name openly during the tape-recorded interview. Indeed, I was the one, who told her initially that I would erase and not use in any case the names given during the interviews. But she was almost panicked, and reminded me to erase the name several times during and after the interview. I had to persuade her that I would erase and never use the name for which I promised more than once. This experience was telling for me

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<sup>48</sup> (M, 50, Kurd, Mardin [M7])

<sup>49</sup> M, 30, Kurd, Mardin

<sup>50</sup> F, 49, Kurd, Diyarbakır

in terms of the high levels of perception of insecurity. In one last case, the participant had phoned the key person mediating our meeting after our interview and warned him, suspiciously, to be careful about me. The key person, whom was the leader of a community centre where my participant was a member, asked her what have I done, and if I encouraged her for the mountain, meaning if I was propagating. The reply was “No”. This conversation was cited to me by the key person himself,<sup>51</sup> perhaps to warn me how precarious could the field get for me, or to learn about my reaction, or for another reason I didn’t know. Still, the reaction of the participant was surprising to me, since she did not show any sign of suspicion during the interview, at least not a visible one I could notice. In other cases, I was asked whether I would publish my work on a journal, or broadcast on TV, or even report it to ministries; in each case I replied it would be an academic dissertation, but dissertations once completed are usually open to many who may wish to ‘benefit from’.

My concern in many cases was that I sometimes was asking- not always directly though- about the most traumatic, burdensome, and painful memories and experiences of the participants, while finally walking out on their lives and leave them alone with all those recollected memories. Despite my uneasiness with the fact, many people expressed their contentment about having been interviewed; some even thanked to me for listening to them; many stated that they enjoyed the interview very much; or said it was just a “*sohbet*” [a friendly chat] for them, referring to -as I get it- the natural flow of the interview and the commonness of the subject matter in their daily talks. In one case, when I said “*sorry*” for making her weary, the participant said giggling “*noo, it has been a therapy for free, is that bad?*” and added that she was “*discharged*”.<sup>52</sup> I am grateful for that welcoming attitude, but I would not dare to claim that it had a soothing affect on

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<sup>51</sup> Field note taken in Urfa, 22.10.2011

<sup>52</sup> F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır



my unease. These sorts of instances may be thought in relation to what Susana Rotker (2002) claims about the complexity of violence can only be comprehended when spoken of between two people, as individuals search for ways to articulate their experiences, telling their stories again and again, whether to exorcise their trauma or to explain the political and economic situation that caused it. What further important in those situations was that we could have a meaningful relation with the participants, where both they and I, personally, found some relevant point in our encounter. Below is a quotation, where the participant is explaining why he called some of my questions to be “*harsh*” or “*needless to be discussed on*”. The explanation can be seen as a reflection on the experience of being interviewed on those venting issues, which were usually “*painful*”, and on the research itself, which the participant openly defined as a space that can “*make [their] voice be heard*”:

What you are doing I find very well, indeed. In something we want; we need such things I mean, such projects, such theses, because in any case we cannot make our voice be heard by anyone [laughs]. Even when we make it heard we have the hell to pay. Imm what I called harsh were those we are sensitive about, I mean those we want to tell but cannot. When you ask about them, suddenly we can be astonished, feeling like where this question came out. I mean they are where we are injured. [Which are those?] Religion, language, education in mother tongue, Kurdish identity, Kurdistan fact... These are all, what we really puffed see some as sacred, and see others as painful realities. That's because remembering them sometimes makes us happy, sometimes scares or appals us. In others they drag us to pain, drag us back to past painful experiences. That's why I used words like harsh or needless.<sup>53</sup>

In some other cases, for instance in case of profound economic deprivation, my feeling of unease was even deeper, being aware that an interview for my academic curiosity had no actual practical use for the participants' demanding conditions. In one such case, where I ended up in a governmental women support

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<sup>53</sup> Notes taken after the withdrawal of my ex-participant (M, 27, Kurd, Mardin)

and training centre in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Urfa<sup>54</sup>, I was asked how I would help to them. I answered I was hoping to get help from them instead, and then understood that I was confused with a psychologist due to my friend's explanation on the phone who arranged the interview. Most probably the word 'sociologist' was taken to be 'psychologist', as they were supposedly more familiar with and surely more in need of one. I was sorry not to be able to offer what they expected, still had no option but to continue. In an interview with one of the women getting help in that centre, just after we started, the child of the participant began to cry helplessly. Thinking that the child was in need of his mother's attention, I offered to end the interview. She seemed frustrated, however, and said, in a defensive and apologetic manner, "*sorry, we've troubled you*". I was solely concerned with the needs of the child, but, I guess, she felt like I cannot bear him crying. Regretting my intervention, I thought her reaction might have been related to her perception of me, perhaps as a person to carry out a duty, with different -higher- positioning of class or education. Such cases reveal it well that even if one tries hard, "the interviewing relationship is fraught with issues of power-who controls the direction of the interview, who controls the results, who benefits" (Seidman, 2006: 99).

In one other case, perception of such power relation was uttered in an informal group gathering by the headman<sup>55</sup> of a deprived neighbourhood, whereby inhabitants were mostly those displaced from their villages: "*they [the researchers] come here, ask about our problems, we tell and tell and they go,*

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<sup>54</sup> Hayati Harrani was a poor neighbourhood mostly populated by Arabs, %69 as one of the teachers at the centre gave the percentage, but there were Kurds as well and had multifaceted socio-economic problems.

<sup>55</sup> (M, 50, Kurd, Diyarbakır, [D8])

*nothing as a result*".<sup>56</sup> His objection was to the perceived 'non-practicality' of all those academic research in everyday lives of the participants. The same person had mistakenly presumed that I was working on forced displacement -most probably the researchers visiting the neighbourhood before did so- and recommended me to try other topics stating: "now, *everybody has learned about this forced displacement, you know? There are other [issues] more detailed, you know? It would have been better if you write a dissertation on those*". The examples he and others had given upon my request were about the difficulties that they/Kurds were experiencing in terms of identity like the ban on the usage of Kurdish language. At least I was on the right track; the venting issues for them were among the topics of interest to the current study. Thus, the objection was not only about the uses of the research, but also about the areas to produce knowledge. One overt criticism directed against the production of sociological knowledge came during an expert interview, when the participant claimed that "*sociologists in Turkey take everything separately. The economy... as West came from Neptune, but East came from Jupiter. Things are not grounded on earth, just here and there. The world system is not so; everything is interconnected*".<sup>57</sup> These are concerns basically about the symbolic and discursive constructions of 'reality', as they are also valuable for a sociologist in terms of methodology. Yet an even harsher perception uttered in the same interview was that "*the legists are on duty to overcome the law, sociologists are in charge*", displaying an extreme expression of distrust. All these objections, misunderstandings, reflections, criticisms, reservations, suggestions, acclaims, explanations, and confusions were telling about how the participants perceived the research; thus were valuable in locating their specific interview as well as in getting a general perspective on the patterns of be-long-ings -the very purpose of the research.

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<sup>56</sup> Beforehand, I had been warned about the same headman that he got angry with a journalist from Holland, stating "you come and go, but do nothing; the European Union has made our situation this bad". Field notes taken during an institutional interview. 16.02.2011, Diyarbakir

<sup>57</sup> Expert interview, Urfa, 14.10.2011

During the interviews, some concepts that I brought forth asking the questions or probing were contested by the participants. Specifically these were “*difference*”, “*national*”, “*homeland*”, “*oppression*”, and “*migration*”. The specific historical, political, symbolic discourses woven around these concepts in Turkey and the experiences of the participants appeared to be the ground for such contestation. As they revealed disparate meanings attributed to the concepts and gave clues about the participants’ perceptions and experiences, below I give some details on them.

In the study, I uttered the word “*difference*” in a context praising the recognition of multiplicity of cultures and divergent forms of identifications and belongings. So, it was an act of acknowledgement of diverse ways of existence, and a quest to avoid universalizing human experience. Shortly, it was an ethical response on my part. However, I realized in many cases that utterance of the word ‘difference’ caused some sort of resentment, though I am not sure if it was the fact that I uttered it or it was the word itself. For many people the word ‘difference/different’ was understood connoting a dichotomy of ‘superiority’ versus ‘inferiority’. Telling about one’s difference –even if not personally but culturally- for instance, was taken as a reminder of her ‘inferiority’, ‘deficiency’, ‘lack’, ‘invaluableness’, or at best ‘abnormality’. The term ‘difference’ was for many connoting ‘inequality’ or ‘superiority’ of the ‘Turk’, or simply the ‘other’ when taken in a context of comparison. It was apparently a source of ‘injustice’ or ‘discrimination’ in their perception, and this itself was an input for my analysis. The dominant was defining what is ‘normal’, ‘acceptable’, and ‘good’ - indeed everything positive. ‘Sameness’ with or ‘similarity’ to the ‘dominant’/‘Turk’ was in cases perceived as signs of personal/collective ‘achievement’ approved by, or still awaiting approval from, the dominant gaze. Thus, although ‘difference’ was a social fact which I valued, some of the respondents could have approached it with caution. It even took me a while to see that the term was in cases perceived in negative connotations, sometimes even as offending. In others, however, ‘difference’ implied positive meanings,

even ‘superiority’. In one case in Urfa, for instance, the participant<sup>58</sup>, in a ‘casual’ conversation in her kitchen as she was preparing “*çiğ köfte*” after our interview, strongly stated that in her opinion I was ‘different’ as I, as a woman, had all the way from Ankara to Urfa by myself. That was mostly a comparison with women in Urfa and women ‘like her’; meaning that I belonged to a different order of things, which she assumedly attributed superior meanings like modern, educated, and perhaps liberated. This was occurring despite the fact that all through the interview she had tried to establish a narrative, whereby she as a woman and individual was a strong one, capable of politics, social networks, economic dealings, and personal matters.<sup>59</sup> Difference never signified a mere comparison. In a dialog between the same participant and me, she asked about the similarity of Mardin Arabs to ‘theirs’. Upon my reply stating that they are sort of different, she asked “*are they different, or are we different?*” Being ‘different’ had a meaning in itself, which in these cases was imbued with positive references, if not superiority. The research being on belongings in a context where ‘difference’ may be treated to challenge the hegemonic project, the wording not always proved to be appropriate, still helpful for providing insight though.

“*Migration*”, was another such term meaning of which was contested. It was never perceived simply as moving from one place to another. The cause and the context of migration always mattered. In this context, the Turkish translation of “migration”, “*göç*”, was almost always understood in relation to “*zorunlugöç*” [forced migration/displacement] even by those who were themselves not exposed to forced migration. Experienced relatively recently and having caused devastating results the forced displacement practices of 1990s left a lively memory as well as still visible negative effects. Within that context, especially those who were not subjected to forced displacement tried to distinguish their

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<sup>58</sup> (F, 25, Arab, Urfa, [U2])

<sup>59</sup> Field notes taken in Urfa, (F, 25, Arab, Urfa)

situation, and refuted any implication of having migrated. In one case, for instance, upon my question of if her parents came from a village or were they already settled in Mardin, the participant “*yes, from the village, yes here in Mardin. But they did not migrate; for long, well sixty years or so it had been that they came to Mardin*”.<sup>60</sup> Migration became only a recent phenomenon in this context and the term “coming”, as rather a neutral and smoother process, was preferred to that of “migrating”. In another case, the participant<sup>61</sup> told that after his marriage they had to live the village first because they did not inherit lands to live by, first went to town then came to the city. When I asked the date of their “migration”, his wife interfered saying “*it would not be called migration; we broke with the [parental] house*”.<sup>62</sup> Against a background, where migration and movement have often been related to force, through forced migration, exile, deportation, policies that urge people to flee, such perception of migration is reasonable. The role of an outside political-academic interference may also have had a role in the concept of [forced] migration becoming a part of the everyday discourses of people mostly with negative connotations. Similarly, notions of going, leaving, emigrating were also perceived to be problematic and received sometimes by anger, because they were often not voluntary. For the participants with no such experience the concept was met in a rather more uncomplicated manner.

In some other cases, the concepts of “homeland” or “oppression” were challenged. I used “*vatan*” for homeland, but being aware that it has nationalistic connotations, when probing I alternatively used the terms “*yurt*” or “*ev*” [home] as well. My utilization of the expressions like “oppression”, or “being oppressed”, was objected by one participant stating “*not oppression, who is it*

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<sup>60</sup> F, 46, Kurd, Mardin

<sup>61</sup> (M, 41, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D13])

<sup>62</sup> Supposedly, in the village they were living together with the man’s family after marriage.

*that would oppress me*".<sup>63</sup> I believe he was protesting against the inherent implication in the term pointing to an unequal relationship, if not dominance; and was locating himself on a more equal ground. Such opposition was rare, however. In contrast, in many cases "oppression", "suppression", or "victimization" were frequently used expressions by Kurdish participants to define their individual and collective self-position. Lastly, the term "*ulusal*" [national] was uttered with ease only in Urfa, with quotidian references to media, like local and national TV channels. In contrast, in one case in Diyarbakır I was warned as I used the expression "*ulusalkimlik*" [national identity], by a participant stating "*here around one would not much use 'ulusal'*"<sup>64</sup> who, thus, 'kindly' called me in the acceptable political 'jargon' of the locality.

My ethnic, religious origin, professional and marital status, hometown, family members, migration story of the larger family were all raised as matters of question during the interviews. The questions were raised at different contexts and times. I self-disclosed as they asked for it. One of the motivations for them to ask these questions was to sort out if I was sharing similar experiences with them; while the other was to find out to what degree they should trust in me when they were telling about their most intimate experiences and feelings to me. Very often, I felt like I was being "measured" against some norms of "theirs", such as democracy, religion/religiosity, and political ideology. In many cases, what I have disclosed was selectively uttered as a means of establishing rapport between them and me; in others they, especially where I came from -the west- became a critical ground for difference. My perceived class position, professional and educational status, gender, age, or manners all might have added to the initial coding about me at different contexts. Still, I guess, in a territory, where social exclusion was so sharply experienced, and where ethnicity and language was so burdened with deeper connotations, sometimes marked by

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<sup>63</sup> M, 22/24, Kurd, Mardin, [M2]

<sup>64</sup> (F, 26, Kurd, Mardin, [M1])

violence and traumatic memories, an attempt to categorize one coming out of blue is much an understandable attempt.

In several cases with the Kurdish participants, I was introduced to the others as a “Turk”, phrased in Kurdish: “*ewTirke*” [She is a Turk]. Regardless of my personal preference of the term “*Türkiyelilik*” [being from Turkey] over “*Türklük*” [Turkness] to define myself; and despite my critical stance towards being primarily identified as a Turk regarding multiple identifications of mine, I was being hailed and becoming a “Turk” among Kurds. In other cases as well, the mere fact that I was coming from “the West”, that is I was born, socialized and living in western Turkey, was often an adequate signifier of my “Turkness” in the eyes and perceptions of the participants. However, there were also cases, where firmness of my assigned Turkish position was loosened up, for instance, due to the place of origin of my family<sup>65</sup> and I was, suddenly, included in a category of “*people who bear the eastern way of thinking*”.<sup>66</sup> I was astonished by the constant comparison and sharp distinction made between the west and the east. My presence might have had a role in its utterance so frequently, yet the distinction emerged as one of the crucial findings of the research upon which many arguments in terms of territorial belongings were founded. In other cases, Turkish being my native language became the criterion of my “Turkishness”. Expressions like “*I don’t know if we [I] can do well in Istanbul accent?*”<sup>67</sup>, which I encountered often, seemed to confer upon me sort of an ‘authority’ in terms of Turkish language. I was much uncomfortable in the face of those expressions; and even more surprised when they were uttered by the professional or educated people, who were in cases older than me.

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<sup>65</sup> An inland Eastern Black Sea city

<sup>66</sup> Field note taken in Urfa, 4.10.2011

<sup>67</sup> (M, 29, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D20])



My identification as a “Turk”, moreover, did not always mean to signify my “otherness” in negative connotations though. In much a teasing manner one of the participants, then becoming a friend, stated: “*do not deprive me off the pleasure of calling you ‘she is a Turk, but a good one!’*”<sup>68</sup> He was reversing the subtly discriminatory expression commonly found in a Turkish context, which goes as “he is a Kurt, but a good one!” This was mimicry in Bhabhaian sense. In other examples where I was framed as a Turk, my ‘Turkness’ and my venture of the current research was accredited a status via similar means of which ‘peace’, ‘acceptance’ and ‘togetherness’ could be achieved. One of the participants, accordingly, stated that “*if you can do this, it is an answer to how could we end this [problems among us]up. We could finish it in this way; through accepting each other*”.<sup>69</sup> My research endeavour had a meaning in itself and positioned me somewhere which they could familiarize with. Similarly, another participant expressed that:

Your way of thinking... now coming here... if did not come... I suppose your idea is that... I guess so, but don’t know, I think your ideas are normal, pro-democracy, pro-human rights, so that you come all the way [and] struggle. [...] Should your way of thinking be different, be like the old mentality, you would not have come here, would not have spoke to me (M, 50, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D8]).

My very being there, researching on venting issues for ‘them’ and interviewing him/them positioned me within “struggle” and against “the old mentality”. My way of thinking became then “normal”, “pro-democracy”, “pro-human rights”. Apparently, ‘here versus there’, ‘coming versus going’, ‘you versus us’ are important dualities in terms of identity politics, and, in these examples, I was being located somewhere in-between, or somewhere traversing these dualities. My outsider and insider positions were constantly being negotiated.

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<sup>68</sup>From fieldnotes taken in Diyarbakır and post-field notes.

<sup>69</sup> (M, 22/24, Mardin, Kurd [M2])

One of the most unexpected questions about my identity came upon my questions on Syriac or Christian people and my participants' relation to them, when I was interviewing an Arab man, in the existence of female family members –the wife, daughters and the daughter in law, in Mardin. Trying to locate me somewhere, to be able to answer my questions safely, he asked: “*don't take it for bad, [but] you are a Muslim, not one of them inşâallah*”.<sup>70</sup> He and his family having migrated to Mardin from a rural location were more conservative in their reactions towards the Christian population of Mardin compared to the local Arabs, whom were in much closer contact with Christians and mostly believed to share the city culture together. Beyond religious identifications, then, the example was telling me about the rural-urban, local-migrant dynamics.

In one last case, I could not help crying in the face of what the participant's narrative about his perception, identifications and experiences. Although such attitude might seem contrary to an objective researcher position which would require not getting emotionally involved or not informing interviewees of your own beliefs and accounts, I follow the suggestion that such approach is counter to the requirement of producing more inclusive and less partial and distorted accounts of race, class, and gender relations Andersen (1993). In this case, next morning I came to realize that a family member of my participant knew about my crying previous evening. Such occasion provided me a ground to observe the working of bonding social capital, in that the cohabiting extended family members were informed about the incident immediately after the interview and most probably had an exchange of ideas over it.

As the examples above disclose, the participants and I, mutually, were in a constant process of defining, redefining, challenging, resisting or negotiating our identifications, locations, positionalities during the field research. Such process had unveiled much in terms of the research problem itself, so had well become part of the data.

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<sup>70</sup> (M, 57, Arab, Mardin, [M21])

### 2.3.3. Observation, Participant Observation, Interaction as Data

I lived in my field sites 75 days in total, which meant engaging in daily life, whereby restaurants, cafes, stationeries, bus stops, buses, minibuses, taxis, parks, streets, sometimes cinema halls, shopping malls, and even hospitals became places of observation and interaction for me. From the very beginning that engagement forced me to face my prejudices as well, though initially I thought I did not have much. On my first day in Diyarbakır, for instance, I noted in my research diary that:

I saw that I was facing a big city, a developed city. I realized that I have prejudices. We had our meals in a beautiful place, where you hear classical music, very stylish, making one forget that one is in Diyarbakır, this is indeed another prejudice. A place where classical music is played, elegantly furnished...<sup>71</sup>

As I continued with the research, I came to realize that the norm, normal, ordinary and order were so linked to each other, and so context bound in time and space. Before me was the task of understanding the conditions, mechanisms and consequences of them in this very context, rather than measure and evaluate them against the norm, normal, ordinary and order of somewhere else- arguably “the west”.

During the field research I was asked, recurrently, if this was my first time in the region or the city. Though for touristic reasons, I had been in all the three cities for a short visit some 9 years ago and in Urfa some 3-4 years ago for the second time. This usually surprised them. The common perception of single-use visitor or a tourist consuming the city for once was not wholly validated though my prior experience was really limited. Still, especially in Urfa and Mardin, my outsidersness was so visible that I could see I was being watched by many in the street. Overall, I felt more invisible in Diyarbakır, except from an occasion reminding my “outsidersness”, and at the same time was about the sensitivities of

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<sup>71</sup> Notes from research diary, 9.2.2011

people. On an off day, a friend already living in the city for a year on a project-based work and I were accompanying another researcher coming from the U.S in order to conduct a pilot for her future project. We, three western looking women, were speaking English as we walked in Dağkapı –part of the “old city” and a market place. My friend dropped by a shop. As two of us were waiting outside, immersed in our conversation and occupying the pavement, I unwittingly made space for an elderly woman to pass by. Since I did not recognize her approaching before, I must have acted in a hasty manner. Only when she contested my reflex, I noticed that she was a beggar in ragged clothing and most probably thought that I was afraid of her. She first yelled in Kurdish “*ne tirse!*” [Don’t be afraid!], and switched to Turkish at some point asking in anger why I was afraid, and dictated that she was a human as well. Stunned by her reaction I could say nothing but that I was not afraid. One of a sudden I was witnessing the resentment and indignation that crystallized in the face of my conduct, helping me understand the “chill factor” (Heath and Cheung, 2006) on experiences, which I will discuss in Chapter 4.

Another case of resentment came from an elderly Syriac man in Mardin, whom I visited several times in his store and chatted thereby. His initial response to me was welcoming and coded me as “*hoca*” [teacher] mostly due to the position of my friend at the university by whom I was introduced to him. Once, upon my meeting another elderly Syriac man, whom I learnt was his childhood friend, he even honoured me stating with shining eyes: “*you find the truly good men; he would also like well-mannered and cultured people*”.<sup>72</sup> However, when it turned out that I was, through another gatekeeper, at his home and interviewed his wife, his attitude was altered towards me, although the instance was a complete coincidence without my prior knowledge. The interview was arranged by an institutional contact and was accompanied by two women from that institution. When I realized the fact, I stopped interviewing and just continued with an

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<sup>72</sup> (M, 70, Syriac, Mardin, [M34])

everyday talk. One reason was that I was already uneasy with the company though could not tell it openly, and it proved to be barren when I implied it. The second reason was that the potential participant seemed already to be timid. Third, I thought that it was not ethical to conduct the interview without the consent of the person I was befriending myself in the town. Still, it was too late and I was already there in the house. When he showed up for the lunch he was surprised, as I too was, and I could sense that he was offended. I explained the incidence in a responsive manner and just continued with the preparation of the meal, washing up and the casual talk. Still, however, when I dropped by his store afterwards, he did not hide his annoyance and told me that my research was bound to fail. Warning me against the uselessness of interviewing people, he almost engaged in a methodological criticism and suggested me reading books instead. He stated “*this Mardin book of yours is unlikely. See, this church nearby is 1700 years old, from the year 350. You may speak to me, I am 70 years old, even if I tell you 100 years that I know, what about the rest?*” His suggestion was that “*One should read them in books. It is of no use in this way*”.<sup>73</sup> This incidence was important in proving me how vulnerable the trust relation could be in the field, regardless of my intention.

Living in the field cites, even only for short periods, provided me with the opportunity to observe more than what I was told in terms of tensions or relations among people of different ethnic, religious or ideological affiliation; and to observe interaction among people, where I could get a sense of power relations, allegiance, solidarity, communication and enmities. I took many opportunities for observation and participant observation such as preparing lavender bags with women in a social centre in Mardin; attending in a women tea party in Mardin composed of Syriac women of different generations all speaking Arabic; attending children’s classes in a Church; Eastern Mass and a Sunday mass in different Churches; a fable night organized by a district municipality in a

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<sup>73</sup> (M, 70, Syriac, Mardin, [M34])

central village house whereby almost all the villagers were present; accompanying women baking bread in tandoor at a social centre; attending in the classes of the children in the day activities at a social centre; having breakfast with shopkeepers in the street in Urfa; chatting in a coffeehouse with Dom people in Diyarbakır; watching the news with the security staff of the hotel I stayed in Urfa; chatting with a young women, her children and niece in a house where I was invited as I wandered in the streets of old city in Mardin; witnessing a discussion following a thievery in a bus in Diyarbakır; and visiting a private hospital in Mardin because of the sudden lumbar muscle spasm I suffered after which I had to leave the field for a period. All these and more I am going to use as part of my analysis in the following chapters.

I also included in the analysis some post field notes and memories as my interaction with some of my participants continued after the field. Some wanted a copy of the transcriptions of their personal interviews and I sent them. Some became my close friends and I learnt much from them even after the fieldwork. Others I called on special days and asked about their well being. Some I contacted via email. In one such case, upon our exchange of emails one participant wrote me the following:

I, too, am happy to hear from you. I was wondering about your thesis and its results. Please don't be offended but I was feeling like I have trusted my childhood memories to a person whom I knew very little, and I have left them by not asking their fate :) If you ever come over here I would like to see you.<sup>74</sup>

This was the participant who initially called the interview to be a therapy for her. Thus, her later response is important in terms of understanding how one's perception of being interviewed might change in time. There might have been changes in more positive ways as well, which are unfortunately, not always available to the researcher after the field.

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<sup>74</sup> Post field notes (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır), 8.1.2013

My own experiences with the territory became another source of data for me. My perception of national/peripheral territorial space became clear there in the very space I was working in. I realized that I was looking from a perspective embedded in 'here' -the west- and I could look from 'there' only when I was there, still not claiming that I could do it thoroughly. Below quotation from my field diary is an important instance of this:

I had already thought on violence while doing pilot in Ankara and came to realize that violence weakens belonging; but, still, I then interpreted the case from a perspective of the larger society, like 'what a pity that some people are getting estranged from us/here'. Yet [now] here even I feel distant to Ankara, like this place has never been a part of the larger territory. As if it was on its own.<sup>75</sup>

Last but not least 'absence', in terms of those who left the cities I worked in as well as who emigrated from the country, is counted as part of the data. The fact became relevant during the field with regard to its role in defining 'belonging'. The role was apparent in memories, longings, or reproaches; in the spatial imprints; and in the current socio-economic structure. To sum up, following the argument of grounded theory that "all is data", I will treat what I saw, heard, sensed, experienced and read as all part of the data to be analysed.

## **2.4. Data Analysis**

In line with the methodology I adopted, I applied an inductive strategy to identify patterns and interrelationships in the generated data by means of thematic codes. I used all forms of data detailed above, besides pilot work, diaries and field notes for constant comparison. I used Nvivo computer software package for "initial coding" (Charmaz, 2006) and categorizing the data at the initial phase. I compared incident to incident, and defined categories of incidents, to which I continued to compare other incidents, with the goal of reaching at patterns. In this, I adopted Glaser's (2002) argument that grounded

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<sup>75</sup> Diary notes in Diyarbakır, 22.2.2011

theory is not after the person but pattern, which is the behaviour that a person engages in; thus the behaviour is categorized not the people.

The grounded theory analysis is argued to start “right off with regular daily data collecting, coding and analysis”; whereby “the focus and flow is immediately into conceptualization, using the constant comparative method” (Glaser and Holton, 2004: 44). The mandate in such process is to remain open to what is actually happening, through listening, observing, and discovering the main concern of the participants in the field and how they resolve this concern; thus not to start filtering data through pre-conceived hypotheses and biases (Glaser and Holton, 2004).

In this case, remaining open to what actually was happening in the field brought forth a reformulation of the research question. My primary problem of understanding the participants’ closeness or distance to Turkishness turned, meanwhile, into a search for understanding the conditioning context, the core ordering processes, and the strategies or outcomes of the relation to Turkishness. Recognizing belongings as multiple and multilayered processes, moreover, I tried to locate the role of Turkishness/national belonging within that multiplicity. This set before me the goal of focusing on when and how national identity/belonging is, rather than what is national identity/belonging or what are its components.

While, at the very beginning, I presumed to reach patterns defined through the variables of location, ethnicity, age, gender and economic status; by constantly comparing incident to incident throughout the fieldwork and the analysis, I came to realize the role of other processes on peoples’ belongings, which I take to be the core ordering processes. As I asked about belonging and Turkishness, some told me about discrimination, exclusion, or inequality; some about interactions, relationships and connections; some about loneliness; some about prosperity; others about loss of belongings, deprivation, poverty; yet others making a life for



oneself; or struggling to save one. These were, apparently, the venting issues for them and I had nothing but to listen to what they were telling to me, in an attempt to understand how those were linked to my question and to one another. I shall note that although I arrived at my codes by constant comparison, some few cases became vital for the analysis in terms of crystallization of what I would afterwards include in my theoretical concepts. Critically, they were all somehow unusual, if not divergent narratives and all belonged to women. In the first case,<sup>76</sup> I left the interview with a feeling that the interview turned to be a failure, since I thought the participant told her whole life story for hours with ‘irrelevant details’ pervading the interview, and mentioned only occasionally what I was indeed interested in. Only after I completed the fieldwork completely, withdrew from the field, and repeatedly asked the question of what she was telling to me with that entire story, I became aware of the ‘turning points’ in her life story, which made me to see the connection between the *violence* she and her family were exposed to, on the one hand, and the formations and transformations of her belongings, on the other. In the second case, whereby I interviewed an old Kurdish<sup>77</sup> woman around her 70s, begging for money in Diyarbakır streets, I came to realize the importance of *social capital* and *economic inclusion*, in this case the lack of both, in defining her attitudes and expectations. Poverty, deprivation, and poor health permeated her appearance. She could not apply for green card as she did not know where the governor’s office was. She was renting a single room for 50 Liras,<sup>78</sup> and lamed from the accident she had last year, a driver hit her whom she called “*bênamus*” [dishonest], she walked with

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<sup>76</sup> F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır, [D3]

<sup>77</sup> The accompanying child, her neighbour, translated what she said during the interview. She had difficulty of speaking, most probably due to her old age, deprived physical conditions and bad health. So, it was difficult for me to catch the words properly. Yet still as far as I could detect, she spoke Zazaki and not Kurmanji. Because it was unclear, I was not able to have her interview transcribed and translated afterwards, thus used only my notes and observations in this study.

<sup>78</sup> Around 33 USD in February 2011.

difficulty. As we walked together to the place we would conduct the interview she repeated saying to me “*inşâallah çavuş be!*” which literally meant “*may God permit you become a sergeant*”. Sergeant apparently signified a high, perhaps highest, position in her mental world. A man becoming a sergeant in the military was much respected by the older generations; yet her reference might be taken as a clue to her relation to the state and its most organized and esteemed institution, the military. Her uneasy attitude trying to understand everything we spoke in Turkish with the accompanying child, might be taken as a sign of her sense of insecurity; and her expression “*I take whoever gives me what*” was important to grasp how be-long-ings forms for her. In the third case, another woman’s narrative where she defined herself to be “*a bird nesting on a tree to look after her children*”<sup>79</sup> made the role of search for safety and lack of social capital purely visible for me. She seemed desperately in need of security and allegiance, but positioned herself distant both to the state and the Kurdish politics, stating that “*there is no benefit from either side; in both of them, you are heading towards an abyss*”. Isolation, exclusion, disadvantage had a clear forming role on belongings.

As I comprehended on the everyday working of the participants’ lives and the context of the transformation of their perceptions and experiences, I started to get clues for the questions of “what is the main concern being faced by the participants?” and “what accounts for the continual resolving of this concern?” (Glaser and Holton, 2004: 48). The clues directed me towards three vital processes shaping participants’ belongings: being exposed or non-exposed to violation; mobilization of social networks and relations, and economic inclusion/exclusion. Following the guides of Glaser (2002) I integrated the concept of violence, social capital, and economic exclusion, concepts from the existing literature, as part of theoretical coding. These concepts provided an analytic frame, serving as a point of reference and a guide in the analysis of data.

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<sup>79</sup> F, 50s, Kurd, Diyarbakır Informal Group Interview [7]

I believe, moreover, that these concepts are also well relating to three fundamental components in terms of power and structures controlling the life chances of ethnic groups, namely safety, economic well-being and meaning.<sup>80</sup> In such context, I take search for safety, economic well-being, and meaning as the “core conditioning context” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) as it became apparent in the data coding process. These I regard to lead us to substantive categories; and conceptualize findings under the categories of violence, social capital, and economic inclusion. Consequently, some patterns have emerged revealing the ways of relation to ‘the national’, or of national belonging. Interplay of the three socio-historical processes, namely violence, social capital and economic inclusion, as well as various formations of positionalities of individuals result in differing patterns of belonging and relating to the ‘nation’.

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<sup>80</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Theda Skocpol for listening to my PhD research and for her suggestions, whereby these three components and the importance of a historical-structural perspective appeared to be relevant for my work. Personal meeting with Theda Skocpol, University of Oxford, Department of Sociology, 16.5.2012

## CHAPTER 3

### MODER-N-ATION NEGOTIATED BE-LONG-INGS OVER STATUS QUO

In this chapter covered mainly are the experiences and reflections of the Arab participants of the research. Specifically looked at were the role, function and meaning of the state in the participants' life as well as the practical encounters and relations with it; relations with the larger society; the social and economic organization of life; local power dynamics; and what role being Arab played in their life. Important themes that emerged during the interviews and became important sources for findings of the research were the rural-urban dynamics; discourse of modernization; the relation between local and national economies; inter-community relations; the role of *aşiret* system; prejudices and reactivity in constructing belongings. In this research included were only Sunni Arabs, Hanafi and Shafi, and the findings cannot be generalized to Alevi or Christian Arabs living in Turkey.

The role of the three socio-historical processes that arose out of the field research to have conditioned be-long-ings of the participants, which I broadly categorized to be violation, social capital, and economic inclusion, is also evident in the case of Arabs. One crucial point is that Arabs, as a categorical group of citizens, were not the target of systematic, long lasting, and/or recent political violence in Turkey, yet they as well experienced structural and symbolic violations in their many aspects. The processes of economic inclusion and formation of social capital, on the other hand, were considerably defining in forming be-long-ings for them in many aspects.

The overall arguments in this chapter are that Arab participants of the study have mostly conforming attitude in relation to the state; have mostly consented to status quo over taking advantage of the opportunities it provided; were articulated into hegemonic relations of power especially in locality. They recently engaged in *comparative claim making* taking Kurdish political and cultural demands as a reference point. Opportunities that the modern state economic structure provides for were the basic framework they negotiated over in forming their be-long-ings. Within this frame, I refer to the construction of *nation through modernization*, which here is conceptualized, following a simple word twist, as Moder(n)ation. **Modernation** stands for the notion of the *Nation* being constituted through negotiating and taking advantage of the *modernizing* processes of the state in the everyday experiences of citizens.

### **3.1. State**

In this part, basically the relations to and perceptions of the state are analyzed. The expressions coming up during the interviews point at some patterns which I conceptualized below as ‘statized Muslims’ with abstracted be-long-ings; state as the ‘power backing us’ with the rights and opportunities of citizenship it provides for; and the ‘internalization’ of the state in a compliant and negotiating political attitude.

#### **3.1.1. Abstracted Be-long-ings and ‘Statized Muslims’**

Overall many Arab participants of the study held a general positive image of ‘The State’ as it is. Importantly, in some cases the expression of feelings of loyalty towards the state and the strong allegiance to it seemed to be directed towards an abstract category of power. In others, very practical benefits individuals received in their personal lives laid the ground for abstraction of state adherence, which did not always necessitated a widely held contentment with its specific policies, practices, and institutions. Yet in some others, despite all the

‘absence’ of the state with its services in actual, practical, and individual lives of the participants “*state love*”, as was expressed by a participant [U16] in the following pages, was readily there.

In narratives that reveal an abstract allegiance, discursive elements of ethnic signifiers and language; religion and piety; symbols of Turkishness and nationalistic discourses are well integrated and seem to feed one another. Below there is an example, which uses the symbols of “*homeland*”, “*flag*”, “*soldier*”, as well as the “*love*” of them as a basis of such allegiance. Critically though, despite speaking about his childhood in Harran, a town of Urfa near Syrian border, the participant generalizes such attitude to ‘all Arabs’ in their fidelity to the political systems they live in, even when they are radically undemocratic ones as ‘dictatorships’.

In Harran region...in all Arab countries I think the reason for people bearing with the dictators is grounded in the love for homeland. Well, our people in Harran, too, love their homeland and flag. We, too, since our childhood, even before we went to school we loved our flag. We were not much familiar with TV. We loved the flag, we loved the soldier. Even my grandfather, who was the most tortured in the village in ‘80 coup, as he was dealing with smuggling then, even he was the one being tortured most, in our house there was never ever an idea against the flag, soldier, or homeland; we loved, even before we went to school we loved the flag. (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1])

‘Loyalty’ to the state, whatever the conditions are, is above expressed to be almost a ‘natural’ state of being Arab, whether for those in Arab countries or in Harran region of Urfa. He mentioned his/their “*love*” despite being only at the preschool time and non-familiar with television; or in the case of other family members, despite the grandfather being tortured by the state security forces for he smuggled petty goods across the border. Such mention shows his perception that their attachment, which is defined by love, was not influenced by the formal education system; popular or official representations of the media; or even by direct physical violence family members might have gone through for disobeying the order of the state, here the border trade policy. Below is another

narrative that indicates the role of religion and piety in providing the source for one's "love of country" and sustaining allegiance towards it.

When we look at it from the point of country or so, we will not forget our being Arab, and there is no chance of our forgetting, as the saying goes 'the one who denies his origin is *haramzade*', so you will know your origin, yet will never betray the country you live in. This is our motto. So what is our love of country; what it says in the hadith '*hubbul vatan ve'liman*', that is 'love of homeland comes from faith'. I mean we don't have any problem, any uneasiness with someone else or with our country. We too are the real owners of this country. I mean we see ourselves neither as minority, nor as outcast, nor as anything else. If there is this country, the first class people of this country are us. (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5])

The narrative is important in revealing the smooth relation between Muslim Arab identity and national belonging. Faithfulness feeding the latter is narrated to be a source that defies any "uneasiness" in the relation and defines one's perception of being "*the first class people of this country*". The same participant saying "*the culture I was raised in, the books I read, teachers teaching me, mother and father's positions, position of the other people had shaped me in some way*", claims that "*a personality come to fore in*" him that "*never judge[s] others*" (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5]). Despite having such 'mild attitude' towards others, as he claims it to be, he defines a hot line, '*betrayal*', defining his, if not all Arabs', attitude towards others in his below narrative:

The only thing of us, indeed, the red point of us is that you shall not betray the homeland. It is not only for Turkey, wherever you live in the world if you are a member of that homeland you will internalize that homeland, you will adopt and protect it [*"sahip çıkacaksın"*]. I mean you shall not look for something else. [...] Love of the homeland comes from faith. For instance I am Arab, my mother's lineage is Arab for 7777<sup>th</sup> generation; my father's lineage is Arab for 7777<sup>th</sup> I have relatives living in Syria. I say may god forbid it, *inşallah* Muslims will not go into war against each other, yet if ever we have a trouble with Syria I would never say I'm Arab so I will fight along Arabs against Turks! I was born in this country, I live in this country. Other than this country there is nothing for me, for me ummm I have no other value than this country. (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5])

His claim of lineage comes from the fact that he is from a Sayyid<sup>81</sup> family, thus stands as a signifier of his ‘genuine’ Arabness; and is, in part, fed by the widely held argument, which I encountered by many Arab participants of the study, that ‘each and every Arab children knows and should count the names of 7 generations of his/her<sup>82</sup> ancestors’. His claim that not 7 but, with a generic if not exaggerated account, 7777 generations of Arab ancestors stands to solidify his argument that he, being ‘truly an Arab’, would take side by Turkey in any potential conflict with the Syrian state, where he has many relatives. In 2011, the time of the interview, it was the early phases of the Syrian war, whereby the future was still vague. Arabs in Turkey surely followed the progress of the war with great attention. His argument, thus, pointed to a factual likelihood, at least in his perception, of a conflict between two states. Also implied in both of his narratives above is a subject position that is defined by the act of ‘betrayal’, as well as seeing itself “as *minority*”, “as *outcast*”, and something other than “*the first class people of this country*”. Here, as it will appear in many other narratives of the Arab participants of the research below this subject position is of Kurds’. Some sort of a self-positioning comparative to Kurds was visible in many interviews. A direct example of it, whereby close identification of the Arab population with the state was best formulized in a sentence by another participant in the following: “*Muslims have been statized [“devletleşti”]; they act together with the state, not like Kurds!*” (M, mid-30s, Arab, Mardin [M23]). The formulation of Arabs equating to Muslims in opposition to Kurds was implied in another expression of the same participant: “*All [Arabs] are Islamists; they are not in treachery in that sense*” (M, mid-30s, Arab, Mardin [M23]). ‘Kurds being in betrayal’ was an often repeated claim by many Arab participants, though not exclusively by all, as it will be made clear in other cases at different contexts below.

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<sup>81</sup> Sayyid is the honorific title borne by people who are accepted to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad through his grandsons.

<sup>82</sup> If this is something expected from the daughters/girls as it is from the sons/boys needs to be checked.



### 3.1.2. State the '*Power that backs us*': Rights and Opportunities of Citizens

One central emphasis put concerning the state was the rights conferred on one as a citizen of the Turkish state, which was put by many Arab participants as a definitive ground for their close identification with the state. State in providing the opportunities they benefit from is a power that backs them was typically expressed by many in that line. Below is a direct example of such perception uttered by a young pre-school teacher who was raised mostly in western cities, yet got her university education in Harran/Urfa and now lives and works in Urfa city centre:

The image of the state [for me], what I lived in, I mean living in Turkey, benefiting from various opportunities of the state, that's to benefit from school, to benefit from health services, to benefit from police [service]... well something like benefiting from such facilities, the state image. I mean when I have trouble, that's the power that could back me. (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9])

Basic services of education, health, and security are the legal entitlements of any citizen in Turkey. Yet the focus on them is essential since the overlap between what ought to be and the practice is not always spontaneous as many negative experiences relating them will reveal in latter chapters. The above narrative is important in this context since it implies the absence of discriminative practices in the participant's individual experience and how it could lead a perception of the state as an ideal of '*power that backs us*'. Perception of a helping hand of the state when needed is an important element in constructing such ideal and provides for a sense of being safe and secure through the very existence of that hand. Another narrative revealing a similar emphasis was expressed as below in response to my question if there was something Arabs as a community expect from the state.

Well in Mardin, they don't expect anything indeed, in Mardin. Well, they shall not interfere with us; but they shall not withdraw their hand back

[*elleriniçekmesinler*]<sup>83</sup> either. There shall be security forces for instance; I mean we shall feel ourselves safe and secure. Yet, not much do Arabs demand in my opinion. [They shall not interfere with us?] I mean, like, our life may not be much interfered with. We shall not be searched by the police in the streets. Like police stops should not be. Negativities should not be and so. I mean they [Arabs] will say this but they would also like the state, the security forces shall be here. [What is your personal demand or expectation from the state?] I wouldn't want more than what is being done now. Because myself, when I sleep at home at night, or should I go out in the street I can feel myself safe and secure. I would not want something more I mean.(M, 25, Arab, Mardin [M20])

Revealed above is not only a focus on safety and security but also one on the expectation of non-interference in the routine of daily lives. Non-interference was mentioned here especially in relation to security forces, whose existence and activity is deemed to be necessary and important, but physical interruption in the daily flow of people, like police checks, is not desired. What is expected is that the security forces should be responsible with lessening “*negativities*” but not create negativity themselves. In the conditions of intermittent conflicts and high security controls such emphasis could be seen as a wish for the ‘normal’. Thus, when that normality is provided, Arabs are said to have nothing specific to demand from the state. Personally as well the participant expects nothing “*more than what is [already] being done*”. He is contented with the status quo. Feeling safe and secure sleeping at home or wandering in the streets at night is an important ground for such contentment. When it is compared to the narratives of some Syriac or Kurdish participants in following chapters, in which they pointing a deep sense of insecurity stress that they cannot feel safe sleeping at night, the gap between the two patterns of experiences would better be grasped.

The state being mainly responsible for security was mentioned by others as well. Reply of one participant to my question on what state was in her childhood reflected such a perception yet in a perspective of generational change.

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<sup>83</sup> An expression meaning “giving up interest in something”.

Then we did not know it. For instance when a soldier, a gendarme came to the village we were afraid, now the children wave hands seeing them. Well, we know that the state is opposing the illegal ways [*“kaçakyollar”*], or else don't know... if done something, done something bad, is against those, isn't it? We know it so. For it my father says the state is like an *evliya* [saint], one cannot partake of his riches, steal it or keep it; we know it like this. Well, *vallahi* [swear to God] so we say the state is something very precious I mean. (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7])

The gendarmerie she mentioned used to come to the village in cases of “*fight[s] of villagers to each other*” in order to reconcile the dispute or at times of elections to provide the security. She recalled that when the soldiers came to the village they, she and her siblings, “*were running inside*” home “*wondering what would they [the soldiers]*”, whose “*uniforms seemed terrifying*” do in the village (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). Yet her mention of the behaviour of children vis-à-vis the soldier today reflects a change in how they come to see the state that is embodied in the security forces. The state being against “*the bad*” or “*the illegal*” has a “*saint[ly]*” image, which is so powerful and omnipotent that one cannot ever fool or misuse it. The participant having a low socio-economic status lived in a deprived and disadvantaged neighbourhood of Urfa and was a trainee at a social support centre<sup>84</sup> in the neighbourhood where I interviewed her. In those conditions any support that could enhance the welfare of individuals or households was being eagerly welcomed and appreciated. In this case it was the support centre, which provided that hand, as well as recent governmental policies in delivering for free the school books and stationery to the children at school age. As she was mentioning some Kurdish neighbours of her who wanted their children not speak Turkish but Kurdish, she said “*they don't have a positive look on Turks*” (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). My question “How do you look?” was

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<sup>84</sup> Woman Support and Training Centre Hayati Harrani [*Kadin Destek Ve Eğitim Merkezi Hayati Harrani (KADEM)*] was a project carried between 2009 and 2013 under EKOSEP, which is a technical support project financed by the European Union and the Municipalities of Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Erzurum, and Şanlıurfa that aimed at contributing to the solutions of the economic and social integration problems in the named cities which were main centres receiving internal migration Retrieved from <https://ekosep.blogspot.com/2009/05/ekosep-nedir.html> accessed on 1.6.2018

replied directly and in a certain manner revealing the role of public services and welfare politics in her and the family members' individual lives:

If we haven't looked [positively] we wouldn't have come here [the support centre], would we? Here it is the state property, isn't it? If we don't look, didn't look [well], not look well to Turkish we would not have raised our children and send them for military service, send them to school, huh? But why shall they stay ignorant, we say that we were left ignorant may our children not be left ignorant I mean, they shall not stay ignorant. [What is the state for you? what it has done best for you in your life?] Look hocam!<sup>85</sup> Now in our Urfa, is there anywhere else like this or not? All, for instance, when your children go to school they give you salary. Look, my spouse worked for others beforehand. We had had insurance. He got out of work, our insurance was terminated. My eldest daughter goes to school but she hasn't got any salary yet. [Because] my husband has a car, they don't give us green card. I mean I haven't received so far even one million [means 1 TL], I mean her salary. Yet still God bless them, for instance they educate our children, for instance they give books, give notebooks, well why is this bad, what's wrong with this I mean. Look, for example, they opened here [the centre], we sew clothes for our children, look we didn't know this beforehand, sewing and like. We knew nothing before. In the past we bought a piece [of cloth] and get it to the tailor's, even that s/he sew it was good to us. Now is this not all the property of the state? I mean one must not deny. Well I see it like this from my own view; I don't know how the others would see it anyway. (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7])

It is apparent in the narrative that “*Turks*”, “*Turkish*”, and “*State*” are used interchangeably, or as equated; it is thus essentially a ‘Turk/ish state’ yet is ‘good to us’ as well. The participant articulates sending children to school and to military service as signs of identification with the state and trust to it, even though they are compulsory thus required by law in Turkey. She implies a will to do so, laying the reason for the former to be their children not stay “*ignorant*”, meaning uneducated, as they, she and her husband, have been so. Although she did not receive any monetary governmental support for her child, and despite her

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<sup>85</sup> She asked at some point during the interview if she could call me “*hocam*” [teacher, mam] most probably because she was used to do so in the training centre where we conducted the interview. The trainee called the trainers “*hocam*” as a sign of respect and as indicating their receiving position. I replied she could call directly my name as I thought the other way would be a hierarchical positioning, but she used “*hocam*” a few times when addressing to me yet never my name. I suppose the hierarchical positioning was already there from the beginning due to many factors, which include my researcher role, thus by implication, my education, my social position, visibly ‘different’ outlook, and the fact that I was introduced to them by their trainers/”*hocalar*” in the centre.

family was not given green card as they had a possession [a car], still the books and notebooks that her schoolchildren were granted for free, and the opportunities like sewing courses that the support centre in the neighbourhood provides for them, all prove to be the “*property of state*” and their importance in their life is not to be “*den[ied]*” for her. Other women at the centre also mentioned that the facilities of free laundry, nursery and day care centre made it easier for them to come to the centre for vocational training courses. Women could attend courses like handcrafts, sewing, embroidery, ribbon work only on the condition that they take the literacy course [in Turkish] as well. The courses altogether were often seen by the participants as contribution to the house economy if not always as a future opportunity of work. For the services like laundry, nursery and day care were free, they were also seen as contribution to the house economy and importantly legitimized the time spent at the centre in the eyes of the husbands as they proved for them that the women were not neglecting the housework or the children in line with the patriarchal division of domestic labour. The role of the support centre could be thought within the wider perspective that Jeroen Smits and Ayşe Gündüz-Hoşgör (2003) provide us based on their research on the socio-economic conditions of the two largest non-Turkish speaking women in Turkey, namely the Kurdish and Arabic women, with regard to their education, literacy and employment/occupation levels, where husbands’ education and occupation as well as the household income were also taken into consideration. They found that the non-Turkish speaking women were less employed in the formal economy; married to man with lower educational levels and occupations; and had lower family incomes with consequences that they were more under the influence of traditional cultural values, that their access to the public domain was limited, and that they were more heavily controlled by their family members, especially by males on whom they were dependent socio-economically and for information about the outside world (Smits and Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2003). In conclusion, they argued that attempts to improve the economic and social situation of Kurdish and Arabic populations in Turkey will be more successful when disadvantaged position of the large group

of women who are not able to speak Turkish was improved (Smits and Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2003). Such conclusion is important in relation to the above expressions of the participant regarding her and her husband's 'being left ignorant', their determination for their children, including the girls, to get education, and the opportunities that the support centre and some public policies provide them with. What I further argue is that the support centres act as sources of linking social capital for people who benefit them, and provide for opportunities of economic inclusion in their conditions of socio-economic disadvantage. Socially linked and economically included, even to limited degrees in terms of absolute measures yet still importantly in respective terms, be-long-ings for them are shaped and strengthened in line with status quo and current balance of power.

An anecdote that one of the training personnel of the centre told was revealing how the centre was received at first and how in time the attitude changed towards it. The neighbourhood where the support centre is had a mixed population of Kurds and Arabs. A male trainer in the centre told about a protest whereby children in the neighbourhood, mostly Kurdish ones, stoned the women support centre when it first opened. They were shouting "*traitor state!*" The trainer in explaining the conditions of the neighbourhood stated "*dust, dirt, mud had been here then, they owe to the state their life, livelihood*", and went on the story telling how he dissuaded the children from stoning the centre saying "*this is your place*".<sup>86</sup> Afterwards he overheard a dialog among some children one warning the other "*this is our place, why are you making harm*". Probably to pull attention to the role of institutions in gaining people's consent and allegiance, as well as to point to a competitive space of hegemony in such work, he further told that "*if you don't take care of, someone else comes and takes care. They repress people knowing very well the weak points of them. The society is like having no character of its own*". Pronouns of "*someone else*" and "*they*" in the above expression denote the subject 'Kurds', who fill in if there is a power vacuum, as he sees the society easily manipulated and almost as an immature organism

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<sup>86</sup> Notes taken from an Expert Interview, (M, 30s, Urfa) 20.10.2011, Urfa

incapable of having a word of itself, thus should be taken care of. Competition is over who will take care. The ideal here is perceived to be a tutelary state that should ‘protect’ its citizens so that other, ‘unwanted’, tutelary may not fill in the gap. The expert participant furiously interrupted to what I had just started mentioning about the perception of lack of investment, without pointing at a place or people, as many of the participants regardless of ethnicity or place of residence claimed it to be a source of problems they lived. He stated that “*the investment being made to Diyarbakır is much more than here [Urfa]*”. His reactive position was clear in yet another expression where he criticises his colleagues in their reluctance in working in the ‘East stating “*teachers are not acting responsibly [thinking] ‘they have sent me to a mountain of the God’ [a remote corner]. If you don’t give it, then the one in the mountain would come and teach!*” “The one in the mountain” refers to a Kurdish subject position that he condemns whether a teacher or a political actor. One more point to be made concerning the trainer’s narrative is that he deliberately avoided expressing the word “Kurd”, as did many other, though not exclusively all, Arab participants of the study. His aversion was clear in the sour look that came over his face when I mentioned Kurds as another subject group of my research. Still, however, pointing at another aspect of the matter he criticised the prejudice in the west, which he personally experienced, as he was chucked out from an online play room<sup>87</sup> after he said he was from Urfa. Having such experience himself, he put the prejudice and exclusion as a ground for “*people*”, always ethnically anonymous in utterance but implying Kurdish people, in their consent to that “*someone else*”. He stated “*if East is seen as a terrorist in the west, people would turn to the east*”, east here much implying the space of Kurdish politics once again. The female trainer at the centre too mentioned the same rationale arguing “*they don’t give [hire] their flats, people outside are guilty as well, if you*

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<sup>87</sup>An online platform whereby he played *okey* with other participants. “Okey” is the Turkish name for the Rummy cube/Rummikub game.

*exclude me I would incline towards the one who accepts me*".<sup>88</sup> Her expression of "*people outside*" pointing to the people in western Turkey, if not Turks, is important in revealing a perception, which differentiated between Turks/the people and the state/the institution. Still, however, it sees the larger society divided along the lines of 'inside' versus 'outside' or 'East' versus 'West'. Despite their sharp criticism of Kurdish political arguments, the two trainers' interpretation of Kurds being discriminated in the west or by the westerners as a ground shaping their identifications is important in two ways. One is in acknowledging the role of violations in forming be-long-ings; the other is in revealing shared territorial be-long-ings, solidified if not formed by the recognition that the attitude of the westerner/the Turkish is prejudiced and exclusive towards the easterner and this leads real consequences for the latter.

Seeing the opportunities and rights of citizenship as she benefits them being so ordinary, to a degree beyond questioning their existence, the narrative of another participant is blended with a nationalistic discourse of integrity of the state, unity of the nation/society, symbols of flag and language and a pious one thankful to God for being the "*citizen of such a state*" (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17]) at least in comparative perspective. Contentment with the status quo as well as the significance attributed to the state in sustaining it, by keeping the society/the nation together, was clear in her narrative below:

State is something to keep the society together; I don't know how to define. [What is the best thing it has ever done for you?] I haven't ever thought in that way, the best thing the state has ever done for me, as I say I am very happy of being peop...a citizen of this country. The best thing the state has ever done for me, I can get my education where I like to; I can travel anywhere I want to; yet these are not extr... Speaking on these is not ... We are not a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country eventually. To what should one make a comparison? If we shall compare it to the Middle Eastern countries, thanks to God I am a citizen of such a state. Existence of the state is important for me, its integrity is important. It is an issue I would never make a concession on. And indeed the way of keeping the society, the nation together is the integrity of the state. This is the shared language, shared flag...These especially the language and the flag are important

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<sup>88</sup> Notes taken from an Expert Interview, (F, 40, Urfa) 20.10.2011, Urfa



matters for me. Despite all our differences, the way for us to hold on together seems to be this to me; I do not know another solution to be honest. Because of this it is important to me. (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17])

Mentioning of the symbols of the nation-state like the official “*language*” and the national “*flag*” as well as the “*integrity of the state*” are important clues for grasping the meanings attributed to the state and its role in the maintenance of the status quo, which are clearly crucial for the participant. State, indeed, was so much an internalized entity and had an untroubled existence in her individual life that her answer to the best thing ever the state has done for her was “*I haven’t ever thought in that way*”. Having entitlements of citizenship were important yet so ‘normal’ and ‘ordinary’ that even naming them was not necessary as if one lived in “*a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country*”. Without doubt in such perception playing part was also her high socio-economic position, as well as the social and symbolic power she was born into as she had a well-known established family, all of which seemed to provide effective sources to solve problems one encounters in the locality, and probably even at wider contexts. Her mention of the 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries and comparison of current situation in Turkey to the Middle Eastern countries is important in revealing the perception that Turkey is ‘better’ compared to those latter countries. Better in what sense? Usually apparent in narratives with a similar comparative focus, regardless of ethnic affiliation of the participants, was a discourse of modernization, whereby some dichotomies of ‘modern’ versus ‘primitive’, ‘developed’ versus ‘underdeveloped’, ‘urban’ versus ‘rural’ imbued the articulation, whereby Turkey stood for the former while the generic term Middle East for the latter.

Below is another example, whereby modern opportunities of life, as well as relative ‘peace’ in the country are mentioned as an essential ground for national belonging, yet are posed as criticism towards those who behave “*ungratefully*”, causing “*events*” and trouble with the claim that they were “*not given*” some “*rights*”. Although not named in this specific quote, and rarely throughout the whole interview, implied here were Kurds in their political claims:

The opportunities of this country are plenty and very beautiful. I mean in other countries, for example now there is war in Syria we see. And people are rebelling; my father had gone to Syria a few times... well that sort of life, like remained from very primitive times, things at very bad condition. Arabs, for instance, acquaintances who live in the village went; went the city of it but there was not even the village life here. State indeed, here it is revealed that state is an institution providing very nice opportunities for people, it provided us with really very good facilities, but don't know, well, we can show ingratitude [*"nankörlük de yapabiliyoruz"*]. [Saying 'we' you don't speak for yourself, do you?] People... For the now lived events [*"olaylar"*] I say, people speak up and say 'I'm not granted this right', that did not happen ... it is given, if you can now still fight for some things, can express things, surely the state had granted you something, your right. If you can go to school, can become a doctor or a teacher, the state had granted that right to you; what else are you standing for? (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10])

Plenty and beautiful opportunities, with full rights to every citizen indiscriminately yet the "*ingratitude*" despite all was a perception shared by many, though not exclusively all, Arab participants. It is important to note, moreover, that for many participants, especially those with low socio-economic status and with low education levels, state equalled very often to the government and since the AKP has been in power for a considerable amount of time now, for the younger generation the state was simply the AKP. Policies of the government stood as a source of contentment and it is believed to have changed many great things. The past in these cases is recalled by oneself or through the memories transmitted from elders as one of pressure and force. Instead, the present is narrated with references to opportunities granted especially to women, to elders, and to children. To my question "what has the state best done for you" the participant expressed the following:

*Valla* [swear to God], it had done everything good. God bless [them] it was not so in the past. For instance, God may not tire Tayyip [Erdoğan] a thousand times; I mean it changed a lot. Been much comfortable. For god's sake, even our honour is much safer now. Trusting, we try to, all over. It's been good, it's been very good; it was not like this in the past. [How was it in the past?] In the past, how, there was not this much courage, not much stuff. Well, it has been good I would say. For example things [places] like this were not open. No such thing. Even a woman going to somewhere, I mean couldn't do, they did not allow it [*"hoşgörmiylerdi"*]. Now all has been changed, became good. May God be pleased! Happily he did [*"iyiki de yapmış"*]. It has been good (F, 30, Arab/Kurd, Urfa [U11]).

‘Comfort’, ‘trust’, ‘safety’, ‘honour’, ‘courage’, and ‘opportunity’ were uttered as signs of the ‘good’ of the present as against the ‘evil’ of the past. The perception that “*much has been changed*”; everything “*becom[ing] nice*” and “*totally different*” was repeated by the participant with reference to city as well. Stating “*in the city man has become different; well in a way it is like in a big city*”, she also mentioned Urfa as a developing, modernizing, changing city. Still, however the mention should be thought within the limits of her experience, which is also defined through habits of having “*got used to it*” and “*hav[ing] no courage to go out anywhere else*” (F, 30, Arab/Kurd, Urfa [U11]). Still, importantly, present is seen to be full of ‘opportunities’ that state has granted even from within a very confined life.

A similar perspective was put forward not only by Arabs but also by some Kurds as well, as were in a number of other cases revealed in this chapter. It was especially visible in Urfa. A participant narrating on the importance of state with references to chaos that would otherwise burst out stated “*well, if there is no state it is difficult for people to get on each other. Life conditions are difficult. What if, if there was no state over us? I think there would be terrible things; I mean it wouldn't be good. State reminds good things to me*” (F, 17, Kurd, Urfa [U16]). From such a generalized discourse she ended up in a more particular one woven with her own experiences to answer what the best thing the state has done for her life was. She spoke in a certain and self-assured manner:

Well, do you know why I could not go to school? We were not doing well enough. Books, books were not given out then. Look, now they hand out books even for the high schools. That's why at least; the first thing coming to my mind is that it provides these books, so I think it's good. Because schooling, I would have wanted to go to school very much, loved it a lot, but because there were not those books, because we were not doing well economically they withdrew me from school. That's why; well because they support students for school I am happy. It [state] means good things to me. (F, 17, Kurd, Urfa [U16])

Delivering school books, like other free services the current government has provided through reformed social policies, reached the everyday lives of many

people living in vulnerable conditions. Poverty coming together with the widespread conservative attitude withholding girls from education appears to be the cause for the above participant not to be able to get education despite her wish to do so. Thus, being a very practical and enabling practice, free delivery of school books and stationery marked for the participant, as for many others, the epitome of the state which “*means and reminds good things*”. One has to note that in this case, as in many other cases, piety of the individual is also another important element in her embracing attitude of the current government, which is equated to what the state stands for at present. She merges at will her religious and traditionalist background with the symbolism of nationalist and official discourses. The tension between being a Kurd and yet rejecting Kurdish identity politics and political movement, together with the straightforward alliance between pious and nationalist discourses are apparent below:

I say that I am from Urfa; but sometimes out of necessity, when someone [in Urfa] asks about our village then I say that we came here from *Suruç*.<sup>89</sup>Ummm being Kurdish, I mean there is both the good and the bad among Kurds. Ultimately, our mother tongue is our mother tongue; but we act accordingly, I mean where [to speak] Turkish or Kurdish. We do whatever ought to be done, praise to God [*“elhamdülillah”*]. But not each Kurd is the same. You see a Kurdish family, Kurdish terrorist obviously... Then another family is also Kurd but not like that, that’s up to the idea and reason of a person, I think so, each has a different one... some support terror... I don’t think like that. I do love our country very much. There is a state love inside me. Reasonably, our state is better than them [the Kurds]. I mean our prime minister, our current state; for sure the state ten years ago was not good at all. This is much better. So we love our prime minister. It has become really good in all aspects, but this terror thing does not permit it to be much better. (F, 17, Kurd, Urfa [U16])

Apparent above is the perception of a significant break between the state ‘at present’ [the AKP government] and before it ‘in the past’. Visibly the former is embraced and praised. Yet a comparative attitude is revealed in the participant’s expression that “*the state is better than them*”, the latter referring to Kurds in any potential political hegemony of theirs. She is content with the status quo as the ‘threat of Kurds’ is perceived to be there. Her Kurdness defined along mother-

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<sup>89</sup> A town of Urfa, inhabited mostly by Kurds

tongue and with “*love of state*” and “*love of country*” in her is set against “*Kurdish terrorist[s]*”, who are strictly criticized for impeding the state from being “*much better*”. Space is also marked in her construction of be-long-ings as she selectively identifies with different places to denote her origin. She gives details about her home-town only “*out of necessity*” when specifically asked, as ‘being from Suruç’ discloses her Kurdness. ‘Being from Urfa’, on the other hand, is a generic way of defining herself, and in line with her valuing the city above village. Moreover, it has connotations of both being ‘urban’ and being ‘Turkish’, since people in the city centre usually define themselves as local *Urfalı*, *şehirli*, or Turks, which all in all also imply being ‘established’. Important signifiers of how she constructed be-long-ings were that during the interview she spoke Turkish fluently and with care, which she was proud of when noted; she stressed that she loved Turks and was motivated to marry a Turk; did not want to live further east, was content to live in Urfa, yet could live in a western city, especially in Istanbul, as she knew from others that there one could practice her religion freely. Her relation with Turkishness is close to an aspiration of gaining status and being included both in the local and in the wider dominant social structure.

Making of unmaking of be-long-ings in this part were basically woven around the narratives of rights and opportunities of being a citizen, with the state received as a power helping and backing the latter as a service provider. State is a modernizing actor aiming at development, while simultaneously a guarantor for security and unity, which are perceived to be burning issues. The oppositional and reactive position vis-à-vis Kurdish political claims; and the comparative look regarding Middle Eastern countries; and the compromise for the status quo are also the building blocks of one’s be-long-ings.

### 3.1.3. *'Internalized State'*: Compliant and Negotiating Political Attitude

Some participants made it clear that even in cases where the 'opportunities' mentioned above were not granted properly, or were only insufficient for the individuals at stake there was still not a reaction of Arabs against the state, but a *compliant attitude* towards it. A participant articulated the below narrative the following when I asked what kind of a thing the state was for him in his childhood:

We had never seen! To be honest we had never seen it! We neither had had a hospital, well, nor a health care centre, barely a school, comi... were sending teachers, sure they were sending inexperienced teachers sometimes, as I already said at times very friendly teachers also came. But we then knew the state as a person sending men [teachers] for the school. I mean when I was a child, personally for me, in a child's mind as you just said, there was nothing as the state. Well, they intimidated us with the soldier saying 'the soldier will come and take your father away'; because then the affects of the coup still continued in those years. There was nothing else. [...] I mean, in Harran region, in Akçakale region; there was by no means any problem against the state. Only after being grown up, having read, researched and seen, [I realised that] though that much thing had happened in 90's we were by no means troubled by them (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1])

State being nothing more than "*a person*" who sends teachers [*"men"*] to school them and a soldier who could "*come and take [their] father away*" are important pieces of memory signifying what state was for a child: authority and fear embodied by civil servants, who were more than often men. Even though he explained the image of the soldier with the still continued affects of the 1981 coup, it is more likely that the image was related to the armed conflict which was at its peak in 1990s, during which he spent his early childhood. Yet it seems that they were not much aware of what was going on around, which he affirmed "*certainly not!*" He explained such 'unawareness' with limited relation to television as only TRT, the state channels, were received in the villages then, which multiplied only in late 1990s after the analogue satellites had arrived. In a nutshell the place of the state for Arabs in Harran/Akçakale region he put as "*well, as I said we did not see the state but we loved it. I mean there was nothing*

*opposing, a proble... an affair against it. Yet indeed it was neither of any use to us!*"(M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). The participant's reproach that they "*had never seen*" the state reflects a retrospective look, possible only by comparison to more recent observations and experiences concerning how things could have been different. This is important in revealing that at the time of experience it was simply 'the order of things'.

The perception of 'the normal' was articulated by other participants as well. One replied my question asking what sort of a thing the state was in his childhood, stressing that they "*internalized*" it however it was:

We had internalized it, internalized anyway. It was that you would attain higher positions if you get education, if you work, you would become director-general, would become rector. We did not have such a [negative] thing; we did not have such a thing. Later on we saw for sure that people were hindered, like 'you won't come here [at this position but] the other shall'. I mean if one deserves it or not is not important; no problem if and only if you are on my side. (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5])

What is reflected above is that such "*internalization*" of the state, the system, the order of things is much about accepting what you already live, rather than on factual comparative experiences of life. It appears that such internalization reflected 'trust' towards the promises of the state like education, which provided an ideal of upward mobility for the individual not only to have a job, but to attain higher positions. Yet only after attaining such factual comparative experiences of life, most probably after growing up and being socialized in various circles, there came the realization and an implied criticism that the system was not based much on meritocracy that is the capability and competence of the individual who seeks upward mobility but on patronage relations and determined by one's position and "*side*" within the constellation of power relations.

That sort of 'internalization' was also implied by others in that relation with the state was so smooth and unproblematic that even having a 'notion' of it, which probably required a reflection, was seen as a 'political act'. One participant

stated that “*when children we did not have such things [in mind] indeed, nothing about the political things... Guess it was so in the family that we did not have interest in. But I shall put the state as an institution that a nation has*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). Both the participant and her younger sister, whom I interviewed together, were civil servants, the younger a teacher at a public school, the elder a medical personnel at a public hospital. Their father was a teacher and now retired from public sector. In their individual lives, thus, state proved to be source of secure employment and retirement with many other grants it provided. Both sisters claimed that they would not prefer to work at private sector for “*it is not secure*”, “*it does not feel safe*”, “*it does not provide guarantee, unless you have a higher, better to say a backing or a ‘dayı’ [maternal uncle]<sup>90</sup>*” behind you, thus “*you can easily be set aside*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]; F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). The elder sister further commented drawing on her experiences that:

It seems not possible to work for an established company for a long time. [...] The most guaranteed employment is state employment. It provides security to you, we may have some difficulties and inadequacies, but the only institution that we can lean our backs safely is the state. My salary is paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> regularly, friends in private sector waits for 15 to 20 days. People have lives, family, children, they need to live on. The safest is the state [public] employment. (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10])

Interestingly, however, to my question whom they vote for, the elder sister replied that they “*indeed haven’t much voted*” in elections so far and don’t know whom their father votes for. The elder sister stated and the younger confirmed that they “*don’t like any political ideas*”, and “*only political idea of [them] is Turkish nationalism, Arab nationalism that’s it [laughs]*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). Importantly thus, although they are much positive about the state, homeland, or Turkishness at an abstract level, they don’t participate in elections, a very basic citizenship right and decision making process. Even if they have affirmed my question that if their abstention from voting was a ‘reaction’, overall

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<sup>90</sup> “*Dayısı olmak*” [literally: having a maternal uncle] is an expression used to denote that one has some power backing behind him, and receives the patronage of that power



their narrative reveals that it was more of an act of nonparticipation, not being active even at a very basic level, and accepting what it is as it is. “*Arab nationalism*” the elder sister mentions above is not something in conflict with “*Turkish nationalism*” in their perception, yet still she is more inclined to the latter as she stressed at many points, while her younger sister is explicitly eager to identify with the former. The “*accepting*” manner of Arabs in their political attitude was stressed by the elder sister in the following, clarifying their relation with ‘nationalism’:

Well, Arabs have a very interesting *MHPlik*,<sup>91</sup> nationalist things; they are more close to Turkish nationalism indeed. And accepting...what is more is we have the habit of accepting, we would accept immediately. I have never been disturbed saying I’m Turk, I’m Arab. If I live in this country, I shouldn’t feel disturbed. (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10])

Many Arabs, especially in Urfa, being supporters of the Turkish Nationalist Movement Party [*MHP*] or being “*ülkücü*” were mentioned by others as well, yet varyingly with criticism, in astonishment, or in pride as I will refer elsewhere below. Clear in the expression of “*the habit of accepting*” is the compliant political attitude of many Arab participants. Habits being ordinary ways of doing, thinking, seeing the phenomena around us is a good indicator of the relation of Arabs to the state. The conditions were usually so undisturbed by the acts and presence of the latter that not much led to a radical change in the unreflective behaviour of the former. This being somewhat a simplistic conclusion, still reveals a salient pattern of be-long-ings among the Arab participants.

Not unrelated to the accepting attitude as the above participant called it is an allying attitude of Arabs with the state or the governing power. The claims of some Kurdish participants during the field research could also be thought within such context. One example was that “*Arabs are pro system; they are where the*

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<sup>91</sup> Being a supporter and advocate of the Nationalist Action Party

*power is, along with the one who holds the power*".<sup>92</sup> In an informal interview an Arab participant claimed that "*Arabs have been the people of power anytime, they sided with the [holder of the] power and adapted to the changes in the power*"<sup>93</sup>. Changing voting behaviours on a collective basis were mentioned for Arabs in Urfa in that "*in the past, they have voted all for the DoğruYol, for the ANAP, for the DSP, and for the CHP*".<sup>94</sup> While for Arabs in Mardin it was said that they voted mostly for the AKP recently -at the time of the interview- whereas before they voted for Democrat Party and at some period for CHP. A participant indicating the fluctuation in the political behaviour of Arabs in Harran, where he is from, referred to an allegorical language his mother used about her own experience:

It changed [a lot over time]; if we go into the politics of Harran region we won't be able to finish it till the morning. Whoever is in power, they would follow after it. Well in my mother's words 'we have all voted for the bee, rode the horse, lighten the bulb, raised the crescent' she says. Also 'ate the wheat', the symbol of the Welfare Party was wheat you know. 'Nothing, there is nothing that changes!' (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1])

"*Bee*" standing for the party emblem of ANAP, "*horse*" for DYP, "*bulb*" for AKP, "*crescent*" for MHP, and "*wheat*" for REFAH is a delicate expression of the fact that Arab political behaviour altered within a wide range of preferences and the ultimate decision was defined according to "*whoever is in power*", as the participant himself uttered. He defined the political attitude in his family to be a "*conservative*" one and that "*his family was inclined towards the one who used religious elements the most*" (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). He basically refers to

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<sup>92</sup> From an expert interview, Urfa, 14.10.2011

<sup>93</sup> From the field notes taken in Mardin

<sup>94</sup> Although he was not a participant of the research, he accompanied one of the participants during my interview with him from the point he jumped in the place, as they were working for the same Arab Civil organization, where we conducted the interview. He is about 19-20 years old, Arab, from Urfa. Here he names respectively DYP [The Right Path Party], ANAP [Motherland Party], DSP [Democratic Leftist Party], and CHP [People's Republican Party].

voting for the right and central right parties and this again was a visible pattern among Arab participants of the study especially in the recent past. One further note is that posing a seeming challenge towards the arguments of accepting attitude of Arabs of whoever is in power, the participant himself is an active advocate and member of “*the youth branch of an opposition party, HalkınSesi*” in his words”.<sup>95</sup> His statement that “*we don’t have a specific hatred towards the current government, yet I am in the idea that they have many wrongs*” could be seen as a sign of an opposing, critical, and challenging political attitude existing among the younger generation, as I will mention in the continuing below. Yet criticism of the government, emergent but not widespread, should still be taken as different from the alliance and loyalty felt towards the state. One observation of mine in the field that there were many Arabs working in the public institutions, or social centres under the governorate or municipality in Urfa [AKP municipality], most defining themselves as ‘Turk’, all distancing themselves from Kurds, and all grateful to the state could also be understood in line with such pattern and as a sign of their integration both to the local and the central power structure.<sup>96</sup>

Many cases in this part could be understood with regard to a pattern that was visible for the Arab participants of this study, which I define as the ***compliant and negotiating political attitude***. It is basically taking advantage of the existing power relations trying to sustain one’s position vis-à-vis the power holder, whoever it may be. Internalization of the existent order of things; accepting attitude towards the power holder and alignment with it; being in tune with the status quo and taking advantage of the power balance established thereof are important elements of such attitude as were revealed in this part. Having already mentioned presence of critical approaches towards power holders, especially

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<sup>95</sup> The People’s Voice Party, HSP, or with a widely used abbreviation HAS PARTI, literally meaning “Pure Party”, was a conservative political party founded in 2010 and dissolved itself in 2012 to join the ruling party, AKP.

<sup>96</sup> Notes from the research diary, Urfa, 20.10.2011

raised by the youngsters, below I will cover criticisms in a wider context. Here not only the memory of past direct physical violating experiences coming from state authorities, but also the experience of structural and symbolic violence will be analyzed.

### **3.2. Criticizing the State: Violent Practicalities of Everyday Life**

One basic argument throughout the dissertation is that the experience or non-experience of violence came out to be an important mechanism affecting the processes of be-long-ings, within this context specifically perception of the state and the function it has for the individual lives. Arabs in Turkey were not exposed to direct political violence; at least to a recent, systematic, long-term, categorical violence targeting them as a group of people in mass, as the length, depth, width of violent deeds are important in forming and deforming be-long-ings as well as their content, tools, and the actors. Although they have well been exposed to structural and symbolic violations, not being exposed to political violence defined in this way is an important determinant in making their be-long-ings.

Even in cases where some historical experiences of state violence that Arabs also underwent were uttered, still their strong allegiance to the state was stressed. In one such case the participant mentioned that in 1980s, the military coup period, Arab men wearing “*zıbın*” were attacked by security forces, their “*zıbın being torn down full-length just because they were wearing it*”; or in other cases they “*took out puşi on man’s head and stepped on it*” (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5]). He continued in determination, however, stating “*could do that, but never that to send us somewhere else other than Turkey, they won’t be able to do that. I mean even if we die, our grave will be here! No one should get this out of his mind, whatever difficulties may be lived*” (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5]). Upon my question if those were lived in Urfa, the below dialog came to forth between the

participant and the accompanying key person of mine,<sup>97</sup> both Arab men of similar age:

U5: yes yes.

KP: I saw it myself.

U5: not the Republican era, it was 80s, I mean not that far, only in 80s were lived these things

KP: as I was 8-9 years old, when the gendarmerie came [to the village], we all put on our pants out of fear [instead of *zibin*]

U5: not those, these were lived just yesterday

KP: these were lived just yesterday. We are picking tomato, cucumber etc. in my father's garden. He takes them to the gendarmerie station, the commander says, I won't take you in like this [wearing *zibin*], change your clothes then I shall.

U5: this is something like those in Ulus [Ankara]; when the parliament was built, the villagers were not let in. The villagers cannot go by Çankaya [Ankara], cannot walk there. The same thing, the violence they made us to live here. It was very severe in here, very severe. The man buys tobacco, wrapping tobacco, the man does not have money to buy it for God's sake; [the security forces] take out the tobacco and tread it out. These were lived. It was almost yesterday, not too far, just yesterday they were lived. But still no one [Arab] would, whatever they do, none would draw gun to the police or the soldier, would not pull a gun on. Well, everyone shall know this as it is. I mean Arabs do not have such thing.

Apparently, the participant [U5] tries to explain the acts of security forces within a set of tension areas, defining especially Republican era but also the state policies in general, that of urban versus rural, modern versus traditional, central versus peripheral. Reference that similar things were lived in the capital city in the early establishment period implies that they were not specifically directed to Arabs but basically to the “*villagers*” who do not dress ‘appropriately’. In this case they were men wearing white long dresses called “*zibin*” instead of modern trousers, or again men covering their head with large clothes call “*puşi*”, which also Kurdish men have used commonly. Tobacco, referred in the other example, was often ‘smuggled’, as smuggling had long been the way of petty trade as the city stood on border and border crossing was an everyday activity up until very recently, and this was probably the reason for the attack of the soldiers to the

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<sup>97</sup> He is separately interviewed as an expert, as he was the founder and leader of a civil society organization in Urfa; here he is signed as “KP”, standing for Key Person.

tobacco sellers. Whatever the rationale beyond, if ever there is one, what experienced was direct violence coming from the state security forces. The repeatedly used expression by both participants that these instances “*were lived just yesterday*”, meaning they were very recently experienced, and the one that it was a “*very severe*” violence are significant in pointing at how they were received by the ordinary people. Still, however, the infuriated focus that nothing of the kind will deter Arabs from identifying with the state or the country, nor to send them away, or in any case resort to violence against security forces seems to be used to frame and fix the political position of Arabs in Turkey as one of alliance with the state no matter what. All these are important in revealing multiple aspects of belonging formation processes.

Apart from few cases revealed during the study, many others pointed to an overall non-exposure of Arabs to direct or any other systematic political violence in comparison to the other two subject groups of the research. The argument partly is that such non-violence in political terms had a defining role for Arabs forming their relation with and perception of the state, despite the structural and symbolic forms of violence they have gone through. Below is a critical conversation that took place among four women coming from different ethnic backgrounds revealing formative role of violence on be-long-ings in a comparative perspective. The participants lived in the same neighbourhood and worked at a Women’s Cooperative initiated after a finalized AB Project where I visited them. Being among the participants of the courses given in the frame of the project they in the end were the few who came together to establish the cooperative under the guidance of the project coordinators. I interviewed the women at the cooperative garden as they were labouring together cracking olives to pickle them. Kurd, Zaza, and Alevi women having been exposed to state violence but Arab not, the interview proved a case of striking comparison. Below I quote at length some interaction between them as it is important in revealing their different positioning vis-à-vis the state. Denotations for the participants

should be read as the following:<sup>98</sup> **A1** (F, 37, Arab, Urfa), **A** (F, 37, Alevi, Urfa), **K1** (F, 22, Kurd, Urfa), **K2** (F, 36, Kurd, Urfa).<sup>99</sup> Expressions of the Arab woman are given in *italics* to make it visible among others regarding her reflection on violence:

A1. The state was fear in what they [Kurds] tell, the state was repression; they say for example it's always raided on the villages. Should there be an escapee, a runaway, they feared the state a lot.

A: We had it too, there were the revolutionaries ["devrimciler"]<sup>100</sup>, and they raided on them. [...] against the aghas, they burnt the grain of aghas.

A1: We [Arabs] haven't seen fear so that we know fear.

A: I have seen the fear, military raided on Sırrın<sup>101</sup> very often

A1: We haven't seen such a thing

A: I was child

Ö: what Turk meant for you?

A1: Turk? Turk was the soldier for us. Turkish state was that which was protecting [smiling]; I mean Turk was who was protecting both us and our state. [...]

K1: It was nothing for us.

[...]

K2: the state for us still is terror. Nothing else! Even a few days ago we have seen the harm of it. Daughter of an acquaintance was in the mountain, was death, I mean she was killed here, and my mother went to her funeral, she always does. She went, and of course the police attacked on people there. This was in Suruç, about a month ago. When the police attacked, my mother, since they were beating a youngster, it was indeed twenty of them beating a youngster, my mother as she knew him, wanted to rescue him and happened to pull a police officer. While trying to pull the second they started to blackjack her, broke her arm; put in prison for three days. She was taken to the court. We still live that trouble. For that reason the state is terror for us.

A: [state is] a harvester ["biçerdöver"]

K2: but we don't have a problem with Turkishness ["Turks" she mean but uses my words], after all we did not have anything [problem] in the country we are. But since our state exposes discrimination we see that terror.

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<sup>98</sup> There was a fifth woman at the beginning of the interview, yet after a while she left for kitchen to cook lunch for the others, which seemed to be a common practice taken in turns by one of them each day. The fifth woman was Zaza, aged 30, from Siverek/Urfa.

<sup>99</sup> Subjected to forced-migration from Muş, a city in Eastern Anatolia.

<sup>100</sup> The leftist people, who claimed to have a socialist ideology and were engaged in the leftist political movements of 1970s.

<sup>101</sup> An Alevi village of Urfa, which now became a neighbourhood

[...]

A1: We haven't seen any trouble from the state so that we shall decry it.

[...]

K1: But there is not an Arab problem as there is a Kurdish problem.

K2: Well Kurds have many problems.

[...]

A1: *well the state did not have a problem with us. [...] either in our own business nor in our relation with the state we haven't seen malignity.*

A: Indeed, our Alevi youngsters had seen. Because they were dealing with revolutionary things, no need to lie here. How many people they enjailed. Freed some, some ran away from Turkey, to Sweden or else after being in prison for a long time. Many people had lived these troubles, now there is not such a trouble. Our trouble now is that we see in TV, either the soldiers or those in the mountain, we are really sorry for them, I know none of them but in all conscience I am sorry. They both die; they shall find a solution to this anymore. What a pity!

K1: Yes, our entire wish is that, we are all like that, we are all so. For so many years ... We wish peace for our Turkey.

A: I don't even turn on the TV these days.

A1. *Those in the mountain... the soldiers.... we are all brothers. The world is big enough to take in all of us. For what are we fighting for? All this torture shall continue no more!* (Focus Group III, Urfa)

Direct and clear reference of the Arab participant to what Kurds have gone through, being supported by the narratives of others, including the Alevi, is important in clarifying the experience of non-violence of the Arab at least in direct, physical and political terms. It shows the relation between being exposed to direct state violence and de-identifying with it. Not seen any “*fear*”, “*malignity*”, “*trouble*” coming from the state, the Arab participant [A1] makes the relation clear in stating “*we haven't seen any trouble from the state that we shall decry it*”. On the contrary, her perception of the state as a “*protector*” stands in outright contrast to the perceptions of those who have been exposed to direct state violence seeing it as “*terror*”, a “*harvester*”, at best “*nothing*”. All wishing for an end to the ongoing conflict, which massively affects their everyday lives, and feeling the pain for the loss of both sides is important in pointing at the will for normalization of life, for non-violence, and for peace.

The relation between direct state violence and formation of be-long-ings was highlighted by another Arab, who was existent in a group interview with teachers at an NGO in Mardin, which he was a member of. He was the only Arab among



a number of Kurds in the group interview. His position as an activist with many Kurdish comrades at an NGO was itself exceptional for an Arab, the only one I personally came across in the field and among the few I heard of. He asserted that *“if the Kurdish struggle for liberation had been initiated by Arabs, the state would similarly attack on them too”* (M, late 50s, Arab, Mardin).<sup>102</sup> The relation between the state and Arabs is conceived in this assertion not as an essential and static but a contextual one. Concerning the position of Arabs in relation to the state he stated that *“those whose mother tongue is Arabic were suppressed, they were left aside”* (M, late 50s, Arab, Mardin). Thus what Kurds called as ‘the integration to the system’, or ‘assimilation’ of Arabs always in a tone of criticism, he called as ‘suppression’ by the state. Such perception coming from a minority, an Arab among the majority Kurds, is noteworthy in terms of power dynamics. The expression *“those whose mother tongue is Arabic”* standing for ‘Arabs’ may be seen, on the other hand, as a political discourse influenced by the language of Kurdish political movement, for which right claiming over mother tongue has become a touchstone for a long period. Revealing a rare account of direct physical political violence by public actors, moreover, he compared his case to a Kurd noting *“my mother tongue is Arabic, I was tortured as well, but it was not one tenth of that he [Kurd] was exposed to”* (M, late 50s, Arab, Mardin). His articulations reveal and remind that the way of exertion and approach of the state matters on group identifications as well as how systematic and categorical is that exertion. The case further reveals that personal experience is critical in defining individual positions, details of which I will be elaborating below.

### **3.2.1. Personal Experience Matters**

What many cases revealed was that problems experienced in individual lives at practical level mattered and brought forth criticism of the acts and policies of the state despite the strong discourse of loyalty to the state and the accepting attitude towards it. In other words, practicalities of life usually served as a direct ground

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<sup>102</sup> Notes taken during an expert interview, a group of teachers. Mardin, 4.7.2011

to specify the problems compared to an attitude of generalized and abstracted embracement of the state's rationale as it is.

A defining observation of mine came in Urfa immediate after the Van earthquake in 2011. I came across at the lobby of the hotel where I was staying for the research, the two personnel watching news on TV as the after-earthquake scenes were broadcasted. These were men at their 40s,<sup>103</sup> whom up to that day I took the opportunity to talk as I came across them. They had a proudly stress on the good relations of Urfa with the state as a relatively peaceful city in the region that was 'free from terror'. They seemed to have no criticism whatsoever towards the state policies. Yet, there was a visible change in their attitude that day, as they now spoke in anger about the state seeing on TV the helpless conditions of the victims of the disaster. When I mentioned the reported inadequacy of the relief tents to be delivered to the people, and asked if they arrived or not as it was a hot issue after the earthquake, one of them burst out: "*they would have made it arrive if it were in Istanbul. It means these regions are different, it shows that the east of the country and west are seen to be different*"<sup>104</sup>. He then smiled bashfully and timidly for saying these to me. The other personnel, on the other hand, added furiously: "*they say we couldn't send them because the roads too were cracked. You have many helicopters, send by them!*" This was an important occasion revealing how practicalities mattered in forming the attitude towards the state. Though it was not directly individual lives of the participants at stake here, the fact that it was a devastating tragedy that an enormous number of people not far from them were undergoing at that moment had a great impact on them in expressing anger and criticism towards the state. How the state institutions responded to the earthquake and dealt with the issue revealed in their eye a 'regional difference' between "*the east of the country and*

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<sup>103</sup> I assume them to be Arab, but I do not have the relevant information.

<sup>104</sup> Field notes taken in Urfa, 24.10.2011

*west*". Were it for the latter one, all the resources of the state were believed to be mobilized immediately. The city Van being populated mostly by Kurds being set aside, 'the region' is perceived to be a measure for the differentiating reaction of the state. Spatial be-long-ings in "*these regions*", the expression denoting Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia, thus materialized as the principle ground of identification for the men. The case proving the contingency of positions with regard to practicalities of life is important in grasping the wider context of formation of be-long-ings.

In other cases personal experiences were uttered as a base for criticism of the state policies and practices as well as the existing order of things. A case in point emerged in a stationery store in Urfa. The man running the store, normally expressing a mild attitude, complained that his earnings dropped significantly after the government started to deliver books for free to the school children. Within such context he criticized the contents of the books saying "*the books that state delivers are empty, nothing inside them. Teachers are now getting them upon agreeing with a private publisher*".<sup>105</sup> As he was left outside the loop, whereby the rules of economic gain were re-established, he showed disapproval of the policy, and importantly criticized the insufficient contents of the books overtly. Important to note is that the policy of free book delivery was praised by many poor as I have already referred above. Thus, how everyday life is affected at an individual basis becomes an important criterion defining the stance of the people towards the state.

Two other participants, the sisters interviewed together, normally expressed their close identification with the state and its symbols, defined an 'accepting attitude of Arabs' as I have referred above, and articulated a discourse of loyalty to the state like many Arabs I came across during the research. Yet based on their personal experiences both had criticisms about their own sectors of occupation, education and health, where they defined "*lacks*" or "*flaws*". The elder sister was

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<sup>105</sup> Field notes taken in Urfa, 18.10.2011

more inclined to see them as inadequacies indispensable for all systems and as the nature of things. The younger sister, however, was more prone to specify the problems she had experienced or observed in many areas of her life. She brought up an issue, for instance, that as a graduate of a 2-year Child Development Department at Open Education University she did not have the right to transfer to a 4-year department, thus could not be employed as a preschool teacher, although all other 4-year faculty graduates, regardless of what department they studied, were employed as preschool teachers after taking pedagogy classes. She criticized the state education policy regulating this implementation as it created “*inequality*” between the graduates, because the training she got specific to the area could not be compared to others who lacked it. Upon other experiences, she also criticized the legislative system in that “*there is no one deputy who works properly*”, claiming “*we have some demands but there is no one listening to us or so, that is the problem*”. She gave an example stating “*our youth [Arab youth] has spoken to them [“minister from Urfa”] for example, [they said] ‘okay we’ll do, we’ll solve’ but no progress [so far]*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). She referred to the need of equality of representation and criticized as well the patronage relations dominating politics in follows: “*to each one a deputy could address in my opinion, why? We say deputy of nation; we don’t say it for nothing. Well ‘I will help the one who is behind me, you stay there’, there should not be such a thought, a silly thought...*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). Basically criticizing the relations of clientelism, she also mentioned lack of efficient representation in policy making and implementation as general problems in Turkey effecting Arabs as well.

Below is another narrative whereby shifting meanings of the state was revealed as the life experience and the way to relating to the state changed. The participant first mentioned what the state was in her childhood stating “*it was for me an institution employing people, taking care and looking after people; perhaps as you have already said it was because my father was a state officer, I mean my father got his salary from the state and in that way looked after us*”.

Yet stressing the change in such perception she added in a tense laugh “*now, the state is a complex world for me. I wish it were still as in my childhood*” (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). Bearing on her experience she talked in a certain and furious manner, as she had to drop out doctoral education in Ankara in her very first year, because that her head was covered “*started to cause greater problems*”. Her mimics were also revealing her anger. As she talked about state she had her fist clenched and shook off her hand as if pushing something that she didn’t want to come close.<sup>106</sup>

The most simple and the current, if I can’t get to the school [university] with my head covered, it means the state does not provide me sufficient opportunities. I mean if, by comparison if you can get to the same school easily and me not, it means that the state doesn’t grant us the same and equal opportunities and the same and equal freedoms. If it needs to be struggled against, yes at this point I would do so. And I would like to take side with the just one. Since I am human, if I am an individual, if I have freedom and rights, the state should provide them for me, it ought to give me the freedom and my rights, if it cannot, then in my opinion the state is not working adequately at the moment. (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4])

The state being obliged to provide individuals under its jurisdiction with “*equal opportunities and the same and equal freedoms*” and “*rights*” is an important assertion not so frequently and clearly expressed by an Arab participant. Although in generic terms she defined the state as “*an organization that defends the independence and freedom of the nation in all aspects*”, she also emphasized that “*the state should be an organization which provides you with comfort and ease regardless of your religion, language or race*”. This latter one is important in its implication of the individual position vis-à-vis the state, an individual stripped of its religious, linguistic, racial affiliations and exists as an individual entitled with rights and freedoms that state ought to grant and guard against others’ and importantly its own intrusion. This ought to be the position of a citizen regardless of its differences. The narrative is also rare in its reference to “*struggle against*”, by implication, the existing state rationale. Although the ban

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<sup>106</sup> Field notes taken in Urfa, 22.10.2011

on entering university with heads covered was not still on implementation at the time of the interview, and her sister was then attending university as such, her past experience stood as violation, political yet also structural, as her potential to continue doctoral education was impeded by the act of the law. “*Struggle*” and “*to take side with the just one*” in the face of such ‘violence’ materializes in the participant’s life as engagement with politics as an active member and head of the women’s branch of an opposition party then. “*I don’t believe that we benefit from equal rights. If I did, believe me I wouldn’t do politics, it is so tiring [laughs] a job [laughs]*” (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]) is a revealing expression in this sense. Her distrust is fed by her perception of the uneven conditions for rights demand in that “*in this country if you have a loud voice, if you have power then you are right, you have those rights; [but] if you are beaten and battered...*”. Such perception was again fed by her personal experience, this time not as the victim but the privileged, in seeing “*people, who have already waited for 6 or 7 months for his angio turn to come*” at hospital “*queuing up for angio*” “*seated in chairs*” in a “*very small, dark, damp and dirty place downstairs*”, whose cardiac operation would probably be done by an “*assistant*”. Her father, on the other hand, having paid for the Professor’s private consultation underwent his angio operation “*in sterilized surgery under supervision of professors and assistants*”. Her rhetorical questions like “*is this equal right in your opinion? What is the difference between these two persons? Are one’s blood light and the other’s dark? Or that deserves dying but this deserves living?*” were not seeking answers but putting evidence for her argument of inequality of people in Turkey. Similarly, the case of favouritism of the “*man*” with “*a title never get[ing] into queue*” but directly heading the counter to have “*his problem solved*” despite all those “*behind who have been waiting for hours*” (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]) were examples of inequalities in terms of class, status, symbolic power and social capital. The witness and direct experience of violation brings an awareness of how ‘things’ are in practice, thus a questioning of the ‘order of things’ shaping be-long-ings of individuals accordingly. Here the participant longs for equal rights and opportunities as well as freedom in her choice of dressing and self-

expression. This defines the ground of citizenship for her, an unfilled yet to be achieved ground even if through struggle.

Complete distrust to the state was very unusual among Arab participants. Yet a rare case was revealed by one young participant when asked about her expectation from the state. She stated:

We all see... I do not expect much from the state institutions; nothing indeed. Neither they are trustable, nor treat people in an earnest manner. I think they should be reformed from top to bottom [...] All. I don't know where they will end up, but they are not good [smiles]. (F, 22, Arab/Kurd, Mardin [M16])

Such articulation of utter distrust seemed to have been fed by her specific social relations, and personal experience witnessing Kurdish discourse somewhat more closely as an offspring of a mixed marriage of an Arab father and a Kurd mother. Although the social relations between the two sides of the family were relatively distant, even limited socialization as a member of the maternal Kurdish family had an affect to alter her perspective to the societal and political matters. Still, as she often engaged in quarrels, however quotidian they may be, with her brothers at home who identified with Arabness and Turkish nationalism and were reactive against Kurdish political discourse, her position is more of an individual one, which probably was also nourished by her then continuing education at a prestigious university known by its politically opponent character.

Apart from few cases, revealed in many examples above was a general attitude where the participants normally not expressed much criticism about the rationale of the state, rather mostly uttered strong allegiance towards it and its symbols especially in the face of a 'threatening other', which was Kurds, non-Muslims, or external forces in many cases. Importantly, however, when the acts and policies of the state affected their individual lives, displeasure was uttered openly and directly. Structural violence and symbolic violence were other two points of reference when such criticisms were articulated as I will mention in the following.

### 3.2.2. Violating Structures and Citizenship Based Demands

Many expressions of discontent pointed at structural violence in terms of the lack of public investments, inadequate services, underdevelopment, and bad policies all leading a region-based discrimination whereby Arabs too were affected as the other groups living in the region.

One participant stated that *“we do not have troubles as Arabs to tell the truth, as compared, for instance, to our Kurdish brothers. But if you take it regionally, we have troubles at the regional context”* (M, 24, Arab, Urfa [U3]). This was an occasional but significant comparison of Arabs to Kurds, specifying the latter as the main victims of political violations. The commonly inhabited region, on the other hand, has become the ground for a shared form of violation affecting Arabs as well. Mention of deprived conditions of live with *“no services granted”*, the region being *“the exile place”*, and people given *“secondary human position”* all indicating structural violence, the participant criticized the *“overall perspective towards the region”* as one influencing all whoever lived there (M, 24, Arab, Urfa [U3]).

In another case, a participant defined how she felt about the region up to her early 20s thinking that she was from *“a place in which the state does not have much interest and kept distant”*, with *“lower socio-economic structure”*, though she believed it now has changed. She saw *“inadequate investments”* in the region and *“incorrect policies”* leading to a perception of *“Southeast, as a different place, as if it was not a part of the whole country”* (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17]). Yet still, she stressed that herself *“as a citizen of this state”*, with *“roots in an Arab family”*, *“love [her] country”* and *“wouldn’t go anywhere, even if they want to send [her] to the most developed country”*. Her attachment was to a degree not to *“have ever had a notion on where she put[s] [her]self”*, only when being asked *“realizing that she has never thought of that”*. For her, *“being here suffices”* as she *“fulfil[s] the requirements of the system while, however, fighting*



*against what [she] oppose[s]”, “trying to change somethings, struggling to catch up with what it needs to be” (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17]).* Importantly, in both of the above cases the participants are coming from families of high socio-economic status, are educated and working professionals. In these two cases participants are economically well integrated and embedded within powerful social relations they can mobilize at their will, which I argue provide them with tools to overcome the limitations put by ineffective, insufficient, or discriminating structures hindering full realization of individual potential. Through social capital and economic inclusion, thus, they can compensate the negative effects that may ensue from violating structures. As their articulations tell much about spatial/territorial belongings I will be referring to the details of these narratives in Chapter 6.

Another narrative that pointed at being exposed to structural violence came as a reply my question is he sees himself as a citizen equally benefiting his rights. Making a refined differentiation between the rural and urban forms of citizenship, and between haves and have nots, the participant revealed interesting meanings, yet with a normalizing and accepting attitude concerning inequalities.

I feel myself equal to a citizen living in western villages, but I don't feel equal to the citizen living in western cities. The citizen who has money sees more right, gets more service. I don't get much service. [Stops] Well, when we talk to our friends who have come from the villages of west, we hear that they too live the same difficulties. Yet there are also difficulties that we live regionally. Well, we see them as normal things; we don't think there is an intentional reason, just trivial things. (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1])

The idea of the rural-urban discrepancy not only in eastern but also in western part of the country attained through relations with western friends depicts the role of bridging social capital in building perception as well as knowledge about the larger society. Social relations with ‘others’ of similar social profile consequently produce more holistic and refined perception of one’s conditions. Regional, class, and rural versus urban differences all become frames of reference in such perception. Another experienced based criticism was uttered by

the same participant concerning the inequalities that educational system bears. He was graduated from the “*only one Regional Boarding School in Harran and Akçakale regions*”, having completed his primary education “*in a combined [a multi-grade] classroom*” beforehand. At both levels, the classrooms were overcrowded, more than doubling the room’s capacity, consequently causing one not “*to gain anything*” out of his education. To continue high school education in Urfa was the privilege of “*the ones who have somewhere to stay [a house or relatives in the city] or those who can somehow overcome it [the shelter problem]*”. Even when they achieved to go on with education in the city, they came to find out that they were “*not ahead of the primary school level*” as they could not get a qualified education up to then. He stated, frequently those students dropped out of school after they started high school in the city. Thus, “*the level of education was so low*” in Harran region “*perhaps even below zero*” at least until very recently (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). Inadequate public services in the region, here concerning the educational system, is a form of violence stemming from insufficient structures and is evidently affective on Arab population as well in leading concrete outcomes for individual lives. Deficient conditions of life in all aspects were a matter criticised by many Arab participants, not by the upper class and the elders much, but especially by the younger, increasing with the level of education and social capital even when they were coming originally from a rural background and a lower socio-economic status.

Seasonal labour migration of agricultural workers in Urfa often came to fore as another hot issue where public agricultural policies of the state were criticized. The extent of the issue was immense as it was expressed to be “*55 thousand agricultural labourers*” in the region, whereby most often “*they go the whole family, as little children work as well, because [the harvest] is calculated per kilo*” and what they earn they spend the whole year (F, 33, Arab, Urfa).<sup>107</sup> In

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<sup>107</sup>Expert Interview, Urfa, 20.10.2011

another interview it was noted that seasonal agricultural labourers were mostly those from the outskirts of the cities, and not villagers, with the minibuses getting off from the downtown; in Urfa they were mostly heading Harran plain.<sup>108</sup> A commonly shared suggestion of those who were badly affected by the process was that the state needed to go through its policies so that the labour force not migrate seasonally and do the same work at home. One participant put it as *“the problem here”* (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). Her father and unmarried sisters who live *“with father”* go from Urfa to Konya and Ankara/Polatlı to work. Seasonal agricultural labour force was indispensable for the family as she stated *“they don’t have land and nothing, and lots of burdens, how would they look after each other, no land, no one working, my two brothers are studying”* (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). One brother having graduated recently, yet still unemployed, the family were concerned to save the pocket money for the other. She suggested that *“those capacities be”* granted in the locality *“for instance, they should permit sugar beet grown here, they shall sew it here, the state shall do the same task here”* so that the labourers *“would have worked in their hometown”* (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). Her question asking *“they would do it here why should they go, isn’t that right?”* is an important one coming from the very practicality of individual lives facing limiting, impeding, violating structures. After the participant married and moved to city centre from village, she *“did not go out”* [of Urfa] for agricultural work, nor worked in Urfa. Before, she as well worked in the fields together with her sisters, besides breeding sheep in the village. Agricultural work in the village was in the form of sharecropping, *“renting the field of someone else”* to grow cotton and wheat. She explained the system in the following: *“well, for example you have land but you don’t have anyone to cultivate it, you say ‘take the land, I give it to you, all the expenses belong to me, you have children you do it’. We did it like that. And the crops were shared by*

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<sup>108</sup>Expert Interview, Urfa, 17.10.2011

half” (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]).<sup>109</sup> Below is a narrative on the details of their work, telling about the nature of the work when they worked as sharecropper and gives a clue about the change after they started migrating to other regions seasonally as agricultural workers. It also tells about the gendered division of labour and the patriarchal structure of family:

We were 8 girls, 3 boys. We did with our own hands; we ate with our own mouth. We did not have anyone working, any brother elder than us. We the 8 girls raised them; we went to the field and worked, brought it to home, cooked and ate. We pitied to our father, we said let him not work. When for instance there was a nice place, a wedding, said to our father ‘you go and have a good time we will do the work’, then we did our work with joy. Well, no one forced us, nothing so. We did our work on our own will. (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7])

Still, importantly, despite criticism of state policies, identification of the participant with the state is very high defining it as “*something very precious*” as I have already depicted elsewhere above. Striking is that whereas she defined the period of sharecropping of the family in a more cheerful language, she defined the seasonal labour period of present times in a more gloomy one depicting it as a “*problem*” of cumbersome and difficult work. Although in both cases they did not cultivate their own land, in the latter they became waged workers dependant on many actors and conditions defined beyond them. In the former they were still actors holding a degree of independence doing the whole work themselves yet only sharing the product with the owner of the land. Loss of agency becomes much of importance to her narrative, even compared to the income gained through seasonal labour. In this context, expectation from the state to “*permit*” a variety of products to be cultivated in the locality, which should be read as to

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<sup>109</sup> Another participant (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]) mentioned that in their case, where they are the landowners, sharecroppers pay annual rental and not give a share from the harvest. The rent changed according to the yield of the land, which in the last instance was depended on whether it is irrigated or not. She said, “*if there is irrigation system within it, it’s value is priceless, but in an arid land you have to dig a well, you need to bring water through drilling, that’s more expensive*” for the cultivator, thus the rent would be lower. She also mentioned the harvesting period which is “*twice a year: one term wheat; one term cotton. After wheat is harvested, cotton is sown*” (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]).

take responsibility to initiate developing and diversifying the local agricultural production, is important in the sense that it is not only a claim for economic inclusion but also for a self-sufficient citizen position on economic terms. She urges for be-long-ings, at least at regional level, to be shaped on an equal foot providing for self-reliant citizens.

A similar expectation concerning the problem of seasonal labour was articulated during the Focus Group interview with women working in a Cooperative in Urfa.

A: Urfa is an agriculture zone, still not developed enough. Still, our people go out [as seasonal agricultural workers], they have accidents, they die, lorries tumble down [...] Urfa is the agricultural zone, Urfa could [provide for] alllllll Turkey, if it is cultivated all over regularly, should the state do something, inform people, assign an engineer, one for 10 farmers, one for 20 farmers an engineer should it assign. Should they do proper things... All our lands have become arid now.

A1: To whom did it [the state] give the agriculture? Gave it to the aghas and the rich, to whom else?

A: Then those people wouldn't go [anywhere], well the land in Urfa is plenty, there is enough land to feed all Turkey. We still bring [import] peppers, bring this and that. Why? We have our own land, we have our natural things we shall eat them. We eat the poison of others.

A1: Should it give to all enough [land] for them to cultivate no poverty around would remain, people wouldn't [go] out

K1. Unless the state takes out of you, it wouldn't give [anything] to you!

A: What has the state given us? Nothing it has given!

A1: We work by ourselves, eat by ourselves (Focus Group III, Urfa)<sup>110</sup>

In the above conversation, the perception that Urfa constituting an “*agricultural zone*”, with the capacity of fulfilling the demand of whole Turkey, stands as a contradiction with the fact that agricultural workers migrate seasonally out of the region. The dichotomy of “*our natural things*” versus “*the poison of others*” stands as another contradiction, uttered by one participant (F, 37, Alevi, Urfa, FG3 [A]), pointing at the improper agricultural policies of the state as well as the bad export policies. Interaction between the women reveals the expectation that state should take action to overcome inadequate agricultural information of the farmers through expert support, and provide equal distribution of land. The need

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<sup>110</sup>A1 (F, 37, Arab, Urfa), A (F, 37, Alevi, Urfa), K1 (F, 22, Kurd, Urfa)

for proper and innovative implementations is urged thoroughly. The harsh criticism of the state, on the other hand, reveals a sharp distrust towards the state bringing forth indicators of structural violence like poverty, landless farmers, and seasonal labour migration as well as favouritism of the rich and the powerful. Traffic accidents with terrible casualties were the other frequently mentioned violent process about the seasonal labour migration. In the above case, for instance, four sisters of one participant (F, 37, Arab, Urfa, FG3 [A1]) were among those workers who had an accident around 2004, whereby her one sister died among other 27 people. The emphasis that “*24 of them were young women and girls, 5 of them married*” (F, 37, Alevi, Urfa, FG3 [A]) showed the gendered aspect of the violence. The other three sisters of the participant were also severely wounded, one still had a dislocated jaw and the other had a platinum plate in her skull at the time of the interview. Despite all the efforts of the family “*the state had not granted a monthly stipend*” to the latter one as the participant stressed. Her question that “*how shall that girl work? She was not given the required health report. She cannot go out under the sun. Would the state give a hand to us?*” (F, 37, Arab, Urfa, FG3 [A1]) is revealing the helplessness of the individuals who lack the necessary economic means to afford a life after such severe injury when faced the disinterest of the responsible state institutions. For her sister who died in the accident, her question asking “*a very young girl, for the blood of her they gave 10 million [10 thousand liras<sup>111</sup>], do 10 million worth a human life?*” (F, 37, Arab, Urfa, FG3 [A1]) shows the frustration of the family not only with the quantity of death compensation, but also with the indifferent and unfair approach of the state. The driver carrying the workers not being imprisoned, moreover, while the family members of the victims were taken to the court was another injustice the participant stressed asking: “*they take our poor to the court, our mothers, our fathers, our brothers they take to the court. Is not he guilty for overcrowding all those people one over another?*”(F, 37, Arab, Urfa, FG3 [A1]). The class dimension in those experiences and demands is clear. Precarious conditions of work bring insecurity, vulnerability, and death for the

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<sup>111</sup> On October 2011 the date of the interview, 1 USD was around 1.85 TRY (New Turkish Liras)

poor. Demand of the same participant for distribution of land, as a secure ground of livelihood, should be understood in this context. Yet, on the other side of the coin, for the land owner any attempt of land reform would mean ‘injustice’. Evidently, one such participant (M, 72, *Urfalı*<sup>112</sup>, Urfa [U22]) whose family has had big lands in Harran plain was angry about my question on land reform which was attempted in 1970s when the family lost their lands but was returned in 1980s. He stated “*if there is no respect to the [private] property, there shall be nothing else. The rationale of the reform is wrong. The state has its own property [hazine arazisi], it shall give them. Why does it take form the one who had worked [for it]?*” (M, 72, *Urfalı*, Urfa [U22]). He rejected the idea on personal grounds, stating “*Why should I give it? Well my father had worked for it in winter, in the rain, suffered for 50-60 years, grown as an orphan. And it gives it to the other for free! Why?*” (M, 72, *Urfalı*, Urfa [U22]). His reference to a holy authority, which the worldly authority of the state should measure itself accordingly in saying “*Justice on earth is the scales of God the Almighty [“Cenab-ı Allah”]*” is an important one is revealing the meanings given to political power and perception of its legitimacy. Such ground is clearly expressed in the following “*The foundation of the states in all is righteousness, that’s justice; it depends on the righteousness. One first needs truthfulness*” (M, 72, *Urfalı*, Urfa [U22]). Importantly, the participant who strongly identifies with the state and the status quo all through his narrative engaged in criticism of the state concerning a past policy on practical grounds as his own interests were challenged.

Shown in this part was the role of experience of structures hindering people from fulfilling a wealthy, meaningful, and secure life, which I basically take as structural violation, in forming their be-long-ings. Longing for a fair, just, equal, caring, and trustful treatment coming from the public authorities were clear in all

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<sup>112</sup> He defined himself to be “Urfalı” and rejected any ethnic definition, stating that there is no document proving any possible “Arab” roots and claiming that he does not give importance to racism but to humanness. He speaks Arabic and Turkish and knows writing and reading Ottoman Turkish.

the narratives above, even though the participants had in general a positive attitude towards what the state stood for. Personal experience mattered in bringing forth criticism in all cases. The ground for demands was repeatedly and strongly their citizen position; yet there were also references to a metaphysical ‘Godly’ order as an appraisal for the worldly ‘order of things’. Still, as structural violence is perceived to be shared by many living in the same conditions, its influence on making and unmaking be-long-ings is somewhat indirect. Social capital and economic inclusion play a compensating role for individuals to overcome or deal with the consequences of those influences.

Besides structural violence, there is also and importantly a concern about symbolic violence that many Arab participants uttered, which I will detail as I continue below.

### **3.2.3. Violating Symbolism of Mediatic, Popular, and Ideological [Mis]Representation**

In all the three research areas of this dissertation the problem of representation, not only political but also popular, was widely stressed by the participants regardless of their ethnic affiliation or socio-economic status. Many people living in these places are not content with representation of theirs, of the ‘east’ in general, especially by the media, including the news and the TV series being shot in the region. Representation by the larger society and by the ideological state apparatuses was raised as an issue as well. Contextualizing the uneasiness about representation in terms of symbolic violence is important to understanding the calls for change in the symbolic order of things and the longings of the participants. Here I will focus on those criticisms uttered by the Arab participants.

A rather implicit example of the felt prejudice of the larger society came in a store, which I entered on my last day in Urfa to shop for some gifts. The



shopkeeper, a man in his 40s, asked what I was doing there and upon my explanation about what I do with a reference to my research, uttering simple questions like how people here feel themselves and so, he said “*we feel good, but we want those who come here feel also good*”.<sup>113</sup> He told that he deliberately talked to the customers “*for them not to feel alone or as stranger*”. “Customers” here read as westerners, who are mostly tourists to the city. Upon my question why would they feel as stranger, he said “*well, those coming from the west see us sort of [laughs] as a different kind of citizen. Ignorant...*” He mentioned some young girls recently coming to the store. They were speaking on the phone, and replied their parents asking how they found those places saying “*just like us, they are very warm*”. He smiles implying a prejudice of those who come to the city towards the locals. Taking it as an issue he seems to try to overcome that prejudice in his personal setting by talking friendly to the customers and showing interest in their visit to the city.

Mention of the prejudiced look of the larger society, even though not specifically to Arabs but to the region, was uttered in other cases as well. An important implication in those was that the cause for such prejudice was the Kurdish issue. A young Arab woman in Mardin<sup>114</sup>, for instance, talked about her experience in a central Anatolian city where she and her husband lived for a while. As his “*husband was working*” she had to demand from her neighbours what she urgently needed and thus built some degree of relations with them. The interaction coming out between the women of the house after her reference to the others’ perception of them was revealing:

The daughter-in-law: When we said we were from Mardin, nobody believed us [Why?] They thought it to be worse

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<sup>113</sup> Research Diary notes taken in Urfa, 24.10.2011

<sup>114</sup> She was the daughter-in-law of a participant [M21] of the research who accompanied him during the interview together with the participant’s wife and two daughters. She was not counted as a participant.

The wife: Mêrdinbaşve [Mardin is good]  
The daughter: They know here, the “Southeast”, as bad  
The daughter-in-law: Our country has become all mixed, there is the good side as there is the bad side; all places have their bad and good  
Ö: Were they thinking of Kurds when they did not believe you?  
The daughter-in-law: I suppose so!<sup>115</sup>

The daughter-in-law replied my openly expressed reasoning with her eyes sparkling in a visible relief of tension for hearing from the mouth of the other what she could have not said overtly. The implication here seems to be the Kurds being the “*bad side*” of the “*place*”, yet the region being perceived in negative terms by the westerners was implied or openly mentioned by others as well often in resentment. The tension concerning Kurds, on the other hand, popped-up frequently in many narratives regardless of what the topic was, uttered often in a comparative language.

Media representations of the city in stereotypically archaic conditions and traditions were another matter brought forth during the interviews. In an expert interview, a trainer in a support centre in a neighbourhood predominantly inhabited by Arabs that basically targeted low socio-economic women asserted, for instance, that “*we don’t want to be remembered by blood feud, aşair wedding and gold*” (F, 40, Arab, Urfa).<sup>116</sup> She criticized the discourse about women’s conditions in Urfa that she heard on a news program on a public TV channel, stating “*just as we notice these women and try to take them one step further, what is done in Urfa should also be noticed and promoted*” (F, 40, Arab, Urfa). She was basically referring to the ‘unchanging’ attitude of the media, of the larger society, and of the public authorities towards Urfa, despite the potential dynamism for change, in which she was taking part through her work in the

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<sup>115</sup> Interaction takes place at the house of the participant (M, 57, Arab, Mardin [M21]) as he was out for a while. All are Arab women of the same family, the participant and his wife having migrated to Mardin from Batman in 1977. The daughter is 27; the wife is in her 50s; and the daughter-in-law in her early 30s.

<sup>116</sup> Expert Interview, Urfa, 20.10.2011

support centre, one among many others in the city, and which she perceived to go unacknowledged. Others uttered similar criticism about the region being recalled by only guns, conflict, and by a backward woman image, not because they ignored their factuality, but because such representation caused a static picture and was by no means helping for any kind of possible change they were trying to achieve. Black dogs being named ‘Arab’ in old *Yeşilçam* cinema films; or the generally held notion in the society that Arabs were black, although they are mostly light or wheat-skinned were among other criticisms of the popular representation.

An evident example of symbolic violence, this time concerning official representations, came from a participant who, being asked about his expectation from the state as a young citizen who defines himself to be an Arab, replied very specifically with reference to how national education system misrepresented and spread out a discriminative discourse on Arabs. He answered immediately, in anger, and in an accurate manner:

First of all, we ourselves, for instance during the education in the schools, it should not make us ashamed of ourselves. In that History of Revolution classes is put some nonsense, stating Arabs had betrayed [the state],<sup>117</sup> we want it to be removed. Because I myself was also saying until a certain age that Arabs had betrayed. Because being childish, it was taught to us so. Well our parents were uneducated anyhow. It made me to come to a point of feeling humiliated. And I find this so crap and grim! [*Ben bunu çoksaçmaveçoğkaddarbuluyorum!*] Well they shall think that it is being done to the Turks in Germany, to Turks in eastern Turkistan, or simply they shall think that something like that is done to

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<sup>117</sup> “Arab treason” is alleged to “Arab Revolt” in alliance with Great Powers, especially Britain, during the WWI against the Ottoman State, which consequently resulted in imperial collapse and the separation of the Arab provinces. Hasan Kayalı (1997: 5) questions the discourse adopted by the Turkish Republican historians referring “the Young Turk era as the sorrowful period when Balkan and Middle Eastern peoples treacherously rebelled against the Turks, who for centuries had shed their blood to defend them from the very foreign enemies with whom these peoples colluded”. Instead, he points at the rather more complex relation between the power and aspirations of the central Committee of Union and Progress and the Arab periphery. For a deconstructive perspective on the period and a thorough discussion of the existing debate on the relation of Turkish and Arab nationalisms see Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918*, Berkeley Los Angeles London, University of California Press, 1997

the Turcoman in Iraq and act accordingly, the bureaucrats of ours in the National Education [Ministry]. I mean we first of all want this. (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1])

The expressions of ‘shame’, ‘humiliation’, ‘nonsense’, or ‘crap and grim’ are signs of symbolic violence experienced in the ‘official’ representation of Arabs, in text books of the national education system, as a categorical identity group as traitors of the state, late Ottoman and the new Turkish state. The participant has a clear demand of removal of such stigmatizing discourse from the books. For the first time in the participant’s narrative “*they*” and “*us*” dichotomy appeared with reference to Turkishness. His reference of minority Turks in other countries likening it to the situation of Arabs in Turkey was also infrequent. Despite all the discourse on not being minority but the genuine offspring and the true owners of this country, there comes a reservation and criticism of the state with its ideological apparatuses and the regime of representation. Symbolic violation matters in forming be-long-ings, intensifying the ‘we’ perception and making at best a resentful relation with the ‘other’. It is still important to note that such reaction is relatively a novel one, much prevalent in the younger generation, seemingly influenced by the only gradually emerging claim making in political terms and the presence of NGO activities still at their very outset. Elsewhere below I quote an elderly person in Urfa (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]) who is himself expressing the “*betrayal*” discourse.

To be able to set a comparative perspective, I include here another narrative, which indeed came during the pilot research.<sup>118</sup> The pilot participant<sup>119</sup> recalling his memories of reading the Arab betrayal claims in history books at school

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<sup>118</sup> Although, overall I did not include the pilot interviews in the analyses, I included a few narratives belonging to two participants including this one, as I deemed important to do so in terms of adding depth to the analysis.

<sup>119</sup> The pilot participant (M, 33, Arab, Iskenderun/Mardin), had his family roots in Mardin with paternal grandparents still living in the village. Yet, his parents moved to Iskenderun in 1978 for the father to work in the then newly established and immensely recruiting iron and steel plant, where he was born the same year.

stated that he was not bothered by such at that time. He set the ground conditioning his perception then as in the follows:

I did not find it odd; I even didn't have such conception. It might be related to that Arabness was not political, no demand from the state. It is written in the book, that's ok, none of my business, if it discredits [Arabs] it discredits. [Thinking] well, the ones in Syria sold [the state] what it is to me, I don't have any fault in that. You don't establish identification [with other Arabs]; you have always been on this side of the border, and still decades have passed over it. (M, 33, Arab, İskenderun/Mardin)

The family having no relatives beyond the border, he had no identification with the trans-border or other Arabs in the world. Indeed, religion rather than ethnicity was a concern for many Arabs, or other pious people, in their relation to the state and “*opposition to the state was only over religion*” perceiving its establishment on secular grounds as the great evil. Describing the mind-set of Arabs around him at his school times concerning the political authority he said “*you lay claim to your country, you love your country indeed, but you always separate yourself from the Kemalists, ‘we are the real owners of this country’ thing, it was very widespread*” (M, 33, Arab, İskenderun/Mardin). The pilot participant recollecting on his childhood memories, these could be taken as reflecting past attitudes may not be generalized. Yet, still it is important to show the level of identification with religious identity which was prevalent among many Arab participants of the research; and equally prevalent identification with the state as an establishment, though the reservation on its secular ground was not always expressed by others, at least openly, and in cases it may even not be shared by some participants.

A specific case of symbolic violence and criticism concerning representation of Arabs, especially of Arab women, came from a participant who ran for MP candidacy in 2011 general elections for the ruling party but was not nominated as a candidate. She mentioned an occasion during that period whereby another Arab woman had joined a meeting and was told ironically “*oooo Arabs! It turns out you have your voice here after*” by “*the leader of the women branch, [who] was*

*Kurd it seems to be; and a bit of a discriminative woman”* (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). The participant was furious recalling the event and commented that *“it means we did not have our voice. See we had no voice before! [...] So Kurds, why, for 15-20 years they, the women deputies, have their voice and why we have not? It means we are so different, we are so backward!”* (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). Still, however, she expressed that upon her candidacy *“at that time Kurds congratulated her more”* eagerly. Revealing the tension between Kurds and Arabs in terms of power relations especially where they inhabit together, the occasion indicates the perception of a stigmatizing and discriminating discourse, here uttered by Kurds, on Arabs ‘having no voice’, being ‘backward’, and being ‘different’, the latter used in negative connotations. The matter being representation and speaking up for one’s own interests here, she recalled another event that could be taken in similar context. A female RPP [CHP] deputy in early 2011 declared publically *“we do not want to be like the Arab women”* referring to the women in Arab countries as she explained it later on. Such declaration was hotly debated in public and was criticized by many including the RPP party leader. The party also made an official apology to the Arab NGO in Urfa. The deputy was sued by the leader of the NGO according to the 216/2th article of the Turkish Criminal Code for the reason of insulting and deriding women of Arab origin in Turkey and openly humiliating some segment of the people. The participant, mentioning the event, asked *“why did not she say I do not want to be like Kurdish women; but preferred saying Arab? Why does she not want to be like Arab women?”* and explained the reason for herself to be:

Obvious anyway. The Kurdish women are already in the parliament, if this woman had said something about Kurdish women, not only Kurdish deputies but all Kurds would have risen up; would have gathered in front of the parliament. (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2])

She added in anger that if she had seen the TV program whereby the deputy and the leader of the Arab association discussed the issue, she would have gone live and asked *“what deficit Arab woman has had”*. Showing her frustration with the discourse in such cases, she referred both to the perception of others and the

exclusion following from there, saying “*it means that Arab women are so backward, means the Arab women... We have become like that, nobody fancy us; nobody takes us into account!*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). She rejected the discriminating and degrading discourse grounding it in a comparative argument, which revealed significant meanings attributed to being a Turkish, Kurdish, or Arab women in comparison:

You cannot compare someone else to yourself, because of this religion, language, race discrimination shall not be done. Must not compare. Now I cannot say I can't be like a Kurdish woman! But I can compare like this, I can say I wish I could be like a Turkish woman. [Why so?] For she has a better, much better, life than me. Has grown in a better environment; in terms of education, in terms of everything she is better. But now this [deputy] does not want us *hah!* Turns her nose up to us; looks down upon us. Like, how shall I say it, humiliates. Humiliates I mean, she regards us with disfavour. Thus she used this word. (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2])

The narrative defines the conditions of ‘the comparable’ and ‘the non-comparable’ to one self and power relations seem to be important in her reasoning. Accordingly, one could compare others’ superior conditions to one self, but not the inferior ones. In that context, she takes the statement of the Turkish deputy, who is without doubt in better conditions, as an excluding, humiliating, and disfavoured one that looks down upon the Arab women. The power of representing, producing meaning, and framing it becomes violence as it established the symbolic order of things.

In this part the influence of symbolic violation of misrepresentation and discrimination discourses were analyzed as they were uttered by any Arab participants. A visible resentment and strong expectation for fair representation, in popular, mediatic, and ideological terms, are the central findings of such analysis. Indeed, in many cases it is well grounded that absence or presence of violating experiences both on a personal and on a collective basis plays an important role in variations of how be-long-ings regarding the larger political community are formed and expressed by the Arab participants, despite the

otherwise overwhelming narrative of strong alliance and attachment to the state. Often a comparative language came to fore arguing for equal treatment, rights, and opportunities whereby Kurds, as well as Turks, were often the subject of comparison. Below I will turn to an elaboration on such comparative language, whereby I define some patterns visible for political agency in case of Arab participants.

### **3.3. Political Agency: *Comparative Claim Making, Reactive Positioning, and Inherited Hostility***

Importantly, representation in political terms was also a matter of concern for many Arab participants. In many narratives a pattern, which I call *comparative claim making*, emerged uttering the very right to claim making in a comparative language especially in constant reference to Kurds, yet also to Turks. Replying what Arabs did expect from the state, a participant used such comparative language saying “*we want at least the same right as given to other, Kurd and Turks, to be given to Arabs as well*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). She mentioned that the number of MP positions from the ruling party was 10 for Urfa in 2011, nine of them filled by Kurds, while only one by an Arab, whom she believed was also “*under their manipulation*” implying a central influence rather than a local one. She defined the problem as “*it is our natural right as well, we would also want to defend our rights, we also have inadequacies, we also have demands*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). The comparative language is expressed in the form of right demanding and was widespread among many Arabs. Kurds were often the reference in that language. Two participants who are sisters expressed a problem of not being effectively represented in the parliament and put a solution as in the dialog below:

[U9] For instance BDP defends its nation, I give the example not to say ours shall do the same but... They did not vow in the parliament. Not in that way, that but things could be done to defend us in a different way, don't know, never thought of it to be honest, but they could defend us as well  
Ö: Do you feel the need for an Arab leader or a party etc?



[U9] Yes we do  
 [U10] But it shall be only if it would really defend  
 [U9] Only if it will defend  
 [U10] Well sure there is, there is Kurdish MP and there is Arab MP, perhaps there is even a minister we don't know it really, but if it will defend that ethnic group, what is it, not for a conflict to arise, or for problems to be lived, but for 'this ethnic group has this problem what can we do', these things should be discussed, otherwise not a conflict or so...  
 [U9] Well we should know it too, if Kurds have Arabs shall have too, I mean we shall say that we have a deputy and he defends us, we too shall tell that in proud... but very difficult, that it will happen, it will realize I don't suppose  
 [U10] Arabs of today are very mild, they would not do anything  
 [U9] They don't have toughness, no toughness; well they would struggle to a limit, after then they would withdraw. (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]) (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]).

Interestingly, even if they have “*never thought of it*” before, they feel the need for being “*defend[ed]*”, but only in an effective way where their problems as an ethnic group are specified and solved accordingly. The younger sister's wish to “*know*” that they also “*have a deputy*” defending them, and the felt need to “*tell that in proud*”, moreover, may be taken to denote an emotional aspect of belongings woven around a “*we*” group, here constructed through a need for representation. The expression that “*if Kurds have, Arabs shall have too*” as well indicates in a comparative manner such constructive role of being re-presented. Still, importantly a hesitating and apologetic language permeates the narrative as the participants do want what Kurds have but not in the “*way*” they have it. ‘Defence of group rights’ and ‘problem solving’ are put as the proper way for Arabs, as against ‘the conflict raising’ and ‘problem making’ way of Kurds. In this way, they seem to eliminate the ‘risk’ of contradicting with their focus on loyalty and attachment to the state and the discourse of proper citizens of The Nation. Yet still, pride, struggle, toughness, and not withdrawing easily are the characteristics they long for Arabs to have in their attitude of claim making. Actually, the seemingly oscillating manner in the dialogue is due to two diverging positions held by the elder (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]) and the younger (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]) sisters, inclined respectively to Turkish nationalism and to Arab nationalism as defined by them. The comparative approach was revealed in another instance through my question on mother tongue demand of Kurds in

education and whether Arabs have such a demand. The younger participant who pitied that she did not know Arabic, her mother tongue, and wished she could have spoken it expressed the following:

I know no [Arab] having such thought till now. Even if there is one, I know not. [You?] I would like it, why shouldn't I want having education in my own language, I would like it too. Well like Kurds, but like Kurds being a community, fighting for it, there is no one as such. Well, in that we are indeed defeated a bit. We behave a bit passively; we don't assert ourselves I mean. And because of that we lose. (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9])

Her narrative comparing Arabs to Kurds in their being organized around cultural, social, and political demands reveals a dichotomous language woven around the concepts like “*defeat*” versus “*fight*”, “*passivity*” versus “*assertion*”, and “*loss*” versus, by implication, ‘*gain*’. She almost posits Kurds as a group for itself, while Arabs as one in itself, identifying Arabs with the former concepts of the dichotomy and Kurds with the latter. Yet her elder sister opposed the participant stating “*well if I live in Turkish Republic, I should know the language of Turkish republic; if I am a citizen of this country I should speak the language of this country. Yet if it is given as an optional course admitted! [amenna!]*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). She justified her argument with the existence of opportunities to learn Arabic individually, like attending to Arabic courses. The younger, on the other hand, admitting that “*the priority be given [to] the language of this country*”, still insisted in her approach stating “*if Kurds are defending this Arabs should defend this as well; what I say is this*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). The “*somewhat a Turkish nationalist*” position of the elder sister, she named giggling, was one whereby she claimed and has “*always defended*” that “*I'm Arab in ethnic structure, but I am Turk in identity*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). The elder sister felt herself as an equal citizen and believed Kurds and Arabs, like the Laz, and Circassian “*are being equally treated*” having access to the same “*vocation*”, having their “*identity*”, “*going to school*”, and “*having been granted enough rights*”. Thus, there was no “*discrimination like this*”, and “*if we live under one flag we need to clasp together*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). She

also argued that *“if you create a dispute, make a problem, people will react to it”* giving the example *“if Arabs create a tension and if people react to this, it is not the fault of the other part of the people but of Arabs”* (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]), yet implying that Kurds were causing the trouble themselves.

A similar dynamic of tension and diverging ideas came up during another interview, as the question on education in Arabic received the reply *“if it happens it happens, but we don’t have such an obsession, we, Turkish is quite good”* (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5]) by one participant, but faced the discontent of the accompanying other stating *“this is [his] own idea”* (M, 37, Arab, Urfa [U24]). Upon the challenge, the former participant articulated some different positions, which could be divided into four parts in his own words: First, *“we are in Turkey, we learn Turkish. It’s no problem if they grant mother tongue, if given we won’t say no”, “we’ll learn it too, we the Arabs haven’t any problem with learning language, Arabic race is the one that can learn the fastest”*; second, *“yet we don’t have the thing ‘our right of education has gone’, ‘we are ruined, we’re repressed’. We don’t have such a thing, now we’re not repressed. We are the first class citizens of this country”*; third, *“you will have some things to a degree you will not lose your essence”, “I see Turks as my ancestors, my forerunners, my fathers, that is a different issue, yet it is necessary to know your own thing, must not forget it either”*; and fourth, *“you give my right. You give it to him, then I would want it as well”* (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5]). Themes like contentment with the status quo; holding equal citizen rights; protection of essential/ethnic identity; and comparative claim making could sum up the above four statements respectively.

Demands concerning the mother tongue asserted by the Kurdish political movement appear to have established a model especially for the younger Arabs, yet still it was not a hot issue even among them. Education of mother tongue by optional courses rather than education in mother tongue, especially for Kurdish but also as a more distant possibility for Arabic, was rather a more commonly

uttered possibility by the younger Arab participants. The general approach could be summarized in one participant's words like: *"for Arabic, I wouldn't have a resounding demand, but if it happened it would have been good"* (M, 24, Arab, Urfa [U13]). Yet, especially in Urfa, where Arabs and Kurds are on more equivalent ground, thus competing, in social terms unlike in Mardin where urban Arabs have had the upper hand in many aspects, speaking Arabic on a more everyday basis may emerge as a claim making.

An interesting case in point was uttered by a participant as she told about an encounter in the courthouse in Urfa as she waited to give a statement in the accompany of her new lawyer, who was an Arab, while her elder one was a Kurd. To a Kurdish lawyer, seeing her and asking about the change, she replied *"I had no chance but change my lawyer. [...] How I can retain a Kurdish lawyer as there are Arab lawyers. It is my fault that I did it so far"* and asked if he had *"ever seen any Kurdish client hiring an Arab lawyer"* (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). Getting *"no"* as an answer her respond came in a narrative of 'awakening': *"then what Arabs are doing with Kurdish lawyers. This is our lack of knowledge. I have hardly got awaken; now my lawyer is an Arab, you know I have ever been a nationalist"* (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). As he tried to *"get rid of"* her through putting her off, which she mentioned laughing, she started to talk in Arabic to a newly arriving Arab lawyer, in which her lawyer joined as well and the new comer also responded in Arabic under the gaze of others, Kurds, staring at them unpleasant as they talked in Arabic. She said *"I deliberately, knowingly spoke in Arabic there, because all the lawyers and their clients there were speaking in Kurdish. Well, I wanted to say sort of 'we too are here!'"* (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). It is important to note that being a daughter of an important *aşiret* leader, and having then recently run for MP candidacy, despite her lower education and being a fellow-wife having only a religious marriage, such reaction was something that she could afford, unlike many other women in similar conditions. Her social and symbolic capitals helped her attitude.

As already noted comparison to Kurdish case was commonly expressed by many Arab participants on various grounds both in Mardin and in Urfa. ‘Not like the Kurds’, ‘likewise the Kurds’, ‘as opposed to Kurds’, ‘similar to Kurds’, ‘if to Kurds to us/Arabs as well’ were some frequently uttered expressions of such comparison throughout the interviews. Yet two basic patterns seem to crystallize among the Arab participants. One is being content with the status quo, while the other is looking for a change in the existing order of things, and receiving equal rights and opportunities in social, economic, and political terms. Importantly, for the latter Kurdish mobilization and organized form of claim making appear to stand as a model, though not mentioned without reservation. Thus, although Kurds are overtly criticized in their demands, their case still provides a ground for thinking the possibility that things could be different for Arabs as well. Or else, it roughly leads to a comparative reaction that could be summarized as ‘if they have, we should have too’.

An important finding is that ascending power of Kurdish political claims and demographic-cultural visibility of Kurds lead to some kind of reactivity among Arabs who fear that Kurds would become hegemonic in the region. As a result they apparently side with the status quo. One Kurdish participant expressed this feeling saying that Arabs “*have the fear of Kurdistan being established; [they think that] at least we are familiar with [the current order]*” (M, 43, Kurd, Mardin [M6]). Such feeling came up during an interview with an Arab participant in Urfa. When she was asked about the image of Turk in her childhood, she told that she was not grown up in a nationalist family, meaning Arab nationalism, and so she had not have any ideas about being Turk, Kurd, or Arab, which she did only after she grown up. Yet, when something reminded her Kurdish claims, like the discussion on reciting Student Oath<sup>120</sup> at primary schools on the children shouting as ‘I am Turk; I am True; I am hardworking...’ she sided with Turkishness. She stated “*it suits my book to be honest. [Why?]*”

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<sup>120</sup> On 8 September 2013, the practice of reciting Student Oath was abolished, as announced in the Official Gazette.

*[She laughs] It might seem like nationalism but since it is Turkey, is the mother tongue of Turkey not Turkish? Well, why do we not accept that?"* Giving examples from "Saudi" [Arabia] using Arabic, or "Northern Iraq" using Kurdish, she stated "here is called Turkish Republic; here lives three groups of people, Turk, Kurd, Arab, all three live widely in Turkey" (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). Thus, her narrative went, everyone using her own mother tongue would cause a "contradiction"; and for such contradictions confuse the minds of people "we are in this condition now" (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). Fiercely opposing the discourse on "Kurdish rights", she argued Kurds were not discriminated but were instead benefiting equal rights. Apparently, she felt insecure about a possible domination of Kurdish language or Kurds. Her ground was that she did not know Kurdish, yet "the language that Turk knows is one, which also the Kurd knows, and so does the Arab" (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). Her sudden switch to a matter of domination or governance by Kurds revealed her sense of insecurity as in the follows:

I would not accept Turkey to be governed by the Kurds. I would not! Not only me, there are hundreds of thousands of people like me. But Turkey being governed by Turks does not make me feel uncomfortable. That would never bother me. If the mother tongue is Turkish, I would be proud of using it and of it being used. (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4])

Above narrative makes it clear that the participant gets closer to Turkishness in the face of Kurdishness, which she perceives to be a threat. What she stands for, indeed, is status quo rather than any sort of identity claim. Although she states she "would like [her] siblings, children or kin get their education in mother tongue", still it is sort of a "dream", since "we are not speaking only one language in here!" and very practically schools cannot be separated for each and every ethnic group (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). Her negotiation with the status quo is also apparent in her criticism of the armed conflict somewhat in a progressive manner. Referring to Quran and Islamic theology, as she is a pious person, she proposes 'humanity' as the common ground to unite us all with our differences. In the absence of "a war for the land", a "foreign powers' intrusion [forcing us]

*to save our country*”, “*disloyalty to honour*”, “*disloyalty to the land*”, “*disruption of unity of the country*”, or “*denial of rights and freedom*”, she claimed that both sides did not know why they kill each other and she asked to both sides: “*why did you kill him, he is your brother!*”(F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). The very recent “*martyr of 24 soldiers*” in an armed conflict when I was in Urfa was an important point of reference for the participant as was for others. Importantly, she defined a Kurdish activist as a “*normal man having a father and a mother as well*”; and implied the shared Muslim identity of Turks and Kurds alike. Her call was that “*rather than bothering with mother tongue or Turkish, they shall establish the brotherhood of the Turk and Kurd*” (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). Her suggestion was that “*for people not to die every day they should recall that they are all human, rather than thinking if I am a Turk, or a Kurd, or an Arab*” (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). Importantly, she also called for some sort of modification of Turkishness should it provide a solution to the existing conflict and problems with identity claims and representation. She said:

Saying I am a Turk shall not be that paramount. Okay, we’re Turk, ‘I am Turk’ should be told, but it shouldn’t be done in a humiliating manner, or in a dominant manner. Well, if necessary, there should be a retreat from calling oneself a Turk, we shall somehow find a common point and make people turn to the essence of love. (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4])

Although “*humanity*” and “*essence of love*” are abstract concepts to be able to provide any comprehensive or systematic solution to the existent socio-political problems, the call for a reconsideration of the discourse on Turkishness is a crucial one. While she opts for the status quo in terms of power relations, it does not go without any challenge to those relations. Rather, Turkishness in its claim to be dominant is called to reconsider its discourse, even to face the option of deconstructing itself. Yet, the insecurity caused by the likelihood of any potential Kurdish hegemony in the region still stands as a firm ground for reactive alignment with Turkishness.

Below is a conversation which came after I interviewed two participants who were sisters in an Arab civil society organization in Urfa. As we ended the interview the founder and the head of the organization, who had arranged the interview for me, turned up and took the opportunity of asking his questions to the participants. I half-jokingly warned the NGO representative in his attempt of a parallel interview for ethical concerns; yet as the participants showed consent and were willing to reply, I compromised and took advantage of what came out. An openly expressed articulation of what I call reactive positioning came in the conversation below. I name our ‘guest’ as Q2, signing him as the second questioner:

Q2: Kurds have an idea of autonomy in here. When there is the autonomy what then would you think of doing?

[U10]: No, I wouldn’t like to be in such a thing. [...] I would go for sure, to the place where the Turkish Republic is...

Q2: Your mother, father, aşiret, family?

[U10]: Well, everyone... I mean everyone would think of his/her choice eventually; I would never want to live under autonomy of Kurds!

[U9]: I wouldn’t want to live either. [Q2: hımm] Well I would go to an Arab country, or would go to the points where Turkish Republic had withdrawn to, but I wouldn’t like to live under Kurdish domination (F, 25, Arab, Urfa, [U9]) (F, 27, Arab, Urfa, [U10])

The somewhat judging and leading question of Q2 asking “*is this not choosing the easy way [“kolaycılık”] so to say leaving the soil of your own homeland? Should you not struggle in here?*” the younger participant [U9] replied mentioning the absence of collective reaction of Arabs coming together, which if happened she would not “*leave*”. Her reservation that “*if there is not a group as such what shall I do?*” pointed at the role of collective belongings in realignment of power relations. To his question on education in mother tongue she [U9] replied again in a comparative language “*Well if Kurds are granted that rights, it should be granted to Arabs as well*”. The dialogue went on like “*anyhow we need to*” [U9] demand it even “*if it is not granted to them*” [Q2], but only “*as a second language*” [U9, U10] since “*if we live in Turkish republic, we need to know Turkish, after that...*” [U10], “*and everywhere is Turkish valid*” [U9].



Under guidance of the NGO representative the narrative turned from a reactive and comparative one to an implicitly assertive one, where at last the ‘need’ for demanding rights is recognized. This might be taken as a minor case whereby the role of civic organizations, thus of linking social capital, in forming be-long-ings became visible.

Comparative claim making was occasionally uttered with regard to the non-Muslim groups. In one case, the participant explained his engagement with the NGO he was then volunteering on the ground of his calculation for “*a need in the association especially in the face of the developments in the last 5-10 years, whereby a certain group of people were tolerated while [they] were ignored*” (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). This time it was not Kurds, but “*Greeks, Armenians, and Jews*” whose “*foundations were tolerated recently*” and “*honour was restored*”, while, on the other hand, “*we*”/Arabs “*couldn’t live religious traditions and customs in the past*” and “*no restoration of honour to those people of us being organized in different ways*”, for “*things done to hodjas of tariqah in the past*”, or to “*our people who are used to get madrasa education*” (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). He sees it as a “*problem*” and “*a cause for discrimination*”. Non-Muslims, especially Armenians, appeared in other narratives as well to be the common enemy very much in line with the mainstream nationalistic discourse in Turkey. The participant, mentioned his previous political stance with reference to Ceylanpınarı of Urfa, where he had his high school education and defined as “*a place where there is a balance of Arab and Kurd [populations], which sharpens one in terms of nationalism as one needs to defend himself when he is oppressed, thus gets sharpened*” (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). Being an Arab and a Turkish nationalist at the same time, he was yet one of the few examples among Arab participants who was actively engaging in NGO activities and politics, pursuing conservative nationalistic politics through an opposition political party at the time of interview. The other politically active ones were also young participants, both women and men, this indicating a rising

inclination for political activism among young Arabs at least for the research area.

The reactive positioning apparent in many of the above narratives was widespread among many Arab participants concerning Kurds and Kurdish political claims. The widespread expressions were that there was “*no discrimination*” towards Kurds as they could well become “*civil servants, police, go for military service*” (M, 56, Kurd, Urfa [U18]); that Kurds, especially in Diyarbakır, were “*intimidated by threat, force; they all keep quiet for the sake of their work, they are all brainwashed, their brains are stolen, they all believe in*”, while “*here they can’t deceive anyone*” (M, 56, Kurd, Urfa [U18]); that they were “*patronized*”, “*manipulated*”, “*instrumentalized*” for the interests of others, who “*make use of them*” (F, 33, Kurd, Urfa [U17]); that there were “*no intermarriage, friendship, affiliation*”, only “*distant neighbour relations*” between Arabs and Kurds who “*do not embrace each other*”; “*Kurds devalue Arabs in the eye of Turks in their social relations and cause biased attitudes of the latter*”; “*because of repression; [Kurds] too try to repress others [Arabs]*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). This latter is a tacit admission of the existence of “*repression*” towards Kurds; and their perceived repression in turn should be thought within the context of power relations between Kurd, Arab, and Turk/Turcoman/*şehirlipopulations* in Urfa. Unlike in Mardin, where Arabs constitute an important part of the urban population together with Syriacs, and Kurds are only rural origin latecomers to the city; in Urfa Arabs have mostly rural origins and are latecomers to the city like many Kurds. While Arabs in Mardin have been dominant in power relations in many aspects, Arabs in Urfa city centre haven’t had such a position. Importantly, thus, while Kurds in Mardin were mostly a group of people to complain of for the urban Arabs; in Urfa they were those to compete with for many resources, be them economic, political, symbolic, or social. Thus, within such assemblage of power relations tension concerning Kurds was much visible in Urfa even in everyday talks.

An interesting case came to fore when I was in a store, a sales place of a foundation established under governorate, which sold traditional Urfa cloth. Talking on the cloth, the young saleswoman in her early 20s reacted to the decision that the new batch of cloths woven and painted in the workshops would be yellow coloured. I first thought it was an aesthetic concern, but only then realized that yellow reminded her colours symbolised as Kurdish ones as she said “*how it will be yellow! Let them add then some green and red as well [laughing sourly] I can’t think of it*”. The simple decision of the colour change in the new products proved for the young woman a radical shift, almost a loss of position to the ‘rival’, if not ‘enemy’. The case reveals the importance of symbols in constructing be-long-ings even in very everyday settings.

Not only in political but also in social contexts as well were tense relations with Kurds often uttered. During an interview in a governmental women support and training centre in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Urfa, the participant apparently became uneasy upon my question about Kurds, as I asked about intermarriage between Arabs and Kurds. She said “*some have it. If they love each other they would but... [You don’t have it I guess] No, we haven’t ever given nor even gotten [bride]. What would you do with them?*” (F, 40, Arab, Urfa [U8]). After this, she totally ignored my question on mother tongue taking advantage of her children who were making noise. Although she was not interested with the children up to that point, one of a sudden she started to take some books on the table and show them to the children, warn them not to tease the books, and so on. She broke eye contact with me and expressed her concern as the centre was about to close and she had to leave. I could barely continue and end the interview properly as she had become reluctant to continue. Both fear and irritation might have caused her reaction.

An important reflection on the “*tense*” relations between Kurds and Arabs in the younger generation in Urfa city centre came from a participant who likened the construction of those relations to being “*a fan of Galatasaray*”, “*a leftist*”, “*a*

*Muslim*”, because your father or family is one. He made an analogy arguing “*we love sultanate, all of ours is handed down from father to son*” (M, 24, Arab, Urfa [U3]). According to his reflection “*radical ends lead to polarization. What happens then is a conflict continuing from one to its descending generation*” (M, 24, Arab, Urfa [U3]). What the participant spoke of was an intergenerational transmission of hostility among Kurds and Arabs. People inherited enmities as they inherited allegiances. Thus for the younger generation of Arabs it was an ‘*inherited hostility*’ towards Kurds, as I would call it. Without doubt, the inherited hostility works also the other way around. The comparative language was apparent for both groups. Kurds as well, where they lived together with Arabs as in Mardin and Urfa, often compared themselves with Arabs not only regarding their attitude towards the state and Turkishness but also their way of everyday life. The perceived general characteristics of the ‘other’, relations to one another, and the relative position of women in society in two groups often emerged as common topics of comparison in the narratives of participants with both affiliation, and a prejudiced language was not uncommon in them.

Importantly, the prejudiced and stereotypical language was widespread in both Kurds’ and Arabs’ articulations about one another. The aim in pointing them here is not to reproduce and breed the prejudices and stereotypes. It is rather to show the contextuality of such language and the ethnically nonessential character of those labels. Unlike the other quotations, the specific participant signifiers are not included in the following quotations, but only the city and the categorical group are referred to with the intention of contextualizing them. Important, in this context, is that in different cities, Mardin and Urfa, the same labels were used by the individuals of each ethnic affiliation against one another. For instance, “*dirty*”, “*stinky*”, “*not clean*” were used for Arabs in Urfa, but for Kurds in Mardin. “*Conservatism*” and “*being resistant to change*” were used in a pejorative meaning for Arabs in Urfa, in cases they were related to “*keeping their essence, tradition*” as “*not changing is nobleness for them*”; while in Mardin, for instance, an Arab told in an admiring manner that Kurds “*keep a*

*hold of their tradition, [while] Arabs try not to extinct*". While it was articulated "*Arabs have the feeling to repress Kurds, they would be surprised when they see their home clean*" was uttered in Mardin, just the opposite was said in Urfa about Kurds who try to repress Arabs and unfairly accuse them for not being clean. The other comparable discourse was that Turks love Arabs but don't love Kurds, which was uttered by some Arabs in Urfa; while in the same city it was stated by a Kurd that "*those coming from the west, the teachers etc., are doing better in Kurdish villages than in Arab villages*", in each case some sort of proud for the Turkish 'favour' being existent in the narrative. Arabs having no other concern than "*eating and drinking*" was expressed in Urfa; Arabs being "*selfish, not caring, passive*" uttered by an Arab, "*Arabs liv[ing] like in reyhani, musical melody, springy, without concern*", and Arab women thinking only "*food, gold, making up, hair colour, gathering for some chat*" were expressed in Mardin. On the other hand, "*Kurds predominantly thinking politics*" was told both in Urfa and Mardin, which when uttered by Kurds was often dignified, yet when by Arabs was disdained.

Reconsidering the differences of social structure and power relations between these groups in the respective cities as mentioned throughout this chapter, the comparable discourses seem to be related to many factors like class positioning, the local hierarchical relations, the migrant versus local tension, political allegiances which all count in the process, and not ethnicity as such. In addition, the role of social capital is visible as be-long-ings are constantly formed within social settings. Absence or existence of relations with neighbours, intermarriage, shared or conflicting economic interests all played their role in this context.

In this part was crucially revealed the role of Kurdish political claims in constituting a point of reference for many Arabs in reconstructing their position in the power axis. A comparative language, used as a ground of claim making, and reactive positioning were made clear in the face of the claims of Kurdishness and its potential hegemony in the region. It is important to look specifically,

however, what Arabness meant for the participants and how its dynamic relation with Turkishness was constructed in their everyday lives, which I will do below.

### **3.4. 'Being' Arab and 'Feeling' Turk**

How the participants locate Arabness and Turkishness is analyzed below through reference to their experiences of socialization; reflection on symbols of a nation discourse like the flag and homeland; practicalities of everyday life; culture; and power relations; as well as a more critical stance towards official and popular representations regarding the relation of Arabs to Turkishness.

#### **3.4.1. Socialization**

Important insights on formation of be-long-ings came from the participants' narratives on being an 'Arab' and being a 'Turk'. As already implied in many cases above two forms of identifications were mostly lived and seen not to be in disagreement with each other. On the contrary, for many 'being a Turk' was emerging in the natural flow of things, as part of their bringing up. One participant mentioned such a case when asked about the image of Turk for him and what it meant in his childhood:

We were already raised by feeling ourselves as Turk, is that right? We didn't think that 'we are Arab man! What're we doing with Turks?' and so... 'Be aware that you are Arab', 'tremble and be yourself', noo! I mean we were already raised as a Turk. We didn't put ourselves... I mean neither a Turkish Kurdish phenomenon was spoken, nor lived, nor made felt. Neither I felt it, nor did they live it. Anyway I say I was raised like Turk. (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5])

The claim that no stress was made on their Arabness as they grew up, and that they were raised as Turk, as well as their mental and physical distance towards the "*Turkish Kurdish phenomena*" imply an untroubled state of relations for most Arabs with Turkishness and with the state. A similar perception of Arabness and Turkishness going well together in 'the natural flow things' was raised in a

dialog between two sisters, expressed in a nutshell that “*the two cultures have no conflict*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]) with each other. The perception was fed by their childhood experience in western cities as their father was a teacher and worked outside Urfa for a long time, where they face no discriminative experiences for they were Arab, on the contrary the parents now have “*friendships for 25 years*”. I asked “what does being a Turk and being Arab mean for you?” and the reply came as a dialogue between the two as the following:

[U9]: [laughs] well... both culture...we haven't lived the Arab culture much indeed as we were outside [of Urfa], we were all raised by Turkish culture, well later on when we became aware of Arab culture, be conscious of it, and feel different, we then had such ideas. I mean we lived both cultures with ease, had no confusion [*“bocalama”*]

[U10]: The two cultures have no conflict

[U9]: Yes, no conflict.

[U10]: I mean Arabs for instance have not a rebellion, not an uprising. Don't know they don't say why Turks has done this because there is no such a thing. Turks, too, as much as I see accept Arabs easily. (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]), (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10])

The expressions of being “*raised by Turkish culture*”; becoming “*aware of Arab culture*” and its “*difference*” only after moving to Urfa when already grown-up; yet being at “*ease*” and having “*no confusion*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]) with two cultures are signs of a smooth acculturation process that participants had gone through in the majority society. It may be taken as a sign of non-existence for the individuals of a problem regarding ‘meaning’ attribution to their social positions and identifications. This is crucial in that search for ‘meaning in life’, together with search for ‘security’ and ‘wealth’, is an important motivation for individuals’ formations of be-long-ings.<sup>121</sup> Participants’ claim that there is no conflict between two cultures should also be thought in line with Rubén G. Rumbaut’s argument that “ethnic self-awareness is heightened or blurred, respectively, depending on the degree of dissonance or consonance of the social

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<sup>121</sup> The idea was inspired by the personal meeting with Theda Skocpol at the Department of Sociology, University of Oxford, 2012

contexts which are basic to identity formation” (Rumbaut, 2008:4). Giving the majority-group youths, as example, he claims that “in an ethnically consonant context, ethnic self-identity tends to be taken for granted and is not salient; whereas contextual dissonance heightens the salience of ethnicity and of ethnic group boundaries (Rumbaut, 2008). In this case, there are signs of perceived existence of an ethnically consonant context for Arabs in Turkey as well as the absence of a contextual dissonance as apparent in the participants’ stress on cultural harmony between Arab and Turkish cultures whereby the latter “*accept Arabs easily*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). In turn, Arabs are argued to have no “*rebellion*” or “*uprising*”, by implication against the existing order of things in both social and political terms, nor are in any claim against the acts of Turks. Perception of absence of conflict between two cultures implies consonance not only at the symbolic-discursive context, but also and importantly in relations between the two groups of people, namely Turks and Arabs. Moreover, inferred from the overall context of the interview with the above participants is that such perspective is basically a comparative one by implication. The not named but existent third group in this comparative perspective is Kurds, with all their ‘rebellion’ and ‘uprising’, and ‘claims against Turks’. As already noted earlier such comparative positioning vis-à-vis Kurds was very high among Arab participants especially with regard to their relation with the state, with Turks, and with Turkishness. Many times, indeed, these are all seen as indicating one and the same thing.

#### **3.4.2. National Symbols: Flag, Homeland, Feeling Home**

Below is a conversation brought forth by the questions of the NGO representative [Q2] I mentioned above, who asked some questions to the two participants joining us at the end of our interview in his office. I know not for sure if his intention was to learn for himself or to assure that I get the right information and image out of the interview, but as the conversation was



revealing in terms of the symbolic-discursive context of belongings I include a fragment below:

Q2: what does a Turkish flag mean for you? The flag of Turk or what?

[U9]: well, if we want to live in here it is the flag of us all, of Kurd, of Turk, of Arab, it's the flag of all. I mean this we cannot do... [Q2: ok....] cannot deny.

[U10]: well it's like this, the person who wants to have his own flag; there are already lots of established Arab countries, if he wants he can go. But if this Turkish Republic is established, if there is such a state, if there is such a nation, and if we have been here, well then we must accept its conditions. [U9: Yes] Well, in terms of ethnic structure I say I'm Arab, but if we look at my national thing I'm Turk, I would always say this.

Q2: what does that national mean; at what point are you a Turk?

[U10]: Well, in terms of the lands we live in, in terms of the state we take service, in terms of the state standing behind us. (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]), (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10])

'The establishment', that is 'the existing state', 'nation', and 'already being here' on the defined territorial 'land' appear as the material grounds for the participant's identification as a 'Turk' and 'accept[ing] its conditions' and 'symbols'. Moreover, the state that serves and backs 'us' might be taken as the practical grounds of such identification. The always present option of leaving Turkey for one of the "*lots of Arab countries*" "*already established*", on the other hand, is being reserved for those who do not identify with such 'National'. The viability of such option, thus, may also be thought as a practical ground for often it is believed to ease the process mentally.

The relation between the existence of Arab countries and Arabs of Turkey identifying with Turkishness or the status quo was established by others as well. The critical point concerning such relation was the comparison with Kurds. One participant expressed it in a context while she claimed that even a "*humiliating glance*" of "*one who is essentially Turk*" "*drives the Kurdish person crazy*", while "*it may not affect the Arab*" (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). When I asked why it was so, she replied as the following:

Kurds are affected more because they have an ideology, a target. Well, for instance it may sound a bit of a big-head but the Arab says anyway I have 8 Arab countries, and counts Egypt, Damascus, well Saudi and so on; but the Kurd cannot say I have one country; my Kurdish flag, sovereignty... [...] Like I shall too have a country where my flag waves, where I have the sovereignty; for this he struggles for so many years, right? What happens when it doesn't realize, he makes trouble here and there. Arab does not have such a concern! Well I speak this for our country. Not for else...I mean Arab does not have such a worry or such concern. And if he is ignorant enough ooh don't bother his pleasure [laughs] he has no limit in talking big. Something like this... (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4])

She replied my surprised question in certainty asking whether Arabs thought of having Arab countries and was this something outspoken as “*sure they do!*” and “*sure it is, why not?*” (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4]). Perception of such relation was expressed by some Kurdish participants as well. One, for instance, stated that “*Arabs do not have problem, they don't question, no worry of preserving the identity. They say ‘we have twenty three countries<sup>122</sup> speaking our language’*”.<sup>123</sup> Thus the existence of many Arab countries as an alternative place to leave Turkey for if need be, seem to provide a source, however imaginary it may be, for easing any tension that may be experienced with existing order of things.

A similar reasoning was expressed also by one of the pilot participants, whom I quoted elsewhere in this chapter. Referring to what he heard from his elders that “*in Mardin centre, for instance, they would not let people speak Arabic, the gendarmeries, warned those speaking Arabic*”; or to the fact that “*the names of the villages were changed*”, he asked the question “*if for assimilation, it was done to Arabs as well*”, “*but why did not they become enemies to the state despite these*” (M, 33, Arab, İskenderun/Mardin). His own explanation concerning the scene that “*Arabs did not mind them*”, never turning to a “*discourse of state discriminating Arabs, [or] not giv[ing] their rights*” and never engaging in organized opposition was that “*there are many Arab states,*

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<sup>122</sup> He may be referring to the number making the Arab world, also known as the Arab nation or the Arab states, currently consisting of the 22 Arab countries of the Arab League.

<sup>123</sup> Field notes taken during an expert interview, 14.10.2011, Urfa

*Arab nation-states*” as different from the Kurdish case. In this line of argument, thus, existence of various Arab states hinders any “*motivational source*” for Arabs, which “*pushes*” Kurds to be “*a more anti-state, more leftist, more demanding*” people thinking “*we are living in Syria, in Iraq, in Iran, and in Turkey, yet we do not have one state, and we live everywhere in poverty and being assimilated*”. Arabs, on the other hand, “*have no basis for such ethnical reasoning and coming to such conclusion*”, as when they go to Arabia, Damascus, or Beirut they find “*the country of Arabs*” where “*they speak Arabic*” and “*understand each other*”. In this line of argument, these cases provide “*a dominating Arab image*”, which is itself “*something soothing*” for the Arabs of Turkey, “*pacify[ing] in terms of demanding something from The Turkish state or prevent them going into such way*”. It’s not a matter of Arab nationalism or “*identification with Arabs*” for him, but a matter of “*confidence provid[ing]*”. His narrative of his personal experience in Beirut, where he went for an academic conference, revealed important meanings in this sense. He “*was very surprised*” and “*it was so strange to*” him hearing that “*everything, all [wa]s in Arabic*”, seeing the “*Arab air hostess on the plane*”, “*the Arab officer woman*” on the land, “*such a nicely dressed woman, so modern [her head uncovered] but speaks Arabic to you, checking your passport*” (M, 33, Arab, İskenderun/Mardin). What he experienced through that travel was the “*demolish[ing]*” of the “*Arab, pious, poor*” equalization in his mind, and the “*deconstruct[ion]*” of the Arab “*image [he] got used to*” so far. The details of such image he explained in the following:

Arabness, something you hear from your mother, your grandfather, a very local thing I mean, doesn’t have any aristocratic aspect for you, ok? [Laughs] From your childhood on it is spoken in specific neighbourhoods, on the hills, ok, nothing it has. It would be spoken in a public office, that’s so weird I mean. [...] I mean even I was flattered for a moment. ‘Wow! How nice! It seems that could happen!’[Laughs]. (M, 33, Arab, İskenderun/Mardin)

Although he stated that he have had already experienced a transformation during his university, masters, and continuing doctorate education processes, becoming

aware that “*that there was not so much difference between us*” and Turks, this travel specifically provided a perspective “*from the side of the Arab*” and deconstructed for him the already shaken images in his mind. He referred above to the hills of Iskenderun, where the family settled after migrating to the town for a work position for his father in the iron and steel plant in 1978 the year he was born. His life until his university years in Istanbul was spent on those hills where many other Arab and Kurd migrants, yet only very few Turks, lived. Those hills in the centre were signs of poverty, migration, outsidership, labour, piety, and Arabness for him and many others like him. In other words, he perceived Arabness in relation to Turkishness within the dichotomies of ‘*local versus national*’, ‘*peripheral versus central*’, ‘*private versus public*’, ‘*traditional versus modern*’, ‘*unsophisticated versus aristocratic*’, ‘*poor versus rich*’, ‘*migrant versus established*’, and ‘*up on hills versus of level areas*’. High levels of social mobility, education, social capital, and economic integration being important factors of his transformation point at shifting grounds of belongings in a wider perspective. His narrative is important in detailing the socially constructed images, and self-perceptions as were mentioned by many Arab participants of this study.

Symbols like the Turkish flag, language, homeland, and national anthem were often raised by many participants as evidence of their affiliation with the national and be-long-ings in terms of the larger political community. Below is a narrative coming as a reply to my question about such symbols including some everyday rituals at schools like reciting Student Oath and shouting “I’m Turk, I’m true”, in order to dig for the individual meanings attributed to them. The participant, a young Arab man who lived long years in Istanbul before he returned to Mardin, articulated on his high level of identification with those symbols and the meanings he attributed to them. The ground for his identification was highly abstract and subtle on the one hand, yet intensely embodied on the other, almost referring to the workings of the human organism.

Well, uttering those [student oath] I had usually a feeling of tremor inside me. They made us live this in the military as well. Like, 'happy who calls himself a Turk', 'I was born a Turk, I'll die a Turk'...when I said things like these, saying them to myself, I had a tremor inside me. Like I feel proud of myself that I'm a Turk, it gives a different feeling. Well, if I was born of a different mother or a different father, if I was an American, I might have felt proud with that as well, but being a Turk is something totally different in my opinion. [What kind of a thing it is?] For instance, I may have tremor inside me when I say 'I'm a Turk'. I don't know if an American can live these, but a feeling of tremor passes inside me when I say 'I'm a Turk'. I mean I know that I am against injustice. Well... How can I tell it more? [What do you feel so that you had that tremor for instance; what do you think so that you have it?] I had that tremor with proud. Well, I mean, as I think that no power can beat me that tremor is inside me. As I have the temperament to overcome every problem. For instance, let me put it this way, when I am wronged, someone else may accept that wrong, but as a Turk I do not. Because the lands you see and live in teach you this. You learn it more and more. You can defend yourself for instance; even if you have never known it before. Because in the physiology of the humankind for instance there is the kidney, liver and so, in the physiology of the humankind, for instance, in the body there are lots of things invisible to the eye. Emotion, for example, no one can see emotions. Reactions for instance, gestures are very important. For example, if I say to my friend 'what's up man' in a smile, I would get a pretty reaction. But if I say 'what are you doing man' on a sour face, I would get a different reaction. Well like this, Turkishness is something related to this. I mean when we are wronged we may even react unintentionally. Like this. For this, even if an army is on my way, my confidence is never shaken as a Turk. I am confident in myself I mean. Even if I will be dead I shall die with that confidence. (M, 25, Arab, Mardin [M20])

Turkishness, in the above narrative, appears as a highly abstract set of attributions like being 'totally different', 'against injustice', 'proud', 'strong', 'resolute', 'self-confident', 'not deceived easily', and feeling a 'tremor' inside. The participant defines himself with these characteristics, all of which have their source in his 'being a Turk'. Interestingly, moreover, Turkishness for him is something familial and being born into; a habitual way of existence; a result of socialization within the land and life; consists of internalized gestures, bodily expressions, physiological as well as emotive expressions; and is natural and familiar even like an unintentional reaction. Turkishness as the embodiment of all those 'emotions', 'reactions', and 'temperament', thus, psychologised, physiologised, and naturalized all at once. His mention of 'Turkishness as an unintentional reaction' provides us with a ground to conceptualize Turkishness as habitus, however arbitrarily and popularly it may be defined in substance. One

essentially defining characteristic of it is apparently ‘manhood’ or ‘masculinity’ with all its references to ‘strength’, ‘pride’, ‘power’, ‘beating’, ‘defence’, ‘army’, ‘military’, and ‘dying’. Seemingly, Turkishness functions as a manly habitus.

### **3.4.3. Arabness as a Source of Social Capital to Overcome Problems of Everyday Life**

The above participant’s narrative does not end at that point. Further complicating the story on Turkishness, much on material grounds this time, was his comparison between life in Istanbul and Mardin. He lived in Istanbul for 14 years, where his family moved to for economic reasons when he was a 2-year-old. He stated the following about the life in two cities:

I compared [them] a lot. Life here is quieter. People here value each other more. For instance when you pass by someone the one may say hello to the other here. But this is not so in Istanbul I mean, even your friend wouldn’t speak to you. Life is so fast there in my opinion. I liken it to that, there is this thing around the eyes of the horses; they always look at their front. To the work in the morning, back to home in the evening. People are really like this. I saw so much accident there since I slept at the streets and so, saw many accidents, saw many people being shot. Though you walk on the same pavement, one does not turn around and look to the other. Well, the man next to you stabs the other, you pass by them but you don’t look behind. I mean the sentiment called mercy is not there anymore. Well since I saw those I wondered about here and came here. (M, 25, Arab, Mardin [M20])

The above narrative defines a high contrast between the isolation, the blasé attitude of the metropolitan city life in Istanbul and the friendlier, quieter, and valuing life in Mardin. Although he “*was bored for a while after [he] came here, because there is not any social activity, you can’t go out somewhere, there is nothing. A very quiet life is it here*”, and he missed Istanbul at the beginning; still he “*didn’t want to go back after [he] had seen all that had happened there*” (M, 25, Arab, Mardin [M20]). He believed life passed so quickly there and all in working, even to a degree hindering one to comprehend it. Plus there was no ‘abundance’ anymore in Istanbul as was in the past when one only worked a short time daily and earned enough money to keep his home; he said “*now you*

*work till night, but still it doesn't suffice*". The narrative on the quotidian experiences in the two cities, constructed through a 'here versus there' dichotomy, is important since what he mentioned about the life in Istanbul bear a sharp contrast to what he had already claimed about being Turk like being against injustice, being strong and resolute, or being non-deceivable. The practice he claims to exist in Istanbul denotes a merciless life, which is tricky, and deceiving, where people, even friends, are indifferent to each other, and insensible to the evil next to them. These are all 'Turkish' in his mindset, yet highly contradictory in itself. Arguably, the practical life as against the abstracted ideals played its role in such contradiction. The participant's harsh personal conditions of life surely very influential in how he experienced and perceived life in the most crowded and cosmopolitan city of Turkey. His mother died after a short time they had moved to Istanbul and the family was broken. He lived together with his elder brother for a while, and then he lived alone and started to work at a very young age. Whereby his main occupation was fishery, he engaged in various precarious works like glazing, carpentry, bakery and many alike. Most of the time he lived and slept in the streets; sometimes at worn out flats with other single young men; while other times he slept at his workplace overnights having no other place to sleep or live. Revealing how all that became 'normal' for him he said: "*I lived alone but it was not that difficult for me; I was sleeping at the streets, but I got used to it*" (M, 25, Arab, Mardin [M20]). He was 16 years-old when he returned to Mardin. He worked in some restaurants and cafés for a while; and after completing his military service he decided to stay in Mardin rather than going back to Istanbul. He was working as a waiter in a popular café-pub in the historical old city at the time of the interview. Talking on the process of his staying in Mardin he took up an articulation of what "bonded" him to Mardin. Aside from the ground it provides for a comparison to the life in Istanbul, his narrative below, full of details, is especially crucial in terms of revealing how social capital works at the local community level and how does it define be-long-ings for individuals.

Then here, the thing binding me here, I'm indeed an Arab, originally an Arab. Since I've never seen it; only in Mardin very recently. I got on the minibus and all in the minibus were speaking Arabic to each other. It was very weird for me, because we are completely used to Turkish. Now the life here is cheap for instance. It is your own people. There is not a condition here for one to harm the other. A small town ["memleket"]; when something happens, it's being heard of. The commitment to one another for instance, one knows the value of the other. When one says hello here, the other feel himself indebted; he too wants to say hello while passing by him I mean. For this I love here. And I am thinking of staying here. Well never... after I came here I never thought of going back. I just went for holiday... [Istanbul, Ankara, Ordu] well for a week time then I came back. [How did you feel yourself there around?] I wanted to turn back here. They are places with many social activities, but well I wanted to turn back here because I got used to over here any longer. I am an accustomed person anymore. I know how to live here. I learnt here that even if you don't have money in your pocket, you can do everything you have in your mind. I mean... for instance you want to buy something, you don't have money, but since people here value each other you can attain it. It is ok on credit... there is no distrust here. I mean one trusts the other. But it is not like that in Istanbul. Not like that somewhere else. No one would know one another since it is a big city. In the big city, you may see a man you once saw after 10 years again, the same person. But here the man you saw once, you can see him 10 times a day. A small place. Everyone knows each other. I wouldn't know well the... But I follow very well my age groups. For example we have this. It is section by section for instance, they say well this guy is from the ones such-and-such. For us it is distinguished house by house. Well from the carrots, from the onions let me say so... as house. [The separate families?] Yes, in terms of surname. According to the surname it is evaluated. For instance, well you went somewhere, the man would say 'who and what are you, where are you coming from, which town of Mardin are you from', from such-and-such place. As the man having worked beforehand with those types of people, he can know you more or less. Says this guy is reliable or not. [Family is the reference?] past.. depend.. I mean it depends on the trustability. Based on that, you can buy it. On credit it's ok. The one values, as I said, the other. But it is not so in the big city...(M, 25, Arab, Mardin [M20])

The narrative makes it clear that Mardin is not only a 'cheaper' but also a 'safer' place to live for the participant. It is a place providing for the expectation that 'one will not harm the other', with people 'committed to each other', 'valuing one another', 'knowing, caring about, respecting each other', where there is 'frequent contact between people', 'trusting relations', 'reliability', 'mutuality' all of which come to fore as important sources of social capital. For the participant such social capital revealed itself in practices like 'shopping on credit', and in opportunities where it becomes 'easy to achieve one's wishes'. 'To know how to live in', 'getting used to' and 'being accustomed to' one place



also appear as sources of social capital at a more individual level. ‘Familiarity with’ and ‘knowledge of’ it appear to define one’s relation to the locality one lives in and indicate a habitual way of construction of spatial belongings. The stress on ‘family affiliation and fame’ points at the defining role of bonding social capital in terms of local relations. ‘Family’ is an important unit in social stratification for *Mardinli* Arabs. The term ‘family’ denotes the shared lineage of a group of households that may actually hold different surnames, unlike the participant’s claim, yet still are part of the one and the same family line. There is an endless reference to Arab Families and their differing characteristics or even hierarchies among them in everyday speech in Mardin. The participant’s allegory of “*carrots*” and “*onions*” refers to the various names and the way of naming of those families, always in plural like “...*ler*”, “...*lar*” in Turkish, the plural suffix indicating descendants of a lineage. One essential point in terms of be-long-ings and the play of social capital in that process is the participant’s expression of “*it is your own people*”. ‘Your own people’ here refers not simply to the local people, but to Arab people as implied by his references of being “*indeed an Arab*”, “*originally an Arab*”, or “*speaking Arabic*”. ‘Your own people’ appears to be the main actor and the constituent of the above portrayed space of safety, care, respect, trust, reliability, mutuality, commitment, value, and informed relations about each other. Importantly, ethnicity gains its function and meaning through the workings of that very social capital defined in this portrayal. Ethnicity becomes the source of social capital. It indeed becomes the capital itself. Thought in this perspective the participant’s narrative on “being Turk” in the previous quotation withdraws to a more abstract level, while ‘being Arab’ in all its practicality and materiality starts to construct his life through the ‘new’ yet old set of relations- new for the participant, old within the order of things for Mardin.

The family becoming an important source of social capital was also expressed by another participant, who after volunteering for the establishment of a youth centre under GAP administration realized the importance of family name in

overcoming prejudice and resistance of people. It was a very difficult process at the beginning as they “*got many reactions*” (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17]) in the traditional city where there was almost no organized public social life beforehand. The four girls, alongside some 6-7 boys, engaged in the process where she, her sister and two cousins. Although they were brought up within patriarchal relations where they were constrained by the uncles on where to go and what to do the high social, symbolic, cultural, and economical capitals available for them through their family were enabling for them to take part in public professional life. She stated that “*it was very difficult to direct families to send their children*” to the centre at the beginning, when she “*realized that the family was important*” as the family name provided the ground of “*trust*” for the parents to safely entrust their children. She then “*realized that being a member of a well-known family made things easier*” for “*people thought she is the daughter of such and such, it would be a good place*” (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17]). ‘Trust’ being received or entrusted through the family’s place and fame in the society is an important indicator of how social capital functions in local relations. Still more importantly the bonding social capital in this case, established through family relations, is transformed to bridging social capital bringing youngsters of Mardin together under the newly established local centre. It furthermore is converted to linking social capital being mobilized to launch an organization under governmental regulation and establish relations to positions of power for those who are included. Bonding, bridging, linking social capitals are tied together in bringing forth a public place in the locality where be-long-ings for many who engaged in one way or another are reshaped.

In another case, being Arab was defined very much in relation to its practical gains at individual level and the personal experiences. The participant being asked on the meaning, role and significance of being Arab in her life importantly brought forth such personal dimension as in the following:

Well indeed, what kind of meaning it has? Now when I think like this I'm happy for being Arab. I never felt discomfort like 'oh I wish I were not [Arab]' or so. Well then, when you think of Arabic, in total the most important for instance, if I adapt it to my life I have taken my education in *Imam Hatip* [School]<sup>124</sup> and [Faculty of] Theology, never I had trouble with Kuran-ı Kerim with Arabic. It was always advantage for me. Well while choosing [to get education at] those, I chose them trusting to my language. Uumm not like... Both schooling in *Imam Hatip* was my preference and so was getting education in [Faculty of] Theology. I mean my family had never put pressure on me anyway for me to go to this school or that. (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4])

It appears above that her mother tongue, in other words knowing Arabic as a result of being herself an Arab became an advantage all through her educational life and laid the ground for her choices of where to study. This fact seems to have fed her decision of getting her secondary and high school level education at *Imam Hatip* and then having her bachelor's and master's at Faculty of Theology, where Arabic was a crucial tool of education as well as constituted an important part of the curriculum. Being Arab in her personal life then meant endowment with a practical gift, the advantageous position of knowing the Arabic language, which helped with her education.

Arabness in the cases above appears to have become a resource for individuals in their practical search of social, cultural, economic, professional gains in their life. In this sense it became an important element of constructing be-long-ings in the practicalities of everyday life. Arabs having a superior hand in Mardin, and in general having a smooth relation with the central dominant power help form Arabness as a source of social capital for individuals in overcoming difficulties they face through familial, communal, and local relations.

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<sup>124</sup> Vocational school to train government employed the *imam* initially at high school level, then at secondary school as well.

#### 3.4.4. *Unreflected Be-long-ing: Cultural Identity and Ontological Being*

Being Arab for some participants was expressed as a natural, and an in itself process whereby almost an external definition was not much possible. When I asked a participant what being Arab meant to him he replied as follows:

Arabs... Well what Arab means that means me, means myself. Well rather than putting on someone else's identity I would put on my own identity; I would live my own tradition; I would live my own culture. I mean what Arab means that means me! Well either I couldn't get the question properly, or... (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1])

With references to culture, tradition, and identity he was defining being Arab as what he was born into, as what he embodied and became in a sense the ontological self. Such perception of Arabness, which almost defies any ground of reflection may stem from the fact that the participant had his early socialization among an exclusively Arab populated area, Harran, where traditional patterns of life and culture are still closely observed. His only lately encounter with the other, be it Kurd or Turk/western, bringing him an apparently reactive and defensive type of identification with what he defines to belong to himself.

For those who did not have their early socialization in an Arab populated circle or through learning the culture, 'Arabness' or 'being Arab' was mostly related to the experiences of others and more of a spectacle. In these cases, mentioned were mostly the practices of everyday life like 'dressing', the language spoken, occasions like welcoming a guest, or distinguishing practices of the rites of passage, like weddings and funerals. The two sister participants who claimed that they "*don't live Arabness directly*" [U9] but are "*in-between*" ([U9], [U10]) two cultures of Turkish and Arabic, for instance, defined Arabness as "*to internalize that culture, living in that culture*" [U9], or "*speaking Arabic, having Arab family life*" [U10]. The elder sister's [U10] emphasis that "*there is not much a rebellious thing*" but "*only these*" was an important signifier of their previously mentioned suggestion that Arab culture was in conformity with Turkish culture,

which indeed refers to the popular and official norms of the dominant political community, however transient they might be. Concerning the “*Arab family life*” they referred to some “*conventional*” codes of manners, which people “*behave accordingly*” [U10] like “*in condolences for instance usually dark colour dresses would be worn, in weddings more colourful long dresses would be worn*” [U9], “*or for instance rice or sugar... these sort of things are brought by*” [U10], “*when visiting for condolence, [and] it is the same when going to wedding*”. The synchronization in their complementary style of replies was interesting in revealing their shared perception, which was not always the case with regard to other issues. One gave the example that “*in Arabs if one comes to your house as a guest for the first time certainly a gift will be given to her/him. This is a specific, standard living. [...] You can't say I'll have a tea and leave; they will certainly cook meal, serve you, and then send you off*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). They confirmed that these were practiced in their family too. The other referred to the “*very secluded aşirets, well aşirets of sheikhs*” who “*practice their religion fully*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]) as part of the Arab culture. More personal experiences were uttered by the younger sister, more as a sign of divergence from the ‘typical Arab’ though. In one case she stated “*for instance when I put on Arab clothing, I can wear it for an hour but for the second I would put it off, because I can't move in it comfortably since I don't always use it, as I don't live that culture I mean... I haven't been in it*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). In another case, the same participant, who was more prone to identify herself with Arabness compared to her elder sister, defined her not knowing Arabic in more intimate terms:

And there is this, I can't speak Arabic, I understand it but I can't speak. This is a huge lack for me. I say to my mother and father why you did not speak to us in Arabic, well we go to the village they speak Arabic to us, I get it, [but] I reply in Turkish. Ah, this is a very big lack, well I want to be able to speak fluent Arabic, speak my own language I mean (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]).

The elder sister, though confirming that not knowing Arabic “*is a lack*”, which she “*feels as well*”, seems to approach Arabic as one language among others,

which would provide practical use among their acquaintances as she stated: “*really knowing a language is good, understanding each other is good. As we don’t know, we stay without a word [“kalakalmak”]* (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). Her experience appear to have nothing specifically emotional compared to the one of the younger sister [U9] who revealed her regret for not knowing her “*own language*”, her reproach to her parents for not teaching it to the children, and her perception of it as “*a huge lack*” with an accompanying sigh of sadness. In this case the participants “*were not raised among Arabs, since [their] father was a teacher [they] were always out*” and the parents “*did not speak [the language] around*” “*for [them] to learn it*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). Increase of awareness about their ethnic identity and ‘difference’ came back at the locality where they faced other ethnics, of their community or of other minorities, which were either non-present or invisible within the majority society. Still, however, their experience and perception that their ‘ethnic culture’ is “*not in conflict*” with the ‘majority culture’ helped them to live that awareness without any inner conflict and still within the circles of majority discourses. Existence of ‘real others’, that of Kurds, within the locality and against those discourses helped strengthen the inner circle position of theirs as was apparent in their whole narrative, just as in other cases above and will be below. At a more personal level, moreover, the facts playing role in such positioning especially in the locality were that the participants were both educated young women who had been able to have schooling despite the male relatives’ objections like their uncle, as their father, himself a teacher, was able to repulse them; that they pioneered for other Arab girls in the family to have education; and that they both were public sector professionals.

In many cases some of which I mention in this part, Arabness for the participants was a form of be-long-ing that was not much reflected upon. It was mostly a way of life, how things always were, or how people always did. Reference to culture, traditions, language, dressing, manners and rituals was usually articulated within such framework. In the presence of a challenging ‘other’, however, ‘difference’

became focal point of be-long-ings whereby Arabness was expressed in a relational context of ethnic and power relations.

### **3.4.5. Power Relations**

Rumbaut (2008: 4) argues that “people whose ethnic, racial or other social markers place them in a minority status in their group or community are more likely to be self-conscious of those characteristics”. Concerning many Arab participants such perspective is important as a negative proving case. Especially in Mardin, Arabs have long been a dominant group in the city centre and in alliance with state power. Never being in minority status, their relation with Arabness and Turkishness is important to grasp within such context. A very clear case along this line was articulated by a participant, a young, educated woman from a rooted, wealthy, and well-known family in Mardin. She narrated on being Arab as following:

What Arabness was for me? Indeed, now I think of it, well at what point of my life stood my Arabness? Well, Arab was a language for us. I now mull over if Arabness was something beyond speaking a language. For instance, we then used to speak in Arabic with our elders in the family, with my grandmother so to say, but my grandfather was very careful for us to speak in Turkish. Only for, yes for us to learn Turkish at home; even before going to school we had already learnt Turkish at home. We spoke Turkish with my mother and father, my grandfather also didn't permit us to speak in Arabic with him; we always spoke in Turkish. ... Really about this... [Silence] It is anyhow said that, some groups for instance even say that we were assimilated. ‘Arabs, you have been assimilated very easily’, thus some try to provoke. Well, but as I said, this is the citizen consciousness. Within my family that was not an issue, Arabness was consisted in language, like culture, well there was also an Arabic culture, I mean food culture, but culture in that way is already the traditional culture, I am not sure if it is true to link it to Arabness, because the Syriacs also have the same culture. That may be more related to the city [local] life here. That's to say, my ethnic identity has never a place in my life that I can define or I can tell about. (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17])

The distinguishing characteristic of Arabness in their life being basically the language was an important finding that was repeated by other participants as well. Usage of Arabic language in their childhood was limited in many cases by

the will of their family members for them to be able to integrate to the dominant society more easily through being fluent in Turkish. Higher socio-economic status and being urban rather than rural were determining variables in this pattern of experience. Lower-socio economic status and rural background, on the other hand, brought in many cases pursued traditions and customs, traditional ways of dressing, more conservative attitudes towards women's education and position in the family, and strong *aşiret* relations. Arabs in Urfa city centre and Arabs in Mardin city centre also differ from each other in that the former has more recently migrated from their villages and have strong continuing relations with the rural both in terms of livelihood and social relations, whereas the latter have been long established in the urban, their relations with the rural constituted mostly as a result of land acquiring from villages, a process starting from the Ottoman period mostly through collaboration with the central power, which I will elaborate on elsewhere below. Arabs in Mardin have conventionally shared the city space and culture with the Syriac population, and only recently but not always cheerfully for the former two, Kurds as well joined in the loop. The above participant's confusion whether cultural elements like food are related traditionally to the local culture that has been shared with Syriacs in the city or specific to some ethnic group is a sign of such historical phenomenon. Yet the participant's concluding remark that her ethnic identity had never a place in her life that she could define or tell about states much about the smooth and untroubled relation with 'The National' that was experienced by many Arab participants. Important in this context is that ethnic identity in her early socialization was so invisible that it "*was not an issue*" within her family as she put it. Though no tension was perceived or experienced by the Arabs themselves between their ethnic and national be-long-ings, a tension was pointed out from outside by "*some groups*", by implication Kurds, who "*provoke[d]*" Arabs that they "*have been assimilated*" whereas the participant thought it was not assimilation but "*citizen consciousness*" (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17]). As ethnicity had become an expressed issue in Turkey, even a hot one, due to debates on national identity, citizenship, or multiculturalism, and the not always



peaceful demands for recognition of difference and identity, the alteration in identity politics affected many people's self-identification and positioning vis-à-vis Turkish identity. The direction of influence and change in the perception, however, was usually very much related to the social locations of people, such as socio-economic status, age, gender, and having an urban or rural background. The same participant's narrative below is important in revealing a perspective on how that process was lived within the locality and by the individuals of different ethnic groups:

They started to ask us constantly, for instance, how it was possible for us to live together with the Syriac people especially, they started to ask. Then we had the awareness that we were different from the Syriacs. Indeed, I have never thought of such a thing up to that point, never thought of it. Never about my identity, I mean I am an Arab or I am a Turk no such thing, but as a Turkish citizen, I thought always that I was a Turk, that's I had accepted Turkishness as a supra identity and being a citizen of this country, Turkishness was the name of that citizenship for me and I was telling that proudly. Well about the Ottoman Empire, I was telling that I was a grandchild of the Ottomans and so, I was proud of that etcetera. Still I am, but... after these have started to be talked about, I became like... Not only me, but also around I see it, I feel like there is a disassociation. As we talk about it, we dissociate. Even me, for the first time this year to be honest thought if I were a Turk? Well my identity, ethnic identity is Arab; is Turkishness a racial or an ethnic concept rather than what I know as the supra-identity? Yet, frankly, I try to keep myself away from this idea; I don't want to think about it. I am a citizen of this country, nothing else bothers. Yes, my origin is Arab, in this country, I benefit everything of this country; thus such mes.. I didn't want to be involved in such things. Yet I also realized it around me, we have entered into a period whereby Kurdishness or Arabness is being discussed like never has been before, even in institutions. [...] whereas never in the past, things like this, I mean this would not be given attention. After all people stood there by their qualities, it was not important who they were. I was raised in a neighbourhood distant to Syriacs. [...] Thus, we had no close, nor neighbourhood relations, I met some in my professional life, there were people I worked together with, I had dialog with. [...] People I have got on very well, that I love. Not one day but really never speaking, we haven't spoken our differences. Now I feel disturbed by this. I believe that as differences are spoken out there shall be the segregation, that it will become real. Don't know, I... perhaps it was our similarities that stuck us together for years; I mean more had we seen it. And for this indeed Mardin was a city of tolerance. (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17])

The above narrative is significantly important for an intersectional analysis. It belongs to a participant, who is an Arab, young, educated, working, woman, of

high socio-economic status, a member of an established and powerful family, worked for various NGOs in Mardin professionally and voluntarily, and nominated for candidacy of being a Member of Parliament for the governing party in 2011 general elections. She, thus, had all the high cultural, social, symbolic, as well as economic capitals in Bourdieusian terms. One must crucially add to these the role of the local social order in Mardin, both in terms of economic relations and ethno-social organization of everyday life, whereby local Arabs in the city centre have been in positions of power. Thus, apparently, she belongs to the dominant social class in the city and identifies with the dominant social status and ideology within the larger political community in Turkey. Just as Arabness was a non-reflective, built-in, and much invisible fact of life for her, so was Turkishness as a matter of course “*the name of [her] citizenship*”. It was so natural that it was not questioned. Yet now through the questioning of others of ‘their’ ethnic ‘differences’ she experienced a rupture in that course, which puts her on the edge of an alternated reality. At a position where she was not aware of the differences at all, she was reminded that Syriacs were ‘different’, by the factuality of which materialized also the ‘difference’ of Arabs, so did even of Turks. Her questioning for the first time if “*Turkishness [was] a racial or an ethnic concept rather than what [she] know as the supra-identity*” (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17]), is a bold expression of it. Apparently, she did not feel comfortable with that uneasy ‘possibility’. What is more, she apparently assumed that differences, including her own, were being established as they were being spoken out. Thus, being astonished by the recent increase of talk on them, she deliberately chooses to stay deaf and dumb to the suggestion of becoming ‘ethnic’, and keep Turkishness as the primary framework for her be-long-ings. She moreover, sees herself as “*a grandchild of the Ottomans*”, in which case being a ‘Turk’ provides in Montserrat Guibernau’s terms “an emotional bond” through “felt kinship ties” as and the nation for her becomes to be “a group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related” (Guibernau, 2007: 12). Since the participant saw herself a member of the hegemonic majority, her objection to differences of identities being spoken out should be understood in relation to a

feeling of loss of status. Indeed, through the new ways of re-presentation she all of a sudden faced a discourse that she was ‘different’ in being an Arab, even if not necessarily with negative connotations. In other words, she faced ‘the risk’ of becoming an ethnicized minority, which signified a loss of hegemonic position for her. As a way out, she opted for disregarding the “*idea*”. The participant’s high cultural, symbolic, social, and economic capitals doubtlessly help her ignore the suggestion of becoming ‘ethnic’, whereas some others who lack those capitals and disadvantaged in many terms have always already been ethnic as part of the natural order of things in their lives. For many participants of lower socio-economic status, for example, Arabness was almost an organic form of being, unprocessed but always there. Here importantly, the participant is hesitant in accepting the emphasis on differences for she believes it will bring “*segregation*” as opposed to the emphasis on “*similarities that stuck us together for years*” (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17]). Thought together with her reference to “*Mardin [as] a city of tolerance*”, such belief of her is also a sign of her dominant position, which in this case brought unawareness of the peculiarities of the others, who are already ‘ethnic’, already ‘different’ and already ‘minority’ vis-à-vis the dominant majority both in the locality and within the larger political community. From such perspective, those others might have not always been that smoothly stuck to ‘us’ in all cases. The sarcastic criticisms by some Syriac participants of ‘the discourse of tolerance’, that the different ethno-religious groups have cohabited peacefully and in tolerance towards one another, exemplified such cases. One participant reproachfully stated, for instance: “*ask me, I do experience these! For sure you live in tolerance, [but] not me!*” (M, 37, Syriac, Mardin/Midyat [MM35]). “*You*” here refers to the owners of the discourse of toleration both local and the ‘national’, the Muslims and the majority society respectively. The argument, in this perspective, points at the disparity of power relations at symbolic-discursive as well as social level. Consequently, one may distinguish a twofold process going on in the experience of the above Arab participant. Firstly, there is her negligence from within her majority position of the factuality of minorityness as others’ experience; secondly there is her confrontation with a

violent process of minoritization that revealed itself in the ‘forced option’ of becoming ethnic through others’ signification. One can note that ethnicity, Arabness in this case, turns from a non-reflected lived experience to a phenomenon that was hesitantly reflected upon, which set off to solidify as ‘The Identity’, as a result of the change in the regime of representation and identity politics. Reflections and criticisms directed toward relation of Arabs to the national were articulated both from within and without group as analyzed in the following.

Yet there is still one striking point to be made in terms of the relations of Arabs and Syriacs in Mardin city centre, which is usually but not always fairly represented as one of a smooth one. The Syriac participant’s objection to the discourse of tolerance above well indicates it, as will be more elaborated in Chapter 5. Mention of the mostly ‘close’ relations between Arabs and Syriacs in Mardin stemming from the fact that they have been the urban population and have shared the city space and culture in everyday life, does not mean that relations between the two groups were always harmonious or without problem. It is only that the two have made up the dominant culture in the urban space. An important case during the field has revealed how rural-urban difference played a role in the construction of those relations. A participant having migrated from the rural of a different city [*Batman*] to Mardin in 1977 differentiated himself from Mardin Arabs as he found them closer to the Christian Syriac culture. Interestingly, moreover, concerning some traditional rituals like funerals, he came closer to Kurds, who were also rural migrants and cohabited in the same neighbourhood. He stated the following concerning Arabs of Mardin city centre:

There are many differences between us and the *Mardinli* [Arabs]. When a relative passes away they have Mawlid and serve sweet breads, we would serve meal. [...] Mardin people love visits and meals [*“gezmekyemek”*]. Our Kurdish brothers, their customs, when they have Mawlid they serve meat with rice on big plates, they are not like these *Mardinli*. (M, 57, Arab, Mardin [M21])

In this context, Arabness comes closer to Kurdishness when it is for tradition and customs, while on other cases the participant and other family members criticized Kurds and showed definite social distance towards them, and openly expressed their disapproval of Kurdish political claims of identity. Yet, through similarity of the ritual of mawlid, a Muslim prayer for the rites of passage, here ‘death’, usually accompanied by served food for the visitors, he places Kurds to a higher position than Mardin Arabs. Arabs in Mardin have adopted the custom of serving sweat bread in the funerals from the rituals of the Syriac Orthodox Christians in the city. Thus, he identifies with Kurds who practice what he perceives to be an Islamic ritual. Visibly, Muslimhood vis-à-vis Christianity becomes the ground for getting closer to Kurds, who are simply ‘others’ in other contexts. Such positioning indicates shifting be-long-ings in the context of rural-urban migration, and is closely related to the ‘local urbanite’ versus ‘rural migrant’ distinction in this context.

#### **3.4.6. *Shifting Be-long-ings: Criticisms, Reflections, and Representations***

Disparagement directed towards Arabs for their relation to Turkishness was already mentioned above. Below is a detailed account of such disparagement:

I have a friend from East...Well we the Arabs from Harran have always love and respect for homeland, nation, the flag as I said; and that is without benefit, despite we haven't seen any benefit of the state, still we love and will continue to love. Because this land is ours and this homeland is ours as well! Well, when Kurdish friends of us somehow blame us for some other things, like flattering the state, don't know... doing Turkism [*“Türkçülük”*] even though it is not our business... No we do not do Turkism; we do Turkeyism! [*“Türkiyecilik”*] Since we love our homeland, we love this flag, and continue to live under the flag. We do not lend credence to those in the mountain and say this during any discussion and this makes the faces of those friends change. On the other side, friends coming from the West see us this time with a different umm look. [What kind of look?] Since we are from Urfa, from the East, they look with a different eye. When we go into discussions with them, [they say] like ‘East is like this’, ‘Arabs are like that’, things like ‘Arabs are traitors’. It makes our blood boil, when we discuss our relations deteriorate at that moment willingly or unwillingly. But normally the table we eat, the water we drink, are all the same, no difference between us. I now stay in a student dormitory; in the student dormitory there is the Kurd, there is the Turk, Arab we are... there is the Arab,

we all live I mean, we don't have any matter, any problem. (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1])

Being exposed to criticisms of both those “from East”, namely “Kurds”, for “doing ‘*Türkçülük*’” [Turkism] though it was none of Arabs’ ‘business’; and of those “from West”, ‘Turks’ by implication, with stereotypical discourses like “*Arabs [we]re traitors*”, the participant marks a position of in-betweenness in the eyes of others. Yet himself embraces a position of “*Türkiyecilik*” [Turkeyism] in his words, which was revealed in Arabs’ “*love*” and “*respect for homeland, nation, [and] the flag*”. Emphasizing that in ordinary flow of life and in shared spaces they can get on well without trouble, he states “*when we go into ideological discussions, we have distance against each other, yet when we strip of ideology there remains no problem among us*” (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). He believes that “*those ideologies are from somewhere outside or only written down by someone inside; ideologies that we are made to memorize*” acknowledging that their effect is valid for him as well as others, and naming them to be as idealism [“*Ülkücülük*”], Kurdism [“*Kürtçülük*”], religiousness [“*dindarlık*”], and irreligiousness [“*dinsizlik*”]. The position that he calls Turkeyism [“*Türkiyecilik*”] is beyond those ideologies in his perception. Although it is not clear if his proposed position is motivated by embracing the lived territorial space or by allegiance to the state, his overall discourse with emphasis on the flag and unity makes the latter more likely. His narrative is important for revealing the play of discourses, prejudices, representations, and ideological positions in framing belongings for the individuals. Specifically, how he was received by others, here Kurds and Turks, appear to have a defining role in such framing. This is in line with Rumbaut’s (2008: 5) argument that “in reacting to their contexts of reception and learning how they are viewed and treated within them, the youths form and inform their own attitudes toward the society that receives them - and their own identities as well”. Reception is important in terms of belonging. For many young participants, yet for others as well, various encounters through education, travels and other visits appeared to provide the ground for realization

of how they are received in the larger society and helped re-shape their belongings.

Another criticism directed towards Arabs was uttered in an account revealing symbolic attachments during my visit to an Arab civil society organization in Urfa, whereby Turkish and Palestinian flags were hanging on the wall inside the place. The head of the organization stated that: *“we are troubled because we hang this [Turkish] flag here, our Kurdish brothers condemn us. We say it is not only the Turk’s flag, it is also ours. And the Palestinian flag is because it is where all humanity meets”*.<sup>125</sup> Religious and national symbols woven together were the frequent point of reference for many Arab participants, revealing the touchstones for belongings.

The criticisms directed towards Arabs that the above participants mention were articulated by some Kurdish participants during the interviews. One participant revealed his surprise and dislike thereof implying that ethnicity is something factual and essential and Turkishness is an ethnic identity just as Arabness and Kurdishness are, while the latter two cannot be converted to the former just by enunciation of it. His articulation is as follows:

Especially Arab community is so bad I mean they don’t have the... Well the awareness of national identity, you would say I’m a Turk, there is not a problem with this, well I’m a Turk what then! [They] don’t have this either! The Arab says I’m a Turk. Arabs I mean, and saying this they even are proud of, you feel that. How do you do that? I’m not a Turk, well I don’t say happily I’m not a Turk; I don’t say happily I’m a Kurd either; but I’m not Turk, I mean this is the truth what shall I do? Well, just like this [shows the table] is wood and not iron! (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13])

Just as he, himself a “Kurd”, was telling these to me, a “Turk”, as he named me the researcher, so an Arab was and should call herself an “Arab”. This was the ‘normal’ for him. ‘Turk’ was an ethnic name for him and not a generic one denoting the nationals, which many Arab participants took it to be so.

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<sup>125</sup> Field notes taken in Urfa, 17.10.2011

Concerning the Arab perception of being a ‘Turk’ a participant, herself a Turk, originally from a western middle class family, now settled in Mardin through her marriage to a local Arab who is a member of an established upper class family, stated the following in a rather critical manner as she commented on the question what is Turkishness for the Arabs of Mardin:

‘Happy is he who calls himself a Turk’, well who calls! S/he goes on to speak her own language, has her own food, dances in traditional ways. Well, for own dressing... Since s/he is already rich, as anywhere in the world thinking that European style dressing is more ostentatious, I cannot say s/he left her traditional dress because she has already not dressed it for a while. Perhaps even before the republic s/he was dressing in [western] clothes from Paris<sup>126</sup> and so... S/he only says I am a Turk, ‘Happy is he who calls himself a Turk’ is the best definition... S/he only calls herself a Turk, this, that’s it! ... Regarding Arabs, I have never seen a place where the apolitical is this much political. That’s being apolitical here is really political and they are so. They are very loyal to Misak-ı milli, they are very clear about it; they do not open the floor for any discussion on it. (F, late 30s, Turk, Mardin [M25])

In such argument the above participant puts that relation of Arabs to Turkishness establishes through self-naming, calling themselves as ‘Turk,’ and through embracement of its symbols and the hegemonic discourse. Otherwise, continuation of cultural identity elements like their “*own language*”, “*own food*”, or “*own dance*”, with the exception of traditional dressing, are seen in the flow of everyday life, yet these are not seen as ‘contradictory’ with identifying as ‘Turk’ as the participant’s narrative implies. Her reference is especially to the Arabs of Mardin, specifically those of higher class ones as she mentions them being “*already rich*”, who are part of her direct personal experience. The participant referred also to older generation of Arabs of his husband’s family in identifying themselves with ‘Turkness’ to the degree of refusing their Arab identity, even if only in discourse. An example was from the husband’s elder aunt, who passed away some time ago, who used to say “*Of course not! How*

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<sup>126</sup> Some Syriac and Arab participants mentioned that “*Paris modası*” [Parisian fashion] was once followed in Mardin city center as Syriacs then had often visited Syria for trade, or familial and religious bonds, and brought western style of clothing home together with petty goods. Syria was then a mandate of France and this was the reason why clothes bought there were called “*Paris modası*”.



*come we are Arab? We're not Arab, we are genuinely Turk ["öz be öz Türküz"]*". The aunt uttered the whole thing in Arabic as she could not speak Turkish at all, which was an example of "*black humour*" for the participant. She claimed that "*this is not assimilation of identity but hallucination of identity*" (F, late 30s, Turk, Mardin [M25]). In such perspective as Arabs in Mardin kept their cultural authenticity in their traditional cuisine, language, and folkloric dance in everyday life they were not assimilated. They were for sure very much under influence of Turkish Republic and not like the ones in Arabic peninsula or Syria; yet still they were 'hallucinating' to see themselves as Turks in her argument. Pointing at the generational change, however, she gave another example of the husband's cousin, who then worked at a local public institution as an administrator and was claiming wittily "*my maternal and paternal grandmothers were Turk, but I'm Arab*". She indicated that the younger generation could easily say that they are Arabs. Although, for her, this did not mean in any sense that it was an identity battle for Arabness, or any claim for it, but was well a sign that they [the high profiled younger generation] did not have an urge to call themselves as Turks. Accordingly, high social, cultural, and economic capitals they can mobilize provide for them a space to be 'ethnic' without risking exclusion or being stigmatized. An important point to be made within this context is the aspect of class and social status implicit in the 'refusal' of being Arab and embracing of being 'Turk'. Evidence in this line was the participant's mention of family gatherings whereby the elders who claimed they were not Arabs argued that they had only adopted the language of their neighbours, Arabs in Syria, and that they were not "*fellahin*". The latter is an important clue in that 'fellahin' or the singular form 'fella' refer to the farmer-peasants and the agricultural labourers of the Middle East and North Africa. "*Fellahin*", thus, might be transmitting a long historical memory of migration or simply connoting a lower socio-economic position. Another participant, a member of the same family, which means in this case having the same surname, told that their ancestors migrated from the city Deir ez-Zor of Syria in the first half of 17<sup>th</sup> century at the time of Murad IV, a Sultan of Ottoman Empire. Not being able to know the reason for

migration, still it could be thought that reference of not being ‘fellahin’ may be taken as an effort of differentiating themselves from the peasants and the agricultural labourers and may be sign of a long historical social distinction. Being ‘Turk’, on the other, being experienced as an urban identity might be seen as a ground for the continuation of that distinction. I will be referring to the urban versus rural dichotomy in relation to belongings more in detail as continue in the following.

Overall the above participant referred to the attitudes of Arabs of Mardin as “*apolitical*”, which she still called to be political in itself. Giving a clue on that was an anecdote where she mentioned her surprise as she first saw the sharp difference between the everyday and ordinary existence of life in the city centre at a time of crisis around. It was 8 months after she moved to the city when a burning wave of armed conflict began in the two nearby towns, Kızıltepe and Nusaybin, and the neighbouring city Diyarbakır. Three of the four gates out of the city that provided opening to these adjacent places of primarily Kurdish population were closed, except of the fourth one to Midyat which had a mixed population where Kurds were not predominant in any sense. The evident contrast of turmoil versus indifference taking place on either side of the gates astonished her who stated:

No exit from the city! But when you stepped in the city, nothing! As if all that was happening in Philadelphia, or in Belfast but not in Kızıltepe which is only 22 km down the city; on another continent, another dimension, another coordinate, so weird I mean!” (F, late 30s, Turk, Mardin [M25]).

Mardin being a city where Arabs are at a dominant position in administrative, cultural, and economic terms, the politics of the apolitical could be thought in relation to the concern with maintaining the status quo and the balance of existing power relations whereby Arabs in the city have a stronger hand.

An interesting claim about Arabs, basically in Urfa, in terms of their identifications came during an expert interview. The participant claimed that

Arabs “uses [Arabness] like a joker”, “if it is about something honourable then they would say ‘we are Arab’, otherwise concerning monetary relations or so they would say ‘we are Turk’”; for instance, “he’ll sell a house, if he hates the *aşiret* he is facing then he becomes a Turk for that moment” (M, 37, Arab, Urfa [U24]). Such claim, I argue, points at *shifting identifications* whereby practical interest for the individual becomes decisive in framing belongings. An anecdote that a participant mentioned may provide a case in point. Being a *şehirli*, “an *Urfalı* for 800 years” he defines himself to be a *Turk*, although he is Arab in origin. He is a jeweller and engages in cross border trading in Syria where he speaks *Arabic* as a tool of communication. Naming himself a [Turkish] “*nationalist*”, he gave the example of a seller in Syria who preferred Turkish liras in exchange of the goods he sold. The participant told that he had his eyes full with tears in the face of the event and stated “if this is *Turkishness*, if this is *nationalism* I am it” (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]). He apparently felt proud in seeing Turkish Liras more valuable in trade relations he engaged in the neighbouring country. On the other hand, simply paying in Turkish Liras without exchanging the money might be something more profitable for him. A more direct case of pragmatic utilization of identifications revealed itself in his following statements “I had problem on the border, I asked ‘wouldn’t you let me for the sake of *Tayyip Erdoğan*’, they let me pass” (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]). To solve the problem he faces on the border, he took advantage of the positive image then that the current power in Turkey had in Syria. He identified as a Muslim in all thorough his narrative. Besides he identified with the Ottoman past stating “*Ottoman is our father, we betrayed it, bombed the railroad*”. Referring to an event taking place during the First World War, the Arab rebellion and bombing of Hedjaz railroad he identified with Arabs more openly yet through criticism, here becoming ‘self-criticism’. Therefore, being Arab, speaking Arabic, being Turk, Turkish nationalism, being descendants of the Ottoman, supporter of the current power relations, being Muslim, and being *Urfalı* were various frames of reference providing him the opportunity to play with identities as need arises. His belongings were defined through shifting

identifications that could articulate to one another at will and without trouble, at least in the existing order of things.

One explanation why the *şehirli Urfa* abstain from identifying as Arab, even if he is one in origin, may be the not so prestigious perception of being Arab in Urfa in contrary to the one in Mardin. One reason for such perception is certainly the rural background of most Arabs in Urfa and that they are latecomers to the city, which I have already mentioned. Difference between Arabs of Mardin and Arabs of Urfa were stressed by various participants in other contexts as well. “*Arabs in Mardin and Hatay are civilized, ours are Bedouins. Cultivation too, wheat etc. those from Suruç [Kurds] taught to Arabs*” (M, 70/68, Kurd, Urfa [U12]). The rhyme between “*medeni*” [civilized] versus “*bedevi*” [Bedouins] in Turkish is not simply a poetical attempt. Similar references to Bedouin roots of Urfa Arabs were uttered by Arabs themselves. One participant, for instance, pointing at the differences of ‘dialects’ in speaking Arabic classifies three groups: Mardin, Siirt, Hatay Arabs, who speak in “*urban dialect which is similar to the official language spoken in urban Syria and Egypt*”; Urfa Arabs, who speak “*Bedouin dialect*”; and “*the dialect of those who deals with agriculture on the side of the Nile, Euphrates, and Tigris*” (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). The expressions of difference of Arabs in Urfa and Mardin often included a comparison with Kurds in both cities. “*Arabs are more advanced than Kurds in Mardin; in Urfa it is just the opposite. Still Bedouin influence on Arabs of Urfa*” was such an expression came during an expert interview.<sup>127</sup> Yet another was: “*Arabs in Mardin are open-minded than Kurds; Arabs of Urfa are Arabs of tent, Bedouins, still not have settled from nomadic state*”.<sup>128</sup> Existence of such a perception in Urfa may be the reason why a participant (M, 70/68, Kurd, Urfa [U12]) stated that his son was warning his wife, who was from *Nusaybin* [Mardin] and had Kurd-Arab mixed origins, saying: “*do not tell ‘I’m Arab’*”

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<sup>127</sup> Notes taken during an expert interview, (M, 40s, Kurd, Urfa) 17.10.2011

<sup>128</sup> Notes taken during an expert interview, 14.10.2011

*here!*”. Being an Arab in Urfa was seemingly not something as esteemed as was in Mardin. Yet still, Arab origin of well-known high-profile people was widely stressed by Arabs in Urfa especially by the socio-economically well-off people, as a sign of claiming a strong hand in the existing order of things of the political power structure and of having achieved prestigious place in the larger society. Important in the above many cases is that be-long-ings are formed through varying allegiances. Below is one such crucial allegiance that emerged to be the discourse of modernization in the narratives of many Arab participants.

### **3.5. Arabness versus Turkishness: Dichotomous positioning along the Axis of Modernness**

One significant argument depending on the findings of the research is that forming of be-long-ings for each of the groups has much to do with a discourse of modernization. The axis of modernization was formed in many narratives along the dichotomies of urban versus rural, developed versus backward, western versus eastern, or individual versus communal. The modern may have occasionally and simply meant the new and the contemporary, whereas it was mostly understood as urban, developed, western, and individual, the latter two having a more ambiguous position in terms of their reception along a positive to negative cognition scale. ‘Traditional’, ‘customary’, and ‘conventional’ likewise had more complex status vis-à-vis the ‘modern’. They are sometimes the non-modern but not always bear an opposite or contradictory meaning. On the other hand, an affirmative attitude towards civilité and manners in Eliasian terms, as well as the longing to keep up with and/or to benefit from modern opportunities were important markers shaping be-long-ings in many cases. Importantly, meanings of being an Arab and being a Kurd and their positioning vis-à-vis being a Turk, as well as against each other were often constructed along the above dichotomies. Modernity discourse, in other words, produced its own hierarchies of identity positions.

Below, I will refer to four basic points of reference whereby being an Arab, in its dynamic relation to being 'Turk', was narrated by many participants with references to modern codes of life. They are namely social attitudes and socialization patterns; dressing; and language. Although urban versus rural dichotomy, could well be included in this cluster, it will be given a space of its own below as it reveals complex meanings in terms of local power relations, intergroup relations, demographic and economic relations, as well as of modernization.

### **3.5.1. Social Attitudes**

I deem important to include here at length a narrative uttered during the pilot research as it visibly reveals an overall picture on the relation between Turkishness and 'modernness'. The narrator especially mentioned piety, class, education, everyday life habits, manners, gestures, and women's clothing as points of reference, concerning which he, in his childhood, came to make distinctions between 'Turks' and 'themselves'/Arabs.

We had a Turkish neighbour, it was all south-easterners around, only a few Turks were living there, a few, don't know how they ended up there. As you went down those hills [of Iskenderun] and came down to the plane there started the Turkish streets, streets that Turks inhabited.[...] Our next door neighbour was Turk, was working in the Post office uncle T., for instance when I had seen them a Turkish image was shaped for me. He had daughters for instance older than me, we called them '*abla*' [elder sister] their head was open, modern, they were very modern looking ones for me, very much outside... our relations were very well, but for some reason the image was always that they were a bit cold, like snob, dislike guests.. My mother also spoke ill of them in those aspects, like they don't like guests, they are not appreciating, and so. And one shall not marry them, they don't know humaneness, and like, such prejudices they would utter. My first Turkish image was this, but there was also the admiration, they looked modern for one; that attracts your attention 'mmm what sort of types are they', 'very strange people' and so. (M, 33, Arab, Iskenderun/Mardin)

He then explained the ground for prejudiced look, including his mother's, through cultural differences like 'insisting' for the guest to have meal with the hosts by the 'eastern' culture, whereby the absence of such insistence by 'Turks'.

The latter would often be deemed as ‘dislike of guests’, ‘coldness’, or ‘snobbery’, whereas it would so normal for someone who did not socialize in a culture dignifying such insistence. Religion and socio-economic status were two important demarcation areas between Turkishness and Arabness in the childhood of the participant as he articulated the following:

[Turkishness] was something that I could not associate to Islam, do you get it? I mean piety, Muslimhood, Islam, whatever it is, it was something only an Arab can live, belonging to him, I thought how come a Turk [similarly a Kurd] can be pious, because all is in Arabic, everything, well this belongs to us, what is it to them? I was thinking how come that they are besotted with such a religion. Secondly, they are rich, there is also this distinction. Where did I see them, living in the apartment buildings I used to see them; or don't know the teacher I mean speaks Turkish, is a Turk, a rich man, upper, being educated and so, I mean I didn't deem Arabs, likewise Kurds, worthy of being a teacher, or being rich and so, those I didn't seem suitable for. Well, the downtown was such a distant concept to me, we used to go there holding my father's hand but well it was a place where Turks were, or the rich were [laughs]. Well, like for instance when we quarrelled with mom in our childhood, if we wanted to make her angry, I said I will get [marry] a Turkish girl, and she got angry [we laugh]. (M, 33, Arab, Iskenderun/Mardin)

Although attitudes of many concerning practices like marriage have changed over time, he stated such perception then was because “*the culture [he] lived in had transmitted to*” him. Remembering the sons of the same Turkish neighbours, who “*all were educated types, one was at university, one was in don't know what high school*”, he said they provided “*models*” then; although now looking back he discerns that “*they ha[d] nothing to exaggerate indeed*”. His narrative reveals that it was differences of manners, gestures, behaviours, which could be taken as ‘modern civility’ in Eliasian terms:

But, then at those conditions you see them in a more sterile... like hearing them saying ‘thank you’, says ‘thank you very much’, it sounds so strange to you, that kindness being verbalized was very odd, because you did not hear that sort of thing from your father, you don't hear the expression ‘I love you’, or ‘thank you’, those kind of gestures are never used by us. Guess it belonged more to the Easterners, everything is through behaviours, I mean if you appreciate you show your appreciation through your behaviour, you would present something, it would not be expressed, it's a shame, you would be ashamed, something like this. That they were expressing these was pulling my attention, ‘mmm how

sterile they live, what beautiful people', we would admire. Well that they were not pious you would despise, 'they know neither God nor The Book' and so, but on the other hand there is the admiration, you see them living decently. (M, 33, Arab, Iskenderun/Mardin)

Everyday life and habitus were important in defining differences and in positioning identities vis-à-vis each other. The participant's childhood experiences provided him a look from where perception of those different types of habitus was shaped for him. He remembers, for example, one of the daughters of the Turkish neighbours sending him to buy a comics journal [*Girgir*], and as they were living on the hills where the poor migrants used to inhabit he had to "run down to places where there were sorts of people who would buy journals". After a while, he went to buy the journals only on the condition that he would read them first, as he developed an interest in the journal finding out that it was "so funny". Lying on the carpet at home he read them thoroughly and after reading all gave to the neighbouring 'sister'. "One of [his] most happy days" was when he went to the neighbours' and saw the bulk of the old journals, which he was lent to read and then bring back, as he expressed his mood in the words: "I was very much happy when I took them home" (M, 33, Arab, Iskenderun/Mardin). Turkishness appeared in his experience as a modern, neat, cultured, and civilized form of habitus, which he often admired to. Concerning the participants of the research this was a common perception, yet not without exceptions. Differences of time and place, as well as the type of interaction, were clearly influential in differences, yet the similarity was substantial.

A dichotomous articulation, this time totally with negative connotations of how Turks have lived came to fore in the narrative of a participant as she was describing the social structure in Urfa based on her political campaigning experiences in the last elections as a representative of a conservative opposition party then. The participant, who is a young, educated woman with higher socio-economic status, tailored her perception of the segmented structure of the city space that is based on class difference and the socio-economic profile of the inhabitants to a dichotomous understanding of socialization patterns, which was



basically reflecting the east versus west discord, on the one hand, and the local versus foreigner, on the other:

There is a huge difference between the western and eastern cultures. You also have probably recognized it that among people in the west there is always a formality, but it is not like that in the east. I don't know if you have already been to the neighbourhood down there, have you been to Job the Prophet?<sup>129</sup> [I nod in affirmation] You have probably recognized that people sit outside their doors; they sit together and have chat, after a while the closeness turns into kinship rather than neighbourliness, that's widespread in Urfa, for sure not in the segment that we call elite people... They don't have that closeness anymore, they see each other in only party like gatherings or in other regular meetings, but that's still alive in the rural part... [Who are the elite people?] They are, so to say, mostly the Turkish segments, that we call elite people and came mostly from out. Let's say he is from Urfa but his daughter-in-law is from Istanbul. Or the man is from Urfa, and the daughter-in-law is from Bursa... The groom and the bride, after a while, there are many in Urfa I mean the foreign brides, so to say foreigners that's coming from the west by marriage. They, in time, you know what we call transformation, gradually turns into the elite people, that's the doctor, the engineer, the teacher, the lawyer, they in time turn into a kind of, they move away from their essence, that segment is peculiar in itself, it is very clear anyway when you climb up there it is very different and when you come down here it is really different. I always say to the friends that Urfa is like two [separate] worlds, bordered with a line, one part is very different than the other. (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4])

'Two separate worlds' within the city in her image seem to reflect the two separate worlds within the country. "*Turkish segments*" of the city refers to both '*şehirli*' locals and the outsiders, "*foreigner*" in her terms, who become local through marriage, whereby a gendered process of transformation through women seems to take place. The segmented space in the image of the participant is shaped along the dichotomies of 'formality versus informality'; 'eliteness versus neighbourliness', 'urban versus rural', 'West versus East', 'distance versus closeness', 'coldness versus sincerity', 'individuality versus communality', 'upper class versus lower class', 'bad versus good' and 'moving away from one's essence versus being close to one's essence'. The first part of the each dichotomous pair fall on the side of Turkishness, while the second part mostly of Arabness. Such dichotomous perception is especially important as the participant

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<sup>129</sup> A neighbourhood named after the alleged tomb of Job the Prophet [*Eyüp Peygamber*] in the area.

told that she was not grown up with the awareness of a difference between Turk, Arab or Kurd; that her parents were not “*nationalists*”; and she was already brought up within the Turkish culture, in terms of dressing, schooling, or speaking.

An important articulation concerning social relations was raised about the education of girls which was seen as a smooth process for Turks unlike for Kurds or Arabs. Being taken more as an issue of west versus east dichotomy, rather than ethnicity as an essential category, getting education was seen as a privilege of Turks/Turkishness.

Well, they never have a problem about schooling [getting education]. If they want, they will go to school; if they don't want they will drop out. Not like a Kurd or Arab in that case, going to school, going out, no problem with that, no pressure, no restrictions. But for the other, unfortunately, the girl can go to school if only the family wants [her to do] if not she can't, no matter she is the most brilliant child of the world. (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4])

To whom exactly ‘Turks’ or “they” in the above narrative point at, whether those people who are called Turks/Turcomans in Urfa or simply the western people in Turkey, is ambiguous. Yet referring to highly generalized categories, it seems that two differing mind-sets, together with dissimilar social conditions are perceived to exist for Turks, on the one hand, for Kurds and Arabs, on the other. A narrative revealing important perceptions about social attitudes was articulated in a dialog between the two sisters, concerning marriage decision and the choice of partner for marriage. To the question how they approached to the idea of marrying someone from West, implying a ‘Turk’, the younger sister replied: “*No, no, no in one word! Well even if I knew I would never get married anyone else, still no I mean. [Should be an Arab?] Should be an Arab... My style is Arab...*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). Giving Arabness an upper hand vis-à-vis what is ‘western’, or ‘Turk’, or “*anyone*” other than Arab, she still faced a prejudiced perception about Arabs, from within her own family. When she told her mother that she was proposed by an Arab from Harran, the mother showed her dislike

stating “*hope it won't work*”. The participant said “*my mother does not want Arab; she says I don't like Arabs...*”(F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). The elder sister, trying to clarify her mother's hesitation, stated the following:

Well it is like this, Arabs have a bit like narrow-minded ideas you know; it's not much related to Arabs indeed, related to the Eastern people... they don't let girls get education, they oppress girls, or they behave badly to their spouses, it is something because of this. Well we were lucky that my father was not a person like that, my mother was not; thus my mother says ‘for you to be at ease they shall not be such narrow-minded people’. (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10])

Disclosing a similar perception to her mother's, the elder sister herself did not want to marry an Arab saying “*It's not that I don't like Arabs... Well don't know I feel like I cannot live together with Arabs...*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]). Otherwise the ethnicity of the prospective partner did not matter for her as long as he was a Muslim. Deeming her mother's attitude to be prejudiced, however, the younger sister stated: “*See I want that idea of my mother's to be overthrown*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). Despite accepting the factuality that makes the ground for such perception, which she “*can't say there is not*”, she still rejected the generalization and claimed “*people who would marry me... us will not be such... [...] Because he knows my lifestyle, my character...well if he makes such a proposal it means he has taken every chance...*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). Admitting that any prospective partner asking for her hand would be as well educated and thinking like her, she reveals a position willing to prove that younger Arab generation is undergoing a social and ideal change. Still, moreover, defining herself close to “*Arab nationalism*” she mentions linguistic and cultural sameness as the criteria for her marriage, thus frames ‘Arabness’ as the space of her future projection:

However it will be it will be an Arab. I mean whatever one's culture is, if she will marry, she shall marry someone of that culture. She should carry that culture. Say if I marry to a Kurdish person, neither will I get used to that culture, nor will he to mine. For such thing not to be lived, it makes more sense that one should marry someone whose language one knows, understands the language...(F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9])

Ethnicity crystallizes the core frame of be-long-ings for all social relations for the participant. Still, in the narratives of her elder sister [U10], “*narrow-mindedness*” being attributed to East, a dichotomous perception of modern and ‘not modern’ is clear. The dichotomy is apparent in all the above narratives, moreover, whether ‘Arabness’ or ‘Easternness’ in general is given an upper hand or not.

### 3.5.2. Dressing

Dressing codes appeared as a gendered dimension of be-long-ings and almost always was related to women. One of the participant, the younger of the two sisters, for example, (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]) stated that “*my mother is an Arab, so is my father. But well, wearing dresses like Arabs, my mother doesn’t do that* [“*Ama hani Araplar gibi böyle kıyafet giyinmesi falan yok annemin*”]. A characteristic way of dressing for Arab women, usually colourful, long, multiple layers of clothes worn one upon the other, was defined to denote Arabness, and the mother who was indeed an Arab was distanced from that way of dressing. The traditional costumes of Arab women stood for the participant on the non-modern side, with probable connotations of rural as Arabs of Urfa has mostly rural roots, their migration from villages and countryside to city centre having started only some decades ago reconstructing and reframing the centre itself. Thus is established a rural urban dichotomy. The family having lived in western cities for long years have probably had an effect on the participant’s positioning at the urban side. Still, the family moving to Urfa from a western city had its effect on decisions of dressing, like the mother who “*was open [not veiled] before, was veiled after coming to Urfa due to the pressure of the relatives*” (F, 27, Arab, Urfa [U10]) “*for them not to say something*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). The elder sister herself has covered her head for the last three years then, yet not directly relating her experience to their new environment. The younger sister who initially reacted to her sister’s choice, on the other hand, was happy for she faced no pressure by her father to cover her head, and stated “*thus I love my*

*father very much, well even though he is an Arab that mental struct...*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]). It is apparent that bonding social relations, here among Arab community, have an enforcing role on women behaviour, here of dressing, and in this sense stand on the ‘non-modern’ pole of the dichotomy for the participants. The father, on the other hand, being a patriarchal figure and an Arab, stands closer to the ‘modern’ pole signified by a different “*mental structure*” by not forcing her daughter to veil. Her emphasis that “*even though he is an Arab*” defines a pattern of ‘the normal’ for Arabs, and points at the father as a diverging case.

The issues like women’s dressing, its generational change, the decisive role of the bonding social capital, urban relations, and of religion in defining women’s dressing came to fore in another narrative below:

Now for instance all our neighbours dresses Arab [*“Arap giyiy”*] wears skirt, covers *neçe*, my daughter doesn’t wear skirt, doesn’t like it much, [in the] past I wore urban [*“ben eski şehir giyerdim”*] here I came I saw our neighbours all wear such *fistan* [long dress], Arab, only me like this I looked, I ran...I wore it. Wore it like this. Now I have my urban clothes [*“şehirli elbisem”*] but I don’t wear them. It shall be like my neighbours. My daughter... Her friends, all around... [She says] Well ‘I’m not used to it, I’m more comfortable like this’. It shall be how she likes herself, what shall I do? She is a young girl now; I don’t want to hurt her. What shall I do? [Do you call ‘*neçek*’ what you wear on your head?] Hah, *neçek* here it is, I cover it like this; some doesn’t put, putting hair out [displaying hair] is ‘*haram*’ [*“saçkoymak haramdır”*]. Well, since I pray [*“Namaz kiliyem ya”*] it’s *haram*; I always for instance, my hair wouldn’t be seen. (F, 40, Arab, Urfa[U8])

The experiences of “*dressing Arab*”, referring to dressing in traditional Arabic way for women, or “*dressing şehir*”, referring to a more urbanized but still conservative way, were defined contextually for the participant. She had once lived in a central neighbourhood of Urfa cohabiting with the “*şehirli*” [‘Turks’], then in another neighbourhood with Kurds, and thereby she wore her “*şehirlielbise*” [urban clothes] just like the majority of others. Yet, after moving to a neighbourhood where predominantly Arabs have lived, she seems to have felt the urge to change to the more traditional way of dressing of Arab women,

“*fistan*”. Her uncompleted expressions “*I ran...I wore it*”, shows her rush to look like her neighbours. She was born in the city centre and her family lived in the city. They have had a small piece of land where sharecroppers do the cultivation, and their visit to the ‘village’, indicating that piece of land, was only occasionally. Thus, seemingly they had weak rural ties. I do not have the information if she had ever worn the traditional clothes before, but it could be assumed that even if she did not wear them in everyday life, she may have the experience in special days, like weddings, funerals, or other communal meetings as this was the usual pattern among many Arab women who don’t always wear them. Yet as soon as she moved into a community whereby it was the norm and the normal she opted for being like everyone, most probably not to face the social patriarchal pressure even if this was not openly uttered unlike the prior case above. Bonding social capital, in terms of ethno-communitarian relations, played its role this time in a way pushing the individual to become similar to the others, and change her way of doing things for the sake of communal belongings.

An interesting dialog between me and a participant (F, 30, Arab/Kurd, Urfa [U11]), which revealed similar meanings took place when I asked her whether she felt closer to her Arab maternal or Kurd paternal sides of the family. She felt closer to the maternal side. Upon my digging question as “to Arabs then?” she hesitated to affirm, and brought an ‘explanation’ for the naming ‘Arabs’ as in the following:

[U11]:Saying Arabs... How... Like they don’t dress Arabic, don’t speak Arabic [“Arapçagiyinmiyeler, Arapçakonuşmıylar”]. Sort of an urban Arab. More or less. Thus I shall tell it to you. Well, so one wouldn’t say Arab. Saying Arab, we didn’t use to dress Arabic, didn’t use to speak Arabic. Well, like that.

O: How is “Arabic dressing”?

[U11]: Arabic you wear zulun, wear aba

O: And how were you dressed?

[U11]: [Showing what she wears on] like this we wore, like this we used to wear. Skirt, sweaters here, headscarf... (F, 30, Arab/Kurd, Urfa [U11])

“*Dressing Arabic*”, in the participant’s words, refers to the traditional way of Arab clothing for women, and it stands as a signifier of being Arab together with “*speaking Arabic*”. Interestingly, moreover, absence of those crucial cultural elements implies a way of life, an urban way of life, where in the specific context of Urfa city centre refers basically to a ‘Turkish’ way of life, as the local people in the city centre call them ‘*Turk*’, ‘*şehirli*’, ‘*Urfalı*’ all at once.

Dressing for women and thus for the whole community appeared to be an important code of ethno-communitarian be-long-ings. Contrast usually established was between the urban and modern way of dressing and the traditional and ethnic one. Being open/ unveiled, or dressing in line with Parisian fashion were other such references mentioned elsewhere above. Class and social capital undoubtedly play their role in shaping those codes of dressing and their varying reception by the individuals.

### 3.5.3. Language

As already mentioned above, language too was an important signifier of identifications and helped shape be-long-ings. In this context as well, the urban versus rural dichotomy played crucial role in framing those be-long-ings. A direct and clear expression of it was revealed with regard to speaking Turkish by the same participant above.

We speak *urbanic*["*şehirce*"] at home. Like this I mean we speak [means how she speaks at the moment, that’s Turkish] ummm... gran... my [fatherly] grandfather, grandmother etc. they are Kurds. Our house was in the village, they lived in the village in the past. So was it, now it is in the city. [Did they speak Kurdish among themselves? Your grandfather...] They spoke Kurdish; then we moved by my maternal grandmother’s. Before it we lived together with my fatherly grandmother’s, there we spoke Kurdish, we were young for sure, at the age of 6 or 7. We moved to the side of my [maternal] grandmother’s. As we grew up a little and started to go school, we stopped speaking like that. We started speaking *urbanic*. (F, 30, Arab/Kurd, Urfa [U11])

It turned out that maternal grandparents, who were Arab and knew Arabic, did not speak it to the grandchildren. So she and other siblings did not learn the language and currently cannot speak or understand it. My question “*So do Arabs in Urfa in general do not speak Arabic?*” was replied as “*nooooo, not much they speak. Arabs are more like speaking urbanic. And they speak it very politely. Speak politely. Fine is it I mean, gentle is their speaking*” (F, 30, Arab/Kurd, Urfa [U11]). ‘Urbanic’, a made up word by me, stands for its Turkish counterpart “*şehirce*”, equally made up by the narrator herself meaning the language of the city, which actually is Turkish for Urfa city centre. I think this is a good example of the interplay of the ethnic versus national dynamic on the one hand, and the rural versus urban dynamic on the other. It seems that being an Arab or Turk, speaking Arabic or Turkish, is something to do with being rural or urban, as well as, if not more than, ethnic or national identifications. The perception is not exclusive to Arabs in Urfa but prevalent also among Kurds. A Kurdish participant, who worked as a watchman at the time of the interview, stated the following: “*we call Turks those who live in the city. We are all Turks for sure, but language-wise it is Kurdish. The language is different; divided as Kurt, Arab and Turk*” (M, 56, Kurd, Urfa [U18]). The social and symbolic meanings revealed are important in that there is on the one hand the rural versus urban opposition in signifying Turkness/Turkishness by the latter, and on the other embracement of Turkishness as an identity for all despite the “*language-wise*” differences.

The perception of ‘superiority’ of ‘urban equals to Turkish’ forms of life mentioned above has also appeared with regard to language. Teaching or speaking Turkish to children at home as preparation to their schooling period was in many cases seen by the parents as a mission for the good of the children. The parents’ own childhood experiences with difficulties of learning Turkish for the first time at school often provided the ground for such attitude. They were in expectation that pre-school learning of Turkish would ease the process and lift the burden for their children. Below is a narrative of a participant, who was



grown up in a very crowded extended family in the rural Harran as one of the daughters of an Arab *aşiret* leader, and had to leave the secondary school at 8<sup>th</sup> class. Working in the cotton fields, she had an arranged marriage at the age of 19, not officially but through a religious ceremony, to a Kurdish man already married and father of 11 children. They were economically well-off. She applied to be a candidate in the 2011 general elections for the governing party, though she was not nominated by the party as a candidate to run for the MP elections. She was sending two of her three children to nursery school although it was then not compulsory,<sup>130</sup> and her approach to schooling and teaching Turkish to children at home were full of notions like “*improvement*”, “*learning something*”, “*behaving properly*”, and “*not to be different [lagging behind] from other children*”. She referred to her own childhood experience as in the following:

We used to speak Arabic within the family in my father’s house<sup>131</sup>. After I got married I started to talk to my children in Turkish. I send them to school, although they are still young. I send them to nursery school, for them to learn something, at least how to behave properly, to call ‘mother’ and ‘father’, to hold the pencil. [Why do you speak Turkish to them?] I want to improve them, well, we always spoke Arabic at father’s house you know and we were very different from our friends when we went to school. We couldn’t understand when our teacher asked something to us. I remember my teacher asking something to me, I couldn’t identify what my teacher had asked, I waited for the break, in the break I rushed to my father, asked him and came back. The school was close to our house, so I ran to the house. Look, in that 5 minutes break I asked to my father and came back, then answered my teacher. (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2])

Although she told she spoke Turkish to her children at home, she spoke to them in Arabic during the 2 to 3 hours I spent with them at their house. Yet at another context, she stated that for them to learn and not to forget Arabic she spoke to them Arabic at home, yet after they started the school she “*ha[s] to speak in Turkish*” mostly, for them to understand their teacher, answer her and learn it

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<sup>130</sup> With the 17.3.2017 dated decision of the Ministry of National Education children from their 54<sup>th</sup> month on were identified to compulsorily attend to pre-school education starting from the 2017-2018 Academic Year. <https://www.ogretmenlericin.com/meb/meb-mevzuat/okul-oncesi-zorunlu-egitim-yasi-belirlendi-mebden-anasinifi-yazisi-16285.html> accessed on 9.7.2018

<sup>131</sup> A patriarchal expression for the parents’ house lived until marriage.

better. She stated that her elder boy has felt in-between two languages after going to school, yet speaks “*proper Turkish now*”, which she stressed proudly. On the other hand, she at once rejected the idea that her children learn Kurdish, although their father is a Kurd. She knew some Kurdish although not “*learnt it upon being interested*” but from her Kurdish friends in the neighbourhood in her childhood, yet stressed “*I would never speak it. It’s the last language I would ever speak*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). Despite being married to a Kurdish man, who she thought was Arab at the beginning as he spoke proper Arabic, she sharply distanced herself from Kurds and was very reactive in her relations with them as well as in her thoughts about them.

Education, all through the participant’s narrative, appeared almost as a magical tool for improvement, attainment, and upward mobility not only in her individual life but also for the Arabs in Urfa. Her motivation of applying for candidacy for MP elections, for instance, was her wish that rural girls in the region be educated. She wanted them being granted salary to get education as their parents think girls’ education as an economic burden to the family, and rather opt for boys’ education if they have the means for it. Although at the time of the interview 8 years of education was compulsory for children of both gender, her mention might be taken as a sign that the regulation then could not still be implemented fully and properly in the region. She also drew on her personal childhood experience, as her father was reluctant about her education and often didn’t let her go to school. Despite that, she stressed, she used to get a certificate of appreciation at the end of the academic years. She compared herself with her younger brother, who was forcibly sent to school by the parents but was so naughty that he did not attend the classes properly. Her brother now was unemployed whereas she believed she could get any position she would want although she lacked formal education, because she “*forced [her]self to a certain degree, [was] smarter, [and] more different*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). She was a registered open high school student at the time of the interview and her following statements should be taken a sign of her motivation for it: “*I want to complete my*

*schooling from outside*”, “*to reach at a certain place*”, “*I couldn’t be a deputy but I want to prepare for the provincial committee*”, “*I want to improve myself*”, “*I want to know how to sit and behave, how to eat and drink, how to speak, how to go to a place without asking others but reading [the signs]*”, “*I want to be a model for other friends, want to be a model especially to my children*” (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2]). Education, which she expects to provide her with status and manners as well as with social and symbolic powers, appears to constitute the means to change from rural to urban, backwardness to development, old to new, and inertia to dynamism. Asking about my field research on urban Arabs in Mardin, whom she perceived as “*changed*”, she engaged in immediate criticism of Arabs Urfa. Once again the reference was to education this time pointing at the gender discrimination in schooling of the children:

%30 of Arabs of ours here are urbanized, %70 are the same, still the old mind [I smile], the old knowledge, I swear it’s the old mind, if it was not the old mind, look here an *Imam Hatip* High School was opened. For the female students for instance *Imam Hatip* is better, she is covered, you can’t open [the covering of] the girl<sup>132</sup>, if she opens it may be taken as bad. It is *Imam Hatip*, still they don’t even send to *Imam Hatip*. Why? It is the girl. And he beats the boy and sends him by force. And the boy does not study! (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U2])

The participant also noting about this gendered issue for the school children, was criticizing the families for not sending girls even to the *Imam Hatip* where they would be schooled in compliance with their conservative and religious values. The expressions of “*the old mind*” and “*the old knowledge*” together with the low urbanization rate in Urfa that she believes to be, stood as signs for the former of the above dichotomous pairs, namely the rural, backward, old, and inert. Concerning the issue on schooling, I was reminded by my key person, who was present during some parts of the interview, that while on the way to the house of the participant, which was in a neighbourhood of a lower socio-economic profile, we witnessed an event whereby the very argument about boys not studying but

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<sup>132</sup> Covering of head for female students at secondary level education was legally permitted by the Ministry of National Education with a change in the related regulations in September, 2014. Before than the only secondary level schools where female students were covering their head [were obliged to do so] were *Imam Hatip* Schools.

being forced by parents to do so was realized. He had to stop driving on a street in the neighbourhood, as a woman shouting in anger in front of the open door of her house threw away the school bag of her son in the middle of the street. The bag being apparently unlocked all the books, notebooks and other stuff flew in the air and fell before us. We waited for the child, weeping and grumbling, to pick up his stuff as my key person stated in explanation that the mother was furious because the boy was not studying for his classes. The effortless explanation proved that this scene must have been such an ordinary one for the people around.

Speaking Turkish to children, its effect on the schooling process, and the outcome of education being especially significant for the people of lower socio-economic status becomes visible also in the below narrative. The participant, herself was not able to get any schooling and her husband got only a bare education of two primary years. She is an Arab, her husband is Kurd. Whether speaking Kurdish or Turkish to the children at home had been a controversial issue marked by the decision of the paternal grandfather. As she herself was raised in a predominantly Kurdish neighbourhood she could speak the language as well and this might have helped her to speak Kurdish with her children as her father in law demanded. In those circumstances, her four children didn't learn Arabic, their 'mother tongue'. Pointing at the generational change, after the grandfather had passed away, the mother started to speak Turkish with the children, one of which was not at school age yet but three were already students. Her motivation was to prevent potential difficulties of learning for them, and for the younger that pre-school learning of Turkish may ease his future schooling process:

I speak Turkish to my children. [...] My father-in-law did not let Turkish speaki...he spoke Kurdish to them for them not to forget their mother tongue. After he passed away... Now all three speaks Kurdish. I say when they go to school... The issue is not Turkish Kurdish discrimination, no it is not an issue like that. I only say for example, when they go to school they shall have no

hardship; their classes, they shall understand their teacher well, for that reason I speak Turkish. (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7])

She replied my question whether she would like her children become state officers “*sure, how I shall not want it?*”(F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). She told that when her 12 years old daughter refuses a helping hand with the housework saying she has homework, she lets her go and study, herself doing the housework instead. Giving up her expectation of the gendered role of her daughter she indeed points at the significance she gives to education of her children. Such significance is also verbalized below:

We [speaks of herself] are illiterate [“cahil”]; we can’t even go to a doctor. Alone we can’t go out. I want them to get education; they shall be better persons than us. Their father is also saying ‘get education’; ‘does not matter how much it costs; I will carry stones but will have you get education’. Their father is illiterate too, has gone to school for two years, then he dropped out. It is our [my] bad luck that we did not even go for two years. It was all work and labour. (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7])

Recalling that I interviewed the participant at a social support centre in a disadvantaged peripheral neighbourhood with lower socio-economic profiled inhabitants, her spouse’s, who works as a mender, and her willingness for their daughters to get education for them to have better conditions of life is an important one. It is also important at a gendered context, since it is the girls’ education at stake here. Concerning the Kurdish demands of education in mother tongue, she stated that “*we are pleasant with the present, the current situation*” and added “*if we speak it at home the child will not forget its mother tongue anyway*” (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). Status quo being favoured with regard to language usage is also the status quo with regard to the power relations. Dominant language signifying dominant power relations appear to be the key to a socio-economically secure place within the larger society. This is very much in line with the argument of Smits and Gündüz-Hoşgör (2003: 831) that there is not only a ‘symbolic’ barrier, but also an ‘actual’ barrier for individuals who cannot speak the dominant language as their use of the available public resources would

be hampered, through less access to written and spoken sources as well as to official jobs, restriction to in-group social relations, and dependence on others for information.

In some cases, transmitting the mother tongue to the children is something yearned for but not achieved because of the lack of required social relations. The participant above who mentioned moving to an Arab populated neighbourhood and changing her way of clothing, this time mentions that the same neighbourhood brought her the opportunity to recall her forgotten mother tongue, even if only partially. She could not transfer the language to her children as their father spoke only Turkish, in her expression the “*city language*” or simply “*city*”. Stating that they speak Turkish at home, she replied my follow-up question if she was Arab<sup>133</sup> by a detailed narration on the ‘reasons’ for their speaking Turkish at home, although I did not ask ‘why’.

I'm Arab. My husband was grown up in *Yenişehir*; he didn't know Arab [Arabic] at all, not at all. My husband didn't know Arab at all, as me [and] my husband spoke the same language [Turkish] our children did not know Arab. I for instance say 'take' or 'give' in Arabic, for they get used to, looking me they don't give. They bring, for example I say what is this, they bring and give but cannot speak like me; I wish they could. [Well you haven't taught them?] Well I did, they don't speak. We came to this neighbourhood three years [ago] all our neighbours are Arab, [in the] past at *Arameydan* all my neighbours were Kurds, we lived in *Yenişehir* all are *şehirli* [urban]. There was no Arab at all, to whom I shall speak, to whom I shall speak Arabic, Arabic only I am speaking. My children, well my spouse doesn't know it, if he knew for example what we talk in the evenings in Arabic our children would have learnt. I mean they don't know, his [husband's] mother is Kurd, his father is Arab, ummm they had all gone through city language [*şehir dili*], nobody knew else, only knew city [*şehir*]. [Do you speak Arabic to your neighbours now?] Thanks god it's good, for instance past, now I have forgotten some words, many, here for example some words comes to my mind directly [as] they speak Arabic, sometimes they say a word I say what's this, an hour later... now I've forgotten Arabic [%] 60-70. Counting in Arabic, for instance; I've forgotten a lot. (F, 40, Arab, Urfa [U8])

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<sup>133</sup> This was relatively at the beginning of the interview, so I did not know whether she was an Arab or a Kurd as I was not informed beforehand about the ethnicity of the participants I interviewed in this support centre. Women attending there were either Arab or Kurd, or had a mixed background, so in each case they would be fitting in my sample target.

Expressions like the “*city language*” or simply “*city*”, as the “*urbanic*” I mentioned before, refer to Turkish, which has become the chiefly used language in Urfa city centre in the historical-social context after the republican period, whereby the space became ethnically more homogeneous in the absence of its Armenian, Syriac, Jewish, and Greek population. As the participant’s husband, who is an offspring of a Kurd-Arab mixed-marriage and was grown up in the city centre, knew only the “*city language*” that is Turkish, her effort to teach the language to her children at home has failed. Arabic for the participant only found its way out within the recently moved neighbourhood, *HayatiHarrani*, which has almost become a ghetto for the lower socio-economic status Arabs in the city, though there dwells also a certain amount of Kurdish population of the same profile. In this context, Arabness reconstructed itself in the periphery of city through a return to traditional way of dressing and a gradual recalling of the already weakened memory of the mother tongue. She re-membered herself to the community through her memory of language and the changed way of dressing. Periphery has come to reflect Arabness in the face of urban Turkishness in Urfa city centre.

The concern over using Turkish in the narratives above could be thought in relation to Bourdieu’s linguistic capital theory whereby “the distribution of linguistic capital is related in specific ways to the distribution of other forms of capital (economic capital, cultural capital, etc.) which define the location of an individual within the social space” (Bourdieu, 1991: 18). Accordingly, differences in terms of accent, grammar and vocabulary indicate the social positions of speakers and reflect the quantities of linguistic and other capital which they possess. Fluent and proper usage of dominant language of the official, thus legitimate, language makes users legitimate speakers. As Bourdieu (1991) notes, through more linguistic capital the speakers can better exploit the system of differences to their advantage and thereby secure a profit of distinction. Smits and Gündüz-Hoşgör (2003) draws our attention to the socio-economic consequences for individuals who are not able to speak the country’s

dominant language at all, and argue that the material effects of using or not being able to use the dominant language can be vitally important in individual lives. The above narratives and the emphasis made on speaking proper Turkish; speaking it very politely, fine and gentle; or some other mention of being mistaken to be an outsider in Urfa for her fluent way of speaking, although the participant spoke Turkish with a heavy accent; and the proud and eager acceptance that one spoke Turkish very well and effortlessly could all be understood within such context. Speaking Turkish, here in many narratives stood to be '*the city language*' or with a brilliant euphemism the '*urbanic*', is a ground to be a 'legitimate speaker', and to have access to the 'legitimate sources' of the dominant society as a 'legitimate member'. In this context, getting formal education appears to be a means of achieving it as well as being a tool in itself to head for those resources. Turkish as the urban, the central, the dominant, and the legitimate language is operated as the tool to be-long-ings in relation to Turkishness.

Above narratives on dressing, language, social attitudes and socialization patterns revealed various dichotomies, which clarified that Turkishness was usually perceived to be closer to a position of urban, educated, well-mannered, developed and progressive that might be epitomized as 'modern'. Even though such position was not always exclusively taken in positive terms, in most cases it was so. Turkishness in this sense seems to signify, for many Arab participants, a modern frame of be-long-ings, which is often yearned for.

### **3.6. Rural versus Urban Dichotomy and the Local Power Relations**

An important note to be made here is that distinction between the rural and the urban is not an exclusive one within this context. What I call 'urban' here is not a group of people totally outside of rural ties neither in social nor economic terms. On the contrary, in many cases they have possessions in rural areas including land -sometimes really large ones which bring relations of authority and



command over those who work on or benefit from those lands - and often, but not always, a family history back in the rural not in the very remote past. The relation between rural and urban for those urban groups, thus, in most cases is not one of a split but of continuity.

Below, I will be elaborating on the manifestations of being urban and rural in the context of power relations; the tensions woven around the dichotomy, like origin, stratification, and rural urban migration; as well as its role within the existing order of things. What the status quo stands for in terms of be-long-ings is an important point to look at more comprehensively.

### **3.6.1. Political Economy of Being *Şehirli* [Urban]: the Elites of the City**

A rural versus urban dichotomy, going beyond the ethnic parameter and sometimes defining it, was visibility apparent in both Urfa and Mardin. The local people in Urfa centre, for instance, called themselves and are called by others as “*şehirli*” [urban/ite], which in cases appeared or attempted as an ethno-neutral definition for the owners of the title. Yet, in many contexts it has connotations of Turkishness, as they or others call them also as “*Türk*”. These definitions follow sometimes automatically as this group predominantly speak Turkish and only some basic Kurdish or Arabic when necessary for business relations. One direct manifestation of the rural versus urban dichotomy came forth during a casual chat with the owner of a stationery shop in the city centre where I walked in to buy an extra notebook for my field notes. As we were talking on what I was doing in the city he said he was originally from a village near Harran and I asked if he was originally an Arab. His reply followed as “*might be Arab, but urban, that [Arabness] has not remained, or still some might be Kurdified; but we are ‘şehirli’ [urban] in essence, haven’t seen village or so, neither have our grandfathers*” (M, ‘şehirli’, 50s, Urfa).<sup>134</sup> Referring to social change through

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<sup>134</sup> Informal Interview, Urfa, 17.10.2011. As he did not take on any ethnic identification, I refer him as “*şehirli*” [urbanite], the way he defined himself.

rural-urban migration he further noted that “*we the şehirli became minority. Whom you call Kurds Arabs are those who have come from villages, after the dam*”. ‘Locals’ versus ‘outsiders’ dichotomy once more repeated here converging with ethnicity. He perceived the change in Urfa in not much favourable terms as he stated “*we could neither keep the old, nor adapted to the new*” in comparison he established with a neighbouring city, Gaziantep, which “*is better, more developed*” (M, ‘*şehirli*’, 50s, Urfa). Identifying Arabness and Kurdness with village origin, his “*şehirli*” [urbanite] presence and memory seem to stand for ethnic-neutral be-long-ings. His originally being from a village near Harran was not perceived as a contradiction by him. Memory and practice of having lived in the city centre for some generations bring about an embodiment of *şehirli* be-long-ings for the narrator. The not so open social history of the city with regard to conversions from non-Muslim to Muslim be-long-ings may well be another motive behind the so eager embracement of the seemingly ethnic-neutral “*şehirli*” identification in many similar cases. Reference of “*şehirli*” to ‘Turk’ also provides a safer position in this sense, as it is the dominant identity both locally in the city centre and also nationally.

Another term interchangeably used with terms like ‘local’, ‘native’, ‘*şehirli*’ [urbanite], ‘Turk’ or ‘Turcoman’ is ‘*Urfalı*’ [one from Urfa] to signify those who has a ‘historical’ claim over the city centre. A participant who defined himself to be a Turk with a stress on being rooted in the city centre, as he claimed “*I am an Urfalı for 800 years*”, stated the following: “*at the very origin there is Arabness; I say I’m Turk, if they come down much on me then I say I’m Arab*” (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]). Being “*Urfalı*” indicating here being ‘*şehirli*’ as his family has been in the city centre for generations, undertook duties of mayor and undersecretary, and legally owned many rural and urban places like bridges, gates, and towers. Mentioning three gates of Urfa, “*SamsetKapısı [Gate], Bey Kapı, and Harran Kapı*”, for instance, he stated that “*gate ownership was given to people who held power, owned his bread*” (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]). The relation between ‘*kapısahipliği*’ [gate ownership], ‘*iktidarsahipliği*’ [power

holding], and “*ekmekshipliği*” [money holding] is an important one in revealing the relation between locality, power relations, and belongings in various aspects. The participant in this case owned his jewellery store in the city centre. His and the family’s economic capital, as well as social and symbolic capitals coming from the local power relations and the family name, point at class position as another variable playing its role on the rural versus urban tension. Important in revealing the symbolic, social, and economic meanings that rural versus urban dichotomy bears, the same participant noted the following:

Siverek Bridge is ours. [Constructing the bridge] they [the family] got closer to Siverek, whether it was good or bad I don’t know. [*Why so?*] We are very different with them, Suruç, Siverek... We have the title deed for the bridgehead. In the past *şehirli* [the urbanite] had dominated; now the villager came. There is the difference of culture; if I am taken to the police station it is a shame for me, for them it is pride (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]).

It comes out that the name ‘*şehirli*’ in the everyday flow of life conveyed an historical memory and had connotations of being ‘the owner’ of the city, and people sometimes used it interchangeably with the name ‘*yerli*’ [the local]. In this sense, it was not only and simply a spatial naming but also a hegemonic signification. The terms ‘*şehirli*’ [urban/ite] or ‘*şehirce*’ [‘urbanic’] bear connotations of ‘superiority’ in terms of existing relations of power within the locality. That the hegemonic role of the *şehirli* in the city has changed after the rural migration is an important memory that was uttered very often by the locals as well as the migrants themselves. In the latter there was usually a subtle sense of victory, though. “*The şehirli [urbanite] had seen himself as the master of the villager*”<sup>135</sup> came from a Kurdish professional during an expert interview in Urfa much representing this latter angle and pointing at the changing power relations. An important point to make is that the above narrative is not only about the ‘rural’ versus ‘urban’ or the ‘villager’ versus ‘*şehirli*/urbanite’ dichotomy but also implies ethnic difference in that who essentially constitutes the population

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<sup>135</sup> Notes taken during an expert interview (M, Kurd, Urfa), 14.10.2011

of Suruç and Siverek, two mentioned towns of Urfa, are Kurds.<sup>136</sup> Thus in this case “*the villager*” represents mostly the Kurds, who is often associated with trouble as in the case of being “*taken to the police station*” here. What is “*shame*” for the established is defined to be “*pride*” for the migrant. Such shame felt for engaging in trouble, among themselves or with the state institutions, was repeated by others as well, including the members of leading families of big Arab *aşirets*. The emphasis of such articulations seem to be on being ‘established’ rather than on ethnicity, or being urban per se. Being established in the locality, thus having a superior position in power relations, is concomitant with dealing with their inner problems by their own tools and having untroubled and negotiating relations with the state institutions.

The rural urban balance in Mardin is to be mentioned here to contextualize the difference between Arabs of Mardin and Arabs of Urfa. In Mardin most of the urban population have long consisted of Arabs and Syriacs. This is at least so for the time after the social demographic structure of the city having changed from being dominantly non-Muslim with its Syriac, Chaldean, Armenian, and Jewish populations. The local lingua franca has long become Arabic since Syriac population presently cannot speak its language,<sup>137</sup> which is only used in liturgy. The ‘*şehirli*’ in Mardin thus are Arabs and Syriacs, whereas the rural Kurds often are the latecomers mostly as a result of the forced migration of 1990s. Many Kurds now are established in the city centre having experienced upward mobility through education and economic integration, yet many in masses constitute the peripheries of the city. Doubtless though there are rural Arabs as well, but what is to be stressed here is that in this case urban Arabs were the ‘owners’ of the city space together with Syriacs, at least visibly so for the period after the non-Muslim population had severely decreased. Being ‘urban’, however, should not

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<sup>136</sup> Differentiation of the population of these towns being mostly Zaza or Ezidi is not meaningful in this context and in the perception of the participant.

<sup>137</sup> The only exception at the time of the interview was the families that are originally from Midyat where Syriac language is still used and transferred to the descending generations.

be taken as pure isolation from rural. On the contrary, many established Arab families in the city have rural ties in that they are big landowners and had rural Kurds and/or Arabs work for them.

Important in this scene was how land was acquired by the urban population, which in many cases was directly related to the past or present collaborative relations with the state. The following articulation is important in revealing that relation:

There is a process of land acquiring from the Ottoman period on. The family of my husband, for instance, being prosperous and cultured due to being city dwellers for long time, did some jobs during the Ottoman period. Well, they had camel trains and they did postal works. They dealt with trade, were traders and meanwhile did some jobs for the Ottoman as well. And one of the Sultans gifted one of the great-great-grandfathers with 8 to 10 villages; land acquiring takes place in that sense, too. (F, late 30s, Turk, Mardin [M25])

Important in terms of indicating the continuity of economic relations is that the family mentioned above having camel trains and doing postal work in the Ottoman era was currently engaged in transport business and had numerous lorries to run the business. This means the prosperity of the family has been continued from the Ottoman period to the modern era, as well as their primary sector of business.

Another way of land acquiring was simply and unjustly recording them under one's name by those who could follow official procedures just because they were "*more cultured*", which usually only meant literate, thus having had access to the information about the lands at times of cadastral survey and registering. The participant mentioned the discontent on the matter in that "*some Kurds do feel resentment for that. They say that the lands were theirs but since their grandfathers were illiterate and uneducated, Arabs did register the lands in their names*" (F, late 30s, Turk, Mardin [M25]). Urban Arabs seem to have utilized the cultural and social capital of theirs to acquire economic capital in cases even to the disfavour of the "*illiterate and uneducated*" villagers. Recently, however,

there has been a changing pattern of land ownership in the city. In the last two decades or so, the armed conflict being a factor, lands change hands as many Arab families are willing to convert their immovable to movable assets and started to sell them to Kurdish families, who grew richer in time and are eager to buy the lands they have been already cultivating. Land ownership, indeed, was defined by the participant above as a form of economic capital for the Arab population, whereas as a life style, almost a *raison d'être* or ontological relation for the Kurdish population. This could be understood in line with the widespread opposition between the “*bajari*” [urban] versus “*gundi*” [rural], which equates, almost exclusively to Arab versus Kurd duality in Mardin and lies at the basis of the not so smooth relations between the urban and the rural populations.

Another participant, a member of the family mentioned above that owned agricultural lands in the rural besides engaging in various other economic activities in the city, narrated on their economic relation with the ‘villagers’. In the agricultural mode of production thus set, the relations of production took place between the urban owners of the means of production, here of land, and the rural cultivating labourers. The participant articulated the changing form of relations and the role of force in such change in the following:

For example, we have lands, cultivating them there Arabs... or Kurds... Well are they Arab or Kurd? I don't know indeed, for only now you... I really don't know what [ethnicity] they are. Do we talk to them in Arabic? But they know Kurdish as well, and Arabic, what origin they are I really don't know if they are Arab or Kurd. For years, since the father of my grandfather they plough our lands, we have such a relation to them for instance. But it is for years now, like they are our workers. Now it has become a bit like... the villagers have become more sovereign on our lands, for instance without their consent it can't be sold to someone else and so; if they don't want they don't let one sell it. One of the members of our family for instance was shot because of this, he wanted to sell it, but the villagers didn't want him to sell. They are not giving [share] of the crop and like. These sorts of conflicts have been lived. The relationship between us and them is more over land. I mean through sowing and reaping is our relation with the villagers. [...] I mean between the city and the village there is rather such a relation. And else the organic products they bring every morning, like milk, cheese, what else yogurt etcetera, trade of them but it is more through brokers, very rarely [bought] from themselves. The broker is the grocers, greengrocers; through their mediation it takes place. (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17])

The narrative revealed that urban versus rural dichotomy, which was in this case reflected in the class positions, was so central in the established form of relation that any concern about the ‘identity’ of those villagers was not prevalent at all. This was so at least for the younger generation that usually was only at the margin of those relations, which themselves have been transforming recently. On the other hand, rural Kurds bringing their products to the city to sell and buy in exchange their own needs was a widely referred phenomenon of the recent past, for which Kurds were named by the urban populations as “*Xodayê mase*” [“the owner of yogurt” in Kurdish]. Many participants recalled memories, direct or transmitted, of those rural Kurds being frequently treated badly in the city. Apparently thus, the recent pattern of the lands changing hands is not only a matter of economic belongings but also and importantly of social and symbolic belongings. Indicating to the changing power relations in social-symbolic terms in time, the above participant mentioned that her family was an influential one, her paternal grandfather once being the municipal major of Mardin and elders holding positions of ‘opinion leadership’ in the society. As the social conditions have changed, however, she believes such position was lost, yet still the symbolic importance of name of the family remained.

What the above narratives indicate is that Arabs in Mardin were articulated into the Ottoman power in the urban local, just as they have been so to the Republican power. They have constituted the elites of the city not only in economic but also in social and symbolic terms. Indeed, one can observe that Arab local elites of the Ottoman periods in all religious, bureaucratic, administrative terms turned into the Republican local elites. An interesting case in point came during an interview, where a participant was a retired teacher, who taught religion classes and also worked as a high school administrator. He came from an established family, owned the first printing house of the city and published a local newspaper. His grandfather was a sheikh in the late Ottoman period and one of the first *müftü* of the Republican time. He defined his grandfather’s position and acquired knowledge stating “*sheikh equals to*

*professor of the present time*”, the equation indicating both the prestigious status of a sheikh, and his cultural, symbolic and social capitals. The participant’s father, on the other hand, was a colonel in Turkish military, without doubt pointing at another eminent position in the society as well as in the military. The information that his father was a military officer whereas his paternal grandfather was a religious leader was something that I could not easily digest at the time of the interview thinking that it was sort of a contradiction in itself. As I proceeded in the field research, I came to realize that my perception was trapped by the dichotomy of the modern versus traditional or conservative, which was indeed a constructed one. To clarify my confusion I asked follow up questions and the participant’s reply was that “*you would make the officers and teachers from the children of the existing intelligentsia for sure*” (M, 54, Arab, Mardin [M24]). Only after I became aware of the fact that Arabs in Mardin city centre were integrated to the bureaucracy by the state, the pattern that both generations emerged as the elites of the city for different periods and power constellations became clear. They were holding the social, cultural, and symbolic capitals as well as economic one. They had been among the authorities in the city and have had a distinguishing social status. There was continuity of power holding from the Ottoman period to the Republican up to date. Some Kurdish participants also mentioned the phenomenon stating the state “*granted the city bureaucracy altogether [to Arabs] as against outsiders*”; as “*established Arab families hold Civil Registry Office [Nüfus], and prison at their hands*”; have “*thousands decares of land*” and were “*taking advantage of the system*” (M, 43, Kurd, Mardin [M6]). He also claimed that “*state supported Arabs as against Kurds*” indication power relations and opposing positions of the two groups against each other and in relation to the state authority.

It turns out that relations with the state of many urban Arabs in Mardin were often very much related to economic belongings, as well as their higher hand in power holding, which is not unrelated. Economic belongings were definitive of identifications as well as the political economy of the city. In this line, it was



argued that Arabs who “*have lands, are wealthy, mostly urban*” did “*not have an identity battle, are not in conflict with the official ideology*” since “*they have that conformism, the state has gifted them with high offices, they have had high ranked administrative positions, been managers of the state institutions*” (F, late 30s, Turk, Mardin [M25]). The relation between economic belongings and the social/political be-long-ings is clear in this context. The participant commented on the uncomplicated relation in that they had “*no problem with that, ‘we are Turks’, they have said ‘we are Turks’*”. Here again the urban groups, this time Arabs, have negotiated with the central power, identified with the official ideology and its essential form of representation, ‘Turkishness’. It could well be argued, thus, that integration to local power structure through negotiation with the central power brings a strong tendency for the status quo. Similarly, in this context, the urban versus rural tension can be interpreted in terms of local power relations as well as for its symbolic meanings. Importantly, thus, it could be argued that affinity to Turkishness endows the urban groups with the continuity of their hegemonic position vis-à-vis the other groups whom they compete with in the same geography. Their opposition to any challenge of Turkishness, therefore, has something to do with the challenge to their own hegemony.

### **3.6.2. Tensions around the Rural versus Urban Dichotomy: Hierarchies of Origin, Stratification, and Migration**

Rural versus urban dichotomy was articulated in many cases to reveal something more than what it denotes on the surface. It revealed more complex underneath meanings when dug for. Those meanings could be clustered under three subtitles: origin, stratification, and migration. All three reveal multiple meanings concerning both in group and inter-group relations as will be elaborated below.

### 3.6.2.1. Origin

Origin and assimilation of different population groups into other groups was an often cited and highly contested issue for each and every group. I have listened to many stories or mentions of conversion or assimilation of Kurds into Arabs; Arabs into Kurds; Syriacs into Arabs; Armenians into Turks; Turcomans into Kurds... Such discourse was almost a competitive one in all three cities, but much visible in Urfa and Mardin as these two are still cities where different groups cohabit on a knife-edge balance of power. Many people of different ethnic allegiances claimed that people of the same ethnic origin with them were in time assimilated into some other groups. The mention of those who once were ‘indeed Kurds’, ‘indeed Arabs’, ‘indeed Syriacs’, ‘indeed Armenians’, or ‘indeed Turks’ was a very frequent one I encountered during the fieldwork. The ways of assimilation were various, like through adoption of the language of those around them, sheltering under the *aşiret* power to defend themselves, or converting their religion to save their life. Sometimes, the same group of people was claimed to have two different origins respectively after the ethnicity of the two different claimers. The historical truth of each claim being set aside, a visible concern of such discourse on ‘origin’ seemed to be with population politics, which is related to power relations.

The ‘origin’ of people was a highly referred and a wondered one in many cases. It was especially stressed by many in Urfa whereby people, whether in an interview or an ad-hoc talk developing by chance, referred to the origin not only of themselves but also of other families they knew. An important point in this context was migration. The discourse on ‘being established’ in the existence of those ‘migrants’ was crucial in that it may have acted as a differentiating, if not exclusive, dynamic to define who counts ‘*Urfalı*’. Apparently, it was not only being a very recent migrant that mattered in this case but being migrant itself. A participant (M, 70/68, Kurd, Urfa [U12]) stated for instance “*even my grandfather had lived in Urfa, but unless the family is Urfalı for seven*

*generations of ancestors, they wouldn't count you Urfali*". The paternal family in this case was from an area some part of which became Syria after the border was drawn, whereby the larger family was divided between Syria and Turkey, Suruç town of Urfa. Then the grandfather in *Suruç* moved to Urfa centre. The participant is the third, and his grandchildren living in Urfa now are the fifth generation. Verifying what he told about not being counted as *Urfali*, his very family was named to be "*muhacir*"<sup>138</sup> [migrant] by someone I met coincidentally in the city centre, who was a member of an established family that he defined in turn to be local *Urfali*. Yet still migration is a highly controversial issue in itself, since the overwhelming majority of the population in the city centre was non-Muslim until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely Armenian, Syriac, and Jew where there is none now. Some of them are stated to have converted into Islam and continue to live in Urfa as Muslims, which they would, as argued by one, "*hide from the foreigner, but cannot from Urfali*"<sup>139</sup>. Yet, the fact that they left or were forced to leave makes a question clear who replaced them? This is important not only in terms of numbers, but also of the appropriation of the accumulated belongings -possessions, culture, and architecture. Such appropriation itself blurs the question who counts '*Urfali*'.

Upon the transmitted memory about the non-Muslim natives of the city, one participant mentioned an interesting point which obscures the discourse on 'origin'. Meaning the period when Armenians were forced to leave the city as well as the country, he stated that "*they haven't taken the children thinking they'll be back, they have left them to us*" and "*then there was a law enacted saying the one who marries a girl in the orphanage [Urfa and Gaziantep] will not serve in the military*". Marriages with Armenian girls followed thereafter. There were also women or girls who were remnants of those convoys of people

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<sup>138</sup>Field notes taken during a city tour for visit of historical places, 15.10.2011, Urfa.

<sup>139</sup>Field notes taken during a city tour for visit of historical places, 15.10.2011, Urfa.

coming all over Anatolia to proceed to Syrian lands. *“Her/his Mother was a dispatch”* [“Annesisevkiyat”] *they would call... even from the Black Sea [region] they came and pass over here. They are the remnants of those who were left here*”. An actual strategy in Urfa to identify people with such history is to ask about one’s uncle, mother’s brother, and if there was none she was suspected to be all alone with the likelihood of being Armenian. Otherwise, since having a son is critically important in the region it is assumed that women having brothers will be a high chance. He stated accordingly that *“if persons of 80-90 years old do not have maternal uncles, their mother is Armenian. They would ask ‘who is your maternal uncle?’ if tells the uncle he is safe, otherwise is an Armenian [origin]. We too do not have a maternal uncle; it might not be by the grace of God”* (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]). Interestingly, however, establishing a hierarchy of relations between groups, here namely the non-Muslim ‘converts’ and Muslim Kurds, he added that *“we get on better with them than we do with Kurds”*. He continued the comparison even for trans-border relations *“We are good with the Armenians in Syria, Aleppo. We go for trade, they are Armenians of Van, and we speak Turkish to them. Kurds there spoke Kurdish to us, seeing that we did not understand their look towards us changed”* (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]). A visible distance towards Kurds was uttered in many cases by the local Arabs and Turcomans in Urfa and Arabs in Mardin. Still, however, identifications and relations are constructed on a changing and contextual basis. The discourse of closeness to non-Muslims vis-à-vis Kurds as expressed above should be taken within that frame. An evident case realized while I was interviewing with the same participant. A wholesale jewellery trader from Mardin whom the participant often traded with came to his store in my presence and joined the talk by himself. When the wholesaler started telling about Syrians, the participant asked in curiosity whether he had “Syriacness” in his lineage and was replied *“no, thanks to God, elhamdulillah [praise to Allah]”*.<sup>140</sup> He was a Kurd from Mardin, but was mistaken to be an Arab by the storekeeper [the

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<sup>140</sup> (M, 60s, Kurd, Mardin) He is not one of the participants, but becoming part of an interview as such, I quote him as it is closely related to the context.

participant] until that time. The tension on the ‘origin’ of people is an important one in terms of belongings in that ‘living together’ seems to be possible only with pretending not to see, not to know, or not speak on it, while on the other hand it is a constant matter of curiosity. In such context, what on the surface appears to be cohabiting is rather living side by side divided by thick boundaries. Another context whereby ‘origin’ was mentioned as a matter of issue was intermarriages. In a dialogue between two Arab participants,<sup>141</sup> the matter came to fore as one stated “*indeed the city centre somewhat undervalues the Arabs*” (M, 37, Arab, Urfa [U24]) and gave the example of an Arab friend being refused the *şehirli* girl he wanted to marry. The other replied “*it is not related to Arabness but to ruralness. The men have established their own system, like a mason club, my daughter is yours, your son is mine, your daughter is mine, it is [about] property sharing, for it not to disperse*” (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5]). The tense relation between the ethnic origin and the rural-urban origin is an important one, in this case Arabness and/or rural background becoming an obstacle to marry a *şehirli* [urban], the latter most often referring a Turk/Turcoman or an ethno-neutral identity in Urfa. The other aspect of the relation, as uttered openly by the participant, is about economic belongings, the marriage relation revolving around the issue of inheritance and sharing of possessions. The same participant referred to yet another case whereby marriage and ethnic origin was related in a context of power relations. He mentioned the following:

What I observed is that Arabs would give their daughters to Kurds, but very occasionally would they take the girls of Kurds. [...] We are not so sure but it may stem from this: among Arabs in this region in the very past, bravery, heroism was very prominent; nobility, lineage was in the foreground. For instance, those Kurds for instance wanted a girl from my mother’s side and said ‘give us your ugliest daughter, we shall accept it’. Why? Because the child [son] will take after his maternal uncle [*dayı*], will become a leader. And it was indeed so, wherever they gave their daughter, the children [male children/men] all became leaders there. Well, so they say ‘give us your ugliest daughter’. [...] For example, many Kurds call us uncle [*dayı*], because the elders had daughters

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<sup>141</sup> One was my key person who accompanied us during the interview with the participant and occasionally interfered the interview to express his own ideas, which were sometimes not in agreement with the participant, thus led an elaboration of what has already been said.

in the very past, so there is uncle-nephew relation. Still many [Kurdish] *aşirets* call Arabs, us or the others, as beg [*bey*]. The grandmother of their grandmother was an Arab. (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5])

The reference to “*bravery*”, “*heroism*”, “*nobility*”, and “*lineage*” signifying the perceived symbolic power of Arabs is important in terms of belongings and the order of social structure. The whole narrative around the Arab women, on the other hand, is actually about the sons, the male descendants, who are praised to have the above characteristics attributed to Arabs and ultimately become the leaders among the community, here Kurds, they were brought up. Women and intermarriage, thus, are articulated into power relations. Power relations was also mentioned by the former participant in the dialogue, who said “*in Urfa the children of the biggest [Kurdish] aşirets are Arabs*”, “*like English women of their own country, the English would give their daughters, and here too Arabs give their daughters to Kurds, to Arabize I guess there is such a thing*” (M, 37, Arab, Urfa [U24]). His reference to the ‘English women’ suggests colonial power relations, or in this case simply some sort of supremacy of Arabs over Kurds. Female body and life are once again ordered along the rationale of economic and ethnic belongings that are interwoven into power relations.

The last issue around origin in marriage relations concerned marriages with the ‘converts’, who were ‘originally’ non-Muslims only some few generations ago. It was a widely held belief that “*they*”, the converts, knew each other and mostly conducted intra-group marriages. Upon my question if there was a hesitation by Muslims about conducting marriages with them, one stated the following:

We have overcome it; it was so in the past, they would not give their girl nor take theirs. It should have been overcome anyway for they have become Muslims. Yet, my observation is that still they marry among themselves, they try to take [daughters] from or give to [those] of their ancestors and progenitors.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Field notes taken during an ad-hoc talk with a man in his 30s, who was coming from an established family in Urfa that defined itself to be “*Urfalı*” or “*yerli*” [native] with possible distant Arab roots, 15.10.2011, Urfa

In another context, the criterion for intermarriage was set as “*the material aspect*” of it, ethnicity, race, or even religion withdrawing to “*the second line*” (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5]). “*Now who has the monetary power is the noble one, because he has the material power*” stated the participant continuing as:

It has all changed now. In the past they looked for other characteristics. Now, says ‘he is rich, if he is rich it is probably a good family’. Even if from another religion or race he says ‘he is a good man, he is hadji’, even if not ‘we would make him hadji’ [laughs]. [...] Besides if the girl is beautiful, what will you do if she is Armenian or not. These are the realities of life.(M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5])

One has to note that the gendered context for the above narrative is important, since it is a male participant and his expression “*even if not ‘we would make him hadji’*” refers to the father of the potential bride. Thus, the example indicates Muslim men marrying a Christian woman, and to convert her, even his father, to Islam. A Muslim man marrying a Christian woman was referred by many as acceptable according to Islamic rules, but not the vice versa. Accordingly, another participant, a woman, whose spouse’s paternal grandmother was an Armenian, stated “*when my father gave me [consented to my marriage] our relatives raised hell, saying ‘are you giving [your daughter] to the grandchild of the convert [“dönme”]!’*” (F, 45, Turcoman, Urfa [U21]). Even if the grandmother had long been a Muslim she appears not to be accepted as a ‘proper’ member either of the family or of the community.

One should note that, the curiosity about origin was never only about the past but also about the current relations and balance of power. It usually set the ground for a selective appropriation of history in Urfa, whereby narratives on the difficulties and troubles of the past, wars, period of mobilization and long military service was vividly articulated. Many people told stories that were transmitted by their elders; others often referred to the common popular stories and discourses mostly nationalistic in tone. Lively conveyed memories on ‘war of independence’; defence of ‘Muslim Urfa’ against ‘English and French occupation’; ‘Arab collaboration and treason’; ‘non-Muslim’ or ‘Armenian

treason' etcetera were recollected leading to a constant reconstruction of *Urfalı* Muslim identity that gets along well with Turkish national belonging. Narratives often articulated in an epic language of heroism were woven into dichotomies of 'inside' versus 'outside' or 'us' versus 'others'. The names of some prominent 'local' families and their members as the leaders of the stories were mentioned in pride and I was urged to visit the commemoration museums and sites in the city, which I did.

Important in revealing the perception of a link between those past events in what they popularly represent to the more recent socio-political upheaval concerning the conflict with Kurdish political movement was an articulation by a participant who stated "*now finally we would have been at ease, yet now the Kurdish case had broken out*" (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]). With a time leap stretching out all the way from the troubled times of the past to the immediate present, he linked the former's connotations of 'treason', 'the enemy within', 'national struggle' to the present time 'trouble' that the 'Kurdish case' creates. The problem woven around the Kurdish political demands stood for many non-Kurd, even for some Kurds especially in Urfa but in other cities as well, as a factor preventing to be 'at ease' today, directly affecting the everyday lives of those who lived in the region. It was thus perceived as an obstacle to other associated potentialities that 'being at ease' might have brought forth like 'welfare', 'integrity', and 'security'. Such narrative coming along with other expressions in the same interview, accompanied by a jewellery wholesaler and the neighbouring shopkeeper, that "*we are respectful to the homeland and the nation*", "*Turk has no friend other than the Turk*" (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa[U20]); "*all is enemy to the Turk*" (M, late 30s, Arab, Urfa); and "*all three were enemies to the Turk*" (M, 60s, Kurd, Mardin), the latter referring to an anecdote during WWI whereby the English, Arab, and the Armenian in Urfa were named, is crucial in disclosing the respective positioning of groups along the axis of be-long-ings.



In such a context, whereby balance of power between different groups has changed a great deal in the historical time span and is currently on a shifting ground; and where traditional forms and primary sources of belongings as family, kinship, and *aşiret* relations still have crucial importance, the question about the ‘origin’ of the individual is always about the present and always related to the issue of where to put the person within the socio-political grid today. Similarly, the stratification between and within groups reveal crucial meanings on current be-long-ings as will be analyzed below.

### **3.6.2.2. Stratification**

How the local urban groups of power were perceived by the others, be them rural migrants or the other, less powerful, groups in the city is also important to grasp the tensions woven around the urban-rural dichotomy. Shortly, the perception overall was not much of a positive one. In Urfa, for instance, it was stated that the natives of Urfa, or the locals in the city centre, were called as “*isotçu*”<sup>143</sup> by those living in the rural areas or rural migrants to the city. The term was used to refer to the perceived generalized attitude of the urban locals in being close to the power centres, avoiding getting into trouble, and being “*flabby*” in everyday affairs. “*İsot*” being the name of a special type of dark red pepper cultivated around Urfa and an important item of production, consumption and trade for the local population, the term ‘*isotçu*’ may also have connotations of making money, wealth gaining, and caring about nothing but the pleasures of eating and drinking. In this line could be thought a reference made by a participant who was an artisan and managed a jewellery shop in the city centre and an urban local defining himself to be Turk with distant Arab origins in the past. Towards the end of a long interview whereby many historical anecdotes about the relations between different ethnic and religious groups in Urfa, which often were full of violent memories, were articulated; and current social and political problems in

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<sup>143</sup> From the field notes taken during two separate expert interviews 14.10.2011

the society were evaluated, he referred to a line of an 18<sup>th</sup> century poet as a wise watchword to be adopted. He continued: “as the Poet Nabi said: ‘If you ever want to live on earth in peace, neither be a vouch, nor a proxy, nor a witness’”<sup>144</sup> (M, 60, Turk/Arab, Urfa [U20]).<sup>145</sup>“*Suya sabuna dokunmamak*” [to keep one’s hands clean] was the expression articulated by various Kurdish, and/or rural background people to indicate the attitude of the urban, *şehirli*, and/or Turcomans/Arabs. One still has to note that such attitude by no means refers to isolation per se. In this case, the participant as a craftsman is a member of a religious order [*tariqah*] like most of the other artisans and shopkeepers in the downtown. In the morning, they all come together to pray within the historical market place [*SipahiPazarı*] before the shops are opened. They would attend the “*zıkr*” [dhikr]<sup>146</sup> ritual early in the morning before coming for the prayer in the market. None would open his store before the prayer. Besides being a religious organization a *tariqah* is a strong source of social capital as is the *ahi*-order, the craftsmen/storekeepers’ guild, the latter being not unrelated to the former in this case. Thus, bridging social capital in the form of religious orders and

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<sup>144</sup> Nabi was a Divan Literature Poet (1642-1712) born in Urfa. The original couplet mentioned here goes like “Gayr için olma dü-‘âlemde zelîl/Ne vasî ol ne vekîl ol ne kefil” (couplet 550) as given in Kaplan, M. (1990). Hayriyye-Nâbî (İnceleme-Metin), Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara.p.169 <http://acikarsiv.ankara.edu.tr/browse/25383/011986.pdf?show> accessed on 30.7.2018. For Kaplan, Nabi in the mentioned couplet of his masnavi, which was written to give admonitions, advises not to be a tutelar, vouch, or proxy for someone else as there is moral degeneration and negativities in the society, which could put one into trouble. The couplet may literally be translated as “For you may not be servile for the other/ be neither a tutelar, nor a vouch, nor a proxy” [Ö.B].

<sup>145</sup> From the notes taken during an interview which started with a breakfast with *simit* on tea, a daily morning ritual for the participant with his few neighbouring shopkeepers in front of their jewellery shops, where I was invited the prior day when I met them. After the breakfast we continued the interview in his shop in the company of the neighbour, who seemed to be close fellow whereby the two were members of the same *tarikât* [religious order], and after a while of a Kurdish jewellery wholesaler from Mardin.

<sup>146</sup> To see how the ritual was defined see <https://www.britannica.com/topic/dhikr>

occupational networks seem to be another factor determinant in allegiances and attitudes of those local people in the city centre framing their very be-long-ings. One has to note that not only in Mardin and Urfa but also in Diyarbakır as well, some participants referred to the ‘*şehirli*’ [urban] and ‘*yerli*’ [local] families with negative connotations. One participant (M, 42, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D23]) revealed such perception upon my question about the relation between the natives/locals [*yerli*] of Diyarbakır and the recent migrants, those coming through forced migration. He, first of all, engaged in clarifying for me that “nativity/localness” [*yerlilik*] in case of Diyarbakır was not something positive in their eyes, read as the Kurds identifying with Kurdish political movement. A similar pattern of alliance with the central state power from the Ottoman period on, having been granted economic belongings along with local political power was repeated once again this time for Diyarbakır. The participant was coming from a politically active family, his grandfather being exiled in 1950s and was imprisoned more than once for his engagement in Kurdish political movement in late 50s and early 60s. He said:

In Diyarbakır that nativity is not something to do with [Kurdish] national identity; [rather] that is a made-up identity, a constructed identity. Like what, the state had granted privileges to the locals in some specific periods, when there was not yet land registry and cadastre system saying 3 villages to you, 3 *mirlık* to you, *mirlıks* they have due to the protocol signed with Yavuz Sultan, and then after other *mirlıks* were designed with 3 or 5 villages in it. Impact of those privileges on the society was very bad. For instance those prominent families in Diyarbakır were defining the life, putting themselves in the place of public authority. They had manors [*köşk*]; and prisons [*zindan*] in the basement of those manors. Prisons, if you go to CemilPaşaKöşk, there are prisons; they themselves judged and sentenced. Go to the CemilPaşaKöşk, basement is all prison; there are iron gratings on the walls. Again the torture by... Begs [Beyler] was famous. As this is the case, between this identity and the people [*halk*], or rather those migrated, coming after forced migration, there was never a healthy relation established. And also some of those locals of Diyarbakır are anyway ethnically Turk; say Bitlis Turk, Ahlat Turk, or Caucasian Turk [gives an example of a family and a member of it, who are of Circassian origin] but they were never Kurdified, why, because the state high rank officials [*devleterkani*] have never internalized the relationship with Kurdishness, the same is valid with the begs. It is so interesting. When this is the case that identity of ‘being local’ in Diyarbakır is not that much accepted within society [*toplum*] unlike in Ankara, Eskişehir, Sivas; it would be a positive value in those. Your being a *Beypazarlı* in Ankara for instance or

*Uluslu* is a very distinguished thing. [...] That did not happen here. [...] And also the approach of locals to those having social demands had always been negative. For example, to rebellions and uprisings the locals never gave support; except from a few family and they are of Kurdish origin anyway. (M, 42, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D23])

In many aspects a deep gap is defined between the urban local power holders, on the one hand, and “*the people*” [“*halk*”] or the “*society*” [“*toplum*”], on the other. While the former is implied to be the ‘outsider’, often Turk and ‘cruel’; the latter is the ‘victimized but rebellious’ Kurd. Interestingly, the same participant stated in relation to this that, “*Diyarbakırlılık*”, the identity of being a fellow from Diyarbakır, “*has not had a broad repercussion or reality within the society*”, and “*only with the interference to everyday life of sports and politics the identity of Diyarbakırlılık has been polished and tried to be made valuable*” (M, 42, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D23]). Yet again, the urban versus rural difference plays a role in the above mentioned split between the local power holders and ‘the people’ as one participant put it stating “*at Diyarbakır centre, up to a very recent time, Kurdish identity was used as a synonym for being rural [köylülük]*” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). An interesting anecdote uttered by the above participant was that during the early period of Republican era, up until late 1930s, the gates on the fortress around the city were closed and outsiders, mostly villagers, were not let into the cities. He said “*if you came after 5pm and do not have a reference [person in the city,] a guarantor waiting for you at the gate to pick you up to his house, you would not be let in*” (M, 42, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D23]).

It is crucially important to note, moreover, that difference between urban and rural is not a static or a simple one. That is to say, not only between the urban versus rural but also among each category itself there are unending and nested hierarchies making the rural versus urban split even more complicated. An evident example concerning the urban groups was about Arabs in Mardin. As already mentioned Arabs are socially organized along ‘the families’; yet among families there are differentiations between the “*wealthier*” or “*bigger*” and the not so ‘wealthy’ or ‘big’ ones; the “*nobles*” and “*non-nobles*”; and even “*the*

*honourable*” and “*the dishonourable*” ones. The narrative of a participant clarified those distinctions as in the following:

Individuals are valued, unfortunately, according to the families they are a member of. My grandmother used to do this, I had struggled with her a lot saying ‘how much discriminative you are’ and so. ‘Who is he from?’, ‘he is from this and this’. Even the father of my grandmother for instance had used to warn my mother, now thinking on it I remember those... for instance, there was even a differentiation being made between the nobles and the non-nobles. [Laughing] may be not something like the perception of nobility in French culture but related to the size and the strength [of the family] I guess. Like, ‘don’t give your daughter to one who is not noble’ said the father of my grandmother to my mother. She always tells this. But he told this because being together with someone not from your own culture would not be a long lasting relationship; like she cannot get along with him etc. [Which ones are the noble families?] Well the big families. Who are those non-nobles I don’t know really, but more like, for instance, the people we know deal with illegal business, don’t know mafiatic, or feudal [stuff]. For instance our families have no feudal structure; I mean we are not *aşiret*. We are only a big family; and for a long time in many areas here more in the state, like I said they were the municipal majors, taken duty in the [municipal] council, there is a power coming from that. Well economically as well there is a power stemming from that. Umm... [silence] The non-nobles are, for example, those who bully. A differentiation they even make between honourable family [*“namuslu aile”*] and the dishonourable family [*“namussuz aile”*]. .. I know it in Arabic, like the one who has an eye on the girls of the others... [In Arabic?] ‘*ayn-ul gaybe*’ they would say, *ayn-ul gaybe* means something like have an eye outside I guess. Those sorts of people also are taken to be in the non-noble category. These things are done by a few people in the family but if it was recurrently lived they are taken like family characteristics anymore. For example some families are known as usurer, these families are usurer. These families bully; these families are smuggler; these families, don’t know, [are engaged in] illegal business and so on. (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17])

It is apparent that titles signifying status differences define the pattern of social stratification within the same ethnic group in the city. The relative positions within the society, social relations and interaction, marriage decisions are defined along those hierarchical lines, which are very much related to the symbolic power as well as the economic and social power of individuals via their families. They are reflected in manners and behaviours of individuals, although not openly uttered. One participant mentioned everyday life occasions whereby people even at casual meetings would first learn who the others are, which families are they from, and deciding whether they have an upper or a lower

status in respect, frame their own behaviour accordingly (F, late 30s, Turk, Mardin [M25]). She also noted that even among the most upper-crust of the Arabs of Mardin there are distinctions between more elites and the not so elites. Her interpretation was that those distinctions may be following certain lineages, wealth, or being cultivated. Her own witness as an outsider, a Turk from a Western city of Turkey, proves that attitude of other people towards her totally changes, may even become submissive, when they learn she is a daughter-in-law of an upper class family. Importance of symbolic power and social capital are clear in forming be-long-ings in these cases, and are defining in social interactions even at most mundane level. Social cleavages are apparently not defined only, or even primarily, along ethnic lines, but along class, social status, family, or lineage. Indeed, there seems to be an unending stratification even among the same ethnic-group people.

The above cases being uttered especially for the city, there is also a clear inner differentiation among the rural social groups themselves. The named cleavages were between the “*mountaineer*” [“*dağlı*”] and the “*plainer*” [“*ovalı*”]; the landowner and sharecrop farmer; or the agha and the fellow tribesmen. However, all those differentiations within the rural structure are swallowed into one basic category, the “*gundî*”, as against the “*bajarî*”, both in Kurmanji, when they end up in the city as rural migrants. “*Gundî*” being the equivalent of “*köylü*” in Turkish, and *villager* in English constitute the basic social category in the face of the “*bajarî*”, the “*şehirli*” in Turkish, and *urbanites* in English. The basic cleavage among the city dwellers being shaped along migration, rural people with all their differences end up being migrants. This does not mean that they all have the same power or social status in the city, yet they all seem to constitute one category in the eye of others. Below analyzed is this last tension, migration, in the rural versus urban dichotomy of be-long-ings.

### 3.6.2.3. Migration

Migration framing a basic social cleavage, the perception of the urban groups towards rural migrants was not often a favourable one in all the three research areas concerning their specific case. A very common expression about the rural migrants was that “*they neither became urbanized nor stayed as villagers; they could not adapt to the city*” (F, 33, Arab, Urfa [U17]), in this case was uttered by an officer of a support centre in a deprived neighbourhood of Urfa. As already mentioned most of the Arabs and Kurds in Urfa were mostly latecomers to the city as they had basically dealt with agriculture and sharecropping, thus have had mostly a rural life until very recently. Especially about rural Arabs, who were more recent in the city after the irrigation of lands through GAP, a widely shared perception was that their adaptation was much slower and difficult. One participant argued that most of rural Arabs migrant in Urfa city achieved “*modernization*”, meaning development of their material living conditions, through economic wealth gained out of increasing value of the irrigated agricultural lands and/or reaping cotton on huge lands, yet without acquiring the necessary ‘mental background’ to live in city centre. He called it “*pseudo-modernization through money*” (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]) with no corresponding mental adaptation that would back it. Examples he gave was “*immediately marrying 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> wives*” upon enormous amounts of money flowing in; living in flats yet “*throwing their waste from the balcony*”, because of which “*the local Urfalı did not rent their apartments as they cannot live properly*” (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]). In his narrative, prior to irrigation of vast lands “*Arabs never had permanently moved from the village to the city*”, whereby the pattern was that “*they came, open [have] a house here, but they would come only occasionally*”. His comment on the pattern was that “*they know that their true place is the village*”, noting: “*the thing we call the urban culture you see? They are far from it...*”(M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]). On the other hand, he stated that:

Locals of Urfa are mostly Kurds; Arabs are minority. In my childhood they lived in one neighbourhood, the rest was Kurds and Turcomans, Turks. You would not easily distinguish between Kurds of Urfa and Turks; they both speak the language of one another. (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]).

Accordingly, Arabs were much later than Kurds who have been already in the city, as “*they came after irrigation*” (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]). Although, there was considerable amount of recent rural Kurdish migration to the city, his account is mostly about belonging to the city, or to the “*urban culture*” in his words, which apparently signifies a superior status in his perception. Not only manners and attitudes, but also gender relations were articulated as part of such signification.

The relation between the economic gain coming after irrigation and migration was mentioned by others as well. In one case, “*the large amounts of confiscation price received for lands submerged in the dam waters in the villages*” is said to be wasted because of the “*men’s uncalculated behaviour*” in the city.<sup>147</sup> One participant, a local elderly coming from an established family, referring to that confiscation price gave the example that while he had not enough money to buy a bicycle for his grandson at the time, or needed to bargain off the price with the house owner to buy an apartment, those who came with money at hand paid huge amounts that consequently market prices were raised. His note that “*they did not know how to spent money, they bought Mercedes [automobiles]*” (M, 79, *Urfalı*, Urfa [U23]) was indicating the conspicuous consumption behaviours of the newcomers to the city. If migration would have happened sporadically, he noted, “*the new comers would necessarily adapt to our culture; yet they came group by group... I will say flock by flock but I can’t associate it to human being. They came in piles and through money [took] us under their hegemony*” (M, 79, *Urfalı*, Urfa [U23]). On the other hand, the money brought in created a movement in the local economy. One expert stated that after “*hundreds of villages, their fields were submerged by dam; those people invested the money*

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<sup>147</sup> Notes taken from an expert interview in one of ÇATOM offices in Urfa, 19.10.2011 (F, early 30s, Arab, Urfa)



they got for confiscation of their lands in Urfa and settled in here”.<sup>148</sup> Making a differentiation along ethnic lines, he said it was mostly Kurds whose villages went under water, while lands of Arabs had gained much value through irrigation, their level of wealth increasing. By implication, those investors were mostly Kurds. A contribution of the process to the economic and social structure of the city was that increasing yield of cotton due to irrigated farming led to an enlargement in the existing industry of textile production in the city centre, however primitive it was in technology. As a consequence, some degree of women labour power entered the labour market, with women starting to work at manufacturing plants.<sup>149</sup> They were getting on the same personnel vehicles to work, although it did not last long for women were shamed for doing this and gradually withdrew. Still, however, it was noted that the experience was important in women’s becoming more public in Urfa and in relative improving of their position within the family.

In another case, a member of a local established family in Urfa city centre, one of the “*şehirli*” or “*Urfa*” (M, 63, *Urfa*, Urfa [U25]), stated that Kurdish population increased in the city centre in the last 50 years; and many Arabs migrated more recently upon the irrigation of vast lands in Harran region through the GAP. Kurds and Arabs, in his childhood, basically had engaged in farming and agriculture; and they occasionally came to the city for hospital visits and slept in *han*/caravanserai over night. He remembers only a few classmates at school who were from villages. He noted that with the mass migration of rural, unqualified, jobless, and poor villagers, scatter houses were built all around the city, whereby the newcomers appropriated the lands of the state and foundational estates. They constituted the peripheries of the city and shaped the culture accordingly. As in other similar narratives of the ‘*şehirli*locals’ of Urfa, in his

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<sup>148</sup> Notes taken from an expert interview in an NGO on human rights in Urfa, 22.10.2011 (M, 40s, Kurd, Urfa)

<sup>149</sup> Notes taken from an expert interview in one of Çatom offices in Urfa, 19.10.2011 (F, early 30s, Arab, Urfa)

account there is almost a perception of being occupied by the rural migrants. The period before migration was defined by him as “*when the city did not extend beyond the fortress walls [sur], there was no scatter houses [gecekondu], and was no Kurdish population at all in the city*” (M, 63, *Urfalı*, Urfa [U25]). He also stated that “*normally*” Syriac, Armenian, and Turcoman [“*Türkmen*”] populations had lived in the city centre. Those living in the city centre were *Türkmen*/Turcoman rather than Turk was a repeated info by different people. One should surely add the Jews and a small population of Greeks in this account of non-Muslims, the former up until 1940s. The claim that “*most of the city was non-Muslim, then they migrated*”<sup>150</sup> was an often cited one by various participants in Urfa, which makes the discourse of ‘natives of the city’ somewhat debatable that is fairly not debated. Yet the changing demographic composition, also leading to a changing of power relations, economic possessions, and social structure, had certainly its decisive role in shaping be-long-ings in the current composition of socio-economic relations in the city.

A visible tension in the mixed population cities, namely in Urfa and Mardin, was over the current size of different group populations: who is more in numbers? Interestingly, both Kurds and Arabs in Urfa claimed that it was ‘them’. Sometimes negative views about the increase of the population of other’s were uttered. “*Arabs, are constantly increasing in population, birth rate is high. Kurds got used to family planning; the number of children has dropped*”<sup>151</sup>; or “*Kurds are more than Arabs, when this group is intense the culture is shaped accordingly*” (M, 63, *Urfalı*, Urfa [U25]) are among those bearing negative connotations about the increase of the perceived ‘other’ group.

A crucial expression about population politics revealing that the dead as well counts in was the claim that “*there is no Kurdish name in the graveyards*” in

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<sup>150</sup> Notes taken during an expert interview (M, Kurd, Urfa), 14.10.2011

<sup>151</sup> Field notes from an expert interview, 14.10.2011, Urfa

Urfa,<sup>152</sup> implying that Kurds were ‘outsiders’ coming to the city centre afterwards; in another case it was similarly stressed that in the graveyards “*the names are Turkish, the headstones are Turkish*”.<sup>153</sup> Noticeably, an unspoken tension behind these arguments is the changing balance of power in the socio-demographic structure due to recent migratory movements in the named city. The underlying claim is to be-long-ing(s) to and in the city. The question is always ‘who belongs’, being inseparably related to the questions ‘whom the city belongs to’, or ‘whose belongings are they all’, the answer varying according to who speaks. A case in point, reflecting a claim to the city from the ‘other’ angle, the migrant’s perception, was uttered by a young teacher in Mardin himself migrated from a town of the city: “*Mardin is Kurd any more*” (M, early 30s, Kurd, Mardin [M10]). The reference was to the changing population sizes in relative terms upon the mass migration of rural Kurds to the city. The expression came upon a mention of the tension between Arabs and Kurds in the city as the other participant, another teacher who has worked in Midyat/Mardin up to then and was newly appointed to the city centre, stated that when he called water seller in Midyat to buy drinking water to the school he worked as the vice-principal, “*they*”, referring to Arabs, did not bring it. When the cleaner in the school called them speaking Arabic, however, they did. He continued that “*Arabs now became minority*”, in Mardin city centre, “*up to two years they will become more of a minority*” (M, early 30s, Kurd, Mardin [M11]). Apparently, what is at stake is more than numbers. A language of ‘taking over’ the city reveals itself for both sides in the expressions above. It is about the power balance existing in the city, getting a hold of the resources for the newcomers and keeping a hold of them for the already there. It is important to conclude that rural-urban migration is very much related to socio-economic change, and is

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<sup>152</sup>Field notes from an informal interview, The neighbour jewellery shopkeeper introducing me to one of my participants thereafter, (M, *Urfalı*/Turcoman), 24.20.2011, Urfa

<sup>153</sup> From the notes taken during an interview which started on a breakfast with jewellery shopkeepers, 17.10.2011, Urfa

often taken as a challenge to status quo by the power holders; it is, thus, an important phenomenon revealing compound meanings in terms of be-long-ings. The social change coming after migration was perceived by the local established family members much in negative terms as already mentioned. This was so in all the three cities as will be mentioned in other chapters as well. The focus on ‘coming from a big family’ as something much valuable was often uttered in this context. ‘The Family’ here denotes an extended family of the same lineage, perceived or real, that may contain differently surnamed families. A participant, who was a member of those prominent, established Arab families in Mardin, mentioned them accounting for what she named as “*real Mardinli*” together with the non-Muslims of the city and openly expressed her regret about the out-migration of many members of those families from the city, where in some cases the whole family had left. She said “*almost all of our big families have migrated; I mean no one is left here, there is no one*” (F, 42, Arab, Mardin [M15]). Her expression signifies identification with “*our big families*” and the perceived absence, desolation, and loneliness for the one being identified is not there anymore. The below narrative of the participant expresses, moreover, what kind of a change has taken place in Mardin after the out-migration of the urban population and the in-migration of the rural population. The change is understood in a dichotomous context whereby an opposition is established between “*real Mardinli*” versus “*migrant*”; “*European culture*” versus “*traditional structure*”; “*genuine culture*” versus “*transferred culture*”, the former in each case referring to the urban whereas the latter to the rural.

For sure it became much different, for instance, of Mardin, the real *Mardinli* have not much remained. Well, in general all *Mardinli* have migrated, very few for the moment, the real, I mean established families of Mardin are very few, all migrated, ummm, now for instance most part of Mardin is migrant, people who have settled through migration. Not only the houses of Mardin, well... of genuine *Mardinli* people the cultural structure was also very different. For example they would call here ‘the little Paris’, for the Syrians were constantly abroad, for it constantly was lived here the Parisian culture, for the Syrians were out. But of Mardin, after the genuine *Mardinli* had migrated, after the Syrians had gone, for example there were the Armenians and the Jews as well, after they went it made a very huge difference. Well, I mean, of course the traditional

structure became a bit more dominant because of the migration [to Mardin], after all the culture there was transferred to here. [A short silence] I mean for sure many differences took place in the life style, many differences, I mean their... to be honest, their culture too was moved here. (F, 42, Arab, Mardin [M15])

Important in this narrative was that non-Muslims are counted within the “*genuine Mardinli*” category, as they were the urban local people who shared the city space and constructed the local culture together with the prominent Arab families of the city. This was an often mentioned fact in Mardin by participants of any ethnic background. Mardin being under influence of a ‘European culture’ thanks to the existence of non-Muslims, has now turned into more of a ‘traditional’ structure due to “*their culture too*” being moved here, implying mostly the migrant Kurds. The dichotomy bears in itself a ‘modern’ versus ‘backward’ opposition, along with the ‘urban’ versus ‘rural’ one. For the latter, her example was that “*in many neighbourhoods there is the village culture now. S/he is throwing the waste bag down from the 5<sup>th</sup> floor instead of putting it outside the door for the doorman to pick it up*”, “*still there are those sorts of cultures*” [“*birtakım kültürler*”] (F, 42, Arab, Mardin [M15]). She seemingly drew parallels between her childhood experience of her father frequently hosting rural Kurdish “*friends*” of him overnight, against her mother’s consent and at the risk of upsetting the everyday comfort for the family members, for lack of place, and her perception of the current situation taking place between the Arab ‘homeowners’ and the Kurdish ‘guests’.

Another participant also mentioned that most of the “*havastabaka*” [the educated-cultivated strata] in Mardin, referring to local esteemed families of the city, moved to the big cities like Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Mersin (M, 54, Arab, Mardin [M24]). He named different reasons for such migration like difficult conditions for enterprises; or potentials for development of the city coming to a halt because of the physical limits of the city or lack of space. Still, however, his mention that “*Mardin is a bit fashion lover*”, “*they saw themselves closer to the west, belonging, opted for living there*” gives a clue about

identifications of urban Arabs, at least how such identification was perceived by those who remained back. He still stressed that later on it was much “*because of necessity, fear, aşiret oppressions as well*” (M, 54, Arab, Mardin [M24]).

In Mardin and Urfa, it was also brought up that some of those people who newly gained power, basically through force and illegality, caused many of the rich people flee the city holding them to ransom, and threatening their life if they do not conform. In Urfa a specific case was defined whereby a wealthy man who voluntarily provided charity for the needy people had to flee the city as he was forced to pay huge amounts of money and was physically threatened. In Mardin as well, behaviour of similar groups, who almost act like gangs, was mentioned to cause problems for social life in the city. A participant, a member of an established local family, referred to them as “*unacceptable people [who] have become dominant today*” (M, 54, Arab, Mardin [M24]). They were “*groups coming through migration*”; “*they have caused trouble for people*” [*halka bela olmuştur bunlar*], since they “*bully*” and engage in “*usury*”. His emphasis that “*we cannot live with them side by side*” reveals the social distance between those urban local families and the mentioned groups receiving power through force and illegality. Pointing also at the physical distance and spatial differentiation, which has now become blurred, he stated the following:

They were living in below rampart [*sur alti/taht-el beden*]; they got the money; they engaged in all sorts of businesses, woman trafficking, drugs; they’ve bought the houses of those who sold them; they’ve bought the key places; in that way they moved up to the upper rampart [*sur üstü*], but it was not a rightful elevation. (M, 54, Arab, Mardin [M24])

“*Taht-el beden*” or “*sur alti*”, Turkish ‘alt’ [below] here referring to outside, that is outside of the city walls, indicates to a perception of the city as an organic whole with “*beden*” literally meaning body. Although in these cases the emphasis is not specifically or exclusively on rural migration, apparently the mentioned groups are perceived to be the outsiders who do not belong. Especially in their incompatible behaviours in these cases, they were seen to

damage the perception of the local space as an organism, spoiling the order of things, and harming the social structure. The city was not anymore a whole in itself.

One last point concerning the change in the city space was the occasionally uttered criticism towards what ‘modernization’ has brought along. Such criticism was articulated especially in Mardin and Urfa with reference to the changing architectural structure of the old towns respectively. They were mostly nostalgic narratives referring to the stronger ties and warmth of communal life in the past with a few families living together in the old houses within courtyards, or to the lost expressions, words, and terms specific to the architecture and life in those houses. The life in the new city place all within a new order of things was criticized especially by the elderly participants. One participant in Mardin, for instance, passionately claimed “*Does it ever look like Mardin, no! The new city is a city of 20-25 years. Nothing is built according to the needs of the people; the youths drink packaged water, because they do not have fountains*” (M, 54, Arab, Mardin [M24]). Another perceived a complete dissimilarity between the old and the new city as “*the spirit is not here*” in the latter. He added: “*The mosques here are different, even the smell of the food is different. While I pass by restaurants it smells like I pass by pharmacy, the smell of fertilizers, hormones, and drugs*” (M, mid-60s, Arab, Mardin).<sup>154</sup> His analogy was striking when he commented on the “*apartment culture*” as he said “*it is 20 flats, the 20 I know not. I feel like I am in a semi-open prison*” (M, mid-60s, Arab, Mardin). The old historical Mardin was simply referred to as “The city” in expressions like “*going up to the city*”, “*the air in the city*” and was not called as “*eskişehir*” [the old city] in contrast to the always uttered naming “*Yenişehir*” [the new city]. The old town on the hill remained as “The city” [*şehir*], whereas the annexed place down in the plain was named as the “New city”. The old one was the genuine one.

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<sup>154</sup> He was a labourer in a print house in Mardin whereby I conducted one of the interviews with a participant. He accompanied us and occasionally commented on the topics. As he was not interviewed fully, he is not counted as participant. His contribution was taken as fieldnotes.

One specific criticism was about the very building method of the new city, whereby the constituting stones of some historical buildings had been used as simple construction materials in the newly built ones. The participant accusing the republican period for interfering with the architecture and destructing what was peculiar to Mardin, again condemns a perceived republican state, or the public authorities in general, for this relatively recent destruction too. He said: “*The republic says ‘you do not have a past’, ‘you do not have roots’*” (M, 54, Arab, Mardin [M24]). In this case, state emerged as the actor breaking off the localness, by transforming the local, deforming architecture, interfering with the perception of the peoples. What belonged to the past, the architectural history of the old city, was praised as constituting the genuine city, whereby the new city is perceived to be a rootless one, devoid of memory, authenticity, and identity. Be-long-ings, thus, were much complicated in the newly constructed city space. It became apparent so far that rural-urban migration was a source of tension shaping be-long-ings in the research areas of this work. A discourse of “*genuineness*” of culture, of space, and of people indicating ‘the established’, ‘the old’, and ‘the local’ in the centre was constructed vis-à-vis one of ‘the transferred’, ‘the recent’, and ‘the migrant’. Status-quo of the established order of things was most often the pivot around which the rural-urban tension is woven in above cases. Moreover, the tension was reconstructed along ethnic lines in many cases.

Changing status quo, power relations, and alignments are significant dynamics to look at more in detail to understand the rural versus urban dichotomy comprehensively. Apparently, class or socio-economic status was the other cleavage playing a decisive role in the maintenance of the status quo. Within this framework, upwards mobility of rural migrants to the city was important, as well as the social change in the rural. Importantly, thus, the established order was not only an issue in the city, but also within the rural social structure. A regretting perception of ‘changing times’ could be seen as the epitome of the relation that the established families had to the transformation of existing balance of power.



An important narrative was uttered by an Arab *aşiret* leader, a woman of 77 years-old, whose father had been the leader of the *aşiret* up to his death. Her husband also is a leader of another *aşiret*, but only one lower in hierarchy to her wife's, as it was mostly due to later economic gain instead of the long established traditional ties and set of relations, which was the case for the *aşiret* of the woman. To my question how big the *aşiret* was she replied "*much dear, much muchmuch*"; me asking "how many villages?" she replied "*many, many, many...*" Assumedly as a sign of power, she enumerated the powerful position holders in the family in that:

We have our hodja, my uncle's son; the municipal major is my uncle's son; in the past head of the social security [institution] was my brother, now went to Ankara; here in Urfa another brother of mine was mechanical engineer, now in Istanbul, retired. (F, 77, Arab, Urfa [U6])

Stating that engagement in politics was limited in his father's time to some rare MPs, she agreed with her daughter<sup>155</sup> interfering "*saving your presence, now all who have the money can enter in [the parliament]*".<sup>156</sup> The change was also in terms of social stratification, whereby the older forms of hierarchical social relations were transformed through upwards mobility of the rural migrants in the city who were once the labourers for the named family in the village. Such change was expressed by the participant who stated: "*they have become provincial district governor; in the past our... Making our bread, and [looking after] our animals, now became the district governor, the municipal major, engineer, everything I mean, the people have changed*" (F, 77, Arab, Urfa [U6]). The named social change transformed the class positioning, whereby the leaders

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<sup>155</sup> F, early-50s, Arab, Urfa, accompanied the interview with the participant

<sup>156</sup> It's not me whose presence is saved in this case, but my key person who accompanied me during the interview. He was a leader of an NGO and sought to engage in national politics at the time of the interviewed, ran for MP candidacy for the ruling party afterwards he was not nominated by the party. What I sensed from the positioning during the interview was that he was coming from a relatively less powerful family in this case, although still powerful in comparison to many others.

of the *aşiret* had owned all the means of production, including the land and all sorts of vehicles -“*harvester*, “*lorry*”, and “*jeep*” were named in this case- and whereby the villagers had provided the labour power. Life in that case continued basically in the village, where the landowners had come to the city usually twice in a year, one in the autumn the other in the summer, to sell their crop amounting 5 to 6 lorries of wheat and the chaff and buy in exchange basically pieces of clothes to sew dress and some other vital needs. They used to bring also dairy products like “*yogurt, milk cream, or butter*” to their acquaintances in the city (F, 77, Arab, Urfa [U6]). Yet, upon the rural urban migration this scene was totally changed, the old villagers now becoming the inhabitants of the city and experiencing an upwards mobility through education and employment opportunities. The ironical expression, uttered laughingly by the daughter in law<sup>157</sup> of the participant, that “*they became more modern than us*” was an indication of how the mentioned change was perceived by the older power holders. At stake here was, seemingly, the symbolic power as well as the socio-economic one. The ‘modern’ indicating not only social positions but also manners and bodily practices was apparent in the participant expression that “*now there is no one left so, now they became modern, now they know dressing, eating and drinking*” (F, 77, Arab, Urfa [U6]). Establishing the relation of the change to migration she said “*now it is not like in the past my daughter, the women have changed, all have become ‘sosyete’ [high society], Kurds and Arabs too pass themselves off as ‘şehirli’*”. About Kurds and Arabs becoming like *şehirli* after they migrated to city, she continued as follows:

Yes, yes they became so, ah right they’ve become *sosyete* [high society]; all have become *alafranga* [of French/European style]. The little children now, having taken from the television, got used to all, all *sosyete*...The girls of our village now, the state came and took them to the dormitory, they all go to school; they’ve succeeded... (F, 77, Arab, Urfa [U6])

Together with migration, media and education are named as the force of change, which in general are perceived by the participant within a discourse of

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<sup>157</sup> F, 40s, Arab, Urfa, accompanied the interview with the participant

development and modernization. Comparing past and present, for instance, she uttered “*there were not this much modernities in Mardin before*”. The change is perceived to have taken place not only in the city, but also in the village as well:

They all follow fashion now, villages too are in fashion. In villages they live more comfortable than in Ankara, Istanbul now. They sleep till 10 a.m.; they live in apartments, [having] washing machine, dishwasher; hot bread is brought by vehicles; they do whatever they want; they sleep; their gold is up to here [shows a point on her forearm] they travel; they live in pleasure; now anyway the village is, the village is better than the city. (F, 77, Arab, Urfa [U6])

Hers is a village of *Akçakale*, an Arab dominated town of Urfa, but as she has strong ties with many other villages as an *aşiret* leader her observation is a more general one. Among those evidences of change in the villages that she understands within the framework of development and modernization the participant mentioned the relatively comfortable conditions of everyday domestic life especially for women; easy access to the basic needs of nutrition; opportunities for mobility and travel; and visible wealth or conspicuous consumption. The change having been framed rather more around the experience of women is an important one, one factor being undoubtedly that the narrators themselves -including the daughter, daughter-in-law, and the granddaughter of the participant- are women, so they recall and compare to their own experiences. Other examples about women’s daily life were uttered on the present time ease of making-up; to streak or colour one’s hair; going to the *coiffeur*’s; wearing wedding dresses and not the white version of the traditional Arab dressing of women; or being kissed publically by the groom in the forehead on the wedding day, all of which were once sources of shame and being ashamed by others pointing at you as ‘the daughter’ of this or that. The other factor for the emphasis on women experience is surely related to the issue of gender and social control, and how mechanisms of patriarchal control changed or took other forms through the experienced social transformation. Still, moreover, the labels as “*fashion*”, “*alafranga*”, and “*sosyete*” the participant used to define the transformation that

villagers have gone through are indicating some sort of ironical perception of the change of the social structure and class positions by the elites of the past.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter made it clear that the Arab participants of the research overall revealed a compliant and negotiating attitude in their relation to the state. Central factors defining be-long-ings for Arabs as a categorical group of people were non-exposure to violence in a direct, systematic, and long-term way; economic inclusion through alliance with central power or through public development projects like GAP in the rural; and non-interfered organization of everyday social life with existent forms of binding and bridging social capital. The role of the state in these factors was defined through what it does not -not exerting violence- as well as what it does -granting services and opportunities. Different ways of exertion by the state brought different ways of relating to it. The state infiltrating into our everyday lives was perceived to be positive by most Arabs, yet perceived to be negative by many Kurds.

Opportunities that Turkish citizenship grants were important for Arabs as a ground for alliance with the state. ‘Turkishness’ provided ‘modern’, ‘developed’, ‘urban’ forms of be-long-ings. Urban versus rural dynamics and migration appeared to be important processes defining individual and group positioning within those power relations. The historical context and socio-political relations that Arabs were integrated into central power relations through local power structure is firmly related to why Arabs, almost exclusively, define themselves as “Turks” and not prefer to emphasize difference. Status quo of current constellation of hegemonic relations was preferred over any potential change in those relations that would risk losing their position.

Importantly, daily life undertakings, habits, including language and belief system of Arabs in Turkey were not categorically, systematically, or fundamentally

interfered by the central power. Existence of Arab states, dominance of Muslim identity in both local and central power structure, dignity of Arabic language, and the ease in learning the language in Quran courses were further facilitating factors for the mostly accommodative alliance of Arabs with Turkishness and the state. Also local formations of social capital established through “*aile*” [family] organization, *aşiret* structure, and religious orders played important role in formation of be-long-ings for Arabs. All these social ties including *aşiret* organization could well become the base for economic inclusion in the local and the central economic system.

Yet personal experience could matter in forming divergent cases, as individuals face unequal, discriminative treatment or policies challenging their personal economic interests they may well openly express distrust towards or criticism of the state policies. Moreover, Kurdish political discourse have been a model especially among the younger generation, and many asserts demand establishing a relational and comparative language such as “like Kurds”, “unlike Kurds”, “if Kurds have”, “if Kurds claim”, “so we do”. Such model taking was conceptualized as *comparative claim making* in this work. Still, an overall more hesitant attitude was clear even in such claim making. Competition with Kurds over territorial hegemony was visibly evident, however, and criticism of Kurdish political movement and discourse was overwhelming among Arabs. Political, discursive, territorial competition and the comparative claim making, on the other hand, brought along reflectivity on Arab identity. Arabness turned from an organic, unreflective identity that was mostly perceived to be a form of traditional, cultural, everyday form of belonging have started to be formed reactively in relation to Kurdishness.

The overall argument in this chapter was that the Arab participants of the study have a consenting manner, take advantage of status quo and hegemonic relations in their experience of Turkish citizenship, and have mostly a present time focused attitude in their relation to the state, which is much shaped around

accommodative or selective alliance, and negotiating relations. Many of them perceive the state as the power that backs us, a form of patriarch, usually with an inclination to accept whatever its decision is. This is the most visible and recurrent pattern among the Arab participants of the research, which is called here as *Conforming Type of Belonging*.

## CHAPTER 4

### VIOLENCE VIOLATED BELONGINGS AS THE SPACE AND MEMORY AS THE TIME OF RECONSTRUCTED 'KURDISHNESS' AS A REACTIVE FORM OF BELONGING

I was walking on the pavement along the bazaar that was set up in the street. Three young women at about their 16-17 were coming down the pavement towards me. The moment I unintentionally stepped on something, which only then I saw was possibly a piece of broken glass bottle; we heard a loud sudden noise. This apparently made the young women frightened; the one panicking the most started running away shouting and screaming with her hands around her head. I guess she mistook it as an attack, a bomb exploding, gunfire or something. I felt terrible. Asking her if she was all right, I explained that it was just me and apologised. I was afraid as well, but my fear faded away in the face of the woman's reaction. Such a city Diyarbakır is seemingly, anything may outburst any time...<sup>158</sup>

Up to this point revealed was one side of the story, though it was not from a single perspective. To be able to understand the diversity of experiences with the state, with the larger society, with the social structure and with Turkishness one needs to complicate the story further. In this chapter, I argue that violation of bodies, memories, properties, places, symbols, relations, or aspirations appears to be a pivotal mechanism of making and unmaking of be-long-ings. It is grounded in one of the basic arguments of the dissertation that violation, in its multiple forms, has a constitutive role in making and unmaking national belongings for the Arab, Syriac, and Kurdish communities of southeast Turkey. Grounding the

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<sup>158</sup> Notes from Field Diary, Diyarbakır, 10.02.2011

argument in the research findings, I propose a concept, *Violated Be-long-ings*, to denote a triple process of violation: of social positions, ties, and achievements; of projections, desires, and aspirations; and of the physical and socio-economical well-being of individuals and groups.

In this chapter, I mostly cover the experiences and reflections of the Kurdish participants of the research concerning various dimensions of their be-long-ings, the latter understood in terms of positions, yearnings, and possessions. This chapter argues that one crucial process that ‘nation’ forms through is violation, which itself emerged as a multidimensional, longitudinal, and multilevel phenomenon in the life experiences of the participants. In other words, it is through the violation of the positions, meanings, and possessions of people that be-long-ings at national context are made or unmade. Within this frame, I refer to the construction of *nation through violation*, which here is conceptualized, following a simple word twist, as Vio(n)ation. The neologism *Vionation* stands for the notion of the *Nation* being constituted through multiple processes of *Violation* in the everyday experiences of citizens.

Covered themes in this chapter are basically the encounters with Turkish state institutions, its various policies, deeds, and agencies; experiences of Turkish citizenship in terms of civil, political and social rights; Kurdish political mobilization, and through it the restructuring of civil society, everyday life, and symbolism; the armed conflict with its various consequences; local power dynamics and the changing city structures in demographic, social and economic terms; international conditions, and interstate relations with neighbouring countries, and to a degree transnational relations. Experiences at all levels of the political/structural, symbolic/discursive, or spatial/territorial contexts of belongings were covered as they emerged during the interviews.

Arguments and concepts proposed in this chapter could briefly be mentioned as following. Various forms of violation mediate for *Confrontational*



*Belongings* pertaining to nation. In other words, violation in its multiplicity plays a formative role in constructing ethnicized, oppositional, and reactive belongings for a great amount of Kurdish participants. Violations that participants have gone through were widely manifold and in various forms - political, collective, symbolic, structural, or gendered. Even when we analytically framed various forms separately often any individual experienced many of them and even many at once as being entangled in one another only to deepen the overall influence. So in a way they were nested together in individual lives. The phenomenon I conceptualized here as *Nested Violations*. It is important to note that violations are not only at present and actual but also in the past and in memory. Indeed, past and present nested violations shape individual memories and lead to formation of a collective memory, which I call here as *Helical Memory of Violations*. The concept refers to the helix-like movement of a memory collectively shaped and shared, through accumulation and linking of each and every violent experience lived around, heard about, or being exposed in one's own life. It becomes a thing in itself, a reservoir, 'The Memory' of violations experienced not only in the past but also at present, not only by oneself but also by the close or the distant people who now all become 'The Members of The Community' today and ever, here and all over.

As bodies, memories, psyches, relations, discourses and space were reordered through violation a *Violent Order of Things* has become the standard of everyday life for many. Order here refers to its various meanings as to command, and control, as well as harmony, legislation, rank, and arrangement. It also implies a derivative word, the 'ordinary', with its meanings of normal, expected, quotidian, and mainstream.<sup>159</sup> I further conceptualized the Kurdish political movement emerging as an actor of reordering things. An *Alternative Social Capital of Kurdishness* was constructed in everyday lives of individuals through the reorganization of a web of social relations, places, and discourses providing new opportunity structures for them. Such formation has led in some cases to

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<sup>159</sup> For the meanings of 'order' and 'ordinary' see <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>

emerging of a new form of subjecthood through the collectivity being embodied by the individual or the individual acting in the name of the collectivity, which I call the *Collecdividual*. Still, in other cases the exclusiveness of those relations was so defining for participants' life chances -especially in economic terms- that individuals were left in the limbo as they could or did not take side. In many of those cases the inner fissures of that very collectivity became visible. The most visible pattern in terms of the participants' relations with the state was conceptualized as *Reactive Identity* with a form of be-long-ings as *Marked* and *Alienated Citizens*.

Yet these were not the exhausting patterns for all the Kurdish participants, as the processes of violation, social capital, and economic exclusion/inclusion played differently in different cases. Those variations will also be analysed throughout this chapter. In the following, a detailed analysis of research findings will be provided to be able to elaborate on the above arguments and concepts.

#### **4.1. Violent Mediations for *Confronting Belongings* and Construction of *Alternative Social Capital of Kurdishness***

One obvious finding of the research to be presented in this chapter is the role of political violence in the formation/deformation of belongings basically pertaining to the legal, political, and structural context of 'the national'. State was a significant agent of such process, although not the exclusive one as will be revealed throughout this chapter. Exposure or non-exposure to political violence; whether it is past or current; individual or collective; systematic or ad-hoc; continuous or occasional; whether victimization is direct or indirect; and who is the perpetrator all count in this role.

Clearly, the role of state was intensely visible for many Kurdish participants of the study; various systematic acts and deeds of violations coming from the state apparatus, and the experience of the armed conflict causing tens of thousands of

deaths, with even more wounded and maimed being the principal cause for that. In the narratives of many participants, the state was visibly embodied in the form of soldier or other coercive apparatuses and was equated with force, fear, and feeling of insecurity by those who have lived through such experiences. Some of those expressions reflecting such experience straightforwardly were as following: “*We’ve got to know the state with its iron fist*” (M, early 40s, Kurd, Urfa)<sup>160</sup>; “*What we know as the state factually is something like electric current. It does nothing but shocks. It does indeed!*” (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]); “*We were grown up by fear [of the state], [in my childhood] I do not sleep, my mother says ‘go to bed [otherwise] the soldier will come’*” (M, Mardin, Kurd, late 30s)<sup>161</sup>. The soldier being the personification of the state became, in these cases, a scary figure ‘interfering’ even in the sleep of a child, thus possibly being interwoven into the deepest fears of a person. In such experiences, thus, state was mostly an agent of violent encounters. Indeed, many narratives in this part are in line with the argument that security forces may be seen as absent or even threatening, let alone protecting the populace, as was the case with the authoritarian Latin American political regimes of the 1970s and 1980s (Balan, 2002). Below, I will be pointing at such experiences as they came up throughout the research.

It was revealed in various cases that state made itself a visible actor in people’s everyday life almost only through violence. A period which was recollected by many to be experienced in its most brutality both in urban and rural areas was 1990s. It was as a period of ruthless violations with the escalating intensity of the armed conflict and the ‘counter-insurgency measures’; activities of various armed groups; tremendous numbers of unknown-assailant murders and disappeared people; gendarme searches and arrestment; constant police checks,

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<sup>160</sup> Field note taken , 14.10.2011, Urfa

<sup>161</sup> A participant in the informal group interview in an institution, Mardin, 4.7.2011

wiretapping, or various other forms of surveillance; and the State of EmergencyRule<sup>162</sup> as a lasting order of things. Violence became almost an everyday phenomenon. Raids on the ‘suspected’ households, for instance, were a constant of the era, about which many participants, young or old, then in the city or the village recollected similar experiences. Below is quoted a typical narrative:

Ouch! Ouch...That was very bad, the 90s, god forbid anyone from those days. Constant fear, unrest, suppression. We could not listen to anything Kurdish [music]. We were hiding the cassettes. We could not read books, hiding them. They were harassing our houses, arresting, without a reason. They were intruding, 200 men! Carrying kalash [Kalashnikov], were intruding the house. In their muddy boots, in the middle of the winter, upon carpets all over. Pulling the mattresses down to the ground to check inside. Nothing was there. Our children were young. Not because we were engaging in something, just an arbitrary treatment. They were breaking into and then leaving as they could find nothing, there was nothing! They were leaving, and a few days later you saw them coming again, why, someone peached on you, they said you dug [to hide something] in here, or someone [suspected] had come to your house, or something [suspicious] had happened, I mean constant harassment! They seized our children, arrested, they were 15-16, going to high school; they seized my nephews, my uncle in law, children of my uncle, my brother, son of my brother, three days in custody. (F, late 40s Kurd, Mardin [M9])

As the above quote reveals, the direct and physical violence it exposes being apparent, the house search is a gross violation of rights. I suppose, moreover, it is also symbolic violation bearing multiple meanings with regard to be-long-ings. It is a claim of control over what belongs to you, where you belong to, and indeed what you are. It is a claim of control over your home, body, and mind, with an undelivered ‘right’ being exercised to define for you what is possible and what is not, what you can read and listen, what you can expose and what not even in the privacy of your home. House search, uncalled, traverses the boundaries of your life, defining inside and outside, private and public, you and not you, however imaginary they may be. It constructs new boundaries beyond which you are ‘ordered’ not to step out. It is an act of violation of all that may be attributed to home, such as ‘safety’, ‘privacy’, ‘warmth’, ‘cleanliness’, and ‘tidiness’. A

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<sup>162</sup> The state of emergency rule [Olaganustu Hal] was declared in 1987 and was lifted in 2002.

crowd of men, armed, and “in their muddy boots” intruding your home is an attempt of putting another ‘orderliness’ over yours, which is evidently a ‘manly’ one, and coming from the state, that being embodied by the military, carries a ‘higher order’. Imposing its gendered social order the house search, in all its material and immaterial means, appears to aim at subduing the individual and by extension the community to which she belonged.

Economic dimension of the raids in terms of economic damage and deprivation that ensued is another issue to consider. A similar case this time taking place in the rural was recollected by a participant, whose family had to leave their village<sup>163</sup> in 1993 when he was only 5 years old. Emphasis on the perceived economic connotations of the event is clear below:

[E]ach and every day without exception I faced the soldiers before me when I woke up. Would you ask for those family members having nerve attack... no single appliance was left solid [...] You wake up with a gun barrel, each morning your home is being messed up; our lentil, sugar and oil were spilled into our garden and being torched with petrol poured on it. [...] Not because they would find something [weapon] in them [...] I guess the only idea of them was ‘let these people die here from starvation’, now the only thing I can think of is that. (M, 23, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [6])

Raids on villages, the villagers being alleged of “helping and harbouring the terrorists”, or called to join to village guards<sup>164</sup> otherwise leave their villages

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<sup>163</sup>A village of Lice, a town of Diyarbakır.

<sup>164</sup> Village Guard System was introduced in March 1985 with an amendment in Village Law No. 422, being initially implemented in 22 eastern and south-eastern cities and another 13 were added in 1993. Many were employed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs as Temporary Village Guards [*Geçici Köy Korucusu*]. Yet many others became Voluntary Village Guards [*Gönüllü Köy Korucusu*]. According to the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs provided in 2009, 123.476 people served as village guards since 1985; and 2009 numbers were 47.819 temporary and 24.088 voluntary village guards, in a total of 71.907. For the details and an analysis of the village guard system see İkinci, Nihat, *Pimi çekilmiş Bomba Köy Koruculuğu Sistemi*, İstanbul: Do Yayınları, 2011 Temporary Village Guards are civilians recruited from among the village population to -guard their villages against the PKK; in exchange for their services, they receive arms and a salary from the government and take part in military operations together with the security personnel. They are hired pursuant to the decision of the cabinet of ministers, upon the request of the Minister of Interior Affairs. While, Voluntary Village Guards are civilians who

were followed by massive village evacuations and burnings. Internal displacement of masses became an extensive phenomenon of the period. Below is a recollection<sup>165</sup>, which reveals an incident of village evacuation taking place in 1993. It is quoted at length to provide a detailed account of how village evacuation was experienced by the people themselves. It appears to have ruptured the routine of everyday life to cause an unplanned and irreversible alteration of it with ensuing loss of belongings and deprivation of living conditions. Economic loss is overtly depicted below.

It was eventide and there was a wedding feast in our village<sup>166</sup>. People had come from Diyarbakır, Muş, and the villages around. They are cooking. Cauldrons are over the fire. One of a sudden there were screams out in the village. We wondered what happened. The state has sent his word “they shall evacuate [the village] now, or I will burn all the women and the children in the morning”. It is evening and there is a wedding in the village. Two of my children had been registered at school. These<sup>167</sup> are yet little and I am in the bed<sup>168</sup>. It is around 8 in the evening. Screams were all around the village. No car, not even a donkey so that we shall ride on and ran away. My father in law told me “let’s take some

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volunteer to become village guards with the stated purpose to protect themselves and their families against the PKK. While they are provided arms by the government, they do not receive a salary and are not authorized to take part in military operations and hired by sub-provincial governors. For the details see Kurban, D., Yükeker, D., Çelik, A. B., İnalın, T., Aker, A. T. & Akalın, N. (2005). The Problem of Internal Displacement in Turkey: Assessment and Policy Proposals. TESEV Report Retrieved from <http://www.tesev.org.tr/the-problem-of-internal-displacement-in-turkey--assessment-and-policy-proposals/Content/221.html>, accessed on 24.7.2015. The temporary village guards report to the village headperson in administrative matters and professionally to the gendarmerie commander whose jurisdiction contain the village they are located in.

<sup>165</sup> The interview was conducted in Kurdish Kurmanji with the help of the son of the interviewee, who was in his early 20s and a university student at a prestigious university in a western city then. He translated my questions during the interview and provided me with the Turkish transcription of the interview afterwards. The quotations in English here are translated by me from the Turkish copy, thus should be understood as translation of translation.

<sup>166</sup> A village of Muş, a city in Eastern Anatolia Region.

<sup>167</sup> She pointed at her son who was in the room with us and meant a daughter of similar age, early 20s.

<sup>168</sup> She was in post-natal period and nursing.

stuff and burry by the river side. I just had given birth and I can't even lift ten kilos. I cried, "God damn them, where shall we go". I sat and cried saying "if they will burn us out, let them do". So much stuff was burnt out. We took some butternut, pots or so and brought them by the river side. A few trays and a few dishes. By the river side, stars on the sky. The middle of the night. [...] Will there be someday in the world that we shall forget about these we were thinking. I came back. These children of mine were small and in the bed. We had our house full. We had everything, our bedstead, our television, our house, our furniture... My brother in law went to the village across; he went on foot. He asked from the villagers there 'I beg you, come and save our children and wives, they shall not burn them; we don't want anything else'. The man replied 'I don't have gasoline, I cannot come'. My brother in law said 'I have gasoline at home; you just come and rescue my children'. He then brought the man along. Ever in fear! There was a bloodcurdling scream in the village. Everybody was crying for herself. They brought a pickup truck. Me, my four sisters-in-law... I cried. I got out barefoot. I clasped the newborn in my arms. These two were sleeping; we put them on the truck. I held the newborn in my arms and started to cry. 'May God not forgive them [*Allah hakkımız onlarabırakmasın*]', where shall we go, who will look after us'. At night, we arrived at a village. Me, and my sisters-in-law; my sisters-in law had also babies. That night we stayed in that village. The house owners were so nice. The woman cried too. We cried together with the woman till morning asking 'what will happen, who will feed us, where shall we go; we don't have work in the city, what will happen'. In the morning the state raided on the village, they splashed a material on the houses and torched them. [...] My mother and father-in-law had stayed in the village, we ran away barefoot. My brother-in-law left us in the other village and returned back to [our] village for his mother and father, for them not to be burnt inside. We had almost 10 lorry of wood in front of our house. We had 10 tons of tobacco in 5 to 6 rooms. All furniture was inside too. My mother-in-law says that as soon as they fired it, the flames were meters high. My brother-in-law had just finished constructing a new house for himself. He hanged Quran in front of the house, hoping that if they see the Quran they will not torch the house. He said, they did not even see the Quran, just fired it all. The other brother-in-law of mine tried to reach for the Quran; his arms were burnt up to here [pointing her elbow]. The women in the village shouted and cried and fainted. The fire caught the tobaccos, woods, goods and houses. Because of the fire in the village nobody has... My elder brother-in-law has got his mother and father out, for them not to be burnt. They burnt the whole village in an hour. They left nothing; burnt them all. We were crying in the other village. We were in a miserable state. (F, 45, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D6])

The personal witness above discloses minute details of the process of being uprooted from one's place of inhabiting; of the efforts to save a life out of destruction; of mobilizing networks and patterns of solidarity; of fear, helplessness and insecurity; of uncertainty of future in the face of dispossession; of rage and agency; of resorting to the symbolic power of the Holy whose 'authority' is perceived to be commonly shared in the Muslimhood of the subject

positions of the ‘villager’ and the ‘soldier’, the ‘victim’ and the ‘perpetrator’, the ‘Kurdish’ and the ‘Turkish’ –the latter at least virtually as the representative of the state. The narrator’s resentful rage expressed in the words “*should they’ve been Muslims, they wouldn’t have done this!*” (F, 45, Kurd, Diyarbakır) gains deeper meaning within this symbolic context. The narrator having given birth recently and having little children to take care of amid the catastrophe also sheds light on the gendered contexts of the violent experiences, the primary target of which, in this specific case, is articulated to be “the women and the children” to be destroyed by ‘the men’, the soldier, if the village was not evacuated; and to be rescued, from being burnt out, by the ‘men’, the members of the family and the neighbouring villagers. At the time of the event, participant’s spouse was away to find a house to move to Diyarbakır city centre as he was in fear of his and his family’s life because of the many previous fearful raids on the village and cruel intrusions of their house by the military forces. But the move came forcibly upon the evacuation and burning of the village. Abruptness of the event is clear in the narrative which points to the absence of necessary preparation (material, mental and psychological) for moving out, unexpected sudden loss of existing sources of income (tobacco, wood) and of savings (all the goods, furniture, some newly constructed houses). The participant’s thorough question asking “*After we have seen this much difficulty, torture, and death, how shall we love the state? We have seen whatever you would think of*” (F, 45, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D6]), openly points to the relation between direct personal experience of political violence and the unmaking of the allegiance to the state as well as of existing be-long-ings in many aspects. An important detail to note here is that sometime before the evacuation the participant persuaded her husband, who had difficulty of finding work, to pay his compulsory military service with the hope that it would bring some stability to life removing a barrier to work so that he could look after the family properly. It was a practical necessity in their conditions for being economically included and to ‘normalize’ life. Violence interfering, however, changed the context of be-long-ings and led to precarious conditions of life at arriving in the city whereby unfamiliarity of everything got even worse with the



economic loss. Revealing details in this context, in the following the participant recollected early days in the city [Diyarbakır]:

Our children were crying and asking for bread. There was no bread so that we could give them. My husband was not here and we did not know where to go and what to do. We haven't seen the city, haven't ever seen the bakers', and we were crying to each other. They [the children] were saying 'bread' and we were crying, were saying 'water' and we were crying. The downstairs neighbour was coming to argue with us, stating 'you are so crowded; you will tear down the house upon us'. We were crying again. When we first came, they were laughing at us as they watched us in their windows. There was not a proper rug that we could spread on the ground. There was no curtain in the window. We lived in that state for some days. Then my husband went and bought some fabric. We sewed it and hanged it in the window. During a whole year we cried to each other. (F, 45, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D6])

In this case, their being able to save their cattle and sheep, and sell them even if underpriced provided them with the earlier rent price. Her husband knew about electricity installation and worked as an electrician renting a little place. After four families living together for about five to six months in a single room, her family finally moved out to another flat; the husband closed the electricity store and opened a small market. Life eventually turned to 'normal': "*Thank God it was an average market; we, four or five families, could live on that. We were able to pay our rent and afford our food. God blessed us and we could go to the weddings as well as to the mourning [funerals]*" (F, 45, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D6]). Having attained the material conditions to be able to attend to weddings and funerals is mentioned by the participant as a 'blessings of God' revealing its perceived place in her life. Sociologically, these occasions are important construction sites of the community, identity, and belonging in many societies. Moreover, participation in weddings and funerals, coming in the narrative after the basic needs of paying rent and affording food, reveal I believe their significance not only for "the symbolic construction of community" in Cohen's (2000) words, but also for its social construction. The opportunity they provide for socialization, exchange, solidarity, and sharing with people alike (relatives, neighbours, people of the same place of origin, people of the same and/or an allied *aşiret*, etc.) was critically important in conditions of resettlement in a brand

new locale after migration, where the newcomers were not much familiar with the resources, institutions, routines, and norms of everyday life. When we think that people, upon their forced migration to the city, have left some of their already established social networks behind or lost the conditions to mobilize them when in need of, any occasion to engage in novel social ties, or strengthen existing ones becomes especially important. Weddings and funerals turn out to be such occasions for the participants of this study. They supply for the opportunities to make up, affirm and reproduce stocks of social capital such as values, norms, networks, information, trust, and reciprocity that permit cooperation, meeting of mutual obligations and solidarity that are essential for a group of people who found themselves in unfamiliar and often disadvantaged conditions. It is obvious that social capital becomes more and more important to access to resources in the severe conditions of life, such as conflict, displacement and poverty. We may assume that in the absence of effective linking social capital -linking individuals to the authorities of power- bonding and bridging social capital, as would be produced through occasions like weddings and funerals, act a compensating role for people to handle the problems they encounter in their daily lives. Thus, for many who were “denied the means to adapt to the changing conditions of their lives and to find a socially dignified existence” (Cheong et al, 2007), material and symbolic exchanges through weddings and funerals provided access to resources through ethnic communitarian ties, in the conditions of their new places of ‘forced’ inhabitancy. This is significant in terms of reconstructing belongings in all social, material, and symbolic terms in the new city space and through newly accessed ethnic communitarian ties. Still, one more point to be made in this context is about the inner fissures of the ‘community’ the narrative reveals, however it may be contradictory with the above argument. The participant reveals a tension as she mentions the reactions of the neighbours in their new habitat in the city. Mention of neighbours, Kurds at Diyarbakır context, who laughed at them as they watched through their windows or complained about their being so crowded, imply that the newcomers are not embraced at once as a communitarian

perspective would romanticize. It blurs any latent homogenizing and naturalizing discourse and points at diverse and often competing formations of belongings. Similarly, in many cases tensions could come to fore with reference to the dynamics of locals versus newcomers or the urban versus rural and it is related to the transformation of spatial as well as social formations. 'Forced migration', in many cases turned to sign a classed be-long-ing, a lower socio-economic status struggling to make a life in the city; as it became, somehow surprisingly, a marker of ethnicity, Kurdness, for the local *Diyarbakırlı* people, even when they were themselves Kurds. These cases are important in terms of indicating that social capital is not pre-given or granted on ethnic grounds, yet is built in time and through relations. The community, or Kurdish nation, would be woven around those inner fissures as I will elaborate more as I continue below.

A source of social capital is argued to "derive from strong identification with a particular group, sect or community which gives rise to solidarity within a clearly defined 'bounded' group" (Gordon and Percy-Smith, 2003: 326). Funerals were especially important in this context. The immense loss of life, in the Kurdish case, in a 'battle' fought for 'the cause of identity', made funerals often turn to politicized gatherings endowed with symbolic meanings of the politics of identity and the discourse of Kurdish political movement. Funerals in such conditions have played a role of boundary making, not only of social but also of political community, here of 'Kurdish nation'. One point to be made briefly is that funeral houses [*cenaze evi*], which are so widespread in the city space of Diyarbakır seem to catalyse any such production and reframing of social capital and political community. Thus, they may also be seen as spaces for reconstructing be-long-ings.

Social gatherings like weddings and funerals may even be thought as means of forming linking social capital, linking individuals to 'authorities' of power established in the name of the Kurdish political community. Isolation of individuals or families from such occasions then would not only mean being

deprived of social relations and the gains thereof, but of political connections, which have always been highly important in Turkey, and now specifically reframed and consolidated in the Kurdish context both in material and symbolic terms. In this context, I argue that the reframed and consolidated social and political relations create an *alternative social capital* for many individuals who are pulled in as their various needs are fulfilled materially and/or symbolically. ‘Alternative’ here stands for the contingently politicized and ethnicized formations of social networks as opposed to tacit everyday formations of social relations. In this line, I argue that the experience of violation that comes from the state apparatuses help underline the boundaries of the collective identity and belonging, here of Kurdishness, through generating ‘suffering citizens’ as well as ‘resisting subjects’ as was conceptualized by Kavita Daiya (2008), thus glossing over the inner fissures (Anthias, 2005) otherwise apparent in the collectivity. The perceived collective agency, which is defined through struggle and resistance against multiple forms of violence comes to fore in making and framing belongings for many Kurds as the following words of the participant make it clear:

Turkish state has tormented us this much; neither had we given up our struggle nor our cause. And we will follow our cause till death. We are abstaining from nothing, neither the meetings, nor the newroz. We are still in our own idea. We are Kurds and we want our language. It had tormented and insulted us this much, may God not forgive it. (F, 45, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D6])

The narrative can be taken as one whereby is depicted a struggling, oppositional, and confronting type of subjectivity, which has been formed in the face of the experienced state violence. A bolder revelation of such subjectivity was articulated by another participant referring to her sister-in-law’s changing allegiance to the state after facing its violence. She, who originally “*is from Erzurum, thus has not ever had such experience*” of violence in her life, stated “*I will die but not let my son do his military service*” after being forced from village in Muş, their house was burnt, and having had to resettle in the Urfa city (F, 36, Kurd, Urfa, Focus Group III [K1]). Her overt decision to prevent her son from

carrying out what the state ordered the [male] citizens to do could be interpreted, on the one hand, as a case exemplifying the relation between violation coming from state apparatuses and deformation of existing be-long-ings, while, on the other, revealing the formation of reactive subjectivities.

Another point that repeatedly came up in the interviews was that symbols act their decisive role in formation of belongings. The above narrative reveals an example. The participant [D6] seems to put an opposition and perceives a duality between the authority of God and the authority of the state. She refers to God's law and justice in the absence of the state's, whereby the former is begged "*not [to] forgive*" the latter, which had "*tormented and insulted us*", the members of the community, whereby emerges its very symbolic construction in Cohenian sense. Opposition and duality between the two forms of authority was also implied in the previous narrative above, that of between the state removing the established social ties through forced displacement, and the God blessing the displaced with the opportunity to re-establish those in a new context.

Not in all cases the formation of subject positions was that straightforward though. Who is the actor of violence that one faces and if one is included or excluded in economic and social circles are all decisive in the complexity of those formations. In one case, I visited a participant's home for the interview, where the family lived in conditions of extreme poverty and post-displacement destitution was so visible. They were renting a 'flat' in a deprived neighbourhood for 70 Turkish Liras<sup>169</sup>, which was basically a small room that opened directly to the courtyard, with an adjacent jerry-built kitchen that was not much suitable for cooking, so the participant cooked in the courtyard. Apparently all the nine members of the family slept in these two bare rooms at night. The toilet was outside in the courtyard, and there was not a bathroom. Their house owner, who is the aunt-in-law of the participant, constantly complained about the acts and the noise of the seven children and wanted to increase the rent to 150

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<sup>169</sup> 70 equated to \$43, 64 by the date of the interview 24.2.2011.

liras. In explaining how they ended up here, the participant referred to the “government attack” on the village they once lived, whereby “the government and the people [“halk”] burnt all houses, and did not let [them stay] in their own houses”. This was an “unforeseen”, “unexpected” and “much frightened” event, as a result of which they “ran away” and “came to the city” (F, 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D4]). My intermittent questions about the state, citizenship, demands and rights produced the answers below; making clear that belonging is very much about effective inclusion, both economically and socially:

I haven't seen any good from the state. My son had a salary [school payment]<sup>170</sup>; they even cancelled it out [as the family gained right to social security]. What has the state done for us? Nothing the state has done for us. [...] What shall I still expect from the state? It was only my house, [but] they did burn it. I am in the house of someone else for 13 years. My spouse is ill. One of my lungs is sick too [have a pulmonary disease], but I have to bake tandoor bread. What shall we do? I cannot demand anything from anyone anymore. It is the state that has done this to us. Neither Kurds have looked after us nor has the state. None has looked after us. Both have done this to us. [Are you content with the state?] In truth, all are same to me; they are all same to us. If only we had a house to nestle in, nothing else I needed. [Would you like the state to confer your rights?] I would like them to confer my rights, but who would give me my rights? (F, 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D4]).

The narrative reveals that not only the evacuation, loss of property, the forced migration, and the consequent economic exclusion, but also lack of effective social relations to mobilize for one's own good lead to the conditions of destitution. The role of structural violence with deficient infrastructure, health and education services only adds to such conditions. Apparently, the sense of distrust, insecurity, and isolation inferred in the above narrative is closely related to such conditions. The role of the state being evident, a critical point that the narrative discloses is a tension with reference to ‘Kurds’. Tension is twofold. There is on the one hand, the Kurds, the “people”, who are assumedly the village

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<sup>170</sup> Her son had a payment for schooling, which was supplied by governmental institutions. Now it is cancelled, because he has the health insurance.

guards<sup>171</sup> that collaborated in the burning of their village and did not let them take refuge in their houses. This is the source of evil. Yet, on the other hand, there are other ‘Kurds’ who haven’t looked after them in their deprived and needy circumstances. She mentions the municipality granting food help for once and a charity organization donating clothes for the children again for once. In anger, she states “*even if there were facilities, they would not grant them to us*”. Her outburst is revealing when it is thought that she baked her tandoor breads in the Hasırlı Laundry and Tandoor House<sup>172</sup> established by Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, which is governed by the Kurdish party -then DEHAP, yet at the time of interview BDP. The House provides facilities, among others, for women to bake for their bread, and the participant was one of the two women for whom the municipality, upon a contract, bought the bread daily and distributed to shops for the women. She has her children go to school on money she makes there. Within this context, her disappointment about the absence of an helping hand could be seen as an outcome of inadequate social capital she has access to and can mobilize for the interests of the family; but also the perceived unequal distribution of resources through the municipality, and the ongoing experience of poverty, deprivation, and exclusion despite her self hard-work in the provided conditions. Important to note here is that the tension reveals something about the transformation of social capital. Multiform violations like being uprooted from the place of birth and residence, where all social relations

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<sup>171</sup> During the interview I asked questions in Turkish, with little Kurmanji Kurdish that I mostly used for probing, and the participant replied in Kurmanji. She understood Turkish; it even turned out during the interview that she could also speak some Turkish but spoke only barely to make sure I understood. Since I did not have a professional translator with me, her daughter translated, but that being not enough was a source of regret both for me and the participant. Professional transliteration came after the interview, and I infer from the context that her reference to the “people” [*halk*] allying to burn their village could be village guards, who were also Kurdish villagers.

<sup>172</sup> It is a public laundry house, established in 2002 -and the Tandoor House in 2003- by Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, which is governed by the pro-Kurdish party, and is operated by the Municipality Centre for Research and Application on Women’s Issues (DIKASUM) like the other similar houses in the city. The house supplies for opportunities for women for washing clothes, ironing, baking bread in the tandoor house, and day care for their pre-school children. Interview in Hasırlı Laundry House, Diyarbakır, 24.2. 2011.

were constituted; resettling in yet another context with new constellations of power and relations all define the deconstruction of social capital ensuing thereof. Trust is lost not only against the state who is perceived to be the main actor of the experienced violations, but also against ‘the people’, referring to Kurds here, who played their role in various acts like ‘collaborating with the state’, ‘not giving a hand’, or ‘spying’ as was also mentioned in some other cases. Moreover, within the urban context municipal institutions, charity or other civil society organizations take over with a potential to provide linking social capital for individuals. In the specific context of Diyarbakır, many of these are in line with the discourse of Kurdish politics, thus social capital they generate is imbued with a call to the ‘shared’ identity that is Kurdishness. Insufficient support on an equal base, thus a fail in generating linking social capital, brings further exclusion and isolation for some individuals, and could be perceived as an unfair play of power used in the name of identity, which makes the above participant’s anger towards “*Kurds*” more comprehensible. For the participant, basic needs like “*a house to nestle in*” is more pressing, and satisfaction of those needs neither by Turkish state nor the Kurdish politics and organizations makes these actors, although ‘opposing’ poles for many, “*all the same*” to her. In a socio-political atmosphere, where “being pro-state or anti-state (or being viewed as such by others) had and has real costs and rewards” as in “the Southeast and among (self- or externally-identified) Kurds in general” (Geerse, 2010: 32), such statement of the participant could be seen as a daring one. Yet from the perspective of the individual, amid the violent conditions, economic exclusion, and limited access to webs of relations to mobilize social capital, it is only a part of the daily struggle of survival.

One more point to be made within the context above about pro- or anti-positioning is aspiration of the participant’s daughter for being a police officer, as she expressed it while taking me to their home for the interview. The 14-year-old, who was visibly inspired by a police television series popular in those days, stated the following: “*I pray for the police officers in the protests [“gösteriler”]*”:



*'God, please keep them from being harmed'*" (F, 14, Kurd, Diyarbakır)<sup>173</sup>. She disliked the "*chaos*" that was caused by the very frequent and mostly very destructive conflicts taking place around their neighbourhood. Not only political and structural violence, but also economic exclusion and lack of social capital defining their life, the 14-year-old's wish to become a police officer, might be read as longing for power and agency, as well as an 'orderly' and a 'secure' living space and conditions. I will give further examples of the similar 'aspiration' as I proceed in the next part. These positions, indeed, have deconstructive potential against the dichotomous, boundary building, discourses of identity politics, and are important in pointing at different ways how individuals, caught in the crossfire of fighting powers, 'cope with' their individual conditions.

Despair and destitution being one visible consequence of the experienced forced migration process, the other, less articulated one, is indeed the social change coming thereafter. A participant, who himself experienced the process as a little child, put it in a nutshell arguing that there were two consequences of the forced migration of mid-1990s: "*the bad one*" was that "*in ruins had been lived; a curtain was hung within the stable, on one side the asses, on the other side them*"; "*the good one*" was that "*while the rate of literacy was 0% in the village, it increased by 100%, because you know nothing except farming and husbandry, you are bound to have your children schooled*" (M, 20s, Kurd, Mardin [M4]). A similar account was uttered in an expert interview, whereby the participant stated that upon evacuation of villages people came to the cities and although "*beforehand they took the Kurd to be a porter*", "*today they see he became a shopkeeper, became a trader, or a state officer*". The experienced was social and economic mobility transformed in the urban context. The participant asserted "*well, [even] if the state had that project, it backfired in a way; it turned to the*

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<sup>173</sup> She is not counted as a participant in the research sample.

*advantage of Kurds*” believing that now “*there is a big discomfort about it*”.<sup>174</sup> Thus, it could be argued that just as an alternative social capital formation process was experienced among the forcibly migrated Kurds in their new destinations, similarly a process of social change also came to fore through urbanization, upward mobility, access to cultural capital, and transforming of labour force. Here, apparently age was a significant factor, since those who directly benefited such process were mostly the young people. Still, not all individuals could be argued to live such change of social structure in similar or beneficial ways as revealed in many cases in this chapter.

Another perception of ‘unintended consequence’ of the state’s acts and policies was expressed by a participant to be consolidation of “*friendship*”, which is deemed to be “*very important in Kurdish society*” as “*you would do anything for your friend*” (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]). The participant defining a friend to be “*your chosen sibling*”, “*few but so precious*”, and “*the influence shaping your life*” claimed that he would sacrifice his life for his friend if he needs to but absolutely not for his ideas, as “*ideas could change*” but his friend “*is indeed the love itself*” (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]). His reflection that it was a way of social organization compensating for the lacks and excesses of the state clearly indicated a form of social capital as was revealed in his narrative below:

The cause for friendship developing this much is the state. Because when the social security institutions are ripened there is no need for people to rely on each other. When there is no need, trust is not matured. Yet in my opinion it is the instinct of self defence of the society lying at the source of good neighbourliness and friendships in Kurdish society. Yes because you are protected by your friends. And will protect your friends. Should the T.R.<sup>175</sup> [“T.C.”] state be a very good state, good means if it stuck with the definition [of how a state should be] that I have already done, I think Kurdish society would have had some impasses

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<sup>174</sup> Notes from an expert interview, 22.10.2011, Urfa

<sup>175</sup> T.R. Stands for Turkish Republic. The Participant uttered the Turkish equivalent initials T.C. which stands for “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti”, the official name for the state, as a devaluing act abstaining from using the full and official name.

because of that. Well, so fine a culture of friendship might have not possibly developed. (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13])

Indeed, his story is about the formation of bridging social capital among Kurds, who face the need for ‘*protection*’ in the face of violation; and act with solidarity in the absence of the required social institutions, the structural violence. Trust, mutuality, and solidarity were thus developed out of necessity, making inner group social relations vital for the satisfaction of various needs of the individuals. Social capital, in such context, emerges basically as a security resource. The argument is that friendship as a bridging social capital serves as a security resource for Kurds who have faced structural and political violence. This could also be thought in line with the argument of alternative formations of social capital posed in this chapter. Still, however, this should not take us to mystify social relations in Kurdish society. Indeed, many cases in this chapter will make clear the ‘inner fissures’ (Anthias, 2005) within the society. Social capital is not something granted, spontaneous, or immediate for Kurds like any other society; it is built and maintained through acts and relations. Yet the argument here, that friendship serves as a security resource and makes bridging social capital for many in that sense, is important in indicating the formative role of violation in terms of be-long-ings.

Overall, three basic arguments were posed up to this point. First is that violation, in its multiple and multidimensional forms, yet especially coming directly from state apparatus, was consequential in forming and deforming be-long-ings for many Kurdish participants of this study. In other words, allegiances, projections, and possessions of people were deformed through violent experiences. The most visible pattern of formation was a confrontational and reactive type of belonging in relation with Turkishness, the state, and the larger society. Second is that, all the uprooting of lives and social relations in rural places were reorganized in the urban bringing forth an alternative social capital, this time markedly Kurdish as a deliberate, politicized, ethnicized restructuring of relations, solidarity, trust, values, and resources. Third is that re-emerging be-long-ings are by no means

homogeneous among all Kurdish people even if seemingly they have gone through similar processes of violation. In this, variation in individuals' access to social capital and economic exclusion play defining role.

Below is introduced another aspect of the formative process that is how belongings are formed through violation of bodies and minds.

#### **4.2. *Nested Violations on the Body and the Psyche: Multiple Forms and Actors of Violence and Multidimensional Formations of Be-long-ings***

To grasp the context of insecurity and 'disorder' acting to define multiple allegiances of people, it is important to further note that it was not only the military but also the paramilitary forces and other armed groups that became the source of fear and violence for many people. "Hezbollah"<sup>176</sup> was alleged to be one such group, stated to be very active in the region through 1990s both in the rural and the urban. Not only the violent conflict it engaged with the Kurdish political movement, but also with some other Islamic groups in the region was important during this era. Among its targets were also individuals, especially women, who were believed to behave 'improperly' in terms of Islamic code. Several Kurdish participants of this research, especially in Diyarbakır and to an

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<sup>176</sup> It is an illegal Islamist armed group, aiming at establishing an Islamic state in Turkey. It was established in Batman, a south eastern city, just before 1980, September the 12<sup>th</sup> military coup d'état; then established centrally in Diyarbakır and was well organized among Kurds especially but not exclusively throughout the South Eastern and Eastern Anatolian regions. It has no organic relation with Hezbollah in Iran or Lebanon, though Iran Islamic Revolution and relations with Iran, not with its Shiite ideology but its way of revolutionary practice and sources of mobilisation, were among the important sources from which the organization in Turkey derived in its establishment. Its activities continued until 2000, when the leader of the organization was killed in a police operation in Istanbul, the archive of the organization was seized and the organization started to dissolve. Though a political party (*Hüda-Par*) and some NGO's were established after the event, which are currently active in the legal political and social sphere; the organization itself is argued to gather its strength, starting to reorganize among its members from 2003 onwards. For more detail about the organization and an analysis discussing 'violence' as one of the instruments, but not an end in itself, for more detail see Kurt, M. (2015). *Din, Şiddet, Aidiyet Türkiye'de Hizbullah*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

extent in Mardin,<sup>177</sup> were victimized by or witnessed its violence. Some participants noted that it was not active in Urfathanks to the dominance of Arab and Turcoman population in the city, stating “*no terrorist organization could be successful here. [...] See Urfa is so different, not like many other places*”<sup>178</sup>. Others stated that in Urfa too “*it was organized enough to kill people*” (M, 56, Kurd, Urfa [M13]). Yet, many related violent experiences were recollected by participants in Diyarbakır and Mardin.

One participant (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır, [D3]), whose family members were directly exposed to violence -spouse was threatened to death and son was shot wounded by armed gangs- mentioned various forms of assaults that took place against politically [Kurdish politics] engaged individuals and their family members. She named murder lists; life threatening phone calls; house surrounding and harassments by armed gangs; waylaying by masked men and beating by batons; and armed attacks resulting in maiming or killing most being part of her own experience. Man “*leaving his house in the morning for work was not coming back home in the evening*” and “*nobody could freely wander in the street after 5 pm*” (M, 41, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D13]) were everyday experiences for many in 1990s. Not only had the mundane space of the city or village, but also the routine time in the morning or evening turned to be violent ones. A participant (F, mid 30s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D14]) narrated her witness when she “*was then single and little*” accompanying her mother in a morning to “*take the dough to the baking house*”. Amid a sudden scream and gunfire along her mother’s warning “*don’t ever look at the man!*” she saw a man coming out of his house being shot to death by armed gang who were riding motorcycles. Pitying that “*before anyone inside could open the door, they killed the man*”, she stated “*he died for nothing. So much like this in Diyarbakır... People of Diyarbakır are*

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<sup>177</sup> A participant stated that Hezbollah was not influential in Urfa, but especially in Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Batman (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]).

<sup>178</sup> Expert Interview, Urfa, 20.10.2011

*much oppressed*” (F, mid 30s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D14]). The perception of people being killed “*for nothing*” is a strong sign of the experienced insecurity and fear, which went along the “*oppression*” that the participant mentions. Another vibrant recollection came during a focus group interview, which pointed to crucial physical, material, economic and spatial consequences of the ruthless experiences people had lived through. A group participant recollected the following:

My family hates Hezbollah; because we had a house, my father’s enterprise, yet my father does not work now. [...] He had a coffeehouse in Adana, we had 2-3 flats, they were all destroyed by them; all were broken down, and we had to migrate in here. When we came here we earned our life really in difficult conditions, very difficult for my family, my father was working out, my elder brother dropped out of school after 5<sup>th</sup> class, and then looked after us, he has been working till now. Like that, [it] is a nightmare for me, so bad. (F, 19, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [3])

The others in the focus group eagerly participated in the conversation telling about the cruel activities of the organization they heard about or witnessed. Among those they told were “*brother of a friend being slaughtered in front of the sibling’s eyes*”, “*students not being sent to school or even to mosque*” for fear of life, “*students being killed in the school service, in the bazaar next to his mother*” (M, 23, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [6]), or “*they pour nitric acid [kezzap] to the women walking in the street or dressed in skirts*” (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [5]). One mentioned an instance her sister had experienced: “*my elder sister was a first year student then, we were in Silvan, just a little child, because she was not veiled armed men surrounded her, all in the class, saying we will kill you and your family. Then she went to school having to cover her head. Imagine! Just a 7-8-year-old*” (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [4]). Extreme sense of insecurity, vulnerability, and hindrance even for the children and the young people is visible in the above articulations.

It was recollected by many as a period when daily life took place in an “*anxious and frightened*” way, where “*nobody could go out after it got dark, [because]*

*they were shooting people in the back of the head*” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakir [D7]). The perpetrator or the responsible could also be other armed organizations. A participant stating that *“each and every Toros[an automobile brand]... You could not dare to look at it!”* (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]) exemplifies that uneasy and fearful existence. He recollects his personal experience of being placed a gun on head being asked why he was wandering around. It was midnight and he was looking for a hotel to stay overnight in Diyarbakir in 1994. The gun on his head infuriating him, he states *“I hardly helped myself not to grip him on the neck. Because there is a limit to my patience, everyone’s patience has its limits. I am not pro-violence, but I shall understand the one who was forced to exercise violence”* (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]). The expression of ‘limits of patience’, here implying an edge to potentiality of resorting to [counter] violence, could be seen as a sign of reactive and oppositional formation of belongings. A well articulated reflection on the target and role of such violations of the period belongs to another participant. Accordingly, the unknown-assailant murders, becoming a constant in 1990s, were perceived to bear a bolder message than the mere killing of the specific person, such as being *“a warning against the folks”, “an impact to be created in the society”* in general, which implied that they *“shall not engage in, otherwise will be murdered too”* (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]). Becoming *“traumatic in Kurds’ collective memory”*, however, the impact of the period turned to be one of alienation of masses, probably *“not only the tortured ones, the political ones, but also the whole people, as a mass, los[ing] trust in the state* (M, Kurd, 35, Diyarbakir [D7]). Alienation and loss of trust are important signifiers of deformation of belongings as being argued in this chapter.

Mention of 1990s as those years of increased enrolment in the mountain cadres might be thought within such context. Indeed, various participants mentioned relatives, friends, children of friends and neighbours, even a son in one case, very often university or high school students, sometimes newly graduated or newly-wed, opting to take to the mountain. Yet other participants mentioned

their own past ideas of joining, which were not very far from realization the, yet they gave up for different reasons. Among the articulated motivations for the unrealized thought of “taking to the mountain” were mentioned to be “*the problems with the family*” as a teenager, and “*being affected by the incidents of the era*” (M, 30, Kurd, Mardin [M3]); the appeal of the “*hero cult*”; the feeling that they “*were not as courageous as [their] friends*” who had already took to the mountain (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır[D26]).<sup>179</sup>It is important to note that at the time of the interview these participants were not fully supporting the Kurdish armed organization, one articulating the reason as being his “*religious values*”. In both cases the participants were well integrated both socially and economically.

The role of ideology and tools of recruitment as a pull factor being one side of the coin to bear in mind, the recurrent theme in many narratives as the push factor were violations coming from the state apparatuses. I believe, the phenomenon of some citizens breaking off all ties and refuse all potential opportunities, regardless of how meagre or promising they could be for the individual herself, in order to fight against the very state s/he is a citizen of, should also be seen as a point, an extreme one though, in the continuum of the formations and deformations of belongings that this study has a prospect to understand. The case may be seen as an extreme form of alienation from the state and perception of ‘illegitimacy’ attributed to it. Though those cases in their actuality were much beyond the scope of this research and I do not have enough or any systematic data to reflect on them in detail, the phenomenon of “*those in the mountain*” as such was always there during the interviews, as various

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<sup>179</sup> Brubaker and Laitin (1998) give some examples to the processes within groups that govern the recruitment of young men (and, much more rarely, women) into disciplined, ethnically organized violence-wielding groups, concerning specifically but not exclusively the case of IRA, to be “the distribution of honour, the promising and provision of material and symbolic rewards for martyrs, rituals of manhood, the shaming of those who would shun violence, intergenerational tensions that may lead the impetuous young to challenge overcautious elders” (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998: 435). Examples in my research also make clear the need for systematic knowledge about the social and psychological group dynamics that favour recruitment into such organizations.



participants mentioned them whether admiring or condemning, embracing or refuting, adoring or demonizing, worrying about or getting annoyed with.

Below is a narrative, quoted at length to be able to disclose the multiplicity of violations one had gone through in his life and what was their role in forming his be-long-ings. The narrative also provides a perspective on how violence, in various forms, is perceived to influence the order of things at present, including taking to the mountain. The participant reveals a perception of sharp difference between the west and east, whereby *“should west have seen what had been happening in our east, this situation would have long been ceased”* (M, 36, Kurd, Diyarbakır, IGI [4]). Having worked in western cities as a construction worker since he was 12, he stated *“even though we served for them, the people in the west”, “they used to accept us in no way”*. Although he believed that *“it has changed a bit for the last two or three years”*, he still would not think of living *“somewhere else”* since he believed *“you are still a Kurd there, either they will make you a thief, or PKK, or discriminate, they will somehow stamp you”* (M, 36, Kurd, Diyarbakır, IGI [4]). His expectation that he will face accusation, exclusion, or symbolic violation of stigma is important within the context of his past experience. His narrative below reveals multiple forms of violations, including lynch attempt whereby he was, among others, a victim of when he worked in some “western” cities:

They attempted to lynch, some of our friends were even taken to hospital, in Ordu, Samsun, then in Artvin. When the [General Directorate of] State Hydraulic Works constructed a dam in Artvin... What shall we tell, which one, should we tell it [all] it would not end in 3 days. That's why I stopped working in constructions, I can't go, I have already become a half-man at this age, I am yet 36 years old but I can't work, all my body is as if I am 70 years old. My foot aches, so does my arm, I am incapacitated, I don't have social security either, most of whom I worked for did not pay for my social security, since I had to [work] whether they pay it or not. Well, they speak about here differently, but the people of East, indeed our culture, yeah we are backwards, that's also because of the state, that's the cruelty of the state on people of East for years, I mean as second class people [...]If [were treated] like human, there was school for the people, health, employment...When you look no factory here, no employment, no future for the people, no one working, no women can go and

work somewhere, only goes to the field and hoes, nothing else. [...] There is no school in our villages, where shall people in village have their children go for school? To Diyarbakır? On which sources? Think of that time, I could not finish primary school. From village I came here to Diyarbakır and went to school for two years; my family was poor, they couldn't look after me and I dropped out. Many things we have gone through, should I tell... I was tortured when I was a 12-year-old, electric shock... now the state does not punish the 17-18-year-olds, the children of people in the West; I was tortured when I was 12. Thousands of people like me! [...] 48 hours on the concrete ground, in the winter, an empty room, not a blanket, nothing, they were coming to the room... I stayed 48 hours on the concrete ground; and many more, for months some stayed. I mean the mountain, no one would go to death for no reason, if we ask you to go now, would you? Nobody would. What is told in the west, they are all fiction! My brother has been disappeared, his corpse<sup>180</sup> we don't know... (M, 36, Kurd, Diyarbakır, IGI, [4]).

The above narrative was articulated in a sense of weariness and despair, as the participant spoke less hopeful than many who had a regular income or at least a work even if temporary; who were educated, and who had social ties to be mobilized for one's end. His experience exemplifies all forms of violations I focus on in this dissertation: political violence (raids on and evacuation of villages, torture, discrimination, disappearances, arrestment); structural violence (poverty, lack of social security, unemployment/lack of work opportunities, lack of infrastructure; lack of schooling and health services); symbolic violence (excluding and stigmatizing "Western" discourse on East/Kurds); and collective violence (lynch attempts). Gendered context of the experience with a specific emphasis on his body, as "a half man" with an incapacitated and emasculated body impotent to work, is yet another crucial point to be considered leading us to one of the conceptualizations of this chapter: *embodiment of violated belongings*. Crucial in this context is that the participant's current experience is very much in line with Rotker's (2002: 15) argument that "violence remains registered in the flesh itself as it rewrites the conditions of citizenship on the exposed body and creates the potential victim". In this case, although a period has past after the participant's experience of direct violence, his body bears the

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<sup>180</sup>The bones suspected of belonging to his brother were sent to Ankara for investigation, where they were reported to be animal bones to their disbelief; and their attorney was arrested in KCK operations.

mark of it as a potential to create victimhood *ad infinitum* revealing embodied violated be-long-ings. Once again, the participant's narrative is significant in proving to be a condensed experience of multiple forms of violations -political, collective, symbolic, structural and gendered- nested together, which I call *nested violations* and try to illustrate in detail throughout this chapter. Its consequences appear to be alienated, distrustful, reactive formations of belongings for the individual as was the case for many with similar experiences in this research.

Yet bearing the mark of all the violent processes was not only the body but also the mind, if ever they could be grasped as apart, as how their 'psychology' was affected was mentioned by many participants within different contexts. Accordingly, the state of being a Kurd was many times narrated as one whose natural flow was impeded by the socio-political conditions and policies leaving a sense of hindrance in the individual. The realization of the potential of life in all its aspects had been hindered. Pointing to such perception, one stated that "*Kurdish people is not a natural people*" [*"doğal bir halk değil Kürt halkı"*]<sup>181</sup>; and during the pilot study one participant stated in similar lines that "*this society is not a proper society*" [*"doğru bir toplum değil bu toplum"*]<sup>182</sup>. In another case, the perceived impediment was narrated with reference to not being able to get education in Kurdish as in the following:

I begin my life 5 years behind compared to someone in Istanbul. Well, what fault I have? In order for me to keep up with that level I should make an extra effort, should take a world's road of extra. What is it for men, why? If I had a primary education in my mother tongue, God knows how different it might have been now. I mean I could have entirely been at a much better level; I mean my personality, identity, character, all about me would be better about which I am sure a hundred percent. It obstructed me to get over the bridge, I mean Turk... I had to use Turkish; you get what I mean as I say 'me', right? [Yes] I mean if grew up in Kurdish like a plant growing in its natural bed; but what happens

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<sup>181</sup> Field notes, July 2011, Mardin

<sup>182</sup> Pilot interview, 21.10.2010, Ankara. (M, 23, Kurd, from Diyarbakır)

now is that plant grows and a rock is placed before it [he make drawings on the air to show the moves of the plant growing around a rock] you slide [*savruluyorsun*] like this, the plant grows like this, takes a path there comes here and continues then on. Let's move this [rock], man! Would it not be better if it grows directly? For what all that distance is, just in pedagogical terms? (M, 33, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D1])

The following words he put in a broader framework that “*Kurdish society is not a usual society; its mind was not able to develop in its normal course as barriers were built before it*” is thoroughly linked with his own experience above. His question if I'm getting right when he speaks of himself is also related to this broader context. As he is individually an educated professional, working as a teacher, and an intellectual engaged in writing, publishing, and even making music, his focus is not that he could not achieve anything, but that he could not realize all his potential, nor he did with ease what he did. The perception of their potential being impeded was especially uttered by participants of similar socio-economic profile, the relatively well-off educated professionals. Experience of nested violations, like structural, symbolic, and political violations, is determining in such perception. Expressions about the ‘*unusual*’, ‘*abnormal*’, and ‘*out of ordinary*’ conditions they have been living through instead of the ‘*ordinary*’, ‘*usual*’, and ‘*normal*’, regardless of how they are defined, were widely articulated by many Kurdish participants. That nothing has developed in its own course was a shared feeling by many as I came to encounter during the research. Interestingly, moreover, such impediment of ‘the normal’ is often argued to lead to duality within the person's psyche. The same participant referred to such phenomenon in the context of speaking Turkish, stating:

We are not an ordinary [*olağan*] society. Nothing of mine is usual; I did not speak Turkish till I was eight. For me a teacher was someone who spoke Turkish and who beat. I was so surprised when I came across a teacher who knew Kurdish, thinking either he was not a teacher or not a Turk. Our consciousness is divided into two, all our life is so. (M, 33, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D1])

In line with such perception of being “*divided into two*”, he claimed that many people [Kurds] were shamming to be seen like what is expected of them and

stated “*we are getting used to it so much that it becomes a part of us, we live a dual routine*” (M, 33, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D1]). His identification of a teacher with a Turk or speaking Turkish, was alike mentioned by a teacher himself, one of whose students, not knowing he was a Kurd, assumed it was ‘safe’ to speak in a negative language about Kurds as she did not match being a teacher and being a Kurd in her mind. He said that she thought all teachers were Turk (M, early-30s, Kurd, Mardin [M10]).

Concerning the dual and sometimes contradictory perception and practice that individuals might go through, it was stated by another, a Turk who came to Diyarbakır from a western city to take part in a project and was living there for some time but only temporarily, that “*most Kurds have memorized standby answers*” to be prepared just in case they encounter ‘The Questions’ (F, early 30s, Turk).<sup>183</sup> Implied in these arguments is the relation between the imposed official belongings and the lived quotidian belongings, which leads to a sort of split-up between the two emerging personalities, one embedded in the conditions of the everyday the other is carried along like a shadow. Sometimes the outcome was narrated in a language of annihilation or chaos, as one participant stated: “*psychological ruptures are being experienced; one can become more than one person. We criminalize ourselves; we can’t speak fluently any more. [...] We don’t have our personality anymore, what comes up is a mess*”.<sup>184</sup> Self-censorship is one process leading to such ‘ruptures’, impeded ‘fluency’, ‘eradication’ and/or ‘multiplication of personality’, with the individual being left without the means to handle what s/he encounters, thus faces a ‘mess’. Importantly, in many cases it was not only the individual’s direct experience but also the memories, witnesses, the oft-heard experiences of others that counted in shaping such processes. In this context, Nancy Cardia’s (2002: 158) argument that indirect exposure to violence, which refers to “knowing that someone to

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<sup>183</sup> Notes from an informal interview, 9.2.2011, Diyarbakır

<sup>184</sup> Expert interview, Mardin, 14.10.2011

whom one is close has witnessed such episodes” or “violence that a victim’s parents or close friends hear about”, serving “to confirm for the victim or for the witness that such events are not that random” becomes important. Cardia (2002) argues that knowing the perpetrator or the victim increases the intensity of the exposure, this increasing the likelihood that the events will scar the witness or the person who hear about what happened. Along similar lines, many of the participants mentioned what others have lived as part of their lively articulations; ‘others’ here could be acquaintances or distant people. In some cases, I even encountered young people mentioning stories they were told by their elders as if they themselves experienced the narrated events, though they had taken place even before they were born. Although initially it seemed puzzling, as the research went on I came to grasp that it was a way of embodiment of collective memory by the individuals. Having to live in the uneasy conditions one is born into, witnessing torment, or hearing painful stories that had been lived prior to one’s birth were important features indicating the socially embedded nature of the violent experience beyond the individual.

A case was articulated by an expert working in charge of children for a municipal institution. Camping with the children in summers,<sup>185</sup> and “*living together with the children for 24 hours*” she said she got “*closer to know the children’s world, the problems they go through, and the pain they suffer*”. Drawing on her expertise her articulation below reveals how early the embodiment of violence could start:

It is very sad to hear a child saying she doesn’t know where her pain is. Children who were traumatized, or those who repeatedly heard about the traumas their elders have experienced, thus suffering pain as they themselves have gone through those traumas. On the one hand, they have much *Arabesk* and hymns [*“ilahi”*] in their lives, on the other they are readily furious to throw stones to a panzer at any protest yet similarly timid enough to turn his back and run off. A

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<sup>185</sup> Summer camps for children and nurseries within the laundry houses were her ideas realized.

group having intricate emotions, but prominently anger... (F, 39, Kurd, Diyarbakır)<sup>186</sup>

Embodied traumas of prior generations by the children are well described above, with a clear depiction of a mix of emotions, discourses, practices. Piety, despair, rebellion, anger, fear, and suffering, experienced all at once, appear to play crucial role in forming their subjectivities. The act of stone-throwing of children, for example, was supposed by another participant to “*stem from so weird reasons*”, like “*the fury felt towards a teacher*”, who believed the cause could not only be political but certainly psychological as a child cannot address anything when you ask about the state (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]). He articulated the case as an example of the enormous outcomes of “*humiliation*” among the Kurdish society. Another participant drew on his own childhood experiences on how the wider socio-political conditions are embodied and become almost an essential part what a person is: “*One is already born into a political atmosphere, well it is not in your hand, this in you ... it is engraved onto your brain, now you, this is self, a part, a part of you, I mean yours, this is something natural*” (M, 33, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D1]). Being born into some conditions which are beyond your will yet are imprinted in what you deem to be yourself, as expressed by the participant, could be taken as manifestation of ‘the political’ as ‘the ontological’. A striking expression about the psychological influence of the experience of violence came from one of my pilot study participants who recollected what her mother<sup>187</sup> uttered concerning the burning and evacuation of their village, after which they had to move to Diyarbakır. She stated in Kurmanji: “*Heta gundê me şewitîya, me nizan bû psîkolojî çî ye*” [*we hadn’t known what psychology was until our village was burnt out*] (F, 45, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D6]). The implication, getting to know what psychology is through the violent experience, points at two parallel yet seemingly paradoxical processes. The first is individualization,

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<sup>186</sup>Expert interview, 25.2.2011, Diyarbakır.

<sup>187</sup> She became one of my participants in Diyarbakır and the interview was conducted in Kurmanji Kurdish, immediately translated and afterwards transliterated by her son, my pilot study participant.

awareness of one's inner self, becoming aware of one's emotions, thoughts, drives as a separate entity amid her social relations. The second is strengthening, if not construction, of communal be-long-ings forming through the knowledge of shared experiences, which becomes tougher as the more negative and all-encompassing is the experience for a categorical group of people. Each and every experience of oneself, which now the individual "*learns*" to reflect on; and similarly of others, which on a gradual and everyday basis become part of a collective pool of memory, create the individual and the community simultaneously. Such memory becomes a way through which one re-members her-self into the collectivity.

Bearing on the examples disclosed above, it should be noted, moreover, that different from Cardia's (2002) conceptualization, in this research the scope of indirectness of the violent experience was not limited to the bounds of family or close contacts, but extended almost to the whole 'ethnic group' as each and every case of violent exposure being heard about have promptly proved to become a part of a collective narrative that after a while starts to speak for the individual. This is very much in line with the phenomenon I define as the *helical memory of violence* which I will be conceptualizing throughout this chapter.

To sum up, the argument in this part was that various violations in their nested experience, direct or indirect, past or present, take a collective nature as they are gone through a category of people. They form not only a collective memory but also a collective body and a collective psyche through embodiment of which many individual re-members themselves to that collectivity. In other words, nested violations played significant role in constituting collective be-long-ings, in this case Kurdish be-long-ings which shaped the body and the psyche of the participants. Another form of subjectivity, which should be grasped in this context, appears to be *being in the limbo* among multiple actors and violations as will be detailed below.



### **4.3. *Violent Order of Things: the Criminalized Subjectivity, Inner Fissures of the Collective, and Being in the Limbo***

The armed conflict, with various actors and processes involved, acted at times as an all-encompassing parameter in people's lives, forcing them to take side or else wither away. However, taking side did not go without contradiction, ambivalence or incongruity. Village evacuations, for instance, were defined by a participant, to be an era of "*huge suppression*" coming from "*the soldier side*" whereby people were forced "*either [to] become a village guard or leave the village!*" While, "*the other side*", namely the PKK, was pressing that "*you won't leave the village, won't cut the wood so that you can help us*" (M, 50, Kurd, Mardin [M7]). The participant, who was in charge as an *imam* in different villages at that time, recollected an event to point to the lay villagers being trapped between the two opposing powers:

My father had an uncle, an old man, may God rest his soul. People in the mountain [were saying] don't cut the wood! Yet, in the village [the source of income] is husbandry, everyone breeds his sheep and goats. For the winter acorns are cut, dried and the animals are fed, the goats especially require it. Well, the villagers are in need of it, they must do it. One day the man went and cut the tree, loaded it, it was sunset, while on his road to home those in the mountain stopped him: 'uncle, we have said that the wood won't be cut'. He says 'son we need them'. But there the soldier is saying just the opposite. The soldier says you clean it so that our activity in the field gets easier. The soldier says cut them down, they say don't. The man rebelled there: 'I am stuck in-between two states, one state says do not cut them, the second state says do cut'. So was the dilemma. This was the situation in our region in those 90s. Who was deceiving whom, who was wheeling and dealing, who was taking advantage of whom, who was profiting on whose coattails? A huge profit! No one trusted the other. All was in silence. Such a fear it was. (M, 50, Kurd, Mardin [M7])

The expression of being "*stuck in-between two states*", and the period being defined to be a 'fearful' and 'distrustful' one are important to grasp the everyday experiences of the lay people who had to walk on a thin line, torn between their own needs and the forceful requirements of the opposing powers. Such perception is apparent also in the reproachful words noting:

When they [the soldiers] go to a village for an operation, they treat all the people as criminal. They miss off the real criminal, but the people [halk] at hand, what does the poor people do, they are stuck between two stones. How would you call it, it is like being between the devil and the deep blue sea [“aşağı tükürsen sakal yukarı tükürsen bıyık misali oluyor” (M, 57, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D22]).

Mistreatment of the people alike, regardless of what they individually did or did not do, is clearly perceived to go beyond the ‘legitimate’ boundaries of the state acts, or at least to be ‘unjust’, as articulated by the same participant “*we don’t say that the state shouldn’t act as the state; but it [unfairly] treats all as the same*” (M, 57, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D22]). What he criticizes is the perceived treatment of all Kurds as convicts of insurgency. The violent processes apparently create a category of *criminalized subjectivity*. A manifestation of such subjectivity came to fore at the onset of our interview with the same participant when I mentioned that I would not ask about his identity, meaning not disclose his ‘name’ or any personal information that could identify him in the research. He immediately responded “*I can give my Identity [meaning ‘ID card’]; we have ever been guilty anyhow!*” (M, 57, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D22]). The confusion sprang from a simple miscommunication between us as he thought I was talking about looking at his ID card as the Turkish word “*kimlik*” [identity] is used for the card in daily speech. Identity as a representational name, a signifier of the person, was mistaken by a legal document, the ID card, which itself is a signifier of the legal status of citizenship and in that context national belonging. Yet, the confusion revealed a lot about the perception of being criminalized and the resentment stemming from it. Being marked as criminal citizen subjects was itself a violent experience, which was perceived to locate Kurdishness eternally out of place, of the norm and the order, of the ordering norm, that is of Turkishness assembled in the ordering processes of the state, of *Turkishness as the order of things*. A critically important narrative, revealing clues on the relation between identity, identity card, and the place of birth, came from another participant who was an attorney. He recalled an experience during his student years in Istanbul whereby he and his friends went through identity check by the police and were taken into

custody although they were only trying to get back from the “*newroz*” area entrance to which, as they saw from afar, was forbidden by the police.

And I realized that they look only at your identity [ID card], your birth place indeed. In fact, the state identifies the person whom it will expose its violence, will subject to violence, the person whom to take into custody perhaps torture primarily from his/her identity [card]. It's interesting that it recognizes him for the identity [card] that itself had given. Well, if this is something bad, why do you, by your own hand, grant me the identity [card] that you deem legal [and] legitimate. That should be legal I mean, not one you need to be ashamed of, need to hide, or cause you to be taken into custody when you show it to the state's law enforcement officers... Well, does the state labels through identities [ID cards]? Such an image we have in our mind; concerning the identity [card] we have this. (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7])

Experiences as the one above are important in highlighting what the legal bond may appear to be for citizens. ID card, which stands for the certificate of that very bond, acts as a tool of defining citizens by the state, yet in these cases not to grant them rights but to sort them out into marked categories assumedly through ethnicity or some criteria of ‘loyalty’, making their place of birth, part of the national territory, at odds with their ‘nationality’, citizenship, and belonging. This only intensifies the perception of being out of place.

It is important to note, moreover, that categorical treatment of Kurds by the state institutions brings about a categorical identity formation of Kurdishness. A participant, whose village was evacuated and burnt while he, with other 35 people, was taken into custody and arrested, interpreted the event in a rhetorical way stating “*we are Kurds; it is the only quilt of us, it sincerely is*” (M, 51, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D8]). The alleged reason, ‘harbouring the terrorists’, was recollected in a way displaying the perception of being caught between two fires:

I wish the prime minister had come and lived in that village. I wish he had, then he would have to give, will give bread or anything. I only gave bread; perhaps he would have given the cow and everything! You have to give, whoever they are you will. The soldier was coming as well; the soldier even harmed us; what the soldier commanded we obeyed as well. Yea we were the downtrodden! (M, 51, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D8])

The participant's emphasis on having no option but to give food to those in the mountain as they come for that, could be understood in a context where as the armed conflict intensified the phenomenon came to be viewed, not only in terms of right and wrong, but also as a "fait accompli" in which as Geerse (2010) noted it did not really matter what people felt about it, it was there and people just had to deal with this. Thus, articulation of both 'giving bread to those in the mountain' and 'doing what the soldier said' as imperatives alike could be interpreted as ways of dealing with this *fait accompli* as people faced the two fighting centres of power, both armed, and both had the command of ordering. In other cases the expression of the allegiance was more direct, whereby people mentioned their respect, loyalty, and support for the organization as they believed it was fighting for their just cause as was also the case in Geerse's (2010) research.

Many participants of this study mentioned that they had to flee the pressures they faced to 'become village guards' and the ensuing retaliations in case they refused to do so. A participant's experience revealed that though their village was not burnt, the villagers still had to leave: "*I didn't continue the 5<sup>th</sup> class [primary school last year then] in the village; for we were under pressure to become village guards. [...] We the villagers insisted not to accept it and our village school was closed down. Then we had to move out anyway* (M, 29, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D21]). He, who is an attorney and works for a human rights association now, defined those "*who usually became the village guards*" as being:

[T]hose losers in the village, those who were not embraced by the villagers, who were prone to crime... [Those] who were seduced by [the offer of having] gun; [were] trying to have a say. This way it was usually practiced. Or those who were weaker in the power relations among the families using the arm of the state to have [power]...(M, 29, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D21]).

Although those becoming village guards are depicted in the above quote as the outcasts of the society, which might have a solid base in specific cases, today it

is depicted that there were different motivations and conditions for people to become village guards, including that it was seen as a secure employment opportunity.<sup>188</sup> Still, however, the above quote provides important insight about the power relations and the conditions that the village guard system had brought for. It was claimed that the system caused many problems including criminal activities and human rights violations coming from the village guards; and constituted an obstacle for return migration as there were cases whereby some village guards, who have seized lands and properties of the migrants, didn't want the previous owners to return and resettle in their villages, or in other cases their violating acts deterred people from returning back 'home'.<sup>189</sup> A participant, who worked as an imam at different villages, recollected his experiences of the violent acts of the village guards, with the caution not to generalize those acts to all though:

They have the worst reputation in the society today. Some deserves that. Yet, some only said 'I shall protect my village, not damage anyone, my village may not be destroyed, the poor and needy may not set off on the roads, not migrate to the west, not be slave to other people'. He protected his village and harmed no one. There are some cases in our region, Ömerli. But people who did not know their limits, like those in the neighbouring village of us [...] destructed even the health centre, the school, fired our houses, left no solid windows or doors, even took the electricity installation out, took those cables out! They destroyed our forests. The village guard and the soldier did these together. [...] I always tell this: 'the village guard harmed my forest, my garden and yard, and you [the soldier] accepted that, you collaborated' (M, 50, Kurd, Mardin [M7]).

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<sup>188</sup> It is shown in a journalistic interview that "becoming a village guard in Turkey's rural Southeast in the late 1980s meant being able to earn a living when no other opportunities existed"; which "could improve [villagers'] lives by being paid to protect their families" and their villages. At the beginning some simply understood the system within this context. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=the-first-village-guards-2009-09-15> accessed on 28.8.2015

<sup>189</sup> For details see <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=village-guards-prevent-reverse-migration-say-experts-2010-02-09>, accessed on 28.8.2015  
See also TESEV Report "A Roadmap for a Solution to the Kurdish Question: Policy Proposals from the Region for the Government", 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.tesev.org.tr/assets/publications/file/Report%20on%20Kurdish%20Question.pdf> accessed on 28.8.2015

The same participant mentioned another occasion whereby a ranked military officer accepted that both them and the villagers “made mistakes in the past”, yet now expressing his wish to “make peace”. According to this military officer, the participant quoted, “the soldier made mistake in trusting the word of a person leading the *aşiret* or the one whose word is being followed by the people in their decision of who were “good” and who were “bad”, and in treating people upon that word. The officer stated that they had not differentiated among the people in their brutal acts, even though “they actually did not deserve that”. The villagers, on the other hand, were mistaken according to the officer, by not providing the soldiers with the information and witness they needed, even when they were not sympathizing with the armed organization. The participant was surprised by what he perceived to be an unexpected confession: “*And this is what a soldier detects!*” (M, 50, Kurd, Mardin [M7]). His surprise can be interpreted as a sign of perceiving the state, much in negative terms, as a unitary and once and for all agent. The perception seems to be blurred through such experiences.

Positionings were not always so clear cut to be grasped within a frame of opposing ends. There are families, for instance, whose different members have had different allegiances. One participant (F, early 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D17]) noted that within her extended family all at once there are “*the village guard*”, “*the militant*”, “*the prisoner*”, “*the police officer*”, and “*the one wholeheartedly married to a military officer*”. Thus, it was not always and for everyone a black and white picture altogether.

Further indicating complexity of social relations is another finding of the research which is on the power relations and dynamics of taking position within those relations. Accordingly, some *aşirets* were mentioned to become “*village guards because the rival aşirets were supporting the PKK*”; or else, “*the very same aşiret was divided into two as pro-state and pro-PKK*” (M, 50, Kurd, Mardin [M7]). What is at hand here is that already existing ‘traditional’ rivalries had been articulated within a ‘modern’ split; or again already established affiliations

have played role in defining positioning within the frame of changing relations of power. An example to the latter was that “*the villages affiliated with the Aghas who have been closer to the state or the right-wing parties preferred the village guard system and all became village guards*”, while “*the villages affiliated with other Aghas did not become village guards*”, “*their children took to the mountain*”, “*their villages were evacuated and they were devastated*” (M, 50, Kurd, Mardin [M7]). Apparently, thus, existing social relations, in the form of hostility or allegiance, have acted as a base for formations of pro-state or anti-state positions in the newly established rules of the game.<sup>190</sup> This is the old rivalries taking new paths, but not solely. It is also a case of transference of the local dichotomies to the national level. Mutual cooperation of *aşirets* and their leaders with state authorities is not a new phenomenon, and has defined political relations in Turkey and the region for a long time. Yet in this case the new set of power relations being so decisive in defining the life chances of people, side taking has deadly consequences on individual lives. Important to note is that being a member of an *aşiret*, in other words being already tied with ‘strongly’ established allegiances, determines individual positions within an existing set of ‘us’ versus ‘the other’ thus predefining their side. Here the role of social capital in forming belongings and the quotidian dimensions of such belongings are clear. One more point to be made is that existence of such cases, though they are not exclusive, have a potential to blur the ground for the discourse, at least as an absolute one, of claiming village guards to be ‘traitors who sold themselves to the state and become enemies of their brothers’. Alternatively, in these cases individual subjects may be seen as taking advantage of the new constellation of power relations in line with the existing fault lines, whereby interests are not necessarily defined through ethnic allegiances.

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<sup>190</sup> This finding of the research is in line with the arguments of Suavi Aydın (2013) who noted that those who represent the state power had to rely on *aşirets* in the region; and that the old cleavages with the already existing sides in the power struggle were determining in engaging with the newly existing problems.

The new constellation of power relations brought about new forms of tensions between groups of people, in which amelioration of conditions or victimization could occur for either side. In some cases, tensions caused divisions within the same village, where “*those who became village guards tried to oppress and harm those who did not*” (M, 50, Kurd, Mardin [M7]). One anecdote expressing such tension in daily relations was about a football match whereby the players who were village guards raged against the opposite side saying “*look at them, they haven’t become guards, but they do challenge us; how you dare it!*”<sup>191</sup> These are important examples in revealing that everyday relations between the village guards and other villagers did not always take place on an equal footing. Accordingly, the village guard system was argued to supply those villagers who gained access to “*weaponry*” with the means of mistreatment or “*killing of the existing adversaries*” as well as ‘opportunities’ of “*enrichment by means of the state wealth*”.<sup>192</sup> Below is an articulation that reveals the conditions of being village guard and the opportunities that it led to. The narrator is an elderly Arab woman who was born and bred in Mardin city centre, moved to a Kurdish village<sup>193</sup> after marrying a Kurdish man, lived there until her husband passed away presumably around 1967/68, then again moved to the city centre –first to Diyarbakır, then to Mardin. She told a story about what happened in the village most probably in early 1990s, which reveals important clues about the dynamics of the power relations, of becoming village guards, and yet another manifestation of relations with the state:

Now there is a gendarmerie station in our village, there are soldiers. [In the past] terror[ists] had raided on for a while, our village opposed to the terror[ists], one person was shot to death. [...] Then they [the villagers] lodged a complaint and the state immediately established a station [in the village], stating ‘since you

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<sup>191</sup>Notes from an informal interview, 3.7.2011, Mardin. (M, 20s, Kurd, Mardin)

<sup>192</sup> From the field notes taken in Mardin, 1.7.2011

<sup>193</sup> A village of Diyarbakır



behaved manly we shall construct a house for you wherever you want, establish a home, grant a *lojman*, he<sup>194</sup> didn't want. He said 'here is ok for me'; all his relatives became village guards. Thus the village is so peaceful now; otherwise believe me our village would be so bad. Nobody was evacuated from the village; the villages around us were evacuated. May God be pleased with the state; it helped them in all ways. Now all new buildings, our village is beautiful, so few are left of the old, stone and clay houses. (F, 80, Arab, Mardin [M14])

It appears that decision of the villagers to become village guards in this case was rewarded boldly by the state and the village was exempted from the turmoil taking place around. It is important to note, thus, not all Kurds were affected similarly from the conflicts. Pressures coming from the PKK as it is clear above were another source of violence and oppression in some cases where it well became a cause for displacement of people.<sup>195</sup> A further example was expressed

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<sup>194</sup>Whom she refers to as "he" is not clear in the notes I took during the interview. Though the interview was recorded, I tried to take notes when the recorder was off occasionally for different reasons. Her speech was not so clear even when she spoke Turkish, mostly due to her old age, and she often resorted to a multilingual narrative whereby Kurdish and Arabic interfered in Turkish, making it even more difficult for me to understand everything clearly. I got help from her grandchild, who was my contact person to interview her; and occasionally from her daughter-in-law and son, who were also present during the interview. This story is one that I had difficulty of locating in terms of time span, but for which I did not have the chance of probing or learning any further afterwards. So, I assume that "he", in the narrative, refers to the headman of the village, who most probably was a relative of the narrator's husband. There is the chance of "he" being his husband, but in that case the event should have taken in an earlier period, which seems unlikely within the historical context.

<sup>195</sup> According to the 1998 Report of the Turkish Parliament's Investigation Commission on the evacuated places of settlement in East and South-eastern Anatolia, the reasons for migration of people were the following: (a) people leaving their villages because of the collapse of animal husbandry and agriculture as a result of the ban on the unrestricted use of pastures and military operations/armed clashes; because of PKK pressure on villages in which there were village guards; and because of the intensification of military operations in villages which were under the suspicion of security forces because of their refusal to become village guards; (b) the PKK's evacuation of certain villages and hamlets whose inhabitants accepted to become village guards; (c) the security forces' evacuation of villages whose inhabitants refused to become village guards, whose security could not be provided or which were thought to aid the PKK. For the details and further reasons based on the TESEV Working and Monitoring Group's fieldworks in Diyarbakır, Batman, Istanbul and Hakkâri see theKurban and others,(2005). "The Problem of Internal Displacement in Turkey: Assessment And Policy Proposals", TESEV Report retrieved from <http://www.tesev.org.tr/the-problem-of-internal-displacement-in-turkey--assessment-and-policy-proposals/Content/221.html>, accessed on 24.7.2015

while I was chatting with a 14-year-old boy as he took me to an interviewee.<sup>196</sup> He mentioned the raids on their village, a hamlet of Diyarbakır, by “*the terrorists*” as he said, referring them as “*the ones whose name I don’t want to utter*”. Their three-family hamlet was not burnt and “*it still stands there*”, yet the villagers had to leave as a result of PKK repression. He stated that the villagers were not village guards, either. I learnt that his family first “*fled*” to Mersin<sup>197</sup> upon the repressions they face, but because of the lack of work opportunities migrated afterwards to Diyarbakır city centre. The boy was one of the seven siblings; his father lived with a single kidney; and the family, lacking regular employment and income, benefited from the donations of the association where I conducted some interviews. Upon my probing the word “*fleeing*” that he used when he told about his background, this time he used “*got out of the village*” instead, putting it as a ‘correction’ to ‘fleeing’ as he previously called the family’s moving. Meanings of ‘fleeing’, for him, seemed to point to an uncanny position in the face of the ‘powers’ involved, namely ‘the soldiers’ and ‘the terrorists’. He was apparently uneasy talking on the issue. During my interview with the participant, which he translated into Turkish for me, he seemed to be irritated when I asked questions about the state and translated the woman’s “*don’t know*”s in a very determined way and in the company of facial gestures of discontent. The questions must have blurred my position in his eye and most probably he was afraid for some reason. His mediation for the woman might well have played a role in his fear. His own words, indeed, when we were on our way to the participant, stood for themselves in explaining his anxiety and irritation: “*everyone is in fear here, they have seen much, it is not like as in the West*” (M,

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<sup>196</sup> The participant was an old woman making her life out of begging in the street and was in a very deprived condition; to whom I was referred to by one of the associations I interviewed with, that acted as ‘a cloth bank’ whereby people in need of could benefit from, yet undertook other services like university entrance exam courses for students. She was one of those people who got some clothes previously. The boy was called by the person in charge of the association office, and this assumedly provided a ground for him to ‘trust’ in me. Still, the respond to such call might well have been interpreted as an act of ‘fulfilment of a duty’.

<sup>197</sup> A city in eastern Mediterranean Region.

14, Kurd, Diyarbakır).<sup>198</sup> The comparison between “*the West*” and “*here*”, which I extensively encountered during the field research and not exclusively among Kurds, reveals the perception of two different worlds of experience in two different parts of Turkey, ‘the eastern’ and ‘the western’. The experience of violence in these cases appear to reconstruct the ‘national territory’, by implication the ‘national polity’, on a clear-cut split between ‘the East’ and ‘the West’. The child’s visibly uneasy expressions, manners, and reservations were all signs, I suppose, of a process whereby fear and insecurity, which so harshly defined the minute details of everyday lives of individuals, were embodied. Important in this context is his wish to become a police officer as he noted “*I want to be a police because of that; it both suits me and is comfortable*” (M, 14, Kurd, Diyarbakır). Here the role of direct political violence and its perpetrator, “*the terrorists*” in his words, in defining boundaries and framing be-long-ings is clear. The job “*suits*” him in his beings and longings: where he is positioned thorough contingencies of life; and the meanings he attributes to it signifying what he yearns for. His concern for order and security against the experience of traumatic upheaval could be seen as playing its defining role within this context. His reference to the job as a “*comfortable*” one reveals yet another dimension of be-long-ings, the economic one. Structural violence crystallized in the conditions of poverty, illness, and the lack of opportunities surrounding his and his family’s life is supposedly influential in his reference. A public employment of regular income and various privileges, which would also fulfil his longing for ‘order’, ‘security’, and ‘justice’, as that would be the claim of the police force, is thus reasonably appealing for him.

The concern for order and security of the individual, however, might not always be in tune with the officially capitalized ‘Concerns’ for ‘Order’ and ‘Security’, this time of the very state. Below is articulated such a case, the outcome being an extreme, but not a rare, example of estrangement of the individual citizen from what the state stands for:

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<sup>198</sup> He is not counted as a participant in the research sample.

I had a friend; he wanted to be a police officer. But what they did to him who wanted to be a police? Raided on his home, just because he had posters of Yılmaz Güney and Ahmet Kaya at home, they took the boy into the custody, tortured, and the boy went to the mountain a month after he came out of the prison. [...] If a person, after living all this, can run the risk of going to the mountain, you can imagine how much he was affected (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1[5])

Another case where the wish to become a police officer was articulated is a dialogue between two “close friends”, as they referred themselves to be so. The dialogue discloses this time a tension between two positions. One is the longing to become a police officer, and the other, the covert opposition to it, is defined through concerns over ethnic allegiances. The dynamic of opposition and consensus between the two is revealing

E: I want my freedom; I want to be a police. [...] Yes, the greatest dream of mine is to be a police. But since I am an easterner, I am anxious. The westerners can make a police whenever they want. But I, because of this identity, can't. It is difficult. [Why do you want to become a police?] I love it very much, fighting, struggling...

N: Are you fighting instead of defending?

E: No, it is not the case...

N: Well, those who become police in the South East definitely stay in the South East. I mean should there be a war, a conflict, s/he certainly stays in east. Since the one you face, too, may be a ... South east... or the one could be a Kurd eventually and the opponent may be a Kurd, fighting with hi... for me... Well, I don't like it!

E: It is the same with the military service. Those of easterners are not delivered to the west. The westerners are not delivered to east either. It has to be like that in my opinion, should be mixed.

N: Perhaps, they would have come here, would see us... Their ideas would have changed I believe. At least when our people has gone there [western locations], would have adapted to other cultures, it would have been better!

E: Well, if the person does not come and see, even if s/he reads a lot, won't get the [genuine] knowledge. (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır[D9]; F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır[D10])

The perception that becoming a police officer is a privilege of the ‘westerners’, and that being an ‘easterner’ proves an obstacle for it is important in pointing to the presumption of being frozen out as an ‘easterner’, here meaning ‘Kurd’. Perception of the distance between the west/ern/er and the east/ern/er, here the Turk and the Kurd, and criticism of the state policies as they are perceived to be

‘separating’ the two and ‘isolating’ them where they already are, is also important in referring to the spatial formations of belongings. Crucially, emphasis of the participants about the lack of social interaction and exchange, especially lack of interest of the west/ern/er in the east/ern/er, points at the role of bridging social capital. This is in line with the argument of Ian Falk and Sue Kilpatrick (2000) that only through interaction social capital can be built, whereby both quantity and quality of interactions have a role in its development. Within such context, the expressed wishes of both the participants “*to have more contact*” with, “*to be seen*” by, “*to adapt to*”, and “*to have the knowledge of*” the other, can all be taken as searching for opportunities to develop social capital. The search should be seen as a sign of longing to belong, ideally on equal rights and positions, in the broader context of a political community that is defined as a ‘horizontal comradeship’ as in the Andersonian nation, this time not only imagined but also connected though. Thus, very much in line with the ‘contact hypothesis’ (Heath and Cheung, 2006) the participants suppose that Turks would tend to become less prejudiced as a consequence of their increased contacts with Kurds. What the experience of many participants reveal, however, is that it is not merely contacts increased in quantity, but importantly the changed quality of contacts that would lessen the prejudice. Thus, only contacts on a level playing field that is relationships on equal terms could have such a role. Apparently, moreover, the participants have also the strong belief that the political community in its actuality not [yet] proves to be a ‘comradeship’. The high likelihood of facing and fighting against a Kurd, when a Kurd herself becomes a police officer or a soldier, appears to be the reason for the opposition of the second participant to the motivation of the first to become a police. The wish for “*freedom*”, “*fighting*”, and “*struggling*” of the first participant melts into air in the face of the discourse of “*defending*” the ethnic siblings rather than fighting them. The ‘close friend’, who one of a sudden is brought under suspicion, is reminded gently that becoming a police officer might mean to stepping beyond the boundaries drawn in ethnic paints between the West and the East, or the Turk

and the Kurd. Thus, not only the territory and the citizens, but also the positions - as in being a police officer- are ethicized.

Anderson (1991) claims that it is the fraternity of horizontal comradeship that makes it possible for so many millions of people to kill and willingly to die for imaginings in the name of the nation. Thus, for Anderson, “nationalism and death are primarily linked in the nation’s ability to command self-sacrifice and persuade its citizens to lay down their lives” (Daiya, 2008: 71). In the context of conflict in Turkey, and of high ethnicization, however, the command seems to be much complicated. Even in cases where one clearly condemns the PKK, the widely encountered experience of Kurds being conscripted in the military mostly to serve in south-eastern or eastern cities leads to a criticism of “*the state [to be] a bit unjust*” (M, late 60s, Kurd, Mardin).<sup>199</sup> This was the case with the Kurdish man from Mardin whom I came across in Urfa in a jewellery store as he was a wholesaler travelling to make trade and I was there to interview the owner of the store. The man, whose five sons had served in various conflict zones in south-eastern and eastern towns and “*thanks to God [have been] discharged safe and sound*”, questioned why “*not a single one had served in the other side [Western cities]?*” and asked sincerely: “*as my children are many shall I send them all to war?*” His expectation was a ‘just’ policy of delivering some of the same family recruits to the safer “*other side*” as some brothers have already completed their service in “*this side*”. His belief that “*%70 of the soldiers serving military in the Southeast are Kurds*” (M, late 60s, Kurd, Mardin) solidifies his perception of injustice and a rather more segmented polity than a horizontal and equal one.

Experience of the highly segmented, ethnicized, and conflictual context of the political community is further complicated as what the ‘nation’ and state

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<sup>199</sup> He is not counted in the number of participants. Yet I quote him as he importantly contributed to the interview taking place as he dropped in, both through what he said and through the occurring interaction with him and the others. Field notes taken during an interview in Urfa, 17.10.2011

demands from the Kurdish citizen, the compulsory conscription to military, is not only a demand for self-sacrifice or killing the ‘foe’, but a demand for killing a ‘friend’ or someone of one’s own ‘community’, as the ‘foe’ in this case is a ‘Kurd’. This is understood by many as fratricide - the act of killing a brother- and sororicide - the act of killing one’s sister. This I call *the dilemma of the (conscript) soldier and the guerrilla siblings*,<sup>200</sup> a dilemma which has been experienced by many Kurdish people and was repeatedly brought up by the participants during the field research. A participant mentioned his own experience during his military service whereby he was enrolled in operations stating “*well, it is shall I shoot or not shoot. That thought. I mean if I don’t shoot him he shoots me. Let his mother cry rather than my mine. You have that thought. Perhaps there are many people whose sibling is in the same thing... I mean it is a very bad thing*” (M, 41, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D13]). The dilemma, together with a strong critique and questioning of the state policies, armed conflict and compulsory military conscription, was articulated by a participant whose son was recruited to military:

[W]e don’t inculcate one’s belief or another’s [meaning Kurdish politics] in the mind of our children, we don’t make our children combative... My child, I openly tell it, my children, I mean Turk Kurd... I am for Kurdishness, my head may... Well, I shall be surrendered to my fate for the Kurds [*“Kürtleriçinboynumkıldaninedir”*], but I will never let my children go that way. I mean, when my child does not know anything about it, has no such relation in his heart or mind, how come you send my boy to [military] operation? How come you send my child to operation? For instance my son [was sent] to operation in Muş, from Muş to Bingöl, from Bingöl to Muş<sup>201</sup>, from Muş to Bingöl... They say, well, let them go and kill each other. I don’t have hatred towards myself [towards Kurds]; if ever I have a hatred that’s to you, so let my child go with the children of the head of the state! [...] Well if I bring up my child and send him to you, why do you make my child kill and be killed by his brother [*“kardeşikardeşeöldürtüyorsun”*]? If you ever have hatred

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<sup>200</sup> I use ‘sibling’ instead of ‘brother’, because although military service is compulsory for only male citizens in Turkey, the PKK enrolls both male and female subjects into its cadres. Thus, it is quite possible that a ‘soldier’ brother and a ‘guerrilla’ brother and/or sister might ‘fight’ against each other in a conflict between the Turkish military and the PKK.

<sup>201</sup> Two neighbouring cities in Eastern Anatolia Region.

towards me, my child shall kill your child; if you ever see me as the enemy... [...] That's why I don't trust the state, how shall I, it makes my child to be killed, why shall I trust? [...] I am protecting, keeping my child from everything, for him not to go to the mountain, not to get involved, why do you send my child to [military] operation, why? You make brothers kill each other, what sort of a state is it? [*böyledevletolur?*] I shelter him, you send him to death! (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7])

Above is a narrative of bringing up a child, entrusting him to the state for completion of his 'citizenship duty'- the compulsory 'military service'- yet enrolment of the son/citizen into battle by the military/the state to 'risk' him -in the perspective of the mother but to 'command' in the perspective of the state- kill or being killed by the 'foe'/by his 'brothers'. The narrative poses, I believe, a fundamental criticism to the social contract which is assumed, within liberal philosophy, to exist between the citizen subject and the state about giving life to and dying for the nation, and which normalizes violence as part of gendered belonging to the nation-state (Das, 2008). The two obligations that the contract entails, accordingly, are that "men should be ready to bear arms for the nation and be ready to die for it"; and that "women's reproduction is seen to be rightly belonging to the state so that as citizens they are obligated to bear 'legitimate' children who will be, in turn, ready to die for the nation" (Das, 2008: 285)<sup>202</sup>. Thought within this framework, objection of the participant in the above narrative is twofold: first, she seems to reclaim the right to her reproduction back to herself; second, she questions the state's 'right' to demand her son's life in the conditions where that would mean fratricide. Although arguing that she takes a fully anti-militaristic position would be an over-interpretation, especially in the absence of the opportunity to analyse her attitude in other possible contexts, it is still important to note that her narrative reveals a refusal to accept the "sacrificial violence [to be] offered for the preservation of the nation" (Das, 2008) - read Turkish nation in this context. Yet, the equally critical point is that she also refuses to satisfy the very similar demand of 'the Kurdish national cause'. Though she identifies with "*Kurdishness*" and positions herself on behalf of the

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<sup>202</sup> Das refers to Taylor 2004, Meyer 2000, Schoenbrun 2003, and Das 2007 for this argument. For more detail see Veena Das, 2008.



fellow “Kurds”, she emphasizes that she keeps her children from engaging in the Kurdish political movement. Doing this, the participant calls the state, in a fundamental way, to account for its act of indoctrinating her child in a specific ideological-political position -that of Turkishness- in the presence of her refusal to do the same for the ‘oppositional’ ideological-political position -that of Kurdishness. An important point to note here is that the would-be target of her “hatred”, “if ever” exists, is not ‘Turks’ per se, but the “head of the state”, presumably not in person but as the holder of an institutional position in command of the existing order of things; still it is much on the condition of their “hatred” towards her/them-‘the Kurds’. Another expression signifying her position was her statement “*I do suffer for both sides*”. She also implied a classed position in her mention of bringing up her children with great difficulties mostly upon precarious labour, in comparison to people who have “*their children get private education*”. Thought together her objection appears to be against the privileged position of the dominant/dominating ones as opposed to the dominated ones; that is the ‘haves’ versus ‘have nots’. The above narrative, moreover, reveal many other tensions concerning the relation between the individual and the state/the political community; protection and risking; care and enforcement; peace and combat; ideas and practice; mind and body. It is also a tension between motherliness and masculinity. Between identifying with and sacrificing for. Between life and death. It reveals, on the one hand, the inconsistency between the maternal/familial economy on the descendant subject, while the state/national economy on the citizen/national subject, on the other. The individual be-long-ings are ordered by the state to be conferred to national be-long-ing. Yet nation, being far from providing a “horizontal comradeship”, as it is split by ethnicized tensions that are making as well as marking boundaries between peoples and bringing forth contesting belongings, proves to be unable to lay a ‘legitimate’ ground for such order. While the dilemma of the (conscript) soldier and the guerrilla siblings is out there as a deadly fact, any possibility of idealization of the national discourse of ‘we are all brothers’ is being torn apart.

Fraternity and brotherhood that national belonging is discursively argued to comprise are undermined through violations in the very name of ‘the nation’.

Moreover, the above participant’s ambivalent stance towards ‘Kurdishness’, “*surrendering to her fate for Kurds*”, on the one hand, and her simultaneous decisiveness not to let her children “*go that way*”, on the other hand, may be interpreted as that she identifies with a Kurdishness, somehow not totally overlapping with what is proposed by the Kurdish political movement. ‘Violations’ that very movement is perceived to have caused seem to play a role in this. Below is a narrative, whereby the above participant criticizes the violent protests that took place on February 15<sup>th</sup>, then the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PKK leader’s capture,<sup>203</sup> claiming that whom they actually harm are the ordinary Kurdish people trying to carry on their everyday lives that are already very vulnerable. Those lives are rendered even to more risk through everyday space becoming a space of violence in the battles between the protestors and the security forces; and through policies of ‘the Party’ enforcing all shopkeepers and businesses to close down on that day –a practice that has long become a convention implemented on each anniversary or protests alike. The participant, as it is clear below, sees such practice as a form of punishing their “*own people*”:

They had all the shutters of the shops closed, of the poor and the needy. There are people who are in need of single bread, 9-10 children at home, and you close

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<sup>203</sup> I was warned not to wander around much that day, and reminding started a few days earlier. I was told that the shutters would be closed down. During day time, when I was returning from an interview at the university, shops on one of two main streets (Ekinciler) at the city centre were open, though those at back streets were mostly closed. Yet, when I walked along the Dağkapı street late afternoon [a peripheral yet a politicized one in the old city] all, including the historical caravanserai, were closed except from a baker’s and a pharmacy’s just across the police station. I saw armoured cars and anti-riot forces with police officers on the corners. This is my first time that I feel fearful in the city; my 6<sup>th</sup> day in the city. Notes from field diary, 15.02.2011, Diyarbakır. A 17-year-old boy burnt himself to death in Fiskaya, a deprived neighbourhood of Diyarbakır, on the anniversary day to protest the capture of Abdullah Öcalan. I witnessed some shops being attacked, their windows being broken by stones thrown, by the crowd to protest the event. Upon my question I was told by a protestor that they were those shops that did not comply with the call to close down on the anniversary day. From post-field notes, Ankara

down my shutter, how dare you do that? If you want to close down the shutters, go and close the banks of the state, hospitals of the state, look I am telling it to myself, to my side, to my Kurdish people [*“millet”*] as well. My brother comes and closes down my door; am I not Kurd? If we will, we shall close the banks down, go to the major and protest there [in the municipality], why do you come to my door? You are running in the streets and my children are being harmed. So, the Kurds a little unfair I sometimes fin... [...] I mean they are my brothers, my brother shall not close my door down, shall go to close the hospitals down, banks down, private security places, for instance close down the courthouse. If they close them down, I will join them too, me too... [2. You are right, but can't do that, that is the state, cannot close it down.] I will do that; why, are Kurds only strong enough against me? Should be against them! [...] I went to the grocery's, the grocery's was closed down, no vegetables to buy, again it's me being harmed [...] It should not be like this, [you] should face the state not your own land, not your own people (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]).<sup>204</sup>

Finding *“Kurds a little unfair”* in their acts and policies in targeting the ordinary Kurdish people in their everyday spatial or economic belongings, the participant engages in a fundamental criticism of established power relations and underlines her position in its very individual existence. Her husband working as a welder in precarious conditions might have had a role in her opposition, as any loss of daily income would be vital in its consequences for the whole family. The neighbourhood she lives being turned into a space of violence intensifies not only the feeling of insecurity as it is seen in her words *“my daughters are grown up, believe me when my daughters go to school my heart goes pit-a-pat”*; but also the vulnerability of the economic conditions of the household, as she works at home, tailoring, face waxing or plucking eyebrows, yet her customers being afraid of coming to the neighbourhood, and complaining her if only she had a place at the city centre. What she says in this context is important: *“see I pay the penalty for what my own Kurds does, how shall I support them?”* (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]). Not only clash and conflict, but also various ‘criminal’ activities as drug selling, theft, and prostitution, which

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<sup>204</sup> The interview took place in the house of the 7th participant, where I went to interview her upon an arrangement of an association that had provided support for the family before. There were a group of women, mostly from her family, visiting her as she was sick. Thus it took place as a group interview, yet not all women participated equally. After many of them left, the house owner, eager to talk, continued to tell more about her self and family. Thus here I quote her more than others, yet still name it a group interview as it started to be so.

increased in Diyarbakır in general and in their deprived neighbourhood specifically, fuel the conditions of everyday violence. The perception that the public authorities have a hand in the increase of ‘criminality’ was revealed in another participant’s words stating “*because the state puts it amid the people in a way. It was not this much in the past. If they did not pave the way, where does this much drug come in?*” (F, early 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [2]). The same participant also referred to the same sort of violence in relation to its consequences over Kurdish identity: “*Young in Diyarbakır are on the edge of an abyss, abyss, abyss! Kurdishness or so has gone; why, because people started to engage in drugs, theft etc. Drugs are everywhere. Go and look, in each street...*” (F, early 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [2]). Being denied the means to adapt to their changing lives and a way of making livelihood, engaging in informal economies and extra-legal ways of life earning become almost a legitimate option as was articulated by a participant: “*Some people go astray when they are poor, or engage in some other jobs [prostitution and drugs selling]; both women and men*”. Pointing to the role of direct economic exclusion or of indirect structural violence, other expressions, importantly coming from relatively well-off and educated people, the former one managing a bookstore in the downtown and the latter being a lawyer, were as the following: “*the ultimate immorality is to criticize the morality of the poor*” (F, 44, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D24]); “*where there is poverty, misery, despair crime in any way turns out to be somewhat legitimate indeed*” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). Yet pointing to her will for inclusion in formal economic relations the above participant stated that “*Turks [equating to state] make me in need of my bread, yet they don’t give either. If only they opened a workshop for us, we could go with our daughters, tailoring... Why should have us sit in this poverty*”. Pulling our attention to the existing potential, realization of which is being hindered, she emphasized the perceived role of the state in the process stating “*if the state had helped us, we would be living at ease*”, (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]). An important point raised with regard to economic exclusion was the discriminative attitude of crop owners towards

Kurdish seasonal labourers then seen in different parts of Turkey. One participant, furious about the attitude, burst out:

People in the west said ‘Kurds shall not come’. They [Kurds] should have not gone then, should not have gone. Their [Turks’] crops should have lain on the ground; they would have seen it then. Thanks to Kurds their potatoes [and] tomatoes are [picked up] thanks to Kurds (F, early 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [2]).

What her anger implies is the active role of Kurdish seasonal agricultural labourers in economic cycle of production, harvesting, and marketing. Importantly, thus, Kurds in this narrative appear as not cumbersome burdens to the ‘state’, but as active ‘citizens’ fulfilling an important function in the domestic economic market. Thus, the participant converts the ‘ethnic’ seasonal worker body into a valuable asset for ‘the national economy’ as a whole, emphasizing the former’s ‘power’ and ‘agency’ in forming and deforming the latter. In other words, ‘Kurds’ in this case appear not simply as ‘victims’ of the seasonal labour migration process, but as ‘subjects’ actively taking part in the construction of larger political community via economic contribution. From such perspective, any exclusion of Kurdish labour from economic sphere is an interruption of the construction of the larger political community. Economic inclusion of Kurds visibly constructs be-long-ings at the wider ‘national’ level.

In many cases, the everyday life struggle of the poor was articulated revealing the role of the interplay between multiple forms of violations they faced; their insufficient or ineffective access to social relations to mobilize to their benefit; and their exclusion from economic sphere. Exclusion did not always or only come from the larger political community or central political authority, but from the very ‘inner’ community, in this case ‘Kurds’. Social capital in all its forms plays an important role in such inclusion-exclusion dynamic. Going through economic hardship, for instance, the family of the participant above (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, womengroup interview [7]) was aided a few times by a local association targeting the poor. But being told that they had grown up children

able to work, the aid in kind was stopped. Yet the participant, being in constant fear for her children and anxious to protect them, saw asthma of her two sons and lack of education of a daughter as an impediment for work. The social networks built through governmental [AKP], municipal [BDP], or any other organizations did not include her family; and this coming together with the insecurities of the space they have experienced in their locality led her to an alienated position. Criticizing the municipality and Kurdish politics for not being inclusive, she stated that “*neither immaterial nor material nothing [it] did for us, for our children. We are all Kurds, but Kurds are oppressing the Kurds. I am a citizen of yours, society of yours, I speak your language; you have to support our children, our youngsters*” (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]). “Kurds oppressing the Kurds” being an important expression indicating power relations, is revealing in terms of inner fissures within the ethnic community. Similarly below, the participant discloses her perception of being excluded on the ground of not being powerful enough, both in economic and social terms, thus implying a structure of power relations, whereby the pro-Kurdish party, simultaneously the municipal administration of the city, leaves the less powerful ‘outside’:

If Kurds are for their own Kurdish nation, own Kurdish people, shall our major be a guest at our home one evening, we know whom he visits, as daughters of a big family we know whom they are having *sohbet* [friendly talk] with... If my economic conditions were good, I had several children and offspring; they would come and be our guests. But not to my house; he wouldn't think that all these children now are our backings in the future, that they are our future. (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, womengroup interview[7])

The narrative above, indeed the whole interview with the seven women of different generations, all members of the same extended family, was informative in revealing many inner fissures experienced within the Kurdish society. Tensions defined along class-based differentiation, being local or migrant, or different ideological positions were uttered all through the interview. The women coming from a local “*big family*”, on maternal side, long inhabiting the old city centre of Diyarbakır have apparently gone through economic decline, especially

the daughters marrying to men of lower socio-economic status. Even apparent, in this line, was the tension between them and the wife of their brother, who they uttered “*became the daughter-in-law of the wealthy family*” (F, early 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, womengroup interview [2]). Their once decent neighbourhood,<sup>205</sup> some of which still lived in, also underwent a social and physical decay, gradually becoming a shelter for the newcomers through forced migration, web of underground economic activities and an area of everyday fight and conflict. Concerning the transformation of the neighbourhood, which was perceived to be an elegant one in the past where “*distinct people*” lived, who were “*well-behaved*” and became educated professionals of today some doctors being mentioned among them, turning more to a deprived neighbourhood where many poor people live currently - the “*nondescript people*”. The neighbourhood is perceived to “*not having the mercy upon it anymore*” [“*rahmetikalmadı*”], turning to an “*improper*” place with increased theft, selling/using drugs, and prostitution. Important in this narrative is that the transformation is perceived to come after forced migration period, with “*people who did not become village guards moving out of their villages*”, “*Kurds to tell more openly*”, “*entering into the neighbourhood*” (F, early 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview, [2]). In this narrative, these “*Kurds*”, “*coming from the village were blindfolded*”, and in the absence of employment opportunities instead of “*sitting in the house starving*” sought ways of making money even if by ‘improper’ means as they saw examples in the city. Though the participant was critical of what was happening, she seemed to blame a higher actor than individual Kurds with her reference to the forced migration of which mainly the state was responsible. Yet the narrative did not go without objection, with another woman asking “*may they be starting; were they obliged to[opt for the improper way]?*” (F, 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview[5]). The tension emerged gains more meaning when thought that the 2<sup>nd</sup> participant is the one most engaged in Kurdish politics, and passionately speaks for the cause of Kurds, blaming many including some members of her own family being hesitant to

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<sup>205</sup>Alipaşa neighbourhood in Sur area of the old city.

support the political movement effectively. This is articulated yet in another tension of “*paying the price [bedel ödemek]*” versus “*being tırşikçi [self-seeking]*”, to which I will turn below. It is important to note, moreover, that the above tension is one of the ‘newcomers’ versus the ‘locals’, which is clear in another participant’s emphasis stating “*we live here naturally [doğallık olarak burada oturuyoruz]. I live here, my brother, my uncle, children of my uncle. Our nature is in this neighbourhood*” (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]). The maternal family of three sisters (participants 2, 7, and 1) being a local family of Diyarbakır with no traceable roots in rural at least in recent past, and the relatively long period of inhabiting the neighbourhood (50 years for two generations) makes the emphasis on the ‘nature’ more clear. It seems that being local is equated to being ‘old’ and being ‘rooted’, which in turn are equated to having ‘high status’. Still, however, a multiplicity of violent experiences that individuals went through coming together with the violation of the everyday space of life led to the unexpected expression of a participant “*well, it has been 15 days that they sabotaged the telephone cables, there is nothing in this neighbourhood; now in truth I want it shall be demolished so that we go and be delivered*” (F, 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview[5]). Thus violence culminating in the neighbourhood in its current state seems to cause for her wish for a fundamental change in the very settlement itself, possibly reflecting on the then widespread hearsay that the neighbourhood would be demolished within the frame of a gentrification project.<sup>206</sup> This may be taken in line with the prediction of the literature on violence that the greater is the violence in a neighbourhood the less is the identification with, the sense of belonging to, the emotional involvement in, and commitment to the place and the collectivity, which would also hamper the development of social capital (Cardia, 2002). The tension between the locals and the migrants was also revealed in another participant’s claim that what made the neighbourhood bearable was only

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<sup>206</sup> There was the widespread mention at the time of the interview that Sur area including Alipaşa neighbourhood was planned to be gentrified in line with an urban transformation project. The neighbourhood was demolished intensively as a result of the military operations in 2017.



the bonding relations of the family, stating “*we don’t have any relation with the neighbours [the newcomers], no friendship, only as a family we love each other, what is left in this neighbourhood is that*” (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]). What the case reveals is that violence, lack of conditions to develop social capital, and economic exclusion are all intertwined in the process of de/forming be-long-ings, here the local and spatial ones, as well as the social and political ones.

Among the variously uttered tensions, many reflecting the socio-economic transformation that individuals and the space have undergone, were those defined along dichotomies of “*prosperity*” versus “*poverty*”; “*having inherited wealth*” versus “*recently becoming rich*”; “*paying the price for*” versus “*skimming off*”; “*distinct people*” versus “*nondescript people*”. Of the dichotomous pairs, the former usually referred to the urban local population once having the economic and cultural capital, while the latter mostly referred to rural migrant population ended up in the city devoid of any such capitals. Tensions, indicating the inner fissures of a collectivity whereby identity politics and nationalistic discourses tend to gloss over (Anthias, 2005), are important to grasp multiplicity of be-long-ings within the same ‘community’, which otherwise is risked to be seen as homogeneous. More lively details of those fissures came from the participant [7], the homeowner, after all visitors had left. As I stood up with her permission to leave, thinking that we have finished the interview properly, she eagerly continued to talk some 10 minutes more as I was standing and as she was lying sick in her bed. She mentioned those “*Tırşikçi*” people, the adjective being used for people who are thought to hypocritically align with power holders and act merely for their self interest. She gave an example of a man in the neighbourhood who “*goes and does like this [V sign] when there is a [protest] march, but when the headman [muhtar] comes [to give out governmental aid] he asks ‘do you have my ID?’, for his papers are inside [given to the officers to get aid]*”. Finding the two acts, protesting against the state and waiting for the aid it delivers, at odds with each other, she quoted the

dialog between herself and the man: “‘Well, you went to the march I saw it!’ He says ‘well the state gives it; you will eat the state property’”. She was furious about the comment and objected it stating “you shall not! If you are a Kurd, you shall not eat the state property!” (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]). She does not only point at the shifting ground of alignments with the ‘state’ and with the ‘Kurdish politics’, but also show that trust or distrust towards the state and the Kurdish municipalities/the movement do not always exclude one another. People may opt for selective alignments to secure their interests and well-being. The humiliating label “*Tırşikçi*”, moreover, indicates how social boundaries are constructed within the frame of power relations. Indeed, details of many occasions that the participant was desperately eager to tell about revealed much about the dynamics of social and economic inclusion or exclusion playing important role in forming belongings. Not being included in the loop of the Kurdish municipal resources, the participant’s family wasn’t included in the networks provided by the government either. They were not delivered coal,<sup>207</sup> for instance, on the ground that they had social security. She stated that “they delivered coal to everyone [...]the people they had delivered sold the coal, because they have central heating at home”;while “we use stove to heat”, “they don’t deliver to us. But, I don’t get security salary; it’s only for the hospital” (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]). Indeed her social insurance was a ‘fake’ one as her husband was registered as a construct labourer by his brother -the employer- for the employment to get the social security payments. This was a highly common experience I encountered among the poor people who mostly had no chance but accept precarious conditions of work. In many cases, individuals stated that their green cards were cancelled by the public authorities as they appeared to have got an insured job, though the insurance was only a first day trick of the employers to meet the legal criteria for employing a worker, which they immediately cancelled once the legal barrier

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<sup>207</sup> ‘Coal delivery’ is a practice of social support supposedly for the poor undertaken by the public authorities.

was overcome. Exclusion from secure labour market conditions certainly deforms be-long-ings leading loss of trust in institutions and hope in future.

In her ideal for her children *“to get education, for them to be free and not like [her]”*, the participant was driven from pillar to post to find some support, including the governor, metropolitan municipality, Sur [district] municipality; yet all her attempts were failed. She was not allowed to speak to the majors, for instance, and none provided any support. Neither could she get a respond to her plea for financial support to send her daughter to study at girls training high school in the city. The daughter earned the right to study at the school, but because the school was far from their neighbourhood the family could not effort the school service or the pocket money for the daughter. The participant *“begged to the teacher”* fruitlessly. Then she *“went to the party, the party that [she] voted for, AK party”* as she knew a party official, who was a childhood friend from the same neighbourhood; yet she could achieve nothing but a suggestion to send her daughter to the school in the neighbourhood, which she *“did not want because they sell drugs there”* and a bare promise stating *“you go I will take care”*. He did not. For another daughter who was a high school graduate, she *“went to governorship for three times”*, asking *“my governor I don’t have the financial conditions, my child wants to get education, may you help my child for her to study at the university? Help my daughter”*. Yet *“the governor did not help, he said ‘give us your address and go now, we will call you’, he did not call”*. Her alienation being two-sided, she states *“we haven’t seen any good from either side; we are in misery in our own land”* (F, late 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]). Her fruitless search to get some financial support for the education of her children should be interpreted as a consequence of ineffective social policy making to provide sufficient social services concerning poverty, education, or other basics to provide for a minimum of person’s quality of life. In the absence of necessary institutional organization, individual social relations may turn to be the only option to find support, however a burdensome endeavour it could be; yet if they do not have those either they are usually all alone. The

participant's definition of herself being "*a bird nesting on a tree, trying to save her children [...] to make them grow and make fly*" points at the intensity of her perception of loneliness, and being folded onto her own family only, as "*a servant of God*" ["*Allahinkulu*"]. Extreme feeling of insecurity and anticipation of being maltreated only adds to that perception and leaves no place to be 'safe' as she states "*now even if I could have provided for schooling of my children and send them away*<sup>208</sup> [*dışarıya*"], *my heart will not be at ease, because my state does not provide for that trust*". Distrustful both to Turkish and Kurdish politics, what she prospects for her children is their being "*comfortable*" ["*rahatlık*"] that implying economic wealth, inclusion, social rights, and being free from violation, which she believes European Union could provide for. The below narrative is important in pointing at tensions experienced at individual level. Even longing for comfort for her children led to an apologetic manner in her articulation, which itself discloses a fundamental tension between the individual position and collective identity.

We haven't seen those conditions, I would want my children see them. Well, do not condemn me, I have endured these pains, I would want my children be comfortable, but shall never forget their mother tongue. Our language is ours, our blood is ours. Our blood was shed too much, our blood has been a stain on the ground, it is difficult to remove those stains to tell it openly, but I don't support anyone either, neither Kurds, nor Turks I support. All are [working] for their own advantage, all for themselves. (F, late-40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Women Group Interview [7]).

Her asking for not being "*condemned*" for her wish for 'comfort' for her children is revealing in terms of formations of be-long-ings. She probably thought her very individual expectation would sound too 'egoistic' in an atmosphere where increasingly everything was articulated in the language of collectivity; individual subjectivity is melted into 'collective' or at least there is the impression that it has been so; and where anything collective or ethnic has started to be dignified, be them Kurdish politics, Kurdish collective action, Kurdish memory, Kurdish fate, or Kurdish culture. She still engages with 'Kurdishness' in her own way in

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<sup>208</sup> Anywhere outside Diyarbakır.

embracing not only its mother tongue and the culture by that means, but also the suffering it has gone through and by that means the collective memory. Yet, she keeps distant from engaging in Kurdish politics in any way. Despite this, as she is estranged from Turkish political community and the state, the ‘solution’ seems to her as having a state own their own, she stating:

If ever we had our state in our language, we would go and bind ourselves with it. If you are Kurd you will follow the Kurd, if Turk will stay with the Turk. This Erdoğan [then prime minister] comes and asks, then they shall tell him to give us a state, we shall know where we are. (F, late-40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7])

Asking for a [Kurdish] state from the [Turkish] state itself being ironical, she clarifies the ground for her demand in the following: “*then we may have trust in our leader [...], trust in our own thing. One pulls us over there, the other here... Wherever we go, one there devastates us indeed*” (F, late-40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [7]). Longing for a state of their own in this case seems to be much related with a desire to know one’s position, to trust, to be free from violation, to be included, and to live at ease, which in all seems to stand for a desire to belong rather than a nationalistic projection per se. It is much like a wish for ‘a just father’ than for autonomy in itself. What “Kurdistan” meant for them, for instance, was articulated in the words “*we want our rights, we want not to be oppressed*”; “*we want our children are not wretched*”; “*may our children not die of drugs in desolate places*”; “*we want something Kurd*”; “*we want a state; that we exist*” (F, early-40s, 30s, late-40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [2], [1], [7]). Otherwise, for instance, when asked about the Kurds of Iran, Iraq or Syria, they replied that under such a state they would like to come together with others only if their “*ideas were the same*” and if they “*get along well*” with each other (F, early-40s, 30s, late-40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır, women group interview [2], [1], [7]).

Concerning the inner fissures of collectivity were also mentioned the distrust among Kurds towards each other, high competition, and jealousy towards one

who have stepped forward economically or socially, indicating somewhat inadequate solidarity among Kurds. One (M, 23, Kurd, from Diyarbakır)<sup>209</sup> recalled, for instance, her mother saying in Kurmanji “*bavête ji hamberête*” [even your father is your rival], and stated “*Kurds liken themselves to kêw [partridge] for we peach against each other*”; the other (M, 29, Kurd, Mardin)<sup>210</sup> referred to the same perception quoting someone he heard saying “*Kurds are a partridge tribe*”, for “*the partridge is the enemy of its own progeny; continuous competition... entraps the other partridge and so...*”. Importantly, in these cases the phenomenon was often contrasted to Turks, who were perceived to have ‘stronger social ties’, ‘solidarity’, are ‘cooperative’ in their relations and ‘help each other’. Regardless of its factuality, the perception gives a clue about the relation between social capital and power relations, about how dominant majority society is perceived to construct itself through dense, mutual, trusting relations whereas the minority society lacks that. Simultaneously, however, the perception of a modern, isolated individual in the West was put vis-à-vis the strong community feeling and close bonds in the East, which were mostly dignified as elements constructing the community. Contradictory they may seem though, the emphasis on strong ties among Turks may be grasped as a contextual phenomenon, which is perceived to escalate in the face of the ‘other’, here apparently Kurds.

To conclude, in this part was defined a violent order of things that rendered many individuals to position of being in the limbo as they could not take part, nor sided with any position they were suggested by opposing power structures. They were criminalized subjects, on the one hand, or denied agency by the very fellow members of their community, on the other. A visible tension between individual existence and collective being often imbued lives of many. The latter, however, was not a homogeneous one but woven through inner fissures leading

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<sup>209</sup>Pilot interview, 21.10.2010, Ankara.

<sup>210</sup> Informal group interview with four young men at their late 20s, early 30s

to variation in formation of be-long-ings. Still, it was clear in the above many cases that violence became a mediator of construction and deconstruction of subject positions and belongings for those who experience it; that it forged violated belongings. Mobilization of available social relations for one's benefit and economic inclusion were also important dynamics in the process. Important to note that gendered context of violent belongings emerged as another important dimension of 'national' subject formations for the participants and its role will be analyzed in the following part below.

#### **4.4. *Collecdividual and the Helical Memory of Violations: Individual Embodiment of Collective Be-long-ings and the Gendered Violent Contexts***

It has been well documented that gender is an important dimension of nationalist discourses, national belonging and the larger political context, both in terms of masculine and militarist constructions of national identity; and of women's politics of belonging. Yuval-Davis (2003) identifies an inherent paradox in women's positioning both as 'symbols' and 'others' of the collectivity; as they are seen both as signifiers of the collectivity's honour, in the defence of which nations go to war, and are subject to various forms of control in the name of culture and tradition. Understanding the relation between gender and belonging is critical in grasping what Caroline Daly (2011) mentions the political significance of the female body, both in terms of control over the sexual and reproductive functions of women, and as a material and symbolic arena of political demarcation and a political battleground itself. Moreover, the relation between conforming to the gender norms of any collectivity and belonging to that very collectivity is a critical one (Anthias, 2005).

Experiences of violence at gendered contexts and of sexualized violence were recurrent in many narratives in different ways. For the purposes of this chapter, in this part I will specifically refer to those cases of such violence whose perpetrator is perceived to be the state, or the related actors. I will be referring to

other cases, as in domestic/intimate violence and collective violence, as they emerge in the narratives. Doing this, I aim to point at the construction and reconstruction of femininities and masculinities; of meanings; of bodies and minds; of order and ordinary; as well as at the relation between such [re]constructions and gendered belongings within the context of political community, the nation, and the state.

I have to note that although I did not ask any specific questions on sexualized violence or the gendered contexts of the violent experiences, narratives to which I will be referring in this part came out during the interviews by the initiation of the participants themselves. This I find very valuable since the subject is so sensitive to be brought about in any context.<sup>211</sup> This being the case, however, it does not mean that those narratives were articulated effortlessly by the participants. On the contrary, expression of those often traumatic memories was difficult, yet was potent to reveal rich meanings concerning be-long-ings.

A participant, whose family was forced to migrate from their village in Muş and have settled in Urfa in 1994, recollected her personal experience visibly in a tense voice and manners:

Sometimes friends want to speak on these, I say I lived through all of them, I don't ever... don't talk about it while I am here [in a bitter smile]. We have seen and lived through. In our little body, we were even tortured! I was 14, almo... still a child, we were child, please excuse me I was on my period, having it for two years then. They had put me on the snow, my hair so long... my mother cared so well for my hair. They were saying 'you slut, you whore, you have harboured them today'. But we did not, that was a slander! Even if we had done...We did not, but we shall do hereafter. Because of this assault we will do. We did not, but we will do! Well, don't know, I was stronger then. If you ask now [in an uncomfortable laugh] I don't have strength! Perhaps those years have still their affect on me. Sometimes as I speak I shake. I can't help it. Why are these happening? Why did they do this to our little bodies? (F, 36, Kurd, Urfa, FG3 [K1])

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<sup>211</sup> Researches like Aras (2009) and Geerse (2010) mentioned the difficulties they faced to get their participants' experience of sexual violence in their respective researches.



It is important to note that the participant's experience of violence both as a witness and a 'victim', is articulated in a language disclosing an oscillation between the subject positions of "I/my" and "we/our". There is also a tension between being "still a child" and being 'a woman' implied in the excuse for breaking the perceived taboo of the womanly experience of menstruation. There is also an observable tension in her narration about her female body, so well-cared and beautified in the private intimacy of her personal domestic life, and her being exposed to male violence, both physical and symbolic, of a public figure, the soldier, who humiliated her in his hailing. The latter act could be seen as an attempt to cast her out of the 'acceptable' subjecthood of the woman citizen and simultaneously condemning the community she belongs to with 'dishonour'. It is important to note, moreover, that through her choice of subject expressions like "our little body" and "we were tortured", she seems to incorporate her personal experience in the collective experience of violence. In both discursive acts of the soldier and of herself, thus, her body becomes a part of the collective body. "Male violence fused with political dominance" (Aretxaga, 1997), thus becomes a marker not only of gendered positions, but also of ethnicized and politicized positions. Female body becomes a space to violate the community and collective identity of Kurdishness. The switch between the personal and the collective is also clear in the following articulation of the participant, who was anxious and drained upon her witnesses and experiences: "*I am fearful, I am fearful indeed! Does that still haunt me? For years haven't achieve.., yet I have achieved much, now we are out in the streets. Yet it was paid for. Much price has been paid for all this*"(F, 36, Kurd, Urfa, FG3 [K1]). With the subject position being blurred between "we" and "I" the participant seems to link individual self to the collectivity. 'Non-achievement', the failure whose subject was veiled yet possibly implying the individual, is being linked to the individual/collective 'achievement' of 'being out in the street' which was earned through 'the price paid for'. Who paid for all appears as the collectivity embodied by the individual or the individual in the name of the collectivity. Be-long-ings are reformed through a re-articulation of the relation between the individual and the collective.

Reserving the question whether any absolute individual position is possible outside of the collective, my argument is that with the merge of individual subjectivity into the collective one, be it in achievement, suffering, practice, or memory, what emerges is a new form of subjecthood: *collecdividual*.

The argument goes that grasping the sites and mechanisms through which the link between the individual and collective has been established is important in terms of understanding the making and unmaking of belongings. The discourse of ‘paying price for’ [*bedel ödemek*], which has become much widespread in Kurdish political movement, and widely expressed during this research, is one such mechanism. Connoted by the discourse are basically the lost lives, devastating violent experiences, pain and suffering that ‘Kurds’ have gone through. The price, accordingly, has been paid for the ‘liberty’, ‘equality’, ‘rights’ and ‘recognition’ of Kurds. Being “*out in the streets*” as both a sign of struggle and achievement is gained through such ‘price paying’, as appears in the above narrative. The discourse, I believe, could be grasped within the context that Begoña Aretxaga (1997) conceptualized the experience of the young Armagh women in Ireland. In her words, the Armagh women “conceptualized their physical and psychological pain within the parameters of a religious ethic of salvation acting in the political arena” and saw “their pain as requisite to saving Ireland from colonization and re-establishing a just and equal society in a reunited Irish land” (Aretxaga, 1997: 142). Her view of such ethics of salvation, “as an interpretive language for pain, which would otherwise be meaningless” (Aretxaga 1997: 142) provides a frame for understanding the discourse of ‘paying price’, though not much from within religious parameters in this case, but from within nationalistic parameters, that’s speaking in the name of Kurdish ‘nation’. Here, I argue, the discourse of ‘paying price’ serves within an ethics of liberation/attainment that acts as an interpretive language for pain and loss, and help attributing ‘meaning’ to it. The discourse, through such ethics, links the individual loss to the collective, in other words to a higher order of goal and gain.

The phenomenon could also be thought with reference to Aletta Norval's (2006: 231) conceptualization of "political grammars" that is "those horizons delimiting what is possible in any given context", grasping the role of and changes in which is important for us to understand subject formations. Accordingly, I argue that language and space that Kurdish political movement creates bring changes in political grammars available for Kurdish citizens in Turkey. Having "*achieved much*" and being "*out in the streets*", as the participant above emphasized, point at such changes in political grammars of Kurdish subjecthood. As many cases mentioned in this chapter reveal, a pattern most commonly emerging in the face of state violence is being involved, discursively or practically, in the political grammar that Kurdish politics provide for. In other words, the space set by the Kurdish political grammar makes it possible for increasing numbers of people to rearticulate their be-long-ings however reactively formed against the violations of the so far dominant political grammar in Turkey. Yet, such involvement is not automatic for each and every Kurd who has been exposed to violation as I will clarify below. Still important to underline in terms of reactive formations of belonging and the individual-collective link is the above participant's furious expression concerning the alleged charge of having harboured the Kurdish armed organization: "*We did not, but we shall do hereafter. Because of this assault we will do. We did not, but we will do!*" Reactive formations of belongings appear, in this research, to be the most direct corollary of the experience of political violence, especially when it is experienced directly by the individual herself. Thus, alienation from what Turkishness stands for -here the state- is usually accompanied by further solidification and politicization of Kurdish identity.

Another discourse that plays an important role in establishing the link between violent experiences of the individual and the collectivity, as well as in formations of collective belonging is that of "*hav[ing] seen and lived through*" the violence, which as appears in the above narrative is perceived to constitute a sharp distinction to simply "*talking on the issue*". The discourse of 'having seen and lived through' I argue, implies here, as in many other cases, 'performative

formations of belonging'; and the link between the individual and the collective is established through such performative belongings. The discourse, connoting violent experience, has also its role in constructing boundaries between those who haven't gone through similar violent experiences even if they may be 'critical of' them, or else were perceived to be 'responsible for', 'indifferent to', or 'in denial of' those experiences. Being about subjectivity and what the 'political grammar' allows for, the emphasis on '*having lived through*' could be understood as indicating that many Kurds react from within a different political grammar anymore that does not fully share that of Turkishness in its current form.

Yet there were other, more routine experiences of gendered violence against women mentioned mostly by the young women during the interviews. Often being in the form of verbal abuse, they were perpetrated by those who occupy positions in the security forces, thus were perceived to be representatives of the state. Among examples are the questions of "*do you have single sister at home*" and "*are you single*" directed to a participant who visited the police station to apply for the procedures for she had lost her identity card and importantly when she was left alone in the station by her father and brother (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Focus Group I, [1]); the verbal abuse of the soldier asking "*do you have a sweetheart*" to a participant during her visit to a imprisoned family member (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1, [5]); or the common experiences of police verbal abuse simply as they wander in the street. Being very much aware that what they experience is "*harassment*", the common perception is that they have nothing to do, which is apparent in their questions of "*who would you report to whom?*" (F, 21, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Focus Group I [2]), "*will you report the state to the state?*" (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Focus Group I [1]); "*is there anyone to whom to report them?*" and "*besides is your reporting taken into account in here?*" (M, 23, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [6]). Responding the verbal assault back in a verbal way is out of question as one noted: "*if I curse at the*

*police I would be cursing to the state and that state will immediately imprison me”* (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Focus Group I [1]).

The experiences above may seem trivial compared to gross violations and in various contexts they might well be experienced by other women regardless of their ethnic identity or geographic location. Important to see in these cases, however, is that every minute detail of mistreatment and injustice whether lived directly by the individual or others are constantly added up, by each narrator, to a pool of memory, which becomes common and shared in solidifying the atmosphere of intense distrust towards state institutions. That pool of memories plays a huge role in defining and underlining the boundaries that are constructed on an everyday basis. Boundaries delimit Kurdishness, as memories as well as bodies are reconstructed. This indeed is related to what I call *helical memory* basically to refer to each bit of violent experience adding up to the collective memory in a way turning into a self-sustaining cycle that merges all in one and negates time and space other than Kurdishness as the eternal being. I will be elaborating on the phenomenon within others contexts in the following pages.

Gendered violence should not only be taken as violence against women, but against men as well. It is not only the femininities but alsomasculinites being formed. It is an urgent question where to “locate the space for making visible, and in which histories do we inscribe, the violence done to male bodies and its relationship to masculinity, male honour, communality and nationality” (Daiya, 2008: 80) amid the relatively well studied violence against women in the context of nation and community. Daiya argues that “masculinity and men as gendered subjects can also become critical sites for the symbolization of nationality and belonging” and that “it is imperative to examine the construction of both masculinity and femininity together in the articulation of cultural and national belonging in public and political discourse” (Daiya, 2008: 42).

Not only the witness and experience, but also a memory of violations being transmitted through generations came to fore during the interviews. “*All our life state has humiliated us; it had our father, had our grandfather*” (F, 45, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D6]) was one such expression of transmission. In another, “*exploitation*”, “*insult of honour*”, “*torture*” “*bite on the feet [falaka]*” were terms used to define what was heard from elders, a “*brutality*” that “*nobody could tell anything about their trouble to each other*” yet today “*is not being forgotten*” (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3]). Pointing at ways of dealing with the violent experience, the participant recollected that “*the men had dressed up in women’s clothes, covered heads, dressed like women so that the soldier wouldn’t interfere, not chastise*”, (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3]). Yet in another case, a participant articulated the reason for her family to move from village<sup>212</sup> to Diyarbakır city in 1970s as to be able to protect her elder brother, the only son of the family, who then upon completion of military service turned to the village. Her definition of the situation whereby the village was often raided by the military stating “*it was again the military problem as it is now*” turns upside down the official discourse, which puts it as a “*terror problem*”, and is important in terms of understanding the meanings people attribute in their own life worlds. ‘The only son’ being protected from violence, on the other hand, gives clue about the gendered contexts of belongings within power relations.

Exposure of body and sexuality in violent contexts provide us with multilayered meanings I suppose. It is not only the body but also the mind that is being targeted at. It is visible that violence coming from the state apparatuses did not only cause bodily pain, loss, and deprivation for the individuals, but also imposed symbolic violence, having a claim of command on something more subtle, speaking to the sphere of meanings, of values, of privacy, of the personality and autonomy of the individual. Arguably the victims are targeted to be depersonalized and relegated to mere bodies, operating mechanically in the full command of the violator. The latter, symbolically puts a claim of potency on

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<sup>212</sup>A village of Eğil, Diyarbakır.

doing anything to the depersonalized body and have it done anything it wills to be done. Violent processes seem to aim at producing impotent minds, as well as impotent bodies. Moreover, both the body and the mind become sites of boundary making. Thus, it is not merely about the immediate individual being inflicted pain, but also the social boundaries of domination and power being reconstructed. It is not only the individual free will and autonomy, but also the social and symbolic structure of meanings that are at stake. The references being made to ‘*our honour*’ regarding women body, for instance, is important in this context. Following Cons’ argument,<sup>213</sup> it could be stated that it “mark[s] the bodies of women both as belongings (objects within the political and spatial economy of territory) and belonging (symbols of nation and community in need of protection, preservation, and purity)”; women, thus, being “caught-up within multiple and violent politics of possession and inclusion” (Cons, 2012: 546-547). Such discourse, indeed, captures both the women and the men in violent makings of competing patriarchal orders, however opposing they may seem to be.

Critical in terms of gendered context of belongings is that Turkish state is perceived and experienced as the holder of the masculine order and ordinariness in its acts and deeds. Intruding, punishing, dominating, depriving and violating, the state, by implication Turkish nation and nationness, were imagined mostly in a context of masculine order of things. Interesting with regard to such perception is its reflection in the trivial scenes of everyday life. Male order in the public and the private comes to mirror each other in such reflections. An overt expression of such perception came in analogy uttered by a participant stating: “*her spouse beats her, she says ‘I’ll divorce you’, he neither permits it. Goes and kills his spouse in her father’s house. This is just what we live!*” (F, late 40s, Kurd, Mardin [M9]). The analogy of the Kurds being the beaten wife by the state, the cruel husband, establishes a relation between domestic gendered violence, and political violence, according status of victimhood to the female/the minority. Yet

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<sup>213</sup> The specific context of the argument is the case of Dahagram, a Pakistani enclave in Indo-Bangladeshi border then East Pakistan (Cons, 2012).

another was mentioned in an expert interview<sup>214</sup> in Diyarbakır when the institutional official referred to a woman, who was an applicant of the institution and once said: “*My husband is not different from the AKP, the state*”. Her husband was unemployed, did not earn money, exposed physical violence to her, and even when at times he worked as a construction worker he still did not give her even a bit of what he earned. The woman smoked, for instance, but the man did not give money for her to buy cigarettes. The official of the cooperative stated that she did not have a TV at home, so the woman’s discourse was not affected by it. In her perception, multiple forms of physical and economic violence she experienced at home were echoing the structural and political violence she and many others experienced ‘outside’. The husband, as a domestic figure, and the state/the government, as public figures, resembled each other in their limiting, uncaring, deteriorating attitude towards the downtrodden wife/the citizens, if not specifically the Kurdish people. Many nationalistic discourses establish “a static equivalence of nation, femininity and vulnerability” (Probyn, 1997). Yet her criticism from within her personal experience importantly challenges such equivalence evenly targeting patriarchal powers both of the domestic and public, of the local and the central, and of the Kurdish and the Turkish. Her agency, seeking employment with support of the mentioned institution, might well be seen as an effort to overcome her vulnerable position. Thus, her active involvement in taking responsibility of her life also goes beyond any frame fixing her as a ‘defenceless female’ in the face of the patriarchal order of things.

It is important to note, moreover, that in many cases it became apparent that femininities and masculinities were being redefined amid the re/constructions of Kurdish belongings; and the mediating role of violence in gendered contexts of

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<sup>214</sup> It was conducted at a Women Cooperative that was specializing in their effort to supply for women employment; and provide for various training and vocational courses for women, like mass education, law, computer, health, and women empowerment. From the notes of the interview with an official of the Cooperative, February 2011, Diyarbakır.



everyday life was crucial in such redefinitions. Women, whose spouses were jailed, tortured, or being killed, recollected ‘their struggle’ to stand on their own feet, taking care of their children and becoming political subjects in the process. Violation in these experiences was in multiple forms, mostly in political, structural, and domestic. Search for economic security and mobilization of social relations had, too, played determining roles in those processes. Revealing in such context was the narrative of a participant (F, 46, Kurd, Mardin [M5]), who married when only a child at her 14, whereby she lived with the family-in-law at the beginning, on which she commented “*as if I was not the bride, but a slave! It was a shame if you went out; you are a woman don’t have any right, just do the housework!*” Her life, however, was transformed into a process of struggle, empowerment, activism, and politicization, with her spouse’s arrestment numerous times and consequent long-term imprisonment. In the process, she engaged in active pro-Kurdish party politics, where she “*worked [for the Party voluntarily] during the day without getting money and lace needled in the night [sighs]*” to make money. Thus she “*struggled*” to feed her seven children on handicrafts as she also “*looked after the prison[er]*”. As she engaged in politics and became a part of the provincial administration of “*the party*”, she was also introduced into new social networks. In her case, husband’s absence for a ‘just cause’ in which she could also legitimately take part and become an ‘agent’ transformed her very position being limited to violation of patriarchal social and marital structures and poverty into one where she could mobilize newly accessed social relations turning them into economic capital, and to other sources of information, security, and solidarity. Now she engaged actively in others’ [Kurds’] problems as part of the party politics. Mentioning “*thousands of people*” in destitute conditions of poverty, illness, unemployment and isolation, she referred to specific cases, especially of women, that she came across during her political activities and criticized the state policies investing in military hardware rather than in bettering those conditions: “*and the state constantly invests in arms, shoots the money [the bullet and artillery] in the mountains, for how long? How will it be? And Kurds are all willing for peace!*” (F, 46, Kurd,

Mardin [M5]). The emphasis on state investing in arms reminds the argument that “every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed” (Eisenhower, as cited in Farmer, 2010: 297). Direct violence being thus related to indirect violence, violation is being doubled. There is also the problem that through investing in arms “resources are channelled away from constructive efforts to bring the actual closer to the potential” (Galtung, 1969: 169). In this line, another point to the violent structural conditions impeding the realization of the social and human potential was the following expression:

If we had remained ignorant send us educators! I wouldn't speak Turkish on many occasions, why you don't know, I don't know, why it is not my fault, not knowing is not my lack; it is the failure of the state. Rather than constructing gendarmerie stations it should have constructed schools! Well, perhaps there were some, it was my father who did not send me to school, but I still think that it was the deficiency of the state, because if the state had constructed more, there would be more [people to go to school]. There are thousands like me. If there was [a school] in each village, definitely there would be 3 more people to go to school, but [instead] there was a gendarmerie station in each village. (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3])

Speaking indeed very fluent Turkish, her opting for not speaking it on every occasion is out of her reaction to what she sees was responsible for many people's lack of education like her, the state. In such perspective, the state not having invested for the good of its citizens had caused the limiting structural conditions hindering life chances for many people of the region. In a similar vein, structural limits were mentioned by another participant<sup>215</sup> who stated that there were problems with adequate teachers and schools in the region, as well as economic hardship of people to afford schooling for their children who rather struggled with hunger and were in need of support by the state as they lacked the necessary sources. Such conditions, in his grasp, negated any discourse of the existence of equality of opportunity like “*you can also learn, no obstacles before you*” which is uttered in case of schooling. His emphasis stating “*we are citizens,*

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<sup>215</sup> Informal group interview, participant [8], Diyarbakır, February 2011

*we want to live together*” is important to underline that his and many others’ expectation is often making citizenship rights functional through structural investments to bring the actual closer to the potential.

Concerning the gendered context, important to note is that in many cases gendered roles of women are deconstructed via political engagement. Their belongings are gendered as well as ethnicized through their experience of structural and political violation, economic exclusion, and mobilization of new social networks. The narrative below is a direct expression of such reconstruction:

Mardin is beautiful indeed, social, they know everything, have the courage, the women! Women in Mardin...For sure we have learnt here, this Kurdish problem, the woman has progressed a lot, knows anymore. Well, wants liberation; wants it but still does not have the ... Yet the men won’t permit for sure. I, personally, am so. I’ve broken free of chains. I am now free. (F, 46, Kurd, Mardin [M5])

In the above narrative many expressions point at construction of gendered, spatialized, and ethnicized belongings. Expressions about the locality being identified with the sociality and courage of Kurdish women, their learning about the Kurdish problem, and will for liberation both from domestic patriarchal chains and from public political chains are manifestations of such construction. Importantly, political participation in some cases has been defined as “an important indicator of inclusive social capital” “particularly as it relates to empowerment, human development and socially beneficial collective action”(The Ties that Bind, 2009: 10). Here as well, the civic engagement of the daughter and mother, and many other women participating in the activities of various associations and foundations, as also will be pointed also in the case of Arab women, could be interpreted in line with the above argument. Increasing social capital by way of civic engagement, they get access to many resources, not only social but also economic. Yet, the mention of “*the men’s permit*” still reveals a tension concerning the patriarchal structures in the process of women empowerment. The very same tension is also referred by the participant’s

daughter who stated that her father can well scold her mother in times of ‘crisis’: “do not forget, you are the woman and I am the man”. Describing her long-imprisoned father, as one “having improved himself a lot, like a history book” and who “becomes one of the most perfect democrats within a [social] gathering”; she stressed, however, that he “is ‘the man’ at home when there is no one else [from outside the household]”. As if revealing a ‘secret’ she stated “it is not as it appears to be” (F, 26, Kurd, Mardin [M1]). Her personal experience of “liberation, self-expression, autonomy, and not submitting to the men’s authority”, that she believes she gained when she was for long periods outside home [Mardin and family] due to her political engagement [with the then DTP]. Her political experience of engaging with the problems of Kurdish women and their ‘liberation’ led to contradiction with her experience of her father dealing with her mother. This causing her “fear” of facing a similar situation personally, she has “not yet got married at this age” (F, 26, Kurd, Mardin [M1]). The reason for quitting her party commitments is revealing in terms of a similar tension. She left “the women movement”, because she faced lots of occasions she could not express herself to others clearly and saw the paradoxes within; coming to see that the women activists “themselves having problems, were not in the position or did not have the capacity to give a hand to other women, to really understand and solve their problems” (F, 26, Kurd, Mardin [M1]). Still, important in revealing the relation between individual empowerment and inclusive social capital through political participation as mentioned above, was the continuing emphasis of the participant on women equality and her continuing relation with a women’s association, a governmental one to be seen paradoxical at once. Moreover, she seemed to have built her life on her personal experiences, staying in Istanbul for a few years where she managed a coiffeur’s with her cousin (daughter of aunt) and establishing her own enterprise upon returning to Mardin despite her family’s initial objection. She was getting vocational training at the time of the interview, and doing very well at her work.

The experiences of ‘self-liberation’ of both the mother and the daughter could be rethought within the context of the Kurdish political movement’s discourse on women, family, nation and liberation as Handan Çağlayan (2010) analyses it. She argues that the ‘new identity’<sup>216</sup> that such discourse projects will be realized through collective action, upon the replacement of the past family, past man and the past woman with the ‘new family’, ‘new woman’ and the ‘new man’ (Çağlayan, 2010: 101-102). Yet, she notes, rather than being one that would democratize the family within everyday life, the criticism, charged with symbolic meanings, sees instead the ‘new family’ as the projected ‘new nation’. Accordingly, it defines the position of ‘new woman’ and the ‘real man’ as against the old “slave woman” and “pseudo men” not as positions to be reached within the ordinary flow of everyday life, but as targets to be achieved and won through taking part in the family of the Party and fighting the hard battle for creation of the great family, the Nation (Çağlayan, 2010: 112). The cases of the two participants above might be thought in this context. They seem to have taken over the call for collective action and the fight for the nation, as they both engaged in Kurdish politics and ‘transformed’ themselves to ‘new women’. Yet the process was not always as smooth as the political discourse projected. Their experiences illustrate that transformation does not take place without obstacles as revealed by the reactions of the man, the husband and the father, himself an ‘actor’ of that very politics. Grasping the women’s self-expressed ‘liberation’ through their agency in public space, which is also expected to transform their domestic space, is important. Yet, as the nation is projected to be the new domestic space, the great family, there lingers the fundamental question: the extent to which such ‘liberation’ could be understood as an individual ‘emancipation’ in the very existence of the politics of identity and the venture of constructing a ‘new nation’ with its ‘new’ forms of dominating and subjugating

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<sup>216</sup> Çağlayan (2010) notes that the discourse turned from one depicting women as ‘slaves to be liberated’ as was in 1980s, to one where women were seen as the ‘agents of liberation’ in 1990s. In its projection of the formation of a new Kurdish identity the changing discourse, she argues, locates the family as the space where the ‘old and the decayed Kurdishness’ would be criticized and dissolved, and simultaneously as the space whereby the new identity would come out.

relations, always gendered and inherently violent. The daughter's questioning of the familial gender roles as well as the problems within politics is well related to this fundamental issue. Her personal experience and individual breakthrough is revealing in pointing at potential forms of agency and subject positions as are experienced by women in their life worlds. Be-long-ings are at once individualized, gendered, politicized, and ethnicized.

Below, I will mention yet another case, whereby the participant's (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3]) narrative, immensely detailed in violent experiences, reveals clues not only about construction of male and female subjectivities, but also the relation of violence, social capital and economic inclusion in terms of the broader context of formation of be-long-ings. The participant's family experienced political violence through 1980s, 1990s and 2000s coming from different actors. They lived through raids at home in search of the husband, who was actively engaged in Kurdish political movement who constantly went into hiding and fled during the time; he was arrested in 1980 military coup; was targeted by Hezbollah in 1990s, where the family went through constant life threatening phone calls and harassments of armed gangs surrounding their house. Crucial concerning the gendered contexts of belonging was that the participant recollected all her narrative in a language positioning herself as the main actor, which leads us to better grasp the conditions that redefine the femininities and masculinities. For instance, in the absence of the man's contribution to the household economy as his life was threatened, she "*kept him within the house for 8 months*" stating "*you won't step out, I don't want to get widowed at this young age, you shall live for your children, I will bear hardship*", and she became the breadwinner. Through making handicrafts like tailoring and lace needling; having her 10 year old boy sell sweets in the street; buying and breeding chicks and selling their eggs; gardening, cooking and feeding her children she "*struggled to stand on [her] own foot, and [the family] not die of hunger*". The male subject, becoming the target of direct political violence, is restrained from everyday life and the female subject replaced him in many ways. She even

became a savoir. She replied the life threatening phone calls ‘daring’ to say “*God will get back the life that God itself has granted*”. She constructed a hidden inner room, a bunker, into the living room to keep her spouse safe from the burst of gunfire; and when, for instance, their tin-plated garden wall was shot by the armed men, whispered to her husband’s ear “*it is not the day of manhood, go inside creeping, I will respond them*” and did so intimidating to shoot the men shouting she supposed there were some “*dogs intruding the garden*”. To prevent any ‘manly’ resistance of her spouse, if not to recreate a ‘manly’ image of him at the time of narration, she stated: “*I forced him, saying ‘they will break in and kill you in front of your children’s eyes’, they killed all like that, killed one while performing prayer, while watching TV...*”. There was no chance but to hide. She “*hijacked him to Diyarbakır*; yet the same day her 12 year old son was shot in retaliation back in the town. The armed men looking for the escapee father, she had to deal with the event alone. She struggled to take him to hospital at a time when people did not want to give a lift even to acquaintances in any ‘suspect’ case and taxis were not driving as they were afraid of being detected by the gangs. In the hospital, she kept an eye on her son, her back leaned on the door as she knit until the morning for not to fall asleep; and eventually had to sign the conditional release petition to take her son out of the hospital before his full recovery. Then she moved her house to Diyarbakır “*with no one’s help*”, where she “*neither sent [her] children to school nor let [her] spouse go out until the arms were silenced*” (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3]). Silence was only relative though, and her older son was shot in the left eye in an attack of security forces during a demonstration on a funeral in 2006, where he lost the eye completely, was broken in the head, and at the time of the interview still suffered constant headaches and was impotent for work. She recollected a similar narrative about her taking him to hospital alone, first to Mersin then to Ankara, and her struggle in the hospital to be accepted in as they did not have enough money for the surgery. The necessary money eventually was brought by some acquaintances that lived in a town of Ankara. Her open anger and frustration about her experiences in the hospital is revealed in her words: “*what have I*

*suffered may them suffer too, I want nothing else. [Sniffling weepy] This is only the half [of what I lived], that's it! Pledging my ID card, my earrings, [begging them to] take me hostage but only take my son to surgery"* (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3]). Though the object of her rage, "them", in above expression is not clear, it seems to be more than a direct criticism of the hospital's act. The incidents she and the family have gone through violate any potential ground for be-long-ings in just, rightful, and equal conditions. The suffering subject, "I", on the other hand, refers to her as a woman, a mother, a *Diyarbakırlı*, a Kurd. As her reflection on the state below reveals, it also refers to her as a labourer, a citizen, and still a Turkish national. All these subject positions being violated in many forms leading rather to reactive formations of belongings though.

[The state] Reminds me the foe and nothing else! Neither it's Muslimhood, nor its friendship, never! I have no trust in anything about it. Whatever it does is for its own interest. It's only I serve for it and it treats me good at some points... They say what else should Turkey do? What did it do for us? What it has done we ourselves took by force. It is the state, what does it do for us, we work for it, we pay our tax, we are servants for it, it lives like the king and we like the slave. I do not accept this life, you might but I don't, I haven't embraced it from the beginning and I will not! Whatever my name is, let it be so, my ID; if I am Kurd let it be written Kurd on my identity card, why should I be a slave of it... They have done this much, they maltreated, only if the name of them shall be removed on us, citizenship of the Republic of Turkey shall be removed, we will wish for nothing more! [Do you mean secession?] [She hesitates briefly; lowers down her voice and the pace of her speaking] We won't secede anyhow, because we have lived together, we were trained together, yes we had also friendships, yes we had married each other, we have grandchildren, children, together. Not that; but they shall lift their cruelty from us, they shall not make us this much lacking, they shall give us the similar rights they give to themselves. (F, 1955, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3])

The narrative above is clearly about the search for security, meaning, and well-being, which are decisive in forming be-long-ings; yet shows the tensions and violations being faced in each target of search. The narrative is about symbols and discourses; legal status and rights; violence and power relations. It demands as well as rejects. It deconstructs the discourse of 'Muslim brotherhood'; calls for ethnic recognition; demands non-violence, and importantly equal status, rights, opportunities. The subject pronoun, which was strictly "I" all throughout



the previous narrative whereby the same participant gave a detailed account of violent experiences as I have already detailed in the pages above, turns mostly to be “we” when it comes to take a position vis-à-vis the state. The positions “I” and “we” here become in a way interchangeable. The perception that many, if not all, Kurds experience state violence in similar ways seems to help integrate the individual to the collectivity, and the experiences of the former to the latter. ‘Collective struggle’, on the other hand, is perceived to be the provider for what Kurds have -“*by force*”- taken from the state. Also perceived is a firm classed opposition, clear in the dichotomy between “*the king and the slave*”, the sovereign and the “*servant*”. Apparent in the above quote is the perception of being economically excluded to a degree of being exploited by the ‘Turkish’ state, as the expressions of “*working, serving, paying taxes for it*” only in exchange of some “*favours*”, which is “*unacceptable*”, make it clear. Making such perception even much sharper is the economic hardship the family has gone through not being unrelated to the direct forms of violence they experienced as I detailed above with reference to the man not being able to work for long periods of imprisonment and hiding, the woman trying hard to earn money, and one of the three boys being unable to work after the attack he survived. At the time of the interview, she has been employed by a local association, organizers of which she built acquaintance during her political activities in the neighbourhood party commission [Kurdish political party of the time]. After a while her spouse was also employed as a labourer in the municipality via her contacts. Being a good example of ethnicity and political activity becoming a source of social relations, through which economic inclusion was secured, this I believe is a case important for understanding the interplay of violation, social capital, and economic inclusion in forming be-long-ings within the everyday lives of individuals. Yet, those formations and due positionings, one being expressed in the participant’s reference to the state as “foe”, the complete other, do not seem to be overarching and once and for all. Even if it seems like a total break up with the state, as she expresses her refusal to bear Turkish ID, still her position is more of an ambivalent one as she equally denies a radical change like ‘secession’ and makes

an emphasis on “*togetherness*”. Her clear desire for her children to become civil servants further solidifies such ambivalent position. She stated: “*I would [want them to be civil servants] indeed; I would because at least then they would have a future at ease in this country [memleket]; because I suffered hardship a lot*” (F, 1955, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3]). The prime motive behind her attitude towards civil service was a search for well-being and economic security and this indeed was shared by many participants facing similar conditions. A concept of “*life in guarantee*”, “*ease*” and “*regularity*” pervaded the perception especially of the older generation, even if they were critical of state policies. Yet the perception should be understood in the present time conditions, as I encountered various participants telling their own experience or transmitted memories of elders about times when state office was only a mediocre and unfavourable option in the existence of more profitable options of trade -especially of trans-border trade when the borders were still not strictly controlled- or of managing one’s own business. There were cases where individuals, usually above their 50s now, were deterred by their elders from applying for a state office employment although the likelihood of getting it then was much higher compared to today.

The above participant’s harsh criticism of the acts and deeds of the state should be thought in relation to her references to non-violence, recognition, equal rights and opportunities from the state, on the one hand, and having lived, socialized, married, and had offspring together with Turks, on the other. Paradoxical it may seem though by such references she indeed lays a demand for inclusion in all political, economic, social, and symbolic terms. This was clear in the overall narrative of hers, astonishingly full of detail, which I had initially found to be irrelevant with my central question. Only sometime after I completed the field research, I came to recognize the breaking role of the experience of political and structural violence in her personal story. I then saw that harsh experiences of violation proved major turning points in her life story, which could under different conditions might have well become a story of integration into the larger

society. Instead, it became a bold example for the making of oppositional and reactive identities, overtly ethnicized and politicized.

Another expression substantiating reactive formations of belongings, this time on a reverse example, belonged to a participant who claimed it was not a 'loss' what drove her to become a Kurd, but being already immersed in the culture and socialize within due relations from childhood on. Belonging to a distinct family, whereby her father (b. 1934) was an intellectual of his time, a philologist and etymologist, a political person yet interested in refining and developing Kurdish language and culture through various research. All the participant's siblings were actively political, yet as she defined they were and still are not "*engaged in the armed stuff of the thing*", and not having a "*militant*" or "*vandalising*" attitude. She was a member and among the directors of a Culture and Arts Association, and a member of a Kurdish nationalist federalist party, although defining her party allegiance to be weak but [Kurdish] national belonging to be strong. She was sharp in her reflections and account; have gone through various violations, both directly herself, and indirectly as a close witness of what other family members had gone through. Still, "*in terms of roots*", she defined her be-longings as follows:

Our national awareness... many organizations, unions, parties, political groups, had been kept distant. We are like, how to say, happened to be so... We haven't learnt from outside what we feel about our culture. Perhaps our difference or difference of the families like ours is this. The basis of national awareness for us, or the difference of it, that we've learnt it like this, we were grown up in this. I mean we did not become nationalist for quote in quote we had a martyr in our house; or did not start to go out and throwing stones around for it. It was different for us. We were the children of a man who we could say was the theoretician of this stuff. We had such a chance. Despite all those weird things we were exposed to, this was a chance indeed. (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12])

"*We did not become nationalist for we had quote in quote a martyr in our house*" is a direct, though a negative, expression of the phenomena of "reactive ethnicity"/identity. The reason for quoting martyrdom was that it did not have "*religious meaning*" for her. Having lost almost 20 cousins from both maternal

and paternal sides, she emphasizes that it was not a consequence of this, a reaction to state; but a framing at intellectual level, a proactive and constructive understanding of Kurdishness. She is indeed critical of that reactive formation and Kurdish politicians themselves for encouraging such reactivity, believing it creates a “*very hollow feeling of belonging*” for people who “*does not know what for s/he is doing what s/he is doing*”, and become a “*people that you herd, in a herd mentality*” (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12]). Referring to reaction to violent socio-political conditions, she claimed, moreover, that “*the mass following their policy is not getting more conscious; only what the force and oppression imposes upon, the historical difficulty imposes, but no awareness. Not in the last generation. A mass whose mindset is ungrounded is created*” (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12]). Arguing that such a mass could become “*a huge problem*”, when they “*are given a concrete thing tomorrow*”, she mentioned that “*now Kurdish intellectuals from all quarters try to clearing it up*”, “*discussing to each other*” (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12]). Violence is a powerful motor-force of forming be-long-ings yet creates reactive formations, which in this case is believed to be directed by Kurdish policy makers as well, and is estimated to become the source of novel social and political problems in the future.

In many cases above, a constant making and unmaking of belongings is clear in all political, intellectual, and social terms. Belongings are gendered as femininities and masculinities are restructured. The memory was reorganized in a helix like movement all encompassing collective violent experiences. The relation between the individual and collective was redefined to bring forth a new form of subjectivity, *collectividual*, on the one hand, and to strengthen a process of individualization, on the other. Social capital and economic inclusion were determining in all those formation of belongings. A reactive formation of belonging as a result of multiple violations was apparently there in many cases. Below, the formative role of violence will be revealed in relation to a specific experience, that of imprisonment and the space of prison.

#### **4.5. The Prison as a ‘Counter Hegemonic’ Space of Kurdish Activism, Reactive Identity and Marked Citizenry**

Drawing on the premise of Foucault (1995) that punishment in general and the prison in particular belong to a political technology of the body; below I try to elaborate on the relation between prison, space, and subjectivity in an attempt to underline its role on the formation of be-long-ings for various Kurdish participants.

Various lawyers, whether through expert or individual interviews, mentioned some legal political implementations leading to “*criminalization*” of people, after the amendments of Turkish Criminal Code [TCK] (No. 5237) in 2005 and The Law on Fight against Terrorism of Turkey [TMK] (Act Nr. 3713) in 2006 that widened the scope of definition of ‘terrorist activity’ or many other ‘criminal activities’. One defined the extent of such criminalization in the following words: “*A people [as a whole] have been declared illegal before law, for anything they do [they] are accused of being a member of the organization[“örgütüyeligi”]*”, the process itself “*blurring the difference between being in the mountain or in the plain*” (Expert Interview, Mardin)<sup>217</sup> The result was increasing numbers of custodies, arrestment, interrogations, and extended time periods of pre-charge detention with the “*prisons becoming second residence for Kurds*” (Expert Interview, Mardin). In such context, prisons much exceeded their capacity in the number of detainees, people “*sleeping in turns because of inadequate place*” (Expert Interview, Mardin). At the time of the interview, Mardin prison, normally with a capacity of 300 detainees, was hosting 900 people 50 of them being women and children; and Midyat prison was hosting 500 people doubling its normal capacity.<sup>218</sup> Health treatment by general

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<sup>217</sup> Interview on 1.7.2011, Mardin

<sup>218</sup> Interview on 1.7.2011, Mardin

practitioners; denial of right to farewell [*“vedahakki”*] of those prisoners who are about to die of a deathly disease; unfulfilled demands of clean air and water; not being permitted to receive letters in Kurdish; and the fundamental right to fair trial were mentioned to be among other problems many prisoners face.

It was also stated that many inmates had the belief that *“it is a political case and trial process, thus they would be freed only if a political development takes place, not wondering about the details of the trial but speaking about the conditions of the prison”* (Expert Interview, Mardin). The meaning attributed to the ‘political’ above implies power and interest relations, thus including bias, injustice, and even being not bounded by law. This by itself gives clues about the perception of state, its acts, policies and institutions as a distrusted entity. Another attorney mentioned a person being sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison for applauding the speech of a BDP deputy [Peace and Democracy Party], which is the legal Kurdish political party. He pointed to that person’s-becoming his client- perception of what he lived reflecting his alienation, and breaking off all ties he has to the larger political community:

He asks ‘why was I sentenced to this penalty; did I commit theft, did I violate one’s right, did I rape, or did I kill someone? As this is not the case, why this state did sentence me to 6 years and 3 months in prison, for just applauding a deputy, or for joining in a meeting?’ [...] These people are thinking of taking refuge, [fleeing] from this country, [saying] ‘I won’t serve this sentence. How long I have [before the case is resolved] two years, within two years I will pull up stakes and leave’. There are lots of people around saying this.<sup>219</sup>

The fact that excessive penalties and of being charged with ‘political acts’ had a deforming role on people’s be-long-ings in the larger political community, and a culminating role on their politicization in favour of Kurdish identity was stressed by an attorney. He said *“80 percent of the people arrested are apolitical, involved in [an event] coincidentally and got arrested”*; however, *“those who are accused not of criminal acts but on political and subjective grounds, get out of*

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<sup>219</sup> Expert Interview, Diyarbakir, February 2011

*the prison even more politicized*” (Expert Interview, Mardin). One of the other factors for such politicization is the violation of rights, misconduct, maltreatment, and abuse that the detainees come to face in prisons; while yet another could be thought as being the political ideological indoctrination they are provided for by the co-prisoners.<sup>220</sup> This equally is valid for the children detainees. Of the 22 children in Mardin Prison, for instance, 18 were arrested being accused of acts like throwing stones to security forces, which is deemed crime against The Law on Fight against Terrorism (Expert Interview, Mardin). A lawyer told about his experience of the constant morning raids on their house by the gendarmerie force, which led a perception for him equating state to soldier; and compared it to his witness years after in a professional visit to children convicts in the prison in which he saw the state the prison warders for the children.<sup>221</sup> A specific example of the process of the above mentioned politicization was given over a 16-year-old convict in Mardin prison:

When I first contacted him [after he was jailed] I was face-to-face with a child, in his looks, manners, and questions. In a visit after 2 or 3 months, I was not facing a child anymore. He doesn't see [legal/parliamentary] politics a solution; refuses to talk of this and that [trivial things]. Even if he is 16 years old, he speaks with a political identity, behaves older than he is, getting out of the prison as being ready for activism. (IHD, Mardin)

“*Being ready for activism*” may mean, as was in many cases, to enrol for the mountain. One of the most recent and widespread events affecting lives of many people at the time of the fieldwork of this study was the KCK operations or trials as they were known publicly. Perceived to be “*the punishment of the legal and democratic political struggle*” of Kurds and a cause for many of the younger

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<sup>220</sup> Miriam Geerse (2010: 113) similarly argues in her study on violent experiences of the Kurdish forced migrants resettled in Istanbul that “for young Kurds, prison was ‘a kind of university’, a place where they developed close relationships with people more educated and versed in political ideology than themselves, and where they finally learned what their struggle was all about”.

<sup>221</sup> Expert interview, 15.02.2011, Diyarbakır

generation to “*loose belief in politics and go to the mountain*”; the period was noted to be one where almost a thousand people took to the mountain.<sup>222</sup>

Prison becoming the space for adoption and embodiment of an activist identity or further solidification of political identifications has long been an important phenomenon within the Kurdish political history in Turkey, Diyarbakır Military Prison No.5<sup>223</sup> being one of the crucial examples. Now it is well documented that the prison witnessed atrocious acts of systematic torture, some lost their lives; dozens were mutilated and permanently disabled. The cruelty experienced in the prison is believed to have played a major role in the rapid escalation of numbers taking to the mountain. Many participants -not necessarily the sympathizers of the Kurdish political movement- remember people who were not at all or actively “*engaged in the movement*”, yet left for the mountain after being released from prison, “*just because they’ve seen that oppression*”, adding “*upon that rancour, on a deeply sinking heart [“büyükbiryaniîçezikliği] we came to this point*” (F, 63, Kurd/Turk<sup>224</sup>, Urfa [U15]). What happened in the prison was in some cases taken to be “*one of the greatest attacks directed towards Kurdish identity, to overcome the problem, bringing the major advocates in and changing their identities*” (M, 42, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D23]) evidently by ‘force’. The result,

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<sup>222</sup>Expert Interview, 28.02.2011, Diyarbakır.

<sup>223</sup> Diyarbakır Prison was constructed in 1980 by the Ministry of Justice and was transferred to military administration after the 1980 September the 12<sup>th</sup> coup d’état, to be returned to the ministry in 1988.

<sup>224</sup> The participant has mentioned Kurdish and Turkish lineages of her, from paternal and maternal sides respectively, yet hasn’t defined herself to be one of them expressively. So, I give the both to define her identity. When asked she defined herself to be a “servant of God” [*Allah’ın kulu*]. Otherwise, she used expressions like “our Kurds”, “our Muslim Turks”, and “our Arabs”.



on the other hand, was “*just the reverse*” (F, early 30s, Kurd, Diyarbakır),<sup>225</sup> leading to the “*ideas being sharpened*” and “*spread to the masses*” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). To be able to point to the scope of the ensuing affect, the participant who is a lawyer and a human rights advocate gave some numbers: “*The number of the inmates then was 5 thousand, together with their families it is assumed to be a population of 100 thousand during the hottest period, the population of the city then was 300 thousand*” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). The inmates, for sure, was not only from Diyarbakır; the city population here stands mostly as a scale.<sup>226</sup> In his argument of the use of torture as an instrument of policy, Herbert C. Kelman (2005: 130-133) argues that when victims are citizens of the state that tortures them, they are “denaturalized” through discourses of “dehumanization” and become non-citizens who are not only not entitled to the protection of the State, but as enemies of the State who constitute serious threats to the State’s security and survival as well as dangerous elements against whom the community/State had a right to protect itself. It is a contributing factor to the dehumanization process, if the tortured ones do not belong to the ethnic or religious community of the torturers and the dominant segment of society (Kelman, 2005). The inseparable link between torture as a political practice and the social situation it unfolds in, thus, is argued to point that torture “is a structured environment with a texture of its own, a configuration of meanings, a logic, and rationale without which physical, let alone, psychic, pain is incomprehensible and ineffective” (Lazreg, 2008, as cited in Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009: 4). When thought against such background, Diyarbakır

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<sup>225</sup>The field notes taken in Diyarbakır, 11.2.2011. She is the spouse of a participant, who participated to a limited degree in the interview of a third participant which took place at their home; she is not counted in the total number of the participants.

<sup>226</sup>Zeydanlıoğlu (2009) who locates torture at the heart of Turkish modernity and the nation-building process, and analyses the use of torture as a tool for forced assimilation, also notes that the prison’s place in social memory and in the discourse of Kurdish nationalism is not only because of the sheer brutality of the practices that that were exercised in Diyarbakır Military prison, but because of the large number of Kurds that were tortured and their relatives who were affected by it in various ways.

Military prison, specifically but not solely, appeared to be a political space, and torture as a political tool, whereby political Kurdish identity had been targeted. The aimed change of identity in Diyarbakır Military Prison was ‘turkification’ as Zeydanlıoğlu points to it; thus “torture as turkification” being “a process of inscribing ‘Turkishness’ on to the bodies and minds of the prisoners” (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009: 12). Ironically though, the above witnesses and memories reveal that the process ended up in further ‘kurdification’ of bodies and subjectivities.

Diyarbakır Prison left important traces in the memory of Kurds, that of humiliation, loss, and trauma. Most narratives I encountered during the field research were articulations of memories transmitted from the earlier generation. One participant whose father was tortured to death in the prison in 1984, has noted that she “*could pass by the prison only after 10 years*” of his father’s death; now guessing that there may be other “*people who wouldn’t want to face that prison*” (F, early 30s, Kurd, Diyarbakır).<sup>227</sup> The participant’s own experience and guess about others’ could be understood with reference to “body memory”, as was analyzed by Allen Feldman, which “involves a situation in which social space and the social body continually inform each other, both tied to violence and the dynamic problem of control and response in a nonmonolithic relationship of social markers such as class, ideology, or race” (Feldman, as cited in Rotker, 2002: 16). In the case mentioned above, it is not only through direct experience of physical violence by the ‘victim’ but through the concomitant violence experienced by the family members or the transmitted memory of it that the social space and social body continue to inform each other. The place where the prison stands turns to a deliberately avoided city space laden with violent memory of abuse, of control and domination, and of brutal loss. Avoidance of the space, on the other hand, is the response of the holder of that memory, which is embodied in her reactive attitude blossoming on ethnic and political grounds. Space becomes a tool for transmission of collective traumas to younger

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<sup>227</sup> The field notes taken in Diyarbakır, 11.2.2011

generations, while the ensuing space-memory becomes a structural violence itself framing and/or caging individual lives. Space as the bearer of traumatic collective memory, thus, makes and unmakes be-long-ings for individuals.

Susana Rotker's (2002: 16) argument that "few places manifest the relationship between violence, space and body as do jails" is important not only in the context of military prison and to the coup period, but also in other contexts of imprisonment as well. Personal traumas that mistreatment and torture in prisons have led to bear signs of such relationship as were revealed during the interviews. A young participant's narrative mentioning her father's lasting pain is a good example: "*imagine, when my father tells... My father is sixty years old, my father cries when he tells about the past! When my father tells about the torture he was exposed to, my father cries!*" (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Focus Group I [1]). The five times usage of the expression "*my father*" in a two sentence narrative and the stress of the father's age being "*sixty*" before mentioning the act of "*crying*", I believe, reveal about the participant's inner confusion in the face of 'power' and 'authority', which most probably she ascribes to the figure of "*the father*", but sees it to be challenged somehow by another figure of power and authority, 'the state' and its violence. Her mention of another example, her uncle-in-law, "*the forty-year-old man afraid of [coming to] Diyarbakır*", who moved to Edirne upon being "*terribly tortured in '94*", seems to add to her uneasiness with the assumed link between 'being aged', 'being men', and 'being strong'. Concerning her stress on "*Edirne*" one may stake the argument that Edirne's geographical location in the western north, thus at one margin of the territory of Turkey compared to the opposite marginal location of Diyarbakır at the eastern South adds, at least symbolically, to the visibility of the 'fearful move'. The participant's emphasis, speaking up "*imagine, they had pulled his nails one by one by pincers*", was put as a ground for us -me and the other participants of the focus group but most probably also for herself - to comprehend such 'fearful attitude' of the uncle-in-law. It seems that the process in which, normally, the perceived 'authoritative' figures, that of

the state, on the one hand, and the paternal or the manly power, on the other, would reproduce and strengthen each other to produce the 'norm', 'normal', 'order' and 'ordinary' even without going unnoticed, is 'interrupted' by one side, the state, quitting the collaboration with the 'disloyal' other side, the father. This is not necessarily saying that collaboration does not take place at all in this or similar contexts. The quit from the collaboration should rather be thought in terms of the "relation between the social contract and the sexual contract as establishing consent to the political order and the domestic order, respectively" (Das, 2008: 284). In this very case, "an essential element in the contract between the male citizen and the state", in which the former is assumed to have "the consent to have one's body altered for the state" that is the "consent to kill and to die on behalf of the state" (Humphrey, 2002, as cited in Das, 2008: 286) was I argue breached—in the perspective of the state- by the male citizen, not only by a simple 'non-obedience' of the contract, but by fighting against the very state on behalf of which he had such 'duties'. In this context, it might be argued that he acted against the very norms of the "gendered belonging to the nation state" (Yuval-Davis, 2006). It is clear, on the other hand, that the image of the suffering male body, perceived to stand for challenged masculinity and disempowerment, puts a stamp in the transmitted memory of the young female subject. Yet, it defines not only the memory but the very existence of the subject with a trans-generational effect as apparent in her note stating "*and we were grown up amid that torture, well just imagine our psychology*" (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Focus Group I[1]). This case reveals how the 'normal' and 'ordinary' was defined through or in the face of violence for many individuals.

Various other participants, moreover, recollected their experiences in visiting the family members or relatives who were imprisoned; engaging in the protests, demonstrations, or other forms of activism concerning the rights of the people in prison; hearing the memories of the elders who were once imprisoned; and encountering with the 'other' or with 'one of us' in the context of the prison. Within such context, I argue that the prison emerges as a space of construction

and deconstruction of bodies, memories, and identities for many Kurds in a way to form ethnic-collective be-long-ings. In other words, prison does not only manifest but also actively constructs subjectivities, much in a reactive way.

Post-prison period has also appeared to be important in terms of the formations of be-long-ings in that imprisonment left other, more economic, traces in people's life, as well. An extensively experienced case was that having been imprisoned in the past for a political charge became an unlawful impediment for being entitled to hold green card, which should have been a basic citizenship right granted to the poor without any sources of income and security. In my interview with an expert,<sup>228</sup> it was stated that the results of a recent research<sup>229</sup> the association conducted in Diyarbakır revealed that %19.3 of the poor people do not have any social security registry or hold green card. The reason for this was asserted to be the trials, custodies, sentences that people had gone through for a political charge. The issue was brought up by another participant whose articulation puts the emphasis on citizenship status. Being deprived of the right to have green card, and thus of benefiting from health services free of cost, the participant tried to 'cheat' the hospital staff by using someone else's medical record to be able to get the treatment for a lower cost:<sup>230</sup>

They did not give it us. Look, after he [her spouse] came out of the prison, I fell sick. Well, we had none [money]. I used the record of his uncle's son, but I was detected by the doctor. The serum was taken out of my arm; the police came and

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<sup>228</sup>Expert Interview, Diyarbakır, 18.02.2011.

<sup>229</sup> The research was conducted on 36 thousand people in 5 thousand 706 households. Notes from the the expert interview, 18.02.2011, Diyarbakır.

<sup>230</sup> Geerse (2010) also mentions cases, though not many, of loaning green cards or insurance cards to relatives in need of medical care as an ad hoc but a quite effective and less time-consuming way of helping others in her study of forced migrants in Istanbul. Though she emphasizes that these cards could logically be only used by people with the same sex and roughly the same age as the card holder, in the case I mention above the female participant attempted to use a male relative's card, which might be a reason for the failure of the attempt.

took me. Then we paid the whole bill of the public hospital; besides we were fined and paid 2 billion more [2000 new Turkish Liras]. They did not give green card. I went and demanded it, they didn't give. Said 'your husband is a terrorist' and didn't give. Then my spouse went, went to see the governor and asked 'aren't we citizens? So we'll leave'. Then they gave it, now he is [benefitting from] the SSK [Social Security Institution]. [Did he mean leaving Mardin?] No, we said we'll leave Turkey! [Since] we are not [treated as] citizens! Well, it is all the system is doing, what have I suffered I have suffered from the system, my children are like this, my spouse does not have a job, well I am sick, how will I get treatment? And [we] have not! ["*e yogh!*"] (F, 46, Kurd, Mardin [M5])

Her mention about her children was clarified by her daughter stating that her elder sister had not been able to get education because of the lack of financial sources while her father was in prison and had to get married at a young age; one of her brothers succeeded in the public employee exam<sup>231</sup> but was not employed because of his father's criminal record; the other brother who is a 3<sup>rd</sup> league football player, although talented as to be a 1<sup>st</sup> league one, which again was related to the father's record in the perception of the family (F, 26, Kurd, Mardin [M1]).<sup>232</sup> Regardless of its factual ground, the articulation is important to see the extent of the perceived discrimination; and the role not only of direct physical but also of indirect structural violence, revealing itself in poverty, lack of resources and unemployment. The symbolic violence of hailing the ex-prisoner as a "*terrorist*" and depriving him of his social rights as a "*citizen*" turns to be a tool for an everlasting punishment of pro-Kurdish political allegiance and a re-punishment, a subjective one though, of the one who has already paid penalty for his legal charge. Thus, the act marked him as the once and for all 'prisoner' and the lifelong 'criminal', with real and material consequences not only for his individual life but also for others who were closely related to him. In such context, the "*system*" as a whole is perceived by the participant to be the source of all suffering. When thought in this framework, the 'bargain' on either being

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<sup>231</sup> Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS)

<sup>232</sup> The daughter and the mother were interviewed separately, each interview fulfilling all the requirements. The daughter was also present during most of the mother's interview, occasionally adding her comments.

entitled to due rights of a “*citizen*” or “*leaving Turkey*”, as it appears in the above narrative, becomes a sign of the demand to be included yet only on equal grounds.

Another common problem faced by many ex-prisoners was to get employed in public sector.<sup>233</sup> One counted 186 young men from his village having served prison sentence, many being “*slandered*” and “*sentenced for no reason*”, but lost their job and were “*marked forever*”, with the “*served prison sentence*” becoming a watch-dog for them “*wherever [they] go, to the west or else*” not to “*get any job*”, especially “*in a state office*” (M, 36, Kurd, Diyarbakır, IGI [D19]). Another participant noted that his right to work was ceased after being arrested in 1984 as he could not get another job at public sector after his release nor could return to his prior work -he was a worker at a state factory. He was eventually able to get his retirement from private sector and got his right to health insurance and the already inadequate retirement salary. Private sector in many cases acted as a buffer zone for economic inclusion in the face of exclusion in the public sector. Being marked as an ex-prisoner did not only affect his own life prospects but of other family members as well, since “*whenever [his] nephew or child applies for a job [his] name comes out [in the registers]*” and they are refused the job. Below, his criticism of not being able to get a green card on the same grounds also reveals that he evidently sees such implementations as violation of his citizenship rights:

I became unemployed in [19]91, I wanted to get a green card but they did not grant it to me. Why do you not give? I need the green card as a citizen, why don't you grant it to me? Just 'we can't'. The district governor said he granted it last year unknowingly [not knowing he had been sentenced for a political charge]. You need to get closer to me, you need to win me, but they put the citizen off each and every day. (M, 57, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D22])

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<sup>233</sup> Geerse (2010: 293) notes that criminal record of people convicted for a political crime was never cleared and their exclusion from working in state institutions is for life. Five years after people have finished their prison term, however, they regain the opportunity to work in the private sector; and the political record is not disclosed to private employers anymore.

His emphasis on his status of citizenship and the need for his due rights to be granted, as well as the need for the state to “*get closer to*” and “*win*” the citizens without reservation, provides an important perspective for understanding the formations of reactive be-long-ings and the role of exclusion in those formations. Questioning the legitimacy of force used by the state, at least in its excessive forms, has appeared to be common for many. Far from being the holder of the monopoly of ‘the legitimate violence’, state in these articulations is regarded to exert unfair and excessive force, making it illegitimate in the eyes of many. However, there is usually a visible generational difference in the focus on citizenship status in that the demand for the observance of citizenship rights, specifically the call to the state for getting consent of the citizen are more widespread among the older generation. Such call together with a straight criticism of state violence was articulated by one participant in the following:

You should endear yourself [to people], whether you are the state, or the army. There is no point in saying [nothing but] “me”, “me”! You should endear yourself by your law and everything! [...] No one could have reached a point by [using] nightstick, truncheon or tank; they can’t either (M, 65, K/Zaza, Diyarbakir [D2]).

This criticism coming from one who, milder in attitude, normally aligns with the state and defines himself as part of the larger political community is important in proving the extent of resentment in the face of multiple violations and what is perceived to be injustice coming from the state apparatuses.

Here I tried to show how the prison, and the experience of imprisonment acted a role of making and unmaking be-long-ings for many Kurds, forming a reactive identity, on the one hand, and a marked citizenry, on the other. Below, I will proceed in more detail with the reflections of the participants on state.



#### 4.6. Alienated Citizens

The corollary of the experienced violations coming from the state apparatuses was sometimes an overt objection to the state and to its many institutions, but especially to the security forces. Some bold expressions of extreme distrust, which include a total questioning of the legitimacy of those forces and Turkish state in general are articulated by some participants as in the following: “*The police, the gendarmerie are sort of occupation forces in my eyes*” (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]); “*The state exists to annihilate us, it exists for nothing else!*”, “*I wouldn’t feel myself safe anywhere security forces, the state, especially the Turkish state is there. Never!*” (M, early 30s, Kurd, Mardin)<sup>234</sup>; and “*In Turkish media, often, the most trusted institution in Turkey is mentioned to be the military, and I have always been much surprised by it, because what I least trust is the military. [...] There is no [state] institution that I trust in*” (M, 33, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D1]); or “*the best is that we establish our own parliament. Indeed, what is the presence of the state over here already? Its tank, artillery, its rifle! Yet, its judiciary and decayed demographic system. When they are gone, nothing left*”.<sup>235</sup> An interesting anecdote depicting extreme lack of trust and suspicion towards state acts, even to public services, was expressed by a participant who stated “*there is no good in anything the state has a hand in. They had brought electricity to the village; they [the villagers] dismantled it all for there could be camera in [the equipment]*” (F, 49, Kurd, Mardin [M9]). Electricity being a basic need and its absence in some places in 21<sup>st</sup> century being a great problem presenting another issue; suspicion about its presence as a ‘technology’ of surveillance and control proves an extreme case of distrust to what the state stands for as a whole.

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<sup>234</sup> He is the son of an interviewee, who was present during the interview and occasionally articulated his experiences and perceptions. Since I did not conduct a separate interview with him, I did not count him as a participant in the total number of the sample. Yet here, as I do in similar cases throughout the dissertation, I include specific quotations when I see them to be important within the specified context.

<sup>235</sup> Field Notes taken in Mardin, July 2011

Another narrative of total alienation and estrangement concerning the citizen position was articulated by a participant in the following:

As I said, I feel like I am in a foreign place. I feel like under the siege of something foreign. See I worked as a teacher, I felt this even when I did that. I'll say something simple, I once realized that when I was visiting some Kurdish cities,<sup>236</sup> when look at the state offices, I even make it a myth, don't take as they are. How to say, like this is mine and being managed by someone else for the moment, someday it will pass on to me. I look within that perspective. No! I really don't feel like a citizen. (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12])

One has to note that alienation expressed above is in spite of the fact that the participant had worked as a contract teacher<sup>237</sup> at a number of primary schools before the interview date, though was not much a compliant one. Another expression of the participant whereby total alienation was visible was that if she had a child, she would not think of schooling s/he, if she "*had to stay here and unless things have changed*" in a "*meaningful*" way for official recognition of Kurdish identity and language. Otherwise she would educate her at home. She believed that current Kurdish language courses or university departments, though she was engaged in campaigns promoting them, were "*meaningless*" as the language did not play a real function in reproducing one's life through employment, social relations, institutions and the like. What Turkish state has meant to her was in a nutshell "*a huge disappointment*", the expression giving a hint about her estrangement as a post facto phenomenon. The reason she articulated as being "*the state caus[ing] some irreparable damages to many people that I love, value, or never knew but felt close. Irredeemable things...that could reach formidable levels... What it has done...to Kurds...*" (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12]). The outcome was "*hatred*", which she saw to be "*very humane*" within the context she framed. Her expectation was "*not a silver*

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<sup>236</sup> What is meant by the expression is the Kurdish populated cities in south-eastern or eastern Turkey, or those on which there is the historical claim of Kurdishness

<sup>237</sup> Contract teachers are also recruited by the Ministry of National Education under the Code of Civil Servants, no.657

*handshake*”, “*nothing done to hoodwink*”, “*nothing done by force of Europeans, [or] by force of Americans*”; but some “*bashfulness*”, “*just to recall it and question*” (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12]). Her expectation, thus, seems to be an original and self-standing effort to take responsibility both by the state institutions but also more importantly by those “*who live in West*”, if not exclusively Turks.

What I get angry, get very angry is even not the state, perhaps the soldier in a way, those who keep gun and power at hand, or political power, but... Indeed I am angry also to the Turkish people. What I am furious about is not the state. Because it is the people who could force it for the good or for the evil; and who could make it relevant. Well, the subject is people. I don't see it as a structure. I do not isolate the human totally. That's why indeed I am resentful to Turks. I mean Turks, the ones who live in West... Because it is also not right to define them as Turks. I am resentful to them. I am resentful because they are insensitive. For they are not involved in some way, and keep silent against anything done, anything done to Kurds this much. (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12])

The participant's reflection about the state as an abstract category and people as acting subjects is important. Apparently, she does not see state and majority society as equivalents, as many others did. Her emphasis on those “*who live in West*” and her hesitation of naming them “*Turks*” is revealing her perception that ‘Turk’ is an ethnic name, and not a name for the larger political community, as would a ‘national identity’ claim put it. Her criticism of the lack of will and agency of people in western Turkey to force the structure to change for the good of others, here of Kurds, is important as is her implied perception that they, perhaps as ‘majority’, should have a decisive say and be responsible for the rest of the larger political community. Thus, it is not only the acts of the ‘Turkish state’, but also Turks’ perspective and attitude towards what Kurds have gone through making the ground of alienation for her. Estrangement from the state goes hand in hand with resentment towards the larger society. This is important in terms of social capital, indicating the lack of trust, mutuality, and solidarity between components of the political community, especially between Turks and Kurds as was mentioned by the participant.

In various cases, the answer of many regarding my question of trust to the state and its institutions was simply “no”. Corruption, theft, maladministration, nepotism were generic criticisms directed towards Turkish political, economic, or social structures. Security, judicial, and education systems were among those that were often mentioned as not being trusted, with various examples of everyday experiences of ‘violations’, minor or major, to justify the expressed distrust. Those many participants included an *imam* not trusting any institution including Presidency of Religious Affairs; teachers not trusting any institution including education system; and attorneys who believed in the need of betterment for many institutions including an urgent one for the judicial system.

One widely trusted institution at the time of the research was the health system. The health sector was usually seen to be a real achievement of the AKP government. The best act that the government has ever taken was seen to be the regulation that enabled patients registered in the Social Security Institution [“SGK”] to get state-subsidy for their treatment at private hospitals where they paid a discounted fee.<sup>238</sup> Before the regulation, the state subsidized only public hospital treatments. The other policy highly praised was the possibility to get medicine at all pharmacies rather than only the ones the specific hospitals have a contract with. Here many cases prove that personal experience matters. A participant who named the health system as the only institution he has trusted, for instance, mentioned that he received adequate qualified service in the public hospital very recently where his ulcers was well treated unlike his experiences in the public hospitals in the past years. Currently, one could find “*qualified doctors in public hospitals too*” (M, 24/22, Kurd, Mardin [M2]), which he believed was due to the then introduced policy regulating that doctors working at private health sector should also work for the public health sector for some hours. Even in this case, however, trust is only partial; and the more enduring is a cynical attitude. In this line, the same participant said “*actually, state means for*

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<sup>238</sup> The percentage of the extra fee costs that private hospitals could charge the patient was increased gradually after the regulation was introduced in 2008, with a maximum of %200 in 2013.

me the one who shows something to people; makes them taste a little, [then] retracts it immediately” (M, 24/22, Kurd, Mardin [M2]). He noted that they “promise” things to do, like “building infrastructure”, or not to do, like “torturing people”, but just “not keep the promise” at the end regardless of whether it was something to do or not to do. There came a surprising definition: “Indeed the state is a joke for me!” (M, 24/22, Kurd, Mardin [M2]). Pointing at a deceitful attitude, the state was defined by another participant to be “unreliable, [that] does not stand behind its own statements, does not display the courage” expected for it to solve the problems (F, 44, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D24]). A sceptical view of the state is clear even when it is thought that things have changed to a degree. One participant for instance was ambivalent between thinking that “after a point nothing changes, you are facing the same wall ever; [which] is terrible” yet that things have changed to a degree “to be righteous” as “Diyarbakır is not the same Diyarbakır as it was 15 years ago”, since “you are not feeling the state in your every single step, it was so in the past with ID checks, searches, panzers, and the police you constantly saw” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). Despite such perception, his answer to his own question “has the state really changed?” was that “it has not, when you think, or when you engage in a protest”, it is only that “the state is much lurking now” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). These reflections might specifically be thought in relation to the period of AKP government, especially with the experiences of its ‘Kurdish Opening’, the policy initiatives announced in 2009 that caused high expectations for solution to what is called the ‘Kurdish problem’, yet with deep frustrations following.

Another question revealing distrust, especially by young participants, was if they would like to become a civil servant, which in some cases was replied in a manner of complete distance towards what the state would entail. This was in contrast to many participants of older generation -as I referred elsewhere above- who often agreed that they would want their children to become civil servants regardless of how criticising their attitude towards the state was. Below is a dialogue, exemplifying the alienated attitude of the youngsters:

7: No, I don't want to be a state officer [Why?] The reason is obvious! Never mind...

Ö: Because you don't trust in it most probably?

7: Not a matter of trust, I don't want, I would like to work in the private sector. Whatever it would be, if I become a teacher [I would work] at a private education centre, if I become a doctor [I would work] at a private hospital...

Ö: Does that mean 'I don't want to do anything for the state'?

7: Yes.

5: [Interrupting]that means why I should do something for one who hasn't done anything for me. (M, 19, Kurd, Diyarbakır FG1 [7]), (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır FG1 [5])

With the private sector emerging as a buffer zone for employment, refusal to work as a civil servant was explained to be “*not a matter of trust*” to state, but a lack of desire to take part in, to supply for, and to collaborate with what the state stands for. Any discussion on the assumption of a sharp divide between the public and private sector is beyond the limits of this work, with no further reflection by the participants. Still, the above resolution of the participant (FG1 [7]) not to work for the public but the private sector could be taken, in itself, to point at reactive formations of be-long-ings that I underline throughout this chapter.

Another negative answer to the same question was that it is “*thanks to the state which did not keep any office at hand so that we shall be state officers; it almost divided and sold Turkey to Europe*” (M, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG2 [3]). It seems to entail a critique towards privatization policies of the state and also imply that state in Turkey is not an independent, capable or a potent agent. Apparently parallel to nationalist discourses of both right and left-wing politics in Turkey about ‘selling Turkey to foreigners’, such perception might be seen as a sign of the effect of the wider political discourses on the local ones, if not the Turkish on Kurdish ones. The participant is not denying the option of becoming a state officer per se. Her criticism is rather a call for restructuring, a reorganizing of the public sector, and in this it might still be taken as a position of alignment with the larger political community, at least with the opportunities it could offer for economic inclusion and a ‘secure’ future amid multiple insecurities that

especially the young people are vulnerable to in his locality. Other participants of the focus group, all labouring at precarious works especially at vacation times, revealed the perception of such insecurities and vulnerability in their reply to the question on their preference to become a civil servant: “*we would work whatever it is [...] only to earn our bread. We don’t have the luxury of turning our nose up at any work, because there is no work, even if we are uninsured we have to work* (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [5]”, “*the model of idealist youth is not common here* (M, 23, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [6]”. Some, despite criticizing the state, were participating in networks provided by the state mentioning apologetically their economic hardship and need for money as a cause. In one case, for instance, the participant was involved in the program of Foundation to Support Vocational Training and Petty Industry (MEKSA)<sup>239</sup>, which she stated to be supervised by the police, whereby she was engaged in training courses after which she would get a certificate, as she was also taking part in many social activities provided by the foundation and getting monthly payments of 300-350 TL<sup>240</sup> (F, 19, Diyarbakır, FG1 [3]). Yet another participant, not having an opposing positioning towards the state, indeed feeling indebted to it as he studied on governmental bursary, stated he was “*not very sympathetic*” of being a civil servant, which “*would be [his] last option*” merely on economic grounds. He articulated the following: “*I think of not being a civil servant*”, because while “*a teacher, in European countries is taken to be very valuable, people with salaries at high level*”, “*in Turkey being civil servant is very difficult, there are people who barely live on*” (M, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır).

Distrust was clear in the widespread answer of many, of different age and socio-economic status, to the question what the best thing the state has ever done for

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<sup>239</sup> On their official website MEKSA is defined to be a public benefit foundation for supporting vocational training and small industry, since its founding in 1985, with various collaborator institutions of the public sector and the government. See [www.meksa.org.tr](http://www.meksa.org.tr) accessed on 18.1.2018

<sup>240</sup> Equals to 190-220 USD on the date of the interview, 19.2.2011

them was, which was strikingly and repeatedly “*nothing!*” The below quotation coming up in the same focus group, conducted with young people aged between 18 and 23, was a lively example of it:

All at once: “Nothing!” [All laugh at the synchrony]  
6: The best thing the state has ever done for me is to exploit me [others: nodding, “yes”], trying to suppress me, putting me to secondary status  
1: things like giving us pain...  
6: giving us pain indeed, torturing, attacking harshly  
5: Putting out cigarettes on my body  
1: May God be pleased [“Allah raziolsun”], it’s very good at these things... [Laughing mockingly]  
2: [interrupts, raising her voice] I am deprived of father love because of the state [...] my father has been lost by the state [disappeared without a trace of whether he is alive or death] Yeah, they say that everything will be all right any longer, will improve somehow, but we never get there, we are always at the same point, they don’t change anything to our benefit. (M, 23, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1[6], (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır FG1[1]), (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1[5], (F, 21, Kurd, Diyarbakır FG1[2])

Remarkably, in another focus group, constructed with young people of similar age and socio-economic status<sup>241</sup> in Diyarbakır as the one quoted above, the reactions were much the same. Initial reply to my question to the ‘best ever thing the state has done’ being “*nothing!*” (M, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır FG2 [3]), again with confirmations and repeats following, the participants stated “*the best is the torture. The best is the pain it gives, that it disregards us*” (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [8]); “*it provides something, then it wants them back*”(M, 19, Kurd, Diyarbakır FG2[2]); “*demands ten times of it back*” [3], “*it opens schools, Turkificates by force, well you’ll deny your origin*” [2]; “*it assimilates*”; “*the state itself insists that we want a separate state, although they [Kurdish representatives] declare so often that we want identity, our identity*”(F, 19, Kurd, Diyarbakır FG2 [1]. “Exploitation”, “suppression”, “discrimination”, “torture”, “pain”, “disappearance”, “deprivation”, “putting off”, “disregard”, “assimilation”, “denial”, “distortion” and “disbelief” coming from the state, as they appear in both focus group conversations above, point not only to direct physical violence, but also to structural and symbolic violence that individuals

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<sup>241</sup> For the profile of the two focus group participants see Appendix II.



have been exposed to. Consequential distrust, frustration, resentment, and cynicism concerning the acts and policies of the state are clear for the participants of both focus groups. One crucial point to note is the experience of ‘disappearance’ as mentioned by the second participant of the Focus Group I. Stating “*we still don’t even know whether my father is alive or not*” (F, 21, Kurd, Diyarbakır FG1 [2]), she refers to her deprivation of paternal love, and establishes an analogy between her personal situation and the Kurdish collective body experiencing similar violence, as they both linger at the same point and never get somewhere where things change to their benefit. Thought together with similar other cases I came across during the research, people facing the disappearance of their beloved ones seem to be on limbo eternally. Having a clue neither about their death nor life, they always bear hope, even if the smallest one, for them to be alive. Looked from another angle they are deprived of the right to have the death body, bury it and mourn for the loss. Being denied the ‘luxury’ of an end, they are stuck in unending mourning or in odds that will never turn to their favour. They live like souls waiting forever to pass through purgatory.

It appears that an increasingly more oppositional, alienated, cynical, or at best indifferent, attitude towards the state is developed mostly but not exclusively among Kurdish people and especially among younger generation. Criticism, distrust, feeling of insecurity was revealed during a focus group for instance, as one noted, “*we even have doubts that we are youngsters*” (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [5]), with another bringing an explanation “*familial problems*”, “*the pressure of the state*” “*economic problems*” widespread in the region coming together, with “*the highest level [of] unemployment*”, which “*would let one go for the mountain, takes one to rebellion, makes one do anything*”, with “*the state do[ing] that on purpose*”, “*mak[ing] [them] feel depressed on purpose*” (F, 19, Diyarbakır, FG1 [3]). The monthly financial governmental aid was also criticised in that those “*household heads*” receiving the money “*gets used to that ease and spends his time at a coffee shop [kahve]*” (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG1 [8]), the suggestion, on the other hand, followed a saying “*we*

*don't want fish, we want to learn how to fish*" (F, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır FG1 [1]). This last emphasis is important in that in Diyarbakır state financial aid, for the poor or the students, was largely faced with anger, on a claim that it "*pacifies*" and makes people "*dependent*". In a city where a highly politicized oppositional discourse is dominant such criticism speaks for itself. Expectation was not supplementary, ad hoc, or discontinuous solutions to the existing problems but a prudent, far-reaching, lasting arrangement to alter the existing conditions for good.

One critical argument<sup>242</sup> in this line was that a considerable amount of the governmental social help budget was allocated to the region and an important part of that share to Diyarbakır, where in contrast the public investment to the city was very low. Yet, it was also argued that, most often not even received by those most in need of, such procedure was sowing the seeds of a begging culture, and disturbing the existing social texture as it leads people feel that they can't lay claim on, achieve, or do anything by their own effort. The expert who was in charge of an association that was established to fight against poverty in Diyarbakır described the transformation stating "*people who were highly engaged in political acts once*" are now "*directing all their energy to survive poverty, even hunger*".<sup>243</sup> He mentioned a category of people who were victims of harsh political violence in the past, and now lived in most impoverished and isolated conditions. Indeed other local organizations in the city as well mentioned people who out of poverty and loss of hope secluded themselves at home; so they were aiming at getting those people, especially women, out. This association as well had a strategy to get people out of their isolated spots, thus provided cards for people, by which they came to the centre and got essential food products on a regular basis. Here the target group was families no member of which was

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<sup>242</sup> Expert interview, Diyarbakır, 18.02.2011

<sup>243</sup> Expert interview, Diyarbakır, 18.02.2011

engaged in labour force. Besides being a “*food bank*”, the association, also acted as “*a social solidarity centre directing people to the relevant institutions*”<sup>244</sup> to solve their problems. A “*rights-based approach*” to social help and not “*charity*” was the vision and practice of the centre. Implying that the beneficiaries were also aware of it, the expert interviewee mentioned those returning their cards upon getting employment asserting that those in far worse conditions should now have their turn of getting support of the centre. This could be seen as an indication of mutuality, trust, and solidarity perceived and practiced by the beneficiaries themselves, thus of social capital established through similar local civil society organizations. The readiness of the ground for such an alternative organization of social capital was indicated by the above-mentioned expert who quoted some target group families who, at the earlier phases of the launch of the organization, spoke out “*do not make us in need of going to the foot of those who have my child’s blood at hand*”,<sup>245</sup> meaning especially the political violence of fundamentalist religious armed groups who are also organized socially through charity. Other religious based communities and *tariqah* as well were in the loop of charity. Indicating the same phenomena and calling such charity as “*alms-giving*”, another expert claimed “*if they had a martyr at home the woman is clear, will refuse the alms culture*”.<sup>246</sup> Apparently, existence of such social ground being an enabling factor, these sorts of organizations become part of the alternative Kurdish social space and the social capital established through relations, norms, trust, mutuality, and solidarity.

Social help as a right and not as charity was indeed the requirement of many participants, critical of the current handling of social help, whether they articulately expressed it or not. One basic criticism was allocation of goods, or

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<sup>244</sup> Expert interview, Diyarbakır, 18.02.2011

<sup>245</sup> Expert interview, Diyarbakır, 18.02.2011

<sup>246</sup> Expert interview, Diyarbakır, 23.02.2011

still money as it is also a commodity, rather than the grant of long-term, organized, and regular social and economic rights. For many, allocation of goods did not provide the structural intervention required to prevent existing structural deficiencies, yet merely created dependent persons. As Farmer (2010) noted national health insurance and other social safety nets are important because they promise rights, rather than commodities, to citizens; whereby a lack of these social and economic rights is fundamental to the perpetuation of structural violence. Duncan Green (2008) also notes that although income is important, not only wealth but a wider notion of well-being is required to overcome the ‘multi-dimensional’ poverty, which is directly related to health, physical safety, meaningful work, connection to community, and other non-monetary factors. This is the reason why building on the skills, strengths, and ideas of people living in poverty and not simply treating them as empty receptacles of charity is crucial (Green, 2008). This is the context whereby many associations, training centres, the variety of organizations practicing in the research field of this dissertation should be taken as part of the social capital built, thus playing important role in forming be-long-ings for many individuals benefiting of such capital.

Still another point to be made about the younger generation is that the reactive attitude and polarization get sharpened for them, as the whole realm of life experience with the state and the larger society becomes imbued with various forms of violation the younger the age gets. The alternative social capital that Kurdishness creates for getting more widespread and strong is in this case an auxiliary force. It was noted, for example, that “*the current is the lightest generation doing politics in the name of Kurds; because the coming from bottom up is an aggressive and destructive [zehirzemberek] generation as you can see in the demonstrations*” referring to those who are known as “*the children hurling stones*”.<sup>247</sup> The experience almost exclusively of violence solidifying boundaries of identity, anger, and reaction of younger generations was mentioned to be

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<sup>247</sup> Expert interview, Diyarbakır, 18.02.2011

different from those earlier generations, who despite all the suffering they have gone through “*still might have hold the idea that we should live together, we shall force that*” depending on their milder social and political experiences. The participant’s own articulation was also to emphasize that there was still a ground to integrate Kurdish people into the larger political community, yet its likelihood was diminishing as the time passes. Still, the reservation of one’s own generation was sometimes viewed as weakness bearing the burden of an insecure psychology, like a lawyer fearing the police even if he is legally exempt from police search. A participant drawing on his own experience as a lawyer stated “*we know that those coming after us will carry on this cause more confidently, at least that those psychological factors will not be [influential] on them*” (M, 29, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D20]). Unhesitant and radical attitude is thus a visibly emerging form of agency for the younger generations of Kurds indicating an intergenerational change in forming be-long-ings.

One may conclude that an alienated and at times cynical attitude is clear for many participants mentioned above. Feelings of doubt, insecurity, disappointment, distrust, loss of meaningful connection, as well as hope in future prospects are visible expressions concerning the state, the larger society, and one’s own position in that society. Those expressions might be thought along a scale whereby at one extreme there is total break off, on the other and at best, the belief in the need for betterment of state institutions and social policies. Political as well as structural violations, like the lack of opportunities and economic deprivation, are decisive in making up such scale. Generational difference is clear for the younger Kurdish participants, as they are more alienated especially in their expectations than the older generation. Arguably, the experience of political violation as a fact permeating one’s whole life to an extent that denies any other experience beyond it is critical in such difference. The alienated attitude is even sharpened by structural and symbolic violence, and the emerging alternative Kurdish social capital with its institutions, and newly articulated

forms of relations creating sources of solidarity and help is another crucial factor in making and unmaking belongings for Kurdish participants.

#### **4.6.1. The Janus Face of the State and Looking for a “*Sahip*”: A Search away from the Distrusted Oppressor but towards the Omnipotent Patriarch**

Crucial to note is that although the state is perceived to be responsible for much of the multifaceted violation, which is the central concern for many, it is also perceived to be the one potent actor to end those violations. One obvious expectation from the state in this context is that it shall become the peace supplier. Below is a participant’s reply to my question about the best ever thing the state has done for her. It was articulated, as in many other cases, in a ‘we’ language, which connoted ‘Kurds’ as a categorical group. Participant’s answer that the state had done “*nothing*” for them is revealing since her spouse was working as a civil servant, and their economic condition was relatively well with regular income and social security that a public office had provided for. Yet within those conditions as well the most urgent phenomenon of life stood to be the peace to come:

Nothing! Nothing it has done for us! What should it do for us was peace so that both sides would be at ease. I mean our youngsters, both this side is dying and so is that side. What will happen? Where does it end? Will it end via blood? No; right? What is the only solution? It is peace. Peace shall come the soonest. The best is that. Let it not give bread, not water, but this bloodshed shall come to an end. (F, 49, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D11])

Peace to be supplied by the state, the latter being a part of the conflict and perceived to be a source of many evil they suffer from, is still expected to supply the ground for trust to be built and provide for justice, ‘care’, and ‘light’ for the citizens. The below dialogue of a participant couple reflects such perception, with an interesting tension concerning the trust to the state revealed in the discourse of the man, basically a generic one, and that of the woman, which is mostly a pioneering one. As the man was engaged in a narrative of violent

experiences during his military service, stating “*insults were many; well, if you look for ill-treatment in this region, at least a hundred years should pass over it for it to be restored*” and mentioned the recent contradictory policies towards peace making, which lead people to lose belief in what has been done, I asked whether he had belief in the state and the state institutions. Below is what I received:

Man: well, sure first of all one needs to believe in the state. See, if a man does not have a state, he has nothing.

Ö: so do you trust it, well...

Man: for sure one should trust in his state. If it does some good things, one should trust it obviously.

Woman: Well... There is not a clue, right? You know it better. I mean so much death, so much blood is being shed and nobody comes out and says ‘I shall do a goodness, that’s enough, I shall stop it indeed’. Apo... I mean Abdullah Öcalan is in his place... let him stay aside. Yet do care for our children... let mothers not cry. My trust, if ever a light was, sure it is our state, sure we cannot live without them, all is the state, but should they have enlightened the way for, all this would not happen, certainly not. (M, 41, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D13]; F, mid-30s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D14])

A similar gendered difference in articulations of the same couple also came to fore in their answer to what they would expect from the state. The man stated “*we expect job opportunities, not only for ourselves, but for everyone*”, while the woman immediately noted “*our expectation is that they shall first cease the fire. They shall find a solution to these problems, the problems of Kurdishness or Turkishness. That’s enough, we are truly tired. We are all tired. [...] It’s a great pity!*” (F, mid-30s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D14]). Her son who wishes to have university education and will have military service eventually was a constant concern for the woman. The issue she brought for points at her perception that peace is the absence of discrimination and prejudice of the larger society, as it is the absence of conflict. In woman’s articulations, the “*mothers*”, who shall not cry anymore, refer both to Kurdish and Turkish mothers, as “*our children*”, whose blood shall not be shed, refer also to both sides, clear also in her statement “*both are ours, “our dearest”, whom “we feel pity for*” (F, mid-30s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D14]). Her motherly experience providing a ground for empathy

with the mother of the “*soldier being killed, being martyr*” (F, mid-30s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D14]), the woman urges a stop for the good of “*both sides*”. A common ground perceived for those ‘sides’ appears to be their classed positions, as expressed by many during the research and apparent here in the man’s note that it is always “*the poor who receive deaths*” (M, 41, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D13]). In many cases, participants expressed their belief that state intentionally caused for the ‘underdevelopment’ of Kurds; and the economic conditions were somehow interwoven into the political decisions. Another reasoning in parallel to such belief, yet with an emphasis on state as a rational organization rather than a searched father, was that the state used the economic conditions “*as a bargaining chip*”, who said “*do not raise your voice; behave as we like*” and “*if you be decent guys I will make the necessary investments to the region, otherwise I won’t*” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). Such “*disbelieving attitude*” of the state was understood as “*stipulation*”, “*bluff*” and “*blackmail*” and was perceived to be far from the “*expect[ed] honesty and sincerity*” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). The state, instead, was awaited “*to solve both the political dimension and the economic dimension*” of the problem, just “*like what is done in advanced democracies in similar cases*” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). Criticism, doubt, and expectation with regard to state, thus, go hand in hand for many participants. An overt expression of such frustration and criticism, together with how the state should act came out in the expressions of the two friends being interviewed together. The government’s proactive foreign policy of the time was criticized in this respect, with the belief that it was leaving the problem unsolved “*at home*” while taking initiative in “*others’ issues*”. One participant stated:

When say Turkish state, treachery for instance comes to my mind, because this is a state which betrays its own country in my opinion. Even if it is helpful to others, it is not for itself. It is the one who goes to help Bosnia Herzegovina or now to Egypt. One should first help its own country then to others. What good the one who cannot glorify, elevate itself shall have for others? [...] Saying betrayal, for instance in Kurdish-Turkish issue, Kurdish side wants peace. As one side wants it, why does the other side not want peace? We wait the other side as well to... (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D9])



Not resolving one's "own problem" and not responding the unilateral demand for peace of Kurds being perceived as a "treachery", the participant still goes beyond the 'Kurdish problem' and sees all "the country" in an insecure or 'betrayed' position. She clearly expressed such conception from another point, stating "this Turkey is without one to look after [sahipsiz], because everybody is concerned for his own interest... works for his own economical interests, no one to take care of [sahipsiz]" (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D9]). Turkish expression "sahip-siz" literally stands for being master-less or owner-less. The participant's move in defining the whole country, thus not only her friend, herself, the Kurds but also Turks -and everyone else if ever thought on- as being "sahipsiz", points at a generalized distrust especially to the political structure of Turkey. It discloses, moreover, a subtle desire for a "sahip", thus a master/owner/governor, if not a father, as the state very often would be perceived to stand for. The perception was also revealed by the other participant; this time at a more individual level, in expressing what state meant and did for her:

Well, to my mind... since there is nothing as the state, so there comes nothing. How to say... why should I know the one who doesn't care about me? [*Bana sahip çıkmayan*] [...] The state did nothing to us, nothing. We look at future in fear. I mean they didn't relieve us of that fear, nor did they do anything for us to get rid of it (F, Kurd, 20, Diyarbakır [D10])

Lack of political trust and pessimism for their future being the pervading sentiment during the interview, the participants named their expectations as "equality", "trust", and "working", one's prospect being "it shall be like how a normal person lives on her life" (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D9]), with the other continuing "I want to be relaxed when I go to sleep and I want to get up with hope" (F, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D10]). Willing for 'a life of a normal person', is telling about the extra-ordinary conditions of one's life. Missed is the 'norm-al' order of things, to be exempted from all the excesses of life like violence, deprivation, poverty and the lacks thereof like equality, security, trust, care, and wealth. Thought within this context, the desire for a "sahip" seems to be much related to be 'included', by the authority who orders the 'normal'. Significantly,

thus, longing for the order, the ordinary, and the normal, while being safe from the excesses and the lacks of them, is tightly related to making and unmaking of be-long-ings, in all structural, emotional, and economic dimensions. Looked for is the normal conditions of belongings, as to safety, well-being, and being able to attribute meaning to life.

Bearing on the call for “*sahip*”, someone to “*look after*”, “*care for*”, “*find solution*”, and “*supply peace*”, yet currently does none, may be understood with an allegory of the state as a nurturing, caring, protective ‘father’ versus a punishing, grim, despotic one. State resembling a father -in both senses- was expressed or implied by many participants. Some were directly articulated in reply to my question “what is the state for you”, while others came out in relation to some other topics covered during the interviews. Below is a quotation establishing the analogy overtly, reminding the father/state his responsibilities, and the consequences for the child/citizens/Kurds if he does not take on those, with the last resort for ‘the child’ being to “*look for another father*”:

State is father. If a father lets his son go hungry, his son will thieve. If he does not look after him well, if he doesn't educate him well, he will be a murderer, abduct a girl, rapes. This is state. And whoever is state today, I don't mean only AKP, whoever it is, since it has the state at hand, the whole power is at his hand, he can ruin Turkey or revitalize it. This is state. But, well, since you have that power, I am only your child, not only me myself but all here. Am I not also your child? Come and look here! There is the hungry here, there is the thief, and there is the drunkard. There everyone is. Come, set your hands to the task and fix this. What does a father do if his child is a thief? He educates him; he fines him so that he doesn't thieve again. If he uses drugs, he treats him. If he is a murderer, he looks for the penalty and tries to relieve him, says I shall relieve my child. That's what a father does. The state is a father for me. Since it is the father, he has to solve these problems. [What if he doesn't?] If he doesn't, it means he is not a good father. Then I have to look for another father for myself. [She laughs] (F, 57, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D16])

Negligence, discrimination, violation of it causing many evils, the participant criticized the state for “*not having any idea about Diyarbakır*”. Having restored the historical family house in Suriçi -the historical old city- with no governmental support but obstacles, she stresses that “*the state is indebted to me,*

*I am not indebted to state*”; and generalizes the ‘indebtedness’ of the state to people of Diyarbakır, who “*still stand upright*” despite the state’s lack of investments, disregard of people dying of hunger, and bluffs to take hold of the municipal administration favouring to do what it should have already done. The state not fulfilling its responsibilities -as a caring, relieving, and pedagogical father- visibly appears to be the actor unmaking be-long-ings, leading its citizens -children- to opt for remaking their be-long-ings at different conditions.

In another case, being so much neglected and violated is compared to being an “*orphan*” that is ‘parentless’, specifically ‘motherless’, Turkish state being analogized to a “*stepmother*”. State becomes the cruel stepmother for the lonely orphan citizens. In reply to my question about EU integration, the below participant, despite stating she doesn’t “*know much about that issue*”, expressed her pessimism about things changing for better:

In my opinion [EU] won’t make any change, because an orphan does never have a supporter, we are orphans. Children of a step mother. No matter how brilliant you are, you are not favoured. But when you have a mother, have a father, if you have also some wealth, you are the blue-eyed boy even if you are indeed a slug [*istersen sümüklü böcek ol ama gül bebedsin*]; that’s it. I always say that we are orphans. We are second class citizens, children of a stepmother. We are treated as such. (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3])

Upon her father’s early death, the participant was grown up without her mother, who made a second marriage yet did not take her daughter along in her new life and home. Hidden in above narrative is the relation she establishes between the ‘lack’ of state for Kurds and the lack of father and also mother in her personal life. She relates such ‘lack’ to the repression and multiple forms of violations she had gone through in her personal life, both as a woman and as a Kurd. Feelings of disappointment and frustration about the state being unfair are obvious for the participant above leading to disenchantment on her position as a citizen remaking her be-lon-ings away from what the state stands for.

Yearning for a state/father to provide backing and protection for Kurds is expressed by another participant in reply to my question about feeling minority in Turkey:

Not minority in Turkey, but I constantly feel being a people without one to care for him [*“sahipsiz”*] and defenceless. When a Kurd is being executed, in Iran for instance, or else being exiled, being tortured, being killed his assailant being unknown, a people without a protector [...] who will protect you, who will stake a claim on you, who will argue that they tortured the citizen of my country, violated my right... [Feeling] there is a power protecting me, a state, there is no such thing. (M, 33, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D1])

In this case, what the participant refers to is rather the lack of a Kurdish state/order than the deficiencies of the existing Turkish state/order. To the latter his trust is “zero level”, “*feeling it’s always been this way and it’ll always be so*”. He mentioned their past “*small village life*”, where their “*relation to the state was already on the basis of lawlessness*”, that is they “*had that relation because there was no law*” (M, 33, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D1]). He basically refers to the unlawful acts of the state which necessitated them to be in relation with the state, a forced and negative one though, as in the cases of his father being frequently arrested in his childhood. State itself, thus, becomes the power to be kept clear of as the below narrative of a participant makes it clear in an intergenerational context:

There is a saying in the region, which affected me a lot. My mother used to tell it. It goes like ‘the state hunts the hound by car’, meaning the state is capable of everything, the state knows everything, the state can do everything, that’s why you should never do anything wrong, because it will certainly call you to account for it. (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7])

Turkish state in these cases is perceived to set the conditions of the violent order of things, and rather than acting as the backing patriarch is much known as an omnipotent yet cruel power, whose rage one should avoid of. On a similar line, another participant analogized the relation between the state and the citizens to the one between the *gha* and the villagers in the context of the local power relations. He stated that “*state is an agha*”, who “*owns [many] villages*”, and

who “*in the past, did not let the boys go to school, were saying don’t send the girls to school, don’t send the children anywhere, let them stay in the village*”. Because “*agha is clever*” knowing if they go to school “*they will become conscious, they will stand against the agha, when they stand against the agha, the rule of the agha will be destroyed*” (M, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Informal Group Interview 2 [1]). The state, in this analogy, does not only cause physical violence but also symbolic violence setting the frames of the ‘truth regime’ in line with its own interests, and hindering any potential to change the order of things it has established. It is, thus, the holder of the symbolic power to prevent subjects to “become conscious” through schooling, which equals to ‘an awakening of citizens’, who could “stand against *agha*”, which equals to ‘standing against the state’. The analogy runs, moreover, that *agha*’s fear of the villagers equals to the state’s ‘fear’ of its citizens.

The resemblance established between the father and the state was not always allegorical, as it came out in a participant’s fundamental criticism of power, both of the state and his father, which he has tried to keep off all his life. His narrative below is interesting in pointing to different aspects of power relation as he perceived both in his childhood and later in adult life:

I had learnt very well from my father what the hell the state was. My father was the prototype of the state for me. For instance, if my father saw that I fell, I would definitely be slapped by him; just because I fell down. How come one is punished because he falls down? [...] I am more consisted of my mother. I do not resemble to my father in any way. In my childhood I used to find the truth like this, if my father was saying something just the opposite was right. [...] My father was a worker [at the state production farm]. His being servant spirited [*“uşakruhluluk”*] had affected me much. When you are grown up among civil servants you know your father better. This is very important, my father doing his hands like this [fastening his hands before his body] before his superiors had much torn me down for instance [...] He was doing this before the God when he was praying [*“namaz kılarken”*], and before his superiors. I still cannot communicate with my father. Yet I do not want to; that servant spirit is ossified in him. I will give an interesting example. I am the technical manager of X [a computer firm]. My father was visiting me in my office. A sergeant came in to have his computer mended; my father stood up and offered his place to him although there was already free seat. I was about to cry, I wanted to sit and cry my heart out. Who is he? Why? How comes this happen; embarrassing...How

they did this, how did they have these people do this? There is a free seat, even if there is not why you are getting up, he shall stand up there. If it was him, would he offer his place to you? No! Why you do? Difference of post [*“görev”*] in Turkey is difference of value. I hate this. There should be no difference between the president and the garbage man in Turkey, no difference of value, there is only the difference of post. [...] ‘Property of the state’ for instance, I heard this expression so often from my father. The property of the state, yes but why does the state owns that much property? Everything belongs to him! Everything! We don’t have anything, don’t own a house, we are renting one. My father worked hard for the state and [got] the salary... [...] I try to stand far-off, still I do so; I don’t contact to the state as much as possible. Satisfy my own needs not to be in need of it. Thus, I try to take care of my health for instance. Because I know that I will need the state if I lose my health. (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13])

The participant perceived his father, who had worked for the state, to have internalized what the state stood for and what it targeted to achieve. The examples he gave of bodily acts and gestures of his father in the presence of ‘authority’, whether the state or God, are important in revealing a form of subjugated, suppressed and obedient subject position, the Foucauldian ‘docile body’ that seemingly coincides with what the participant refers to as “*servant spiritedness*” [*“uşak ruhluluk”*]. His recollection of the encounter between a military officer and his father in his very workplace is an important one in this context. The client-expert relation between the sergeant and the participant, which may be thought as a relatively neutral one or even contextually in favour of the latter for his expertise, was re-ordered through the father’s reaction to the presence of the sergeant, a military officer, a figure representing the state, the patriarchy, the norm and the order. Thus, the relation presently established as an equal one was all of a sudden swallowed by cultural domination, not only in terms of ethnic positions but also and importantly by “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell, 2005) posed by the relational positioning between the father and the sergeant. The participant’s criticism of his father’s attitude and of the value attributed to “*difference of post*”, as well as the phenomenon of “*the property of state*” is important in underlining his expectation of a ground whereby belongings are defined on a more equal basis for the citizens. Thus, his grasp of the state as a guarantor such ground is much a technical one, basically defining a

“programme” that sets the canon of living together for all members of the political community. Yet, at present conditions he criticized the state in Turkey for not doing what it should have done. For him, it rather defines every single detail of life, culture, religion, knowledge, behaviour, and this is why it needs to be taken as “*more crucial than it seems to be*” in terms of its affects on individual lives. Another criticism of the participant is directed to a form of ‘subjectivity’ whereby the person does not responsibly act, nor claims for individual autonomy, will, and rights; but only his “*back leaning on institutional structures*” for “*short term*” “*personal interests*” and “*drive for security*”, he “*compromise with the status quo*”. This he calls “*şahsiyetsizlik*” [lacking in personality], which is for him the dominant attribute among people. The participant does not refer only to Kurds, but to a general phenomenon in Turkey concerning the citizen subject position vis-à-vis the state. Moreover, his emphasis on being “*grown up among civil servants*” could be seen to connote a witness of Turkish order of things, both literally as there are many Turkish/western civil servants who are appointed to eastern offices, yet also symbolically since the state offices are or at least expected to be the epitome of what the state stands for. It is also important to note that he also does not embrace the Kurdish order of things as such, as he thinks “*the relation between the PKK and the Kurdish society is a totalitarian one*”, as “*Kurdish society thinks that if it’s not the PKK, things will not go right*”, while he “*suppose[s] most politics of the PKK is not much different from the politics undertaken by the T.C. state [Turkish Republican state]*” (M, 36, Kurd, Urfa [U13]). His subject position, posing fundamental criticisms to both Turkish and Kurdish politics and status quo, is one example going beyond the *collecdividual* whereby be-longings are formed on a more individual basis.

Overall, above narratives are important in pointing at the expectation from the state as a patriarch supplying for peace, equality, trust, care, support, protection, and wealth for ‘its’ citizens; yet which, in its actual conditions, is experienced instead as an unjust, subjugating, brutal and oppressive one which is not much

trusted, if not totally kept away. Here I argue that lack of trust to the state and to its various institutions, policies and actions, should be seen as an outcome of violent encounters with the state. Direct, recent, and/or systematic violence experienced appear for many to be a cause for 'loss of trust'. Still, the emphasis on directness of violence should not be taken as being strictly limited to the exposure of the person herself, now, and here. Rather, it expands to the collective body, memory, and virtual violent spaces as I have already mentioned heretofore. In many cases, people themselves were much aware of the role of violence in their belongings and perceptions. This was apparent not only in the reflections of the individuals who personally has gone through that experience, but also of those who witnessed it. In one case, for instance, a participant who is an attorney and a human rights advocator, stated that "*I suppose it has changed a lot, Turkey has taken some route in terms of rights and freedoms, this makes a positive difference for people like us, but for sure what the state is for those who suffered directly [those whose villages were burnt]and me would be different*" (M, 29, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D21]). Yet another who stated that she does not participate in the marches and meetings, here specifically referring to those arranged by Kurdish political movement, spoke on similar grounds:

No, I haven't gone. The women participating in the meetings... don't know... have their hearths been wounded. May God give pain to no one! That could be. Should a similar thing happen to me, I may go as well. Because she is a mother; [wishing that] 'may a route be opened so that I shall reunite with my child'. One would go anywhere for her beloved ones. (F, 49, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D11])

As it is clear above, direct experience of violence, even by those who were not directly affected by it, is seen to be a justified ground for reactive attitudes and identifications of those who were. Below is another narrative, whereby the participant, he or his family not experiencing any direct violence, analyzes what he had heard from his friends in a comparative perspective. What he refers to is in line with the argument of this dissertation concerning reactive formations of belongings in the face of violence:



No, my father did not have any such troubles. Because the villages in the area I lived were not burnt out. Yes, there were psychological pressures, the soldier raided on the villages, but the villages were not burnt out. Those who have experienced it see the matter more emotionally. For example, Lice was burnt out totally in the past and I have many friends from Lice [...] what they tell is really horrific. Look, an incredible psychology, one tells 'they fusilladed my father and mother before my very eyes'. [...] Tells 'our English teacher was killed in the street, in Lice, we were looking out of the window yet could do nothing. He lay there as such for two hours'. Those who saw them, who suffered them approach emotionally, look so differently. [...] Say: 'these are done to me, just to defy me, for me to suffer, done to my race'. [...] It merges with nationalism from a point on. It becomes nationalism. Tells: 'I suffered, I will defend my right to the full'. (M, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D5])

He implies yet another position of those “*very few*” people asking “*why are these happening*”, taking the situation as it is and dwell on the question “*to what degree we can improve it from now on*”. Articulating a discourse of “*luminosity*” versus “*darkness*”, he concludes aphoristically that “*either we will see the reality or we will close our eyes and choose a side*” (M, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D5]). His call is to go beyond “*choosing a side*”, which implies darkness and “*see the reality*”, which implies grasping things as they are. Such position is clearly related to having individual responsibility on one’s attitudes and decisions rather than leaving oneself to the flow of the collective will. In other words, it is related to a determination of going beyond the *collecdividual*.

One should note that in all the three cases above (D21, D11, D5), the participants emphasized their pious identifications; they were not overtly distanced from the larger political community despite their criticism of the state and the larger Turkish society; they had an optimistic future projection; and were not unconditionally identifying with Kurdish political movement. In the first case, the attorney called for a “*redesigned, reorganized, bettered*” state structure including the judicial system (M, 29, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D21]). Second participant voted for AKP in the past general elections, while supporting BDP for the municipality, and is content with the municipal policies, yet still believing Kurds are “*not being represented because they are not given the opportunity. At each word their mouth is shut. Silenced. They have nothing at hand. They want*

*to do something but they don't have anything at hand*" (F, 49, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D11]). The third participant, criticized AKP for acting on its own, not seeking approval and/or contribution of other parties; for not continuing its policy of Democratic Opening; for not providing resources to and depriving the BDP municipality on purpose, thinking "*we haven't won here, here is not our party's*" -for which he is "*resentful and furious*"- yet still criticized BDP and all other parties for not doing politics for the whole Turkey (M, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D5]). Similar for these three participants is that they all argue for unity and inclusion. In this context, their point in that confronting attitude of those who have experienced direct violence is reasonable should be understood in line with my argument of reactive formations of belongings. The perception of the "*limits of patience*" as was uttered above by participant (U13) should be seen in this context of conditions leading for emergence of reactive identities. Such perception also bear a clue about the legitimacy attributed to formation of reactive identities in the local popular mindset.

Below are two narratives, which present good examples for reactive formations of belongings; as well as for the role that inclusiveness of alternative discourses, spaces, and networks play in such formations. For the first narrative, it is important to note that the participant (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]), who is an attorney, well-educated and relatively well-off, has always had the tendency to define himself as "*Türkiyeli*" and a part of the larger society. Yet, his witness of the categorical treatment of Kurds by the state and his personal experiences of hostile reception, prejudice and discrimination in the encounters with the larger/'Turkish' society seem to have caused him to draw back into the inner circles, reinforcing for him a categorical formation of Kurdishness, despite his awareness of the fissures along which such category is defined. "*I am so fed up with this war that I don't want to feel as Türkiyeli anymore*" (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]) he stated, pointing in that to the role of lynch attempts in the Kurdish neighbourhoods in various places like *Mudanya* or *Dört Yol*. He stated that he believed in defining oneself with those "*self created processes, with the*

*effort exerted and self-achieved things by one's skill and talent*" and thus, he "would like to define [himself] as an attorney" or one "trying-to-be-an-intellectual". Despite such intention he ended up at a point where he stated "after all that have been lived, I certainly may define myself as a Diyarbakırlı and as a Kurd; I don't see any wrong in this anymore" (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). The above articulation is important in revealing how existing be-long-ings are violated and alternatively reconstructed through reactive processes. What is important, moreover, is that such newly formed belongings may also serve as a ground for forming new forms of social capital. The participant's below narrative reveals the formation of commonality, obligations, and social solidarity for fellow nationals, in this case Kurds, in the context of lynch attempts against those Kurds who were relatively disadvantaged in terms of power relations compared to him.

I would not let a Westerner or a Turk to repress me, I will answer back and I will struggle with him. As I am an attorney I will call him to account for what he did to me, well I will make an effort for it in any case. But who will call to account for what is done to a constructor labourer, one who has not the language, not power, not status, not money? See, this is where equity is required. Everyone should be equal. (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7])

The call for equity and equality, the expectation of fair and just treatment, still shows that although the participant does not anymore define himself as a *Türkiyeli* but as a *Diyarbakırlı Kurd* instead, he still has some notion of a common public organization, or the state itself, and has not altogether broken ties with what is "Westerner or Turkish". His call to the state "to change the perception of Turks on Kurds", for which "it has to change its own perception" is a sign of such ties. What he mentions is the symbolic violence of representation, and for him the state's responsibility to change it. Thus, it is not only the policy and practice of the state that has to be changed, but the attitude of the Turks for which he thinks the state is both responsible and able since "there is the statist tradition in Turkish society; it is taken as the father". His expectation from the state is grounded in his emphasis about the trouble of Kurds

*“both living the trauma itself, and to try to prove it, to prove it to Turks”* (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7]). The ground was well detailed in his below narrative where Kurdishness crystallizes as an identity both the denial and the proof of which is demanded by the state/Turks.

The state has to change the perception of Turks on Kurds, for this it has to change its own perception, then things need to be changed, because we, to speak for myself, we don't want to explain ourselves to Turks anymore, because here for all those lived we are the victims, it is you who have to tell about this and the state should set itself to enlighten Turks about why they should not hate Kurds but respect them, about what their rights are. Because there is an unbelievable nationalistic, fascistic wave getting bigger in the west, some as a result of the war; some of the disinformation that the mass-communication, the media... There is pollution at the level of consciousness, first of all that pollution needs to be cleared away. First we want them to change their perspective towards us. And for this the state, those who are more influential... Because, as far as I get it, what do Kurds say does not have much importance for Turks. Kurds are anyway separatists, they want to split this country, they are secessionists, they are always uneducated, and they always beg from the state, they are victims in any case. You would not credit the word of someone you encoded like this. Thus, certainly the state must be in. (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7])

The above narrative is important in terms of different aspects of forming belong-ings one being social capital, the other is symbolic violence. Lack of effective relation between Turks and Kurds which would enable a trusting, open, and understanding communication is crucial in pointing at the lack of bridging social capital between the two as the participant puts it. Accordingly, the extra effort of one who have been violated to explain about the violation to those who have already prejudiced, stereotypical, and uninformed approach towards it, is itself perceived to be a form of violation which we could grasp as symbolic violence. There is for worse also the disinformation and misrepresentation of media to add on, if not to create, such context. In such ground the state is called in to act as an arbiter and to persuade Turks in what Kurds have gone through and *“change their perception”*, for which it first *“has to change its own perception”*. This is an important position, diverging from many other in the role it attributes to the state as an arbiter between the two societies. Such call is despite the very role the state has in all what Kurds have gone through, as the

participant is much aware in pointing the change of perception that should first the state achieve for itself. In the lack of all such endeavour, however, he has no other option but ‘to be a Kurd’ and only that, despite his otherwise willingness to be a “*Türkiyeli*” and a self-achieved attorney. Still, however, Kurdishness appears far from providing a categorical closure for the participant. Having started to define himself where he believes he is driven to, Kurdishness, he still has problems of fitting in as a similar process of proof of identity is demanded within the inner circles of the identity-practice of Kurdishness. The below narrative makes the details of such ‘unfitting’ position clear, yet still with an emphasis on reactive categorical formation of ethnicity:

I am type of a person who is somehow embraced neither by the Jesus nor by the Moses [*“ne İsa’ya ne Musa’yayaranabilentiplerdenimbiraz”*]. Turks are excluding anyway because we are Kurds, yet Kurds are excluding because we are not Kurd enough. They tell ‘you should be speaking Kurdish’, ‘why are you not pro-PKK’, ‘you are not supporting our politics fully’ [...] There is this exclusion among Kurds when they do not see you as one of them, a politics of exclu... [But you say you give support?] That will not suffice, I haven’t ever thrown a Molotov [cocktail] for instance; or now I support BDP politics, but I do not engage in politics myself. For instance, there was a press announcement today, I took part as well, attorneys of the party were also there, yet not all of Diyarbakır Bar is *BDPli*[BDP supporter]. Some are religionist, some are liberal, totally liberal, I put myself within that category for instance, and I support what I find right, when not... If you take part in the group you should do what is required; as the lawyer of them, for instance, you will make a statement which you don’t find correct, or you will have a press release. Or else, the party politics is already depends on a single man, it is the command coming out of his mouth, it is not possible that you say something opposing him; and people does not like it very much. It may be necessary in some respects; but I don’t feel I belong to. For Kurdish politics not to lose power it may be necessary, but it definitely should get democratized. At least, for instance, many people in the region may be feeling pro-BDP and Kurd, but may not feel sympathy to Öcalan. But since the state regards all as... At the point when we are face-to-face with the state, I think we all need to feel ourselves Kurd, because the state sees us all as Kurd. Whether you are a liberal Kurd, you are a dissident Kurd; you are religious Kurd etc. treats all as the same no matter what. (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır[D7])

The narrative above is important in pointing to the fissures within ‘the collectivity’ as the participant is critical of Kurdish political movement in being antidemocratic and exclusive, in which he “*does not feel belonging to*”. The role

of the “negative consequences of social capital” like “excess claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward levelling norms” (Portes, 1998: 15)<sup>248</sup> are indeed at work in this criticism. The participant, who has all the resources for social mobility, like the cultural, economic, and symbolic capitals, rejects becoming a *collecdividual*, one who acts in the name and will of the group no matter what; yet as the state approaches Kurds as a categorical enclosure, so does he feel the necessity to take part in that enclosure. Still, he is resentful for he feels he is pushed towards it, by the state through its acts, and by the larger society through denial of access to its circles. Portes points out a similar process whereby “the mobility of a particular group has been blocked by outside discrimination” through “lengthy periods, often lasting generations”, such “historical experience underlines the emergence of an oppositional stance toward the main-stream and a solidarity grounded in a common experience of subordination. Once in place, however, this normative outlook has the effect of helping perpetuate the very situation that it decries” (Portes, 1998: 17-18). The case above proves in this line that the relation between ‘feeling Kurd’ as a tacit aspect of life, on the one hand, and ‘the need to feel Kurd all alike’ as a reframed and rebounded projection of identity politics, on the other, is an example for such formation of “oppositional stance”. Thus, Kurdishness as a politically contingent form of belonging becomes a prospect for people with a variety of different, even potentially competing, allegiances who commonly face the violating categorical treatment of the state and the dominant society. Moreover, the participant believed that non-differentiating brutal attitude of the state “*in the past*” has more recently changed to a more elaborate one where “*now it differentiates between the good Kurd and the bad Kurd*”. In this way, the state says “*if you shut your mouth up, and not oppose...*” rewards some mostly in a manner of “*paying hush money*”, which he thinks “*may also be the part of a psychological war*” (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır). Despite his oppositional stance, however, he is in search of a ground to be included within the existing larger

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<sup>248</sup> Portes (1998) also names “exclusion of outsiders” among the other negative consequences as were identified by the recent studies.

political community in the face of an equally exclusive and non-promising alternative Kurdish political community. He thinks that the state “*needs not to be afraid of [granting] rights and freedoms, [but] just the opposite*” to regain its citizens (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır). Clarifying his allegiance towards a ‘democratized Turkey’ and his disapproval of a potentially ‘totalitarian Kurdistan’, he points to reactive formations of belongings, the emergence of which he thinks the state policies give rise to. His will to belong, to be included, and to connect is apparent below:

We will try to become free in as much as you will limit us. But if we are free, we won't have any other demands. This is my own opinion on the issue. [...] I think there should not be a state that is much totalitarian just because its name is Kurdistan. I would not live in it, wouldn't like to. If Turkey is democratic in real sense, it is a country I would like to live in, feel belonging to. Yet the only problem is that our trust, belief has been shaken, we are disappointed. The state has to revitalize this hope; otherwise it takes us to a more nationalistic point by its policies. I don't want this happen to be honest; this I think is the dilemma. (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7])

Another participant, answering if he had a longing for a Kurdish state, compared his past and present attitudes, which are totally in contrast to each other, revealing the role of violence -then- and lack of it -now- as he perceived it to be, in forming his belongings. He defined himself to be one for a democratic Turkey, and had reservations about the conditions of Kurds having a state of their own:

I don't want it in today's conditions. If you had asked me this question in 1992, I would have said I do want it. After realizing about some things, I don't want it now. Now I believe that this state I am living in, despite all the insecurities, keeps me safer. [Difference in the past?] Difference was that everyday there was the police on top of our house. Each day a neighbour or a family member was somehow tortured. Why? Why should I want such a state then? Now, there is not; it has been overcome somehow. Even if there is, no one says I am tortured. Yes there are custodies, but no one claims that they are beaten. I really believe that there is not. Turks and Kurds have lived under the same roof for hundreds of years and this they can continue. Yet these restrictions should be lifted no matter how, and this problem be solved. Why not live together? What will be like when we are a separate state? Think of it, you will construct a building anew. You don't have the means to dig a foundation, neither the mason to build the construction, nor the plasterer, not the painter, nothing you have for the moment; even if you have some they are much vague ones. It is not definite

what kind of a work will come out. How will you build it; if you built it either it will collapse immediately, or will be a building being ridiculed by others. For the masters of the building are not explicit. As a last thing, when a state is founded, whichever state it is, if a statue will be constructed therein I don't want it. I want a statue-less state; I don't want the current statues either. (M, 30, Kurd, Mardin [M3])

Once in the past having had the unrealized drive of 'taking to the mountain', the above participant now states that he "*only partly believe[s] in the [Kurdish] cause, the other part being totally against [his] ideas and belief*". Becoming a pious person in the process, he started to question the Kurdish political movement, stating "*to what degree my values are your values? I found my own values. This is not the value for me; the value for me is Haq [God]. I can't approve anyone's death, how can I? I haven't granted that life, why I should take it! The biggest cause for my giving up was the deaths*"(M, 30, Kurd, Mardin [M3]). Emphasizing that he is "*opposed to the armed side of the cause*", and "*believing [that] the problem could be solved without using arms*" if it ever meant to be done; yet "*it will not be solved on arms for another hundred years*" unless existing conditions are changed. 'Kurdistan' for him, which doesn't strictly denote a definite geography, is a country of free people established and governed by "*the will of Kurds themselves, their choice, and not based on blood of anyone*" unlike, for example, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which he believes "*is not Kurdistan despite its name, but a colony of America [U.S], a small autonomous region under America's [U.S'] control*", where he "*wouldn't like to live in*" (M, 30, Kurd, Mardin [M3]). The emphasis of the participant that "*the masters of the building [being] not explicit*" should be understood in this context of 'being sovereign' versus 'being under control'. Yet, he states that Kurdistan he "*dream[s] of, is not championed by PKK, or PJAK, not the Syrian Kurds, no one does advocate it*" and believes that "*there are millions of Kurds like [him]. All alone!*"(M, 30, Kurd, Mardin [M3]). His focus on a "*statue-less state*", whether Turkey or a potential Kurdish state, that implied statues of the founding leaders as totalitarian symbols seems also to reject an antidemocratic establishment. His analogy of the historical 'house' for Kurds and Turks having



*“lived together under the same roof”*, moreover, seems to point at the role of status quo in forming be-long-ings especially in the absence of a preferable alternative.

Narratives of the two participants above are important in terms of pointing at the role that political violence, not only of the state but of the Kurdish movement; that symbolic violence of representation, not only of Turkish but also of Kurdish discourse, to the degree that they could be singled out as such; and that processes of inclusion or exclusion in the discourses, spaces, and networks -both Turkish and Kurdish- play in forming individual and collective be-long-ings. They refuse a totalitarian state even if it is a brand new Kurdish one. They both emphasize the importance of the individual free will which shall take its place within the diversity of the political community that they would willingly be a part of.

What revealed in this part was basically the expectation from the state to fulfil its duty of supplying for the needs and the well-being of its citizens, in all physical, social, and economic terms; as well as to keep from unjust and violating acts and discourses towards its citizens. This is a strong position revealing a will to be a part, to be included, and to belong. This is also a strong call for democratization of the larger political community, Turkey, in which the participants have a claim to belong. The discussion on looking for a *“sahip”* or *“sahipsizlik”* should be understood within this frame. Violation unmakes be-long-ings, while there is still a will to belong.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

As I tried to underline through many cases in this chapter, the basic pattern concerning the formations of belongings is that violation coming from state apparatuses lead to distrustful and alienated subject positions, which paves the way for rather oppositional, reacting, confronting forms of belonging and which brings forth ethnicization, politicization, solidification of those belongings. This

being the most often referred form of political violence; I also mentioned other experiences of political violence, as they were articulated by the participants, and tried to disclose their peculiarities and consequences for individuals who have gone through them. Perpetrators of other manifestations of political violence were multiple, including paramilitary forces, armed organizations, and the insurgency movement. Effects of political violence, on the other hand, were at many times severed by the existence/exertion of other forms of violence, be them structural, symbolic, collective or sexualized, as I tried to point out throughout this chapter.

Violence on the whole appeared as a formative process whereby ethnic identity and national citizenship is produced. This is by no means claiming that Kurdish identity is formed by ‘violent processes’, at least not more or different than any other identity formation. Rather, I try to point at its transformation from a tacit everyday life fact to a reframed, bounded category attributed with ‘meanings’, which acts as the centre of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy. Still, it is difficult to argue that categorical closure formed in this way is an exclusive one, since many cases reveal counter-narratives in the face of the potentially hegemonic political Kurdish identity discourse. Nor have I argued that politicization of Kurdish identity started with armed conflict and the Kurdish political movement, or through the political violence experienced in the last decades. I rather focused on its spreading through masses and becoming a counter-hegemonic space of discursive practices. It could be argued in this respect that Kurdish be-long-ings have gone through both a quantitative and a qualitative transformation. It is important to note, still, that Kurdishness was still not perceived to be a closed category at the time of the research and was yet open to formative affects of positive political developments and inclusive socio-economic experiences both at individual and collective level.

Another argument I tried to detail in this chapter is that the very existence and call of the Kurdish political movement, as well, plays a formative role through

the changes in the ‘political grammars’ (Norval, 2006) it brings forth and the space it opens for articulation both discursively and practically. Thus, what I argue is that it is not only a negative dynamic, a push factor, epitomized by violence that play role in such formations, but also a positive one, the pull factor, of an alternative social, political and discursive space. It has been shown that Kurdish political movement, through discursive and material re-appropriation of sources and space, provided a form of social capital for many participants; a Kurdish/local one as opposed to the Turkish/central one. Various organizations, associations, institutions, and for the Diyarbakır case the municipality per se contributed to or acted out for such re-appropriation process. Once the pattern as such is crystallized, the pull in of more individuals to the emerging space that the networks, discourses and the sources provide for becomes easier. I suppose that formations of be-long-ings of many Kurdish participants could be read within this context. Being inspired by the relation that Katie Smith (2007) establishes between a denaturalising approach to the status quo and symbolic violence as Bourdieu puts it, I argue that such new forms of Kurdish social capital posing a denaturalising approach to the status quo in the eye of people, appear to provide platforms for making their experiences visible and known, expressing dissent, reducing self-doubt, and for forming solidarity, acting, or moving on in a way to challenge symbolic violence they face. The argument, however, does not exclude the presence of newly created forms of symbolic violence by that very alternative social space. This is to say, individual articulation in such space still depends on the extent of the inclusiveness of the newly formed discourses, networks and sources, as it was clearly revealed in cases where people who perceived to be marginalized in those spaces were equally critical of both the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state.

Two dimensions of the process, whereby the individual links up with the ongoing construction of collectivity, could be discerned, at least analytically: one is *performative*, and the other is *cognitive*. It has been argued that “constructions of belonging have a performative dimension”, in that “specific repetitive

practices, relating to specific social and cultural spaces, which link individual and collective behaviour, are crucial for the construction and reproduction of identity narratives and constructions of attachment” (Yuval-Davis, 2011: 15-16);<sup>249</sup> and in this way “free-floating emotions ‘stick’ to particular social objects” (Ahmed, 2004, as cited in Yuval-Davis, 2011: 16). Inferred from the cases analyzed in this chapter is that performative dimension of constructions of Kurdish belongings is a significant phenomenon, and two flows of experiences, proving to be repetitive, act out their role for those formations. One is the experience of violence in all its forms. Many participants, especially Kurds, emphasized throughout the interviews the notion of similarly “having lived through” certain shared experiences such as structural deprivation, poverty, political violence, cultural repression, and discrimination at various levels. ‘Having lived through’ being the signifier of direct, personal experience appear in these cases to be a ground leading to a sense of commonness, and reframing ‘the in-group’ as distinct from ‘the others’. The practical experience of and bodily presence in the conditions they had been living through, seemed to have created a specific ‘political grammar’ for these people. The experience and witness of violence were constantly contrasted to the mere “knowing” or “having an idea” about it or even mentally “opposing to” or “the refusal” of it. I think what they were trying to tell was that ‘Turks’ -mostly referring to people in western Turkey, sometimes people anywhere in Turkey other than the southeast or east, but frequently non-Kurds- were speaking from within a different political grammar, but the Kurds were not to share that grammar any more, which itself implied formations of dissimilar subjectivities for Kurds and Turks. The second flow of experience significant in terms of performativity of belongings is the political organizations, basically around the Kurdish political movement, including protests, meetings, marches, commemorations, or celebrations. Providing opportunity for identifications to be promoted, expressed, negotiated, or adapted; drawing, defining, or solidifying boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ through their very organization, discourse, and the witness of frequent violent

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<sup>249</sup> Yuval-Davis (2011) refers to Bell (1999), Fortier (2000) and Butler (1990) for this argument.

confrontations between diverse actors including the security forces and the participants, they contribute to the performance of Kurdish identity. As I mentioned above for several times, the body itself becomes the very space where such 'performance' is acted out. Through death, mutilation, maiming, blood, imprisonment, torture, hunger strikes, suicides, self-immolation<sup>250</sup>, diseases following maltreatment at prison, demonstrations, protests, hurling stones, hiding, escaping, taking to mountain, wearing *poşu*, and through the very V sign, body becomes an essential space of formations of Kurdish belongings and constructions of Kurdish identity. *Body emerges as the space of Kurdishness.*

What I call the socio-cognitive dimension of the process, whereby the individual is linked to the collectivity, reveals itself in the relation between the experience of violence, construction of memory or the perception of time, and the perception of self-identity/self-location. Here, it is important to recall that exposure to violence in this dissertation is defined not only as the experience of direct but also indirect victimization the latter referring to violence that one witnesses or hears about. What I often came across during the research among many Kurdish participants who faced violence is a type of narrative integrating day-by-day happenings, discriminative acts or discourses experienced by anyone who has a self or other definition of Kurdness. This is most often regardless of how thin that definition is; of how close or remote the person experiencing violent conditions, act, or discourse to the narrator; of the actor, cause, or source of the act or the event; of where they took place in Turkey; and of how minor or major they actually are. This last was revealed in many cases, for instance, whereby political charges or arrestment, on the one hand, and a scornful attitude, on the other, were put into the same pool of memory. There establishes an unending chain of evidences for categorical treatment of Kurds, mostly by the state/governmental institutions, yet recently also by the larger Turkish society, which sharpens the perception of 'difference' and delimits the boundaries of

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<sup>250</sup> I refer to the typical usage of the term as used since 1960s, which is suicide by setting oneself on fire as a radical form of political protest.

Kurdishness with every other ‘evidence’. The perception, moreover, was so sensitive to any positive or negative experience. Related to this was what I mentioned above with regard to trust to institutions. In some cases distrust was so high that gross violations left aside, many troubles, which might well be experienced by any average person in Turkey, regardless of her ethnicity, was still perceived to be discrimination against Kurds. Here it appeared that it was not always the individuals themselves having experienced discrimination or injustice; but were the existence of various cases they hear about or witness and the very conditions they have lived through. Consequently, their anticipation of being frozen out was so widespread. This is a fact akin to what is known as the ‘chill factor’<sup>251</sup>(Heath and Cheung, 2006), whereby the very anticipation itself shape the acts and decisions of individuals playing its role in making the boundaries and delimiting the categories of “us” versus “them”. Chill factor, thus, should be considered as another dynamic contributing to the construction of everlasting chain of evidences. The chain ever incorporates each and every experience of violence and discrimination, as each evidence links to the prior and as such to the primary one -independent of what, when or how it took place. In this, the chain tightly binds the past and present, the individual and collective, the silenced and expressed, the subtle and the manifested, the idea and practice, and accordingly, the memory and the body. The chain, thus, in its spiral like upwards move on a single focus- violence and discrimination against Kurds- negates time and creates a collective *helical memory of violations*. What is left behind is not the present per se, but Kurdishness as the eternal moment brought up through violation. Chatterjee (2005) argues that in the case of 1920s and 1930s’ India, what millions of people in both the cities and the villages who were engaged in the movements following Gandhi did not constitute a common experience despite what was described by the historians as the same great events.

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<sup>251</sup> Anthony Heath and Sin Yi Cheung refer to chill factor in the context of Northern Ireland, “where Catholics may be unwilling to apply for jobs in a Protestant firm (or vice versa) because of the hostility or discrimination they anticipate from co-workers or employers belonging to the other community” (Heath and Cheung, 2006: 6).

Individuals' own understandings of those events were narrated in very different languages and inhabited very different life-worlds. The nation indeed, Chatterjee (2005) argued, existed only in heterogeneous time, even if it was being constituted through such events. In this case, however, the argument is that heterogeneous time of Kurdistan is entrusted to the memory through violence. Violence, in other words, reverses the proceeding of heterogeneous time of Kurdistan, only to constitute the common homogeneous time of 'The Kurdishness', through collective memory, which now acts in a helical movement. One re-members, members herself into the collectivity, the performed identity of Kurdishness, via such memory. Memory functions as the momentum forging the collective identity and the moment of individual belonging. *Memory emerges as the time of Kurdishness.*

One last theme to go over is the perception of state as was revealed in this chapter. In many narratives, state was equated with force, fear, feeling of insecurity, lack of consent, and lack of hegemony. State was seen the criminalizing, exterminating source of evil, which is perceived to create and escalate the problems by various means including poverty and deprivation; lack of investment in the job market or in education; imprisonment; use of political violence; and use of military violence. State in many cases was seen as an agent who take back the rights even if it provided some, and made life more difficult through its discriminating acts. There was both a strong critique and questioning of the state policies and violence; and a mocking, indifferent attitude towards the state. State was unreliable and cunning, as well as omnipotent most often in a feared way. When it was expected to stand as the father, it is usually perceived to act 'his' authoritarian role. Yet still the state itself was often seen as the actor to bring peace, to provide for 'its' citizens, to grant rights, to distribute the resources. Here, the role of violence, in all its forms, and the formations of reactive be-long-ings play a significant role. Reactive attitude, in the face of violation, is still open for an improved and constructive role of the state, yet only in the context of 'positive peace', with the absence of hidden as well as the brutal

forms of violence. An epitome for the existence of such openness was the widespread discourse of '*if the state thrusts out its hand we would give our hand too*'. Even though reactive form of belonging vividly emerged as the most crucial pattern of Kurdishness grounded in the findings of this research, there also came to fore some other patterns, which I named and mentioned briefly in this chapter. Pro-status quo and negotiating attitudes with the state and with Turkishness were also other patterns crystallizing among some of the Kurdish participants, to much a lesser degree though. Religion and modernization appeared to be important negotiating fields. Turkishness, to the degree it was inclusive of Islam in act, discourse, or ideology, in other words as far as it provided a ground for practicing Muslimhood, was negotiable, even if not always eagerly welcomed. Modernity, on the other hand, not as a secular mind and practice set but as developed opportunities of life was the ground for reconciliation with and accommodation to Turkishness. Modern prospects and facilities were almost always welcomed. Thus, though it could be concluded here that there is a variation in reception of Turkishness and relation to the state, the prevalent and most visible one among many Kurdish participants was the reactionary belonging as was thoroughly analyzed in this chapter. Important to note still is that these are patterns, not exclusive and once and for all, but contextual and contingent.

Violence in this context is direct, systematic, and continuing. It comes to fore that spaces, bodies, memories, and alliances are reordered through violation of what they were and what they aspired to be. Order here refers to its various meanings as to command, and control, as well as harmony, legislation, rank, and arrangement. It also implies a derivative word, the 'ordinary', with its meanings of normal, expected, quotidian, and mainstream.<sup>252</sup> It is not only the experience but also the memory of violence having put a manifest mark on the processes of belongings, concerning especially the Kurdish and Syriac population. Crucially, violence is experienced at multiple levels, individual as well as collective,

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<sup>252</sup> For the meanings of 'order' and 'ordinary' see <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>



physical as well as symbolic; material as well as discursive. The multiple forms of violations could be referred to as political, structural, collective, and symbolic violence. Fear, anger, frustration, pain, suffering, indifference, sorrow, revenge, and loss expectation for justice are but some expressions of the experience of violation at individual and/or collective level. It is most often gendered.

As was shown through many narratives through this chapter, the issue of trust appeared to be decisive in terms of formations of belongings for the participants of this study. Trust is a signifier of social capital. Coleman's (2012) argument that "trustworthiness of social structures is a form of social capital that allows the proliferation of obligations and expectations" is important in this context. In this case, we might well think that distrust towards state institutions and political structures shows deformation or the total absence of the ground for formation of linking social capital -the vertical relations with people in positions of power and authority. My argument, following Coleman (2012), is that distrust towards social and political structures, which is consequential to political violence, brings forth defection from obligations and loss of expectations on the side of citizens. To see such defection and loss, as many narratives above have revealed, is critical in terms of understanding those citizens' improper utilization of the institutional structures, and their refrain from partaking in the orders of them, as well as the search for alternative allegiances and sources to mobilize for one's ends.

Concerning the relation between violence and belonging important is the argument of Daniel Conversi, which states that "it is the direct and shared experience of (state-led) violence against the individual as a member of a group, or follower of a belief, that has enormous ethnogenetic impact" (Conversi, 1999: 570). It has also been argued that "as a rule, the emotional components of people's constructions of themselves and their identities become more central the more threatened and less secure they feel" (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 202); and that "the sense of trauma, loss and nostalgia for communities are powerful stimulants

to oppositional identity formation” (Ray, 2011: 14). Rumbaut (2008), moreover, talks about “*reactive ethnicity*”, as “one mode of ethnic identity formation” that is forged “in the face of perceived threats, persecution, discrimination and exclusion”. “Highlighting the role of a hostile context of reception in accounting for the rise rather than the erosion of ethnicity”, Rumbaut (2008) exemplifies cases whereby a group of people “become self-conscious about their common fate and distinctiveness”, and begin to feel more their ethnic identity than anyone, political organization and solidarity rallies helping to transform the communities.

## CHAPTER 5

### CAUTIONATION CAUTIOUS BE-LONG-INGS IN THE FACE OF BEING MINORITY OF MINORITIES

In this chapter, mostly the experiences of Syriac participants of the study will be covered. Here, the story is still further complicated as what is at stake is a religious minority group, Christian Orthodox Syriac population, which is not entitled an official minority status at national level, and which cohabits with the majority Muslim populations, Arab and Kurd, at the locality that it is indigenous to. Their immediate surroundings and relations are definitive in making and unmaking of their be-long-ings. Thus, one needs to look closer to the state of *being 'minority within minorities'*, *inter-community relations*, *local power relations*, and *the role of aşiret system* in forming be-lon-ings of the Syriac participants.

Relating to the last chapter, it should be noted that experience of political violation was not exclusively reserved for Kurds, yet many Syriacs, Armenians, and Chaldeans living in the region, well besides other ethno-religious groups, were affected as well. The high conflict era, period of village evacuation, village guard system, state of emergency and martial rule, let alone the pre- and early republican periods of violent episodes or discriminative policies directly concerning the non-Muslim or Christian populations, have deeply affected these groups in social, economic, demographic, and cultural terms. Memories of 1915, the incident of Capital Levy and its aftermath, international conditions and periods of interstate crisis were among those episodes and policies, which repeatedly came up during the interviews. Crucial and peculiar in the case of Syriac participants of this research was their experience of collective violation in the locality, violence coming from the neighbouring Muslim- Arab, Kurd, and

Turk/Turcoman- populations on religious-communitarian bases. Important also was symbolic violation, which is directly related to the phenomena of representation and production of discourses thereof, that is not only determining but also detrimental for the very existence of an ethno-religious minority population few in numbers and relatively weak or disadvantaged in terms of the privileges of political power. The role of social capital and the role of economic inclusion were also important processes in forming be-long-ings for the Syriac participants as will be exemplified throughout this chapter.

Overall, the argument is that cautious and reserved attitude, the most visible pattern among the Syriac participants developed in the face of mostly violent, exclusive, or discriminative experiences, becomes the basis for articulating into the nation. *Nation* being constituted through *cautious* subjectivities, in other words *nation through caution*, is conceptualized here as *Cautio(n)ation*.

### **5.1. Chained Memory of Violence and (Un)making the ‘Truth Regime’**

Although it was not a direct focus of the research, the memory of 1915 emerged during the interviews as a constant reference point proving its role in shaping be-long-ings for the Syriac community. “Seyfo”<sup>253</sup> was the phrase used in Syriac to define the period, which crystallized as one of traumatic loss both in tangible and intangible terms. Not only the transmitted memories of the elders, but also the

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<sup>253</sup> Bruinessen (2012: 7) notes that the true extent of the “*Seyfo*”, as the Syriacs call the violent period, is still unknown to the wider public and is a matter of debate among experts. Donabed and Mako (2009) argue that the total number of Syrian Orthodox lost their lives during the period of 1915 is well over one third of the members of the Orthodox Church in the Middle East. High numbers of men, women, and children belonging to the Chaldean Church and the Church of the East likewise perished in the course of massacres in eastern Turkey and the Urmi region (Donabed and Mako, 2009: 85). Aziz Kara (2006, as cited in Palmer Andrew, 2013: 163-164) notes that “*Seyfo*”, which is the Syriac equivalent of *Sword* in English and *Kılıç* in Turkish, is the word used by the Syriac to denote any massacre executed by the Muslims against Christians; “*Fermano*”, on the other hand, was more specifically used for the massacre in 1915. Naures Atto (2011: 84) argues that Assyrians/Syriacs perceive the *Seyfo* to be the latest overwhelmingly major incident of persecution in their history.

discourse, official and local, woven around the period were mentioned by the participants, though not always spontaneously or openly. Informative in terms of the role of the period in making the memories and narratives of Syriac people was a participant's mention of his own experience during an oral history project, which was undertaken by a local cultural association with Syriac and Kurdish villagers. Revealing in this context was his expression that "*even before we initiated [the interview], without being asked any questions yet, particularly the elders started with the year of the massacre. Well, history [and] life here starts from the massacre on*" (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]). The period appears to mark a 'Beginning', if not an 'End' so to speak, which defines the 'Before' and the 'After' of the collective memory and belongings. During the field research I had a similar experience, yet in another form. 1915 seemed often to be the one hidden under the tongue for many Syriac participants, and when it came out in some way the narrator was in relief. It appeared to be almost an essential component of subjectivity that represses the subject and is repressed by the subject, yet played out a defining role in the narratives, experiences, and perceptions of the participants, whether it was expressed thoroughly or not. Should I mentioned it before the narrator, s/he was eased that it came out without her taking 'responsibility', if not the 'risk', for uttering a highly contested issue; and was content to see that someone 'outside the community' respected the memory of the experience and the pain suffered thereof. Even when the participants were inclined to see the event and other violent periods as issues of past, of "*very old times*", in the relatively eased current times, the outsider's act was still one to be thankful to. The following quote reveals one such case: "*in the very past times, as I already said, difficulties had been lived through. Late afternoon today, when you stopped by the shop, to a few points you, you thankfully, I would thank to you, you mentioned*" (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]). Four times repeated "*you*", addressing the researcher, and double "*thanks*" of the participant could be seen as an example of such positioning of the 'insider' vis-à-vis the 'outsider' who 'dares' to mention the period. Despite the cautious language of the participant with regard to the "*cause of the difficulties lived in*

*the past*”, which he sees to be “*ignorance certainly, and malicious intentions*”, the experience and its memory stood with its entire reality in his articulation:

Ah, I don’t know whoever promised whom, in what way, whatever they then promised upon which considerations... Yet the painful things of the past had been lived. We are not old enough to remember them, but the painful things that had been lived in the past, had certainly been lived (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]).

Revealed in his expressions, moreover, is the perception of an uncanny relation between “*the past times*” and the present. While the past events “*were so bad for us [...] that we still bear the traces of them to tell the truth*”, “*today those are tried to be compensated, and that is pleasing*” (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]). On the one hand, a clear opposition is established between the past and the present. In such opposition, the past with “*so much difficulties*” is compared with present, which is usually seen to “*have changed in positive terms*” as the participant describes: “*now we are well, at ease, we don’t have any problem with the state*” (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]). The contrast between the past and the present is also established between the memory and the experience. His emphasis on the period “*being lived*” by the community members although his personal memory does not reach that far, takes on almost a language of confession, if not persuasion. Yet ambivalence is seen with regard to the participant’s perception of the re-representation of 1915. He expresses, on the one hand, his unease about the event being an issue of hot debate as in the following: “*to be honest, after this much, searching, introducing, probing about these events [...] add I think not to the solution but only to intensifying the problem*”. He articulates his expectation that “*things to repair, to please people*” and “*to compensate*” the past experiences should rather be provided. In his question “*where will it head to when you probe about the past so much*” (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]) lies his anxiety of becoming -seen by others to have become- a part or an object of a highly polarized political discourse and of the various potential forms of violations that could follow. A visible sense of insecurity could be detected in such anxiety. Yet, his yearning for a reconstruction of the

official discourse reveals the other side of the coin in terms of the formations of be-long-ings here stamped by the very denial of a ‘lived experience’:

Yet I wish, I wish Turkish Republican state, it would not but, I wish it accepts such an event, so live.., such a lived event! Believe me many people will be relieved conscientiously. Yet still “so-called”, “so-called”, “so-called”; no it is not “so-called”! If that’s the case, you as the state shall establish a research team, come and wander around this region; then you’ll see if it has a reality or not? It has; you cannot deny it! (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26])

The participant’s emphasis on the “*livedness*” of the event and his call for searching the “*reality*” in the memories of those experiences in the “*region*” could be understood as a call for a reconstitution of the current ‘truth regime’ through unmaking of representations and discourses, and a whole set of symbolism. His reference to “*conscience relief*” may be understood to point at the perceived moral dimension of such regime. Putting reservations that he understands it to be “*the state policy*”, related to the “*issues of the investments to some states etc.*” and stating that he “*sincerely [doesn’t] contravene it*”, he presents an example of the cautious/self-restrained attitude, which I came across in narratives and attitudes of many Syriac participants of the research. Consequently, rather than being too assertive, he came back to his call for a “*repair*”, which seems to refer broadly to the implementation of equal citizenship rights. This I infer from his reply to how such repair should be, whereby he mentioned those experiences of the community members, which could be grasped in the light of the conceptualization of Mesut Yeğen (2004) that is “*differentialist citizenship practices*”. Among those “*past*” experiences were counted the following: “*they would not even make one of us a watchman*”, “*would send all of us to the same place for military service, all to Erzurum, to Sivas, to Amasya written there g.m [n.m], g.m*<sup>254</sup>. *meaning non-muslim, always there, why not in Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, when we served there it meant we were*

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<sup>254</sup>g.m. stands for the first letters of the expression “*gayri-müslim*”, which literally means “*non-muslim*” in Ottoman Turkish and is used so in the official and informal language of the modern Turkey.

*backed by someone*”, “*we used to be treated as second class citizens*”, “*in the past we had the shame of not learning our language, shame of Turkey, it was forbidden as it was for Kurdish, perhaps for others [...] if had a school for Syriac, even if we had the chance to teach it on our own facilities, today we’d known Syriac*” (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]). In comparison with recent changes he also noted that “*not a decent position they granted to one of us in the past, now we even can have a parliamentary candidate, it is one of the positive changes realized for us, and these are good things for sure*” (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]). Various incidents cited above -an array of experiences concerning military service, public employment opportunities<sup>255</sup>, social standing, political representation, citizenship status, and cultural rights- are being linked in the participant’s narrative to the most catastrophic 1915 and its repercussions. This, I suppose, enable us to speak of a ***chained memory of violence***, bearing of which forces one into a rather self-restrictive, restrained and cautious attitude. Such attitude appears not only in dealing with the state or the official institutions, but also in everyday life that is defined by a religion and language/s other than one is born into, and still by power relations that only -and at best- “tolerate” one’s existence, if not altogether “exclude” it. By *chained memory of violence*, I mean something slightly different from the helical memory I defined earlier. In the former, all the memory is linked back to one single period of violent events, 1915, as would be in a chain; while in the latter, ‘every’ violent memory or experience of ‘everybody’ is linked together in an ever accumulating manner without necessarily one single start point or a centre, yet creating its own centre, violation in itself, through its own dynamic of pulling in every single experience however trivial or gross it may be.

An act of linking the more recent experiences of violence back to the period of 1915 is seen in yet another participant’s expression, who up to that point referred to some recent violent periods like the village evacuations and its influence on

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<sup>255</sup>Hurst (2012) mentions that Turkey has not legally barred non-Muslims from public employment, but informal discrimination has made it very difficult for non-Muslims to be hired.



the rural Chaldean population, that is mass emigration to Europe, stating “*we have also the previous period of course; that date of 1900s*” (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). Both periods are recalled through incredible loss for the community, though incomparably in the former it is the lives that had been lost.<sup>256</sup> Still, mass emigration of people meant a huge loss of social, economic, and human capital as well as enormous wealth of culture, knowledge, competence, and productivity. The intricate relation of the two periods was also mentioned by Tamcke (2012) who argued that the experience of “Seyfo” is at the foundation of the Syriac sense of insecurity to this day reinforcing the willingness to emigrate to Europe. In the above narrative 1915 not being dated openly is perceived as a baleful time. It is almost a fixed point of reference of the chained memory of violence for many Christians in the region. If we note that currently only three Chaldean families left in Mardin in contrast, for instance, to 1968 when the Church<sup>257</sup> is remembered to be full of Chaldeans, how traumatic is such huge transformation, ‘loss’ indeed, in such a short period could well be comprehended. Another clear depiction of loss is seen in the narrative below, whereby the participant mentioned the violent episodes experienced by the Syriac community:

No crap is left that they haven't tried in order to cast the Syriacs out of the region. They killed even the mad, the deaf, the doctor or the headman... Whoever they could, they killed. Only to give a message to the family or to the village, or so forth, telling openly that the term would be theirs: ‘either you go or the term is yours’. I mean it was emptied in that way, Midyat decreased to 110 families in this way. Well, I... I saw five churches serving in Midyat, five pastors; now one church serves in Midyat. Now it is only the half [of the population left]; I witnessed, Midyat, in 1960 there were 1600 families in Midyat, in 1960 there were 46 Muslim families in Midyat, look at the gap in between! Start from 1915 and count towards 2011, it is countless what this

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<sup>256</sup> Atto (2011) argues that the mass emigration from the homeland is often compared to Seyfo in terms of its effect on the existence of the Assyrians/Syriacs in the homeland.

<sup>257</sup> Saint Hirmiz Church, the Chaldean Catholic Church in Mardin was once the Metropolitan cathedral of the Chaldean Catholic Eparchy of Mardin prior to it lapsing in 1941. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mardin> accessed on 23.12.2016. See also <https://duanemiller.wordpress.com/2015/06/02/st-hirmiz-chaldean-church-in-mardin-turkey/>

people have suffered. Even today it is so. Nothing has changed. Ahh, today they would have committed the '15 genocide if they could, yet the world does not permit anymore, I mean they simply can't! Even in a minor incident people let the whole world know it via internet. (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

The narrative displays the extent of loss -of cultural, religious and social existence as well as the high number of inhabitants. It also discloses the desperation, insecurity, and loneliness that people live in the conditions they live. Yet, a balancing factor at times of violence appears to be the link to the supranational space, referred here by the expression “the whole world”, which emerges as a ground for safety and security that the national space lacks. It shows also that lost social capital ‘at home’ and the social capital reconstructed via transnational links.

Moreover, it becomes clear in the narratives that the period became a fixed reference point for many not only as a dreadfully traumatic event experienced by the older generations in the past, but experienced as a traumatic event by the descending generations and similarly at present corollary to the policies pursued and discourses woven around the issue. One such discourse being evidently ‘denial’ as mentioned above, another important one for Syriacs is the period’s being solely voiced with reference to the Armenian population. One participant stated, for instance, that “*1915 was a Christian Massacre, not an Armenian massacre. [...] Syriacs, Armenians and Greeks were all killed*” (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). Another such policy is the lack of effective acceptance of the suffering, an apology. Pointing at the devastating consequences of the period for the community in economic, cultural and social terms, the same participant also stated that “*I lost everything in that '15. Lost everything! My livestock went away, so did my property, my identity, my history, my books, my holy values, I lost everything of mine therein. Is an apology too much? Are we going to live together like this?*” (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). In the face of such traumatic loss, “*apology*” could be seen, on the one hand, as a political act, which might be taken as a step towards redefining political community and restoring -even if only partially- the effects of political violence.

It may be seen, on the other, as a symbolic act with material consequences, an act of re-presentation of 'reality', re-establishing the truth regime, and to efface the effects of symbolic violence of denial, overlooking, and perversion. It is important to note that the participant sees taking responsibility and apologizing as a way leading to collective "*healing*" and "*a task of humanness*" as well as a fair condition of "*living together*" (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). Such emphasis, I suppose, points yet another dimension of how apology is perceived, which is the social dimension, with connotations of mutual trust, respect, and share of values, thus of the making and maintaining of social capital within the larger society. Hence, we can infer that apology is perceived as a social as well as political and symbolic act; and it refers to horizontal relations within society as it does to vertical relations -of a specific population- with the state. Yet lack of apology or any attempt for it, enunciator of which shall be the state and society, is linked with the continuation of "*the same mentality*" solidifying the perception that "*nothing has changed; all is lie!*"(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). Feeding such perception is the experience of intermittent episodes of political violence, not necessarily solely towards the Syriac or Christian population. The participant, like some other Syriac participants did too, mentioned various violent incidents experienced by members of other communities such as Ezidi and Alevi to denote that 'unchanged mentality and practice'. Experience of political and collective violence in Turkey, being perceived as a generalized state of affairs specifically against religious minorities thus becomes a perceived common ground linking different ethno-religious minority communities, and further contributes to the perception of insecurity, exclusion, and pessimism about the future in many aspects. A quote in this line can be found below, where the participant links the denial of 1915 with the official attitude against a relatively recent violent episode targeting yet another religious minority group, the Alevi:

Sometimes I think it's normal that they deny 1915, Sivas<sup>258</sup> was just yesterday, [and] it still is denied. All is recorded by cameras, there are voice records, cameras, films, witnesses still living, and they still deny it! To whom would you tell about the 1915? To me it was told, I read them, they were expressed in poems, there are melodies, they are expressed in sorrowful music, have become films. They were told to me personally, I can't deny them in any condition. No matter what it costs! [...] My grandmother had told it to me; she had lived it in person. I listened also to other elders many times; I listened to Muslims too (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]).

These narratives, I suggest, are other manifestations of *helical memory of violence* that link various violent episodes together in a circular movement, in this case a *helix* both *vertical*, as it has a longitudinal perspective concerning the same specific population in time, and *horizontal*, as it spans through space and across cultures, thus pointing to the perception of a continuity of a violent mindset and practice in both time and space. The above narrative also and importantly points at the formative role of violence in cultural and social terms. Memories of 1915 were transmitted to succeeding generations by elders telling the lived or witnessed events, which happened “*before [their] very eyes*”; *they were the subject of films, music and literature* (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin[MM35]); and they came to fore in inter-group relations mostly in a decisive manner.

Still, transmitted memory of violent experiences of earlier generations and the need to handle everyday inter-communal relations at present being simultaneous processes; individuals might develop their own path of agency. The feeling of insecurity, leading to a reserved attitude and withdrawal into community relations in general, may in cases lead to a hands-on attitude as apparent in the below narrative:

Do you know what they would say to us? Never show them the way to your home, don't tell them, they are unreliable (laughs). They told us such a life and such events to show that you cannot trust them. Trust yourself only. But we... I

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<sup>258</sup> He refers to the violent attacks against a festivity organized in Sivas, a central Anatolian city in Turkey, by an Alevi cultural association in 1993, whereby 37 people, two of them attackers, died as a result.

am not that pessimistic. I still show my way [to home] and I am not afraid. Living in fear is not good, need to be courageous. Fear does not help your fate [“*Korkunun da ecele de faydası yok*”]. Cowards die many times before death. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27])

A similar path of action was revealed by the same participant in a context where he criticized those who have migrated, either to Istanbul or to European countries. He puts “*struggle*” he is engaged in ‘at home’ as opposed to the ‘loss’ of those who (were forced to) have left home.

They are assimilated, left with their spiritual and religious ties only. Their past, memories... Nothing left other than the elders sometimes coming here to live [for a short bit] and then go back. I don’t know what we mean here for them. Yet it is not important for me. I got used to struggle on my own and I am content with my life, I knew that life does not have a taste without any struggle. We’ve fought; I both beat and got beaten. Yet I am pleased, I have my lessons out of them. I refined my philosophy of life in an apt way. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27])

Some sort of resentment and non-migrant versus migrant tension is detected in his narrative, whether relating to the conditions of the remaining community and what they have had to go continuously; his perceived loss of relation to those who had gone; or his unrealized earlier wish of migrating to Europe. Still, however, he claimed he did not want to go to Europe anymore, since he believed he “*now fills a gap in Mardin*” and having “*not wanted to exist only for [his] community, [he] share[s] Mardin with all*” (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27]). He refers to his collection of old goods and antiques, though which he believed he preserved the old memories and cultural heritage of their ancestors. He was also engaged in trade of them, economic gaining was thus also part of his endeavour. Identification with the locality meant both the roots and a self-made life for him.

In some other cases as well some tense perception of those who have migrated to Istanbul, or those who have already lived there, was visible. One stated for instance, that those in Istanbul “*have always looked down upon us: peasant, dull, ignorant, uncultured people. They are all bigheaded*” (M, 56, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM37]). Such tension might be related to the rural versus urban

dichotomy; to the relatively higher levels of accumulated economic wealth in Istanbul; to the differences of socialization patterns and lifestyles stemming from living in different structural conditions together with different populations; and to other historical ethno-cultural peculiarities of the community. Yet such an attempt is far beyond the limits of this dissertation and requires further research. Still what the tension, however obscure it may be, hints is important in pointing at various constituting elements of be-long-ings for divergent contexts.

## **5.2. *Fettered Citizens/Subjects: Experienced Tensions in Space, in Time, and between the Individual and the Communitarian Existence***

An important note to be made here is that memory of violence and traumatic loss proved to be a burdening experience for many Syriac participants in terms of present time belongings and future projections. When I asked about how everyday life at present was affected by such memory of violence a participant noted that “*our soul has been penetrated by it, and we can’t help our souls; this is it in a nutshell!*” The expression points at how violent experiences affected one, almost defining a paradigm for perception and thought, violence marking its very affect all through one’s soul. Not only the body but also the psyche is influenced by violent experiences. The following statement of the same participant shows the extent that everyday life is influenced; “*well we’re here we’re going, so much negativity has been lived that one is stuck; even much so when we cannot reach the information we want to*” (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). By the latter he refers to the specific information on the family origin, as they know it was rooted in today’s Iraq and that they had left about five hundred years ago. The family tried to follow its roots but nothing genuine came up. The frustration thereof, thought together with his feeling of being “*stuck*”, discloses the importance of belongings as spatial processes and reveals a tension between the will to a peaceful life ‘here’, which is yet thwarted by constant “*negativities*” and the search for the information of the original place ‘there’, which cannot be realized either. The tension between here and there could be called ***the tension in***

*space*. Repercussions of violence on individual lives come to fore not only with regard to space but also time. Indeed experience and memory of violence act such a devastating role on formations of belongings that relation between the past and the future may become a challenging one. Manifestation of such tension could be seen in the following narrative, whereby the past, present and future are linked tightly together, yet in a negative way almost to establish a vicious circle. The past seems to impede the potentialities of future and “peace” in the present. The tension between the past, present and future could be called *the tension in time*.

What shall I [expect of future] anymore; normally it shouldn't have been like this, but well it happened. I have no expectations for myself, yet obviously for my children. [I feel] in-between, [thinking] whether it would be good or bad if they continue their life here. I sure had dreams, yet I sometimes feel I should prepare them for going to Europe and make a life there. We represent a foundation here, a nation/people. After me, if my children leave as well, who will look after this foundation, what'll happen? Well, I want to consider this but I can't reach a conclusion thereof, I'm obstructed. We experience something and it sickens. No peace, [utters an Arabic idiom, meaning] no peace in this world. (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33])

The participant, above, articulates his individual expectations of future with reference to the conditions of communitarian prospects, which implies a third tension, *the tension between the individual and the communitarian existence*. International space being perceived as a secure ground, vis-à-vis the insecure national space, seems to have an important role in terms of future projections. For Syriacs in many cases emigration was facilitated by the already established family, kinship, or communitarian ties via former emigrants; and it has been an often resorted method, often as the only option of escaping violence and repression, as the narratives in this chapter mentioning various violent episodes will make it clear. Yet the above narrative discloses that opting to go is not always so easy and never only an individual decision. Apparent here is a concern for the continuity of ethno-religious group identity that crystallizes in the maintenance of the churches and foundations as the participant, who is in charge of the church, sees himself and his children, subsequent to himself, to

“represent” and “look after” such identity. It seems that when individual concerns and life projections diverge from what is perceived to be the communitarian good, there emerges a tension. On the one hand is the absence of necessary conditions of living in “peace” here, in the ‘homeland’, because of various forms of violence, yet on the other is the fact that leaving the non-peaceful place is an edgy issue as the roots, past, and memories become a hindrance for doing so. They almost become fetters on the individual future projections. The deadlock is between establishing one’s life and living for a nation. Many narratives at some point turn to a story of presence and affluence once, yet of the current absence and lack. Absence seems to define the existence. The consequence is a feeling of in-betweenness; being on the horns of a dilemma between leaving or staying, to stake a claim or giving up; and sense of being stuck in or hopelessness. It proves to be a life in strain for many. When they decide to be in, they are not at ease. Should they give up and leave the burdening memory of loss and a feeling of indebtedness towards their community’s future stands before them. They turn to be *fettered citizens/subjects*. They are bound with fetters not only by their ‘responsibility’ to the past, but also by the forcing conditions of the present. Collective past becomes a burden in the present for the individual in terms of her future projections. In this way, the excesses of the past, violence, the lacks of the present, secure and peaceful life, and the ambivalence of the future are all linked together as is the individual existence and the collective one.

### ***5.2.1. Violent National Order of Things, Restrained Citizens/hip, Relational Modernities***

A violent period, 1990s, was detailed in the previous chapter mostly in the context of the Kurdish experience. It is possible to say about many Christians in the region that they got caught at the crossfire between the state security forces and Kurdish insurgents especially in the rural areas where they cohabited with Kurds or lived close to them. State of insecurity lived during the era was



expressed by a participant as in the following “[19]90s were so bad, it was so bad; between ’90 and ’94 it was all horrible in here. And we were just in it, in the middle of the conflict. Each day! Each moment! Something could have happened at any moment!” (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). It was mentioned that during the period “most of the Syriac villages were evacuated too, [while] some fled out of repression” (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]). Evacuation seems to have taken place very much like in the Kurdish case, as one participant noted “they were raiding on at night, if you are still here in the morning you are dead! In the middle of the night, [people] arranging a lorry [to load] goods and chattels...” (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). Urge ‘to become a village guard’, or the accusation of ‘harbouring’ were the troubles they too faced with consequent effects following. “What crushed us most after 1914-1915 is the village guard system” (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]) is a bold expression of such effects as many people had to evacuate villages thereafter. It was stated that “no Syriac village had accepted to become village guard”; yet in a manner to point at the power relations and show how individual decisions and life-worlds were contained by the social structure lived within, it was also noted that “there is only one single Syriac who is a village guard, and the reason is obvious. The village he lives in, [they] are all village guards. Village of an Agha; he had no other choice” (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]). As “having no other choice”, so being “stuck in between” are illuminative expressions for the underlying role of the power relations for those affected by the acts of both sides in conflict. He noted that military operations<sup>259</sup> undertaken on the accusation that they were helping the

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<sup>259</sup>Bilge (1996) mentions that those military “operations” of the state were sometimes a result of targeting of the Syriac villages by those who provoked “state forces” by blaming the Syriac villages to help Kurdish armed forces. He states that they were the ones who settled in the evacuated villages and seized the Syriac lands thereafter. Resisting Syriacs were usually the victims of unknown assailant murders. He defines those forces to be the same with those who provoke local Muslim people against Christian Syriacs on religious grounds. He referred them to be fanatical Muslims and anti-Syriac forces trying to base themselves on religious grounds that were uneasy with economic wealth of Syriacs and were willing to seize it (Bilge, 1996: 99-100).

Kurdish armed groups put them in-between the conflicting forces with detrimental consequences ensuing. He said:

But we were stuck in between. The state was coming ‘well you give food to Kurdish militants’, or things like ‘they come and take shelter here, you help them’. We had such troubles a lot. We had troubles in our villages, our monasteries, everywhere. Most of our people had fled because of those troubles then” (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]).

The above participant also stated that his brother-in-law, the elder brother of his wife and the father of eight, was killed at home at a midnight in that period. He, being the “leader”<sup>260</sup> of the village, with many villages under his control, was believed to become the target to force the villagers to evacuate the village, since targeting the secular community leaders or the headmen were “*tactics used to evacuate the villages*” (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). I will refer to the consequences of evacuations for Christian population more in detail in Chapter 6. Yet some other specific instances were mentioned by the participants such as being assigned by the gendarmerie to keep guard along the oil pipe line,<sup>261</sup> some part of which lies along the rural Midyat. It was mentioned that many Syriacs, especially young men from the villages along the line or around were made to guard the pipe line at nights. A few guards were placed by the soldiers along the kilometres long line “*to keep watch and ward in wild and remote places in the mountains [dağbaşı]*”. Yet they “*weren’t paid, supplied*

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<sup>260</sup>Bilge (1996) mentions the position of such “leaders” in both urban and rural areas. Accordingly, social power in rural areas and villages, whereby the struggle for power is rather sharper than in urban areas, is shared between the cleric in the village and the ‘family unions’, or a single family union defined usually by their economic power and crowded population. The leader of the family union that seizes the power, in turn, becomes the ruler of the village and holds the right to execute some functions both within the village and against or in relation to other villages (Bilge, 1996: 87-88).

<sup>261</sup>The Iraq-Turkey Crude Oil Pipeline, which is popularly known as the Kirkuk- (Ceyhan) Yumurtalık Oil Pipe Line. The system transports the oil produced in Kirkuk and other areas of Iraq to the Ceyhan (Yumurtalık) Marine Terminal. The first tanker was loaded on 1977; the Second Pipeline, which is parallel to the first one, was completed in 1987. Retrieved from <http://www.ceyhanbotas.gov.tr/en/default.aspx?Pgid=122>

*food, or armed to be able to defend themselves*". Although it was a compulsory duty, even if "*nothing in exchange*" of the 'service' was provided, the participant telling the story stated that they cannot now make any claim for financial compensation as they "*can't prove it, because [there is] no formal registers, [since] it was done on personal initiative, not an order from the state, from above, nothing written*" (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]). Yet the damage caused went well beyond individuals, as the old mother of the participant interfering in Syriac stated that "*half [the Syriac people] fled because of those repressions then*" (F, 80s, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin).<sup>262</sup> I will be referring to other incidents of emigration or flight following violent periods or policies in Chapter 6 in the context of territorial belongings. It is necessary to note that not only in rural but also urban areas as well violence affected everyday lives of people detrimentally and led flows of them heading mostly to Istanbul and sometimes to European countries. Revealing the perceived danger and the state of insecurity of daily life one participant noted that in those conditions of "*terror, we worked putting our head in the lion's mouth*" (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]).

Encountered force, repression, violence and the consequent perception of insecurity were yet not limited to a specific period that is 1990s. Martial rule was imposed in many cities in the region from 1978 onwards, which became valid for the whole country with the 1980 military coup. Mardin was among the eight cities whereby the state of emergency rule [*Olağanüstü Hal*] was declared in 1987, yet it became adjacent city [*mücavirîl*] in 1996 although the state of emergency was terminated. The long period of state of emergency, which was lifted only in 2002, and the experiences of violent periods led the generations born and bred during those periods to 'normalize' it. A clear expression of such perception was uttered by a participant born in 1974, who "*was a child, 5-6 years old [at the time of] the [19]80 coup*" and despite having only "*few memories [of the coup], not much*" still remember a neighbour warning his

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<sup>262</sup> She was not counted as a participant.

parents in that “*only the children could go out to get some breads yet the elders should not go*” (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). Seemingly in an urge to make it clear that such experience was not so extraordinary for many in the region he continued as in the following:

Yet we have not seen any democracy, it has been the state of emergency as far as I can remember, except for [the last] few years, except for the [last] 4 or 5 years, it was all emergency, the martial rule that we have grown up within. [What kind of a psychology it leads?] Well, psych... one... one gets used to it. I mean, we haven't seen any democracy yet; only if you've lived in democracy and known it then you would know what the martial rule is. That was life! It was always the martial rule, life was ever that. Everyone knew that if you got close to the police, he would beat you; that was how life is, the police existed to beat [people]. They could learn about democracy a bit [only] today, 10 percent or 15 percent of the whole arrived in there, at least [you know that] no he cannot beat you! But then life was that ... You can recognize the problem only after you see a liberal country (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]).

The narrative reveals the participant's reflection on his perception of the violent conditions of life as 'normal', where violence becomes the order of things after a while. In the absence of a state of affairs necessary to have an awareness of an alternative order of things and web of relations -a liberal, democratic and peaceful one- let alone an ability to examine and evaluate them, violence seem to have become the order both in the sense of the ordinary and the regular, and in the sense of the rule, the system itself, *die Ordnung* in its German expression. Violence in such conditions seems to have established itself as the national order of things, with the state of emergency and martial rule laying the circumstances one grows up within and gets used to, leaving the citizens without the knowledge of an otherwise democratic and liberal rule of law. This situation can partly be understood in the light of Galtung's (1990: 295) argument that “the culture preaches, teaches, admonishes, eggs on, and dulls us into seeing exploitation and/or repression as normal and natural, or into not seeing them (particularly not exploitation) at all”. When the culture is understood in a broad sense as the way of life with the structures, meanings, doings and makings it produces and is produced of, it is visible how everlasting multidimensional violence experienced

in every minute detail of life may lead to a perception of violence as the life itself. The emphasis in the participant's above narrative that "*life was always martial rule*" points not only to direct violence, but also to structural violence with all the forms of relations and capabilities it brings into being, and to symbolic violence, which creates a form of perception or knowledge of 'the reality' that violence is 'normal', thus hinders the possibility of 'knowing' any other way of life that is defined not only negatively as 'non-violent', but also positively as 'peaceful'. It is important thus to see that multiple forms of violence are intricately related and they are experienced so by many in the region. Yet another aspect to add to this perspective was whether the people had the means to leave or not. It has been argued that one "effect of the impossibility of being able to leave a violent area might be desensitization with respect to violence or even acceptance of it as a normal occurrence; [whereby] violence becomes perceived as a fact of life" (Cardia, 2002: 163). Many participants in this research contended, as some of the quotes in these pages reveal, that there certainly occurred an outflow of huge number of Syrians, non-Muslims in the broader context, who left the violent area, which in some cases is the region but in others the country altogether. Violence appears to be a major cause for the internal migration from the region and emigration from Turkey. Moreover, we may reasonably argue that those were mostly the ones who had -directly or indirectly- the means to leave.<sup>263</sup> What I was told during the research backs this

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<sup>263</sup> These two relate to the discussion on whether the main cause for the Syriac e/migration was economical, as the official discourse in Turkey claims it to be. Yakup Bilge (1996: 96-99) argues that such claim is far from reflecting the reality as the living standards for many Syrians were not below the average standards of life both in the Southeast region and in Istanbul, yet just the opposite. He states that only a small amount of the total of Syriac émigrés were of lower social economic status, while most of them had economically rather moderate conditions or were well-off. In Mardin, for instance, many Syriac villages that were set upon the most fertile and abundant lands were evacuated by their inhabitants –Öztemiz (2012:70-71 quoting from Schukink, 2003) states that this very ownership of land and property was even a factor in the attacks of Muslims, their outrage towards oppressive conditions and economical, social, religious repressions being directed towards the 'wealthy non-Muslims' through a collaboration of the *aghas* and *sheikhs*. Bilge argues that collective outflow of Syrians is a reflection of their response to the situation they faced and their loneliness in Turkey. He also notes that there is an economic dimension of such outflow yet it is more to do with securing their existing economic capital, moving away from the violent condition they faced, rather than lack or search of it. Economic difficulty 'at home' was only a trivial part of the story which was only effective in

claim in that the affluent people were the forerunners of migration to Istanbul or European countries, while some poor followed them to take advantage of being employed by those already established their works there.<sup>264</sup> One participant narrated on the process stating: “*the way to Istanbul was open. All the craftsmen, all had gone, established different clans in the Grand Bazaar; opened stores in Şişli, Kurtuluş, opened firms. Most of them are jewellers. They were mostly jewellers here as well. We still have many in the Grand Bazaar*” (M, 72, Syriac, Mardin [M32]). The expression “*we still have many*” is a sign of the close relation of the individual to the community, of the individual’s appropriation of what belongs to the community, of the individual be-long-ing to the community and vice-versa. Revealing the importance of the bonding social capital for community members, especially for the poor, and indicating economic interconnection to the degree of forming an ethnic enclave, the participant also noted “*both the wealthy and the hungry left. But mostly the wealthier. When the wealthy went, employment [opportunity] decreased, so all were doomed, the poor as well went. Those who had relatives followed them, what can the poor do other than go to his relative*” (M, 72, Syriac, Mardin [M32]). This indicates

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some rural areas. He mentions the migration from rural Mardin to the city centre, but mostly the one from centre to Istanbul and as a further step to European countries. Öztemiz (2012: 69-75), depending on the findings of his doctoral research conducted in Mardin, writes also that seeing economical reasons to be the only cause of the phenomena of Syriac e/migration is an inadequate one as the causes vary in different periods and contexts. He basically names five: in 1950s e/migration was mostly based on economic reasons as the poverty apparent in Turkey in general also affecting the Syrians as well; in 1960s the insecure conditions stemming from the oppressions of the Kurdish *aşirets*; from 1980s to the mid-1990s the conflicts in the Southeast and the following insecure and negative conditions for the Syrians; also at different periods state based religious and social oppression influencing Syrians and its psychological consequences; and the inappropriate conditions of the Southeast Anatolian region inhibiting education and the increasing problems appearing thereof. International crises, PKK and Hezbollah violence were also mentioned by Öztemiz (2012) as causes for emigration to European countries. Arıkan (2011) categorizes two reasoning of emigration in her work on Assyrian Transnational Politics, which she conducted in Sweden, Germany and Turkey. Accordingly, there is an economic reasoning for the emigration from 1960s to mid 1970s starting with the guest worker schemes in Western Europe, mainly in Germany; and a political reasoning starting from mid 1970s till today based on Assyrians’ utilization of asylum procedures in Sweden (Arıkan, 2011: 9).

<sup>264</sup> In this regard, findings of Su Erol’s work (2016) among Syrians in Istanbul are in parallel to the findings of this research.

some form of ethnic entrepreneurship, whereby co-ethnic employers provide opportunities of work for the community members, and it is the way through economic inclusion in the national and international economy is realized. Indeed, their involvement is beyond ‘inclusion’, since the gold market in Turkish economy is said to be directed by crucial Syriac and Armenian entrepreneurs. They are important for the Mardin city economy as well, for the overwhelming number of craftsman and jewellers in Mardin are Syriacs and they have a dynamic role in the market. One should also note that existing occupational segregation which parallels to ethnic division emerge in cases as an enabling structure necessitating and sustaining mutual relations between different ethno-religious groups. I came across an interesting scene in the city, revealing ways of dealing with the ‘other’ through adoption of his language in what he deems to be holy. In one of those jewellery shops in the old city a note printed out on an A4 paper stated these sentences each lined under one another: “the signs for the hypocrite are three: lies when he speaks, misappropriates, breaks his word. Hz. Mohammad (A.S.)”<sup>265</sup> An Arab participant in the city mentioned this note after I had seen it myself. A Christian having hanged on the wall of his shop the saying of the Prophet of Islam certainly pulled his attention. He said it is “*because those who owe him are the Muslims*” (M, mid-30s, Arab, Mardin [M23]). What is done apparently is a transferral of symbolic power of the saying to regulate the local economic relations aiming to affect Muslim customers to be loyal to their debt when they shop. In a broader context, such undertaking indicated that those who stayed behind were to find their way to develop and maintain relations with others/the Muslims whom they shared everyday spaces of life.

Concerning migration still one point to be made is that it was less an option for those who did not have the ‘means’ to migrate. ‘Means’ here refers to a wider context including well-being and preparedness in physical and psychological

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<sup>265</sup> The title “Hz.” stands for “*Hazreti*”, which means “His Holiness” and is used to praise, glorify, and show respect for the one named. “A.S.” stands for the Arabic word “*alayhi s-salām*”, which means “may the God’s peace be on him” or “peace be upon him” [PBHU]. The expression as is used as a sign of respect and piety in ordinary language.

terms, in addition to material sources and social capital. In such state of affairs, accommodating to the existing conditions of life, however difficult they are, was much of a necessity, opting out of which could have caused detrimental consequences. Life as such should be nothing but ‘normal/ized’ for effective survival in all manners. Still, however, the consequence of migration of Syriacs for Mardin as a whole was the loss of the expertise and talent, economic enterprises and wealth, as well as social relations, thus the opportunity to develop higher levels of bridging social capital. One crucial perception of loss was related to a way of life, a ‘modern’ and ‘civilized’ one, existent in Mardin in the past but lost with those who had gone. An open expression was narrated as in the following:

Up to 1975s, Istanbul of the Southeast was Mardin. We used to go to cinema twice a week; we had a cinema-hall. Theatre plays used to come and we went [to see them], once a week or ten days some play would come and we used to go to theatres. Artists used to come and gave concerts. Well, moreover, when you walked along the street there were no two person with headscarf, all were civilizееeed! They were even dressing in miniskirts in here. [...] Then when the locals of Mardin had left, it became like this. (F, 52, Syriac Mardin [M31])

People wearing gloves and fedoras in the streets of old Mardin were also recalled by other participants as a sign of modern clothing even before its time. Some Syriac and Arab participants mentioned that “*Paris modasi*” [Parisian fashion] once was followed in Mardin city centre as Syriacs had often visited Syria, which was a French mandate then, for trade, familial, and religious relations. They brought western style of clothing as well as petty trade goods to the city. A detailed narrative was as following:

Well on Sundays... It was as if there was a fashion parade. Well, no one can differentiate us from Turks; all had dressed up, then those hats and tulles were worn, French tulles. The French were dominant in Syria then, colonialism... We used to come and go then, there we had received the fashion. [...] Everyone had their shoes shined. [...] Men wearing fedoras, women wearing unveiled dresses. (M, 72, Syriac, Mardin [M32])



Mentioning the influence of clothing reform of early Republican era he further stated that men started to wear suit and fedora, while women did not wear chador anymore, “*all were in modern clothes*”. Muslims “*having adapted to*” them; and “*no one can differentiate [them] from Turks*” were interesting expressions revealing a perception, which I call **relational modernities**, whereby ‘Turks’ are deemed to be a modern society comparably as Syriacs/Christians are; while ‘Muslims’, apparently urban Arabs sharing the city centre with Christian Syriacs, only adapted to the latter and become modernized accordingly. Although generalizing, such perception indicates a dichotomy of western versus eastern, ‘Turks’ referring basically to the present time western, urban, and secular population of the country, and ‘Muslims’ to an eastern, and less modern population. The participant, as did many other Syriac participants, apparently identifies with the former.

To go back to another emphasis of the narrator above, a way of getting to know an alternative order of things is seen to be the perception of relative democratization experienced within one’s own country, as some Syriacs believed was the case in Turkey in the last decade -as of 2011- which I will be mentioning below; or through one’s experiences held in a ‘democratic’ and ‘liberal’ country, referring mostly to the western European countries. Yakup Bilge (1996: 101) states accordingly that emigration of Syriac people to European countries led them realize quicker that their development had been prevented and they were oppressed in their own country, as they gained in those countries many rights such as Syriac being taught at state schools, radio programmes broadcasting in Syriac language, Syriac people becoming representatives in local municipalities and benefiting from various other improvements. This was also confirmed by the participants of this study who had experiences in European countries. One, who was a former emigrant to Sweden and have returned with his family in 2002 after 23 years of living there stated that “*people have awakened after going out to Europe*” (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]). Naures Atto (2011) writes that at present Sweden is home to perhaps the biggest Assyrian/Syriac

community in Europe, and in Sweden they have played a major initiating role in generating new questions and initiatives pertaining to their collective identity, which have come to dominate the discursive field at transnational level. It is clear in this case that those questions and initiatives were also effective in the 'homeland' through return migrants. The above participant's role in the establishment of a cultural association after returning, and his active engagement in communitarian issues as well as relations with Kurdish politics to find a say for the Syriac could well be thought in this line. An interesting point he further made about the perception of many Christians in Turkey before they emigrated was that "*since massive massacres [referring to the late Ottoman period] had already come to a halt with the Republic, the oppression was more in a psychological, economical and social form. Thus people were not much aware what was going on*" (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]). This was the fact to which people woke up in Europe: things could have been totally different, and what they had experienced was indeed not 'normal'. An important point he made was that they "*achieved this political consciousness*" there in Europe and realized that it was not only the misbehaviour of the local Muslim population on religious grounds but a part of a broader and deliberate political plan of the Turkish state. He stated that:

First we could not totally figure out what was the reason for all the oppressions and problems here. We mostly thought we lived all these because we were Christians, yet its roots we realized there. We live these troubles not only because we are Christians, but because we are the owners here around, owners of these lands, and because they want these lands cleaned of us. We achieved this political consciousness. We woke up there; we came to realize this there. [...] They want to erase our very being here, annihilate us. Or assimilate. (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36])

Further connecting what happened in Turkey, which he thinks "*the state did on purpose, knowingly*", to the even broader context of world politics he stated that *at the time of Kenan Evren [...] a meeting was held, the Islamic Conference*<sup>266</sup>.

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<sup>266</sup> Kenan Evren was the leader of the military coup in 1980 and the president until 1989. Turkey attended in the IV. Islamic Summit Conference held in January 1984, for the first time at the

*There was a decision, the need to evacuate the Middle East from the Christians. Anyhow after that here the greatest oppressions had been lived”* (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin[M32]). Important to note in the above narratives in terms of the focus in this dissertation is that transnational space and links established thereof play their role in defining and shaping belongings for the Syriac people in Diaspora but also in Turkey. More specifically, they provide a source of social capital, of linking type arguably, which is utilized when in need of. Links thus established seems to have played their role in changing the constellation of the very political space and the power relations as the participant noted that “*any longer in this world becoming globalized, [whereby] people reach America [US] in minutes, those massacres in the old manner cannot be realized, cannot”* (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin[M32]). There were other mentions of the potential bloody and detrimental consequences of the attempts of collective attacks, by local Muslims against Christians, which took place in Midyat yet were prevented through mobilization of linking social capital (both national and transnational) as the capital city as well as the European Parliament was alarmed to play their role before physical violence occurred.

Importance of transnational space and its relation to the violent national order of things also came to fore, in an ironical manner though, in an anecdote a participant told, which is about an event taking place in Mardin around 1982-1983 just after the military coup. It was a period where many Syriacs, especially from Midyat and around, were fleeing the country for European countries. The story is about a group of “*researchers*” and “*ambassadors*”, “*from Sweden, Germany and some other European countries to investigate about the reason for emigration*”<sup>267</sup>, who came to find Syriac people claiming that they were

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level of Presidency. Evren also attended in the V. Islamic Summit Conference in 1987 and was active in the decisions taken about Turks in Cyprus and Bulgaria.  
Retrieved from [https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenan\\_Evren](https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenan_Evren) accessed on 17.6.2016

<sup>267</sup>Oran (1988) mentions a research committee being established by the Dutch government for investigating the conditions of Syriacs in Turkey, after a group of Syriac Turkish citizens sought

oppressed “*in order to be accepted as immigrants*”. The participant told the rest of the story as in the following:

As the brigade commander [*paşa*] hosts them for dinner, here in the officers’ club [*orduevi*], having *raki*<sup>268</sup>, delegates and all, chatting, the commander says ‘it is a lie Sir, could that be right? We don’t oppress them, not behave unjustly; if you like I will have their leader, he will tell you’. He gives order to the soldiers; a helicopter takes off and lands in the yard of Mor Gabriel Monastery. It is around 11:00 or 11:30 pm. They wake up the metropolitan bishop; he gets up, dresses up, gets into the helicopter and flies to Mardin. He [the commander] says ‘Your Archpriests’, [*Başpapaz Efendi*] they ask us if we oppress you or doing any injustice, you tell them what’. The metropolitan answers: ‘my dear commander, you have come and got me out of my bed at this time of night and brought here, could there ever be greater injustice than this!’ (M, 33, Syriac, Mardin [M28])

The story stands for itself in terms of power relations, which are taken to be granted by the hegemonic one, yet which in this case was challenged by the agency of metropolitan bishop disclosing how violence was embedded in that very constellation of relations. Laughing, the participant added “*see the logic, well that’s military logic. [...] Sure, Turkey is not the same as in 70s or 80s*”. Thus, despite those experiences, thinking that things have changed in Turkey in a more positive direction, he criticizes elders, including his own father, of being “*still like in 60s or 70s, [deeming] one should not talk about the state*”. He adds to make the reason clear, “*they have fears coming from past, you know. They couldn’t catch up with the change much, see?*” (M, 33, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). “*Fears coming from past*” are very much related to the memory of violence, as I mentioned above, covering the experiences of many episodes back to 1915, sometimes even further back, as well as those in more modern times like the

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asylum in Holland in 1979 claiming that they were oppressed in Turkey. Oran states that such application caused uneasiness in the Dutch government who first thought of deporting them, yet later decided to investigate the situation. He notes that although the conclusion that the committee arrived was not echoed in the press, he learned from a committee member that they concluded that Syriacs were oppressed by the Kurds in the region. I am not sure whether the research committee that the participant mentions in the above narrative is the same one that Oran mentions, yet this is the only reference to such a committee I came across so far.

<sup>268</sup> An alcoholic beverage

Capital Levy, problems in the Law of Foundations, discriminative citizenship practices and instances of collective attacks after international crises. Indeed, the latter two appear to prove that such fear was far from being caused by either the “past” experiences or the “memory” exclusively, yet it was repeatedly fed by the more recent experiences and by the anticipation of facing them anytime in future. Such experience, deepened by the fact that being Christian in a country where religious affiliation appears to be a definitive measure of (national) belonging and the ‘nation’ is popularly and officially defined -regardless of its truth- to be 99 % Muslim, may be argued to lead almost a state of ontological insecurity.

### **5.3. Collective Violence: Muslim Neighbours against Christian ‘*Gâvurs*’,<sup>269</sup> and the Muslim Mediators**

One extremely important phenomenon which had a determining role in defining the boundaries between Muslim and non-Muslim groups, to make a bold categorical divide, is the collective attacks of the former to the latter. Narratives of many Syriacs reveal that international conditions or Turkey’s interstate relations with neighbouring countries like Syria, Iraq, Iran, Cyprus, and Greece played an important role in triggering those attacks. Religious difference is critical since many of those incidents of collective attacks followed by tense interstate relations or any event, which is perceived to insult Islam or Muslims that takes place anywhere in the world, in mostly the so perceived ‘Christian Europe’. Below is a narrative, clearly expressing such experience:

You know what? In Mardin, indeed not in Mardin, generally in Turkey, do you know which were the years we suffered most? The constant intercourse of Turkey with Greece, the problems, landing of troops in Cyprus, again it was always the opportunist and self-seeking Kurdish and Muslim groups here

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<sup>269</sup> *Gâvur*, *gawur*, *giaour* meaning infidel/unbeliever, an offensive religious and ethnic slur, which is used by Muslims in Turkey and the Balkans to describe all who are non-Muslim with especial reference to Christians (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giaour>) “Fille” in Kurdish, having a similar meaning, was also used widely for the Christians especially by Kurds as many participants themselves also mentioned.

brought grist to the mill of Arab Muslims. And those sprouting always as banditry caused for the weakness of our community. They started a flood of abuse and humiliation of people asserting that Makarios, the Cypriot Greek Makarios, was from Midyat. Think of that! Upon an impertinent event with Greece, all [Christians] inside Turkey had their shares [of suffering]. 70 churches of ours were burnt down in Istanbul, again because of Cyprus or Greece, plundered at a day in '50s, there are films shot about it. .. Almost always there were those making a bait of us, or try to do so, whether it is the state, the government, political parties, the right wing or the left wing, they always try to make an easy bait of us. Even though we try to abstain from politics, some people do always push or incite us... We have always been made a bait of and still are ready bites to be consumed. I mean still we are not able to fully explain ourselves and what we are looking into. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27])

Important is the emphasis that despite having refrained from politics they are being pulled into political debates or to take side, if not already being stigmatized as the 'other side'. The narrative below, recalling the period of 1974 crisis on Cyprus and the consequent Turkish military operation in the island, reveal details of the tension in everyday lives of Syriacs:

Makarios was the president [of Cyprus] then. The priest, the parson [here] could not go out [that time]. They called out Makarios... [In anger]Cyprus is no concern of us, we are from here! ["*yabize ne Kıbrıs'tan biz buralıyız!*"] [pauses] In '74 as Turkey issued an order [...] we are the children of here, from Mesopotamia, [laughing] not Greek either, so what is it to us! ["*e bize ne!*"] [They thought as] 'well, the Greek side kills the Muslim, so we shall kill the Christians here'. [...] See we have the name Petros, [they shouted] 'either half of the Cyprus, or the wife of Petros!' And Petros was a shoemaker here. [Laughing] what is thi... what for is thi... and included in the landing [Cyprus operation] were at least 40-50 Syriac youngs, soldier, in the Cyprus landing, [they] were [conscript] soldiers... (M, 72, Syriac, Mardin [M32])

The narrative reveals that Syriacs who feel and deem to be of 'this side' originating, living, and projecting to be "*here*", as "*children of here*", were easily thought to be of the 'other side' in any case of interstate crises with a 'Christian country'. The apparent tension above is about inclusion, and being counted as 'belonging'. Even the fulfilment of one's military service, which is compulsory for every male Turkish citizen and deemed in official and popular discourse to be a 'sacred service to the homeland', appear not to suffice for the non-Muslim

citizens to be accounted for being ‘from our side’. An anecdotal narrative of the participant below reveal a case personally experienced in military service:

I was paying my military service, what I lived there... I was the most comfortable, but I do not forget a memory. It was the time of Kardak crisis<sup>270</sup> in '96. We were in the air force, thanks God not at the front though. My comrade in arms asked me ‘what are you gonna do?’ ‘What does it mean what I am gonna do?’ ‘Well’, he said, ‘you are a Christian, Greece is Christian, we are Muslims, what're you gonna do?’ Ugh, what shall I do now? If I had the opportunity I would ask the Greeks not to kill me as I was a Christian! [We both simile] Well, I don't have it either. God damn it! What shall I say [more]...(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

The narrative is significant in presenting the position of a Christian Turkish citizen in the perception of others at times of a crisis with a ‘Christian country’. Even when serving military, thus fulfilling a citizenship obligation that is highly valued as a ‘national duty’ and compulsory for men, the participant faced an attitude of not being included as ‘one of us’, but was identified by the ‘other side’, if not the enemy, which too is coded to be Christian, in such perception. Thus, in the specific case he mentioned, a ‘Muslim versus Christian’ dichotomy being established concerning an interstate dispute he was ‘forced’ to make a choice, if only mentally, to take side as if he was not already a ‘side’ that is a Turkish citizen defined under Turkish Republican State and serving the military of that very state on the eve of that forced ‘choice’. What makes this memory ‘unforgettable’ for the participant seems to be this very blurring of his ‘insider’ position as well as his awareness that he, as a Christian Turkish soldier, did have no means whatsoever to prevent him from being shot by ‘the Christian other side’ if such necessity of confrontation had emerged. Such memory, for the participant, seems, to play the role of a reminder for the ambivalent position of a Turkish citizen who is of Christian faith and leads him to be quite furious for not being treated as an equal citizen.

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<sup>270</sup>A 1996 dispute in Turkish-Greek relations concerning the ownership of two islets/rocks in the Aegean which resulted in status quo ante. Retrieved from <http://tfpcrises.org/ana-sayfa-1996-kardak-krizi>; <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/background-note-on-aegean-disputes.en.mfa> accessed on 4.1.2017

During the interviews, vivid memories were recollected by the participants concerning the repetitive events and communal gatherings targeting the Syrians. One took place in 1968 at another time of crisis on Cyprus with Greece when a crowd was organized and marched against Midyat along with a dog and a monkey carrying cross, an act of humiliating Christian symbols. The participant noted about how the event was organized in following: *“in '68 during the Cyprus incidents, the local governor [kaymakam] of that time gathers all the Muslims together, organizes, especially, this Arab segment”*(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). *“Kaymakam”* being alleged to be the responsible person of the organization is information that needs to be verified; but regardless of its truth it is still important in revealing the trust, or the lack thereof, towards the local representatives of the political power holders. The potential attack was prevented with the interference of some political and military actors and a considerable Muslim man from an *aşiret* to which the Syrians are also tied to. The participant telling about the event continued in a way to show the consequences of such occasions:

Thanks God it didn't realize, but people are not at ease, no peace in the *memleket* [at home], I mean such an incidence one of a sudden, when thousands, tens of thousands of people march towards you, against you or upon you is not normal though! You have not even yet recovered from the past [violations]. This means there is no life in this country! In this way, the European road had been opened to [Syriac] people.(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

The quote is important as evidence for the effect of collective violence on the experience of insecurity and decisions to emigrate. He asks the question *“I don't have a problem with a Kurd, or with an Arab! And not with the state, not with the Turk either, I don't have any problem. So, why is there a problem?”* (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). His own answer reveals his perception that the main cause for such events is that they are Christians among Muslims. The participant stated accordingly:

They are Muslims! I mean when you say Kurd, not all Kurds are like that. When you say Arab, not all Arabs are like that. Well, what is our quilt? It is being a



Christian. [...] Nothing else, there is no other reason for that. [...] Do whatever you want if I say I demand land, or I don't recognize the state, or the flag is not mine, or I curse or say something to Ataturk, the state is right to do with me whatever he likes then. But no, there is nothing, [so] what is my quilt? My quilt is being a Christian; I have got no other quilt. And everybody knows that, why should I have a problem with a Kurd? No, I don't have a problem with a Kurd, or with an Arab! And not with the state, not with the Turk either, I don't have any problem. [...] It has nothing to do with Kurdishness, or Arabness or Turkishness, it has something to do with religion. Anyhow some people do abuse it... (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

Reference to the perceived 'red lines' of the state and society over the symbols like land, loyalty, flag, and the Ataturk cult –as they are conceived to be so at the time of the research- stands for a denial of existence of any 'legitimate' ground for such violence in the absence of transgression of those lines and in the face of the restrained attitude of the Syriac citizens. Yet at the same time it discloses a perception that such violence is 'justified' in case of infringement of those lines. Still revealing in terms of the expectation of relative liberty in modern Turkey compared, for instance, to an openly Islamic regime, and the perceived inconsistency of the current conditions to such expectation is the following expression of the participant: *"what is painful about these is that we live them today, in this age. Well, nobody believes it; they say 'it cannot happen. Are you talking about another country?' No, I am talking about the Republic of Turkey, not about Iran but about Turkish Republic!"* (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]).

The organization of another incident, which took place in 2005 in Midyat displaying the pressure upon the Christian population at times of international crisis, had a very similar pattern to the prior ones. The participant's narrative below is importantly full of details of the event and telling about such pressure:

Wherever in the world takes a minor incident against Islam we here are going to pay for it. Just as we did in 2005 for the caricature [incident]<sup>271</sup>, again tens of

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<sup>271</sup> The series of events followed well over ten years triggered by the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten publishing a series of cartoons, some depicting the Prophet Mohammed as a terrorist with a bomb on September 30, 2005.

thousands of people gathered here. Against whom man? [Was that so, did people gather in Midyat?] Yes, the same as in '68, the same place, the same community, they marched towards there [Estel]<sup>272</sup> got assembled, and then they marched against here [Midyat] to the same point, [heading] after that point to the work places. Where are you going? Isn't that enough that you've marched three kilometres forth and three kilometres back? Why not enough? No, [they] shall enter into the stores [owned by the Syriacs]... Still we are accused for preventing that: 'the Syriacs do not let us hold a mass meeting'. We are the guilty again, they will enter the stores, and what is going to happen in the stores is clear. [How did you prevent it?] The state! [Him so you reported] Ankara was all in alarm, so was the European Union, the European Parliament, because we were informed beforehand. Well, the '68 memory had not yet been effaced; the image was the same, if ever it happens again we know that, we haven't forgotten about the '68. We know where they would gather together, how they would approach... They will get out of the mosque here, go to Estel, nearby to the teachers' club, gather there together, will get out of the mosque there and will march against Midyat. Why march against Midyat? Why not the ones in Estel coming here and marching against Estel? Do that! No! Against Midyat! As if we are Danish, we have drawn the cartoon of Mohammed, that's us! (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

The participant implied the severity of the situation in the words: *“if any one person, only one let alone that tens of thousands, had sworn much blood would be shed”*. A significant point of the above narrative is that it shows how space being embedded with the memories of violence, in other words, how space, a critical constituent of belongings, is formed through violence. Estel, Midyat and the three-kilometre road between the two with specific places named are marked by those memories. Violence, once again, acts out its formative role not only on society through defining relations, boundaries, and movements, but also on space, marking nodes and places to forms social and individual life worlds. It also forms psyche of the individual, influencing a whole totality of conscious and unconscious processes. An important point about violence is the participant's reply to my question about how those attacks were organized. Reflecting his

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For a detailed timeline see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11341599/Prophet-Muhammad-cartoons-controversy-timeline.html> accessed on 5.1.2017

<sup>272</sup> Midyat is the old city of the town Midyat, mostly populated by Kurds and Syriacs; Estel is the more recently constructed part of the town, mostly populated by Arabs who are called as *Mhelmi* or *Mhellemi*. The two are socially, culturally, physically segregated from each other.

perception that the only cause was the religious difference, he stated “*no need for organization. Religious orders, sheikhs, even no need for them! Is the opposite side Christian? Is it the profane? Is it gavur? That’s enough!*”(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). Being about representations and how a group is stigmatized, the discourse reflected in this quote concerning ‘the religious other’ should be taken as a sign of symbolic violence. Symbols being constitutive of groupness, identifications, thus of belongings, in the sense of Anthony Cohen’s (2000) construction of communities, here the phenomenon of being victim of violence on the ground of being Christian becomes such a symbol, of ‘suffering’, if not always ‘martyrdom’ of the pious Christian, constituting Syriac Orthodox Community in its encounter with the cruelty of the ‘other’. The participant’s reply to my question if many Syriac emigrated after 2005 may be read in this way:

No, the already remaining will not leave anymore. The remainders have already seen all but death, nothing else. It was the same each and every day. Well, how am I able to tell this much at this [young] age? Believe me, we care about nothing but death; well, we know why we would be killed, we know that we are guilty of being Christians. If we are being killed because we are Christians, may it be happiness for us indeed! Happiness for us!”(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin).

A critical point disclosed by the course of events narrated in the above quotes is the role of social capital in preventing violence or bringing it to an end. The relation constituted between the local, national and transnational space is important in the play of such role. Mobilization of political relations in the capital city referring to the state power, and of transnational political power through European Union and the European Parliament are signs of linking social capital. The narrative of the participant reveal also that relations of “*hemşehrilik*” [being from the same city], “*köylülük*” [being from the same village], and “*aşiret*” provide strong ties and form crucial sources for social capital of locality, which may be seen as bridging social capital. He said: “‘68 was prevented by a Muslim again. But, now [2005] we have pushed the state! Well, we pushed the state; otherwise we believe that if it were only the local officers here [pauses]

*there might not even a single Christian have left now!*”(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin). The lack of trust in the local state officers is clear above. Yet the local community leaders and those in state power who are themselves originally from Mardin are still trusted and as the two incidents mentioned here prove they were effective in preventing things to get worse. The participant mentioned an Arab member of the parliament from Mardin bursting “*if any one drop of blood is shed in Mardin I will go on a hunger strike here in the parliament*” and another one holding an important office acting role in precluding the incident. What he noted concerning the role of local leaders is important in indicating the function of local social capital in such cases: “*in 2005 again there were some opinion leaders [...], each standing in front of the shop of the person from his village. Well, in order to interrupt if something [violent] happens*” (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). An important point to make is that all actors in these instances who prevented further aggression and took precautions against it were Muslims, those who had the power to do so. The participant noted concerning the person who had prevented the ’68 attack: “*not an ordinary Muslim, a mighty family, of whom we have Aghas*” (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). Thus it is not wholly and simply an ethno-religious dichotomy, that is Kurd-Arab-Muslim versus Syriac Christian, reflected in the constellation of such a social fact, but a more complex structure of power relations including those of majority-minority, *aşiret* and relations of clientelism, centre-periphery, and economic relations. In some commentaries, for instance, those collective attacks are interpreted as “provocations” of “local Muslim people against Christian Syriacs on religious grounds” by those “fanatical Muslims or anti-Syriac forces trying to base themselves on religious grounds” yet “basically who are uneasy with economic wealth of Syriacs and willing to seize it” (Bilge, 1996: 99). In such interpretations, too, the role of interstate crisis is mentioned as Bilge (1996) notes that such provocations reaches to the extent of ‘enmity’ against Syriacs especially at periods of tense relations with non-Muslim neighbouring countries. He also mentions “political ignorance”, “religious perspective in evaluation of events”, “foreign politics being influential

on societal relations”, and “religious ideology” to be effective in such phenomenon.

Collective violence experienced at times of international or interstate crises, even when only as attempts, breeds the perception that Syrians are at the end of the barrel in such circumstances only because they are Christians. The below narrative of a Church Leader also reveal such perception:

We are Syriac first; we are a nation, a people. Our creed is Christianity; faith. If Christianity is a quilt, then that’s different... We don’t bother anyone, or have [caused] any problem, haven’t had [so far]. Yet we have ever been oppressed because of our creed. We’ve much complained about this, I’ve always told about this. Say as in Eur..., as in Iraq, in Syria or somewhere else wherever there is a problem we were thrown on the edge of the volcano by the folks [*“halkbizi hep topunağzınaatti”*]. As if we are responsible of the whole Christian world. It’s wrong! It’s wrong! We have nothing to do with the Armenians; no ties with the Greek, nor with Europe, or America or Russia. We, the plain citizens, we’ve been the owner of the lands over here for so long. Our homeland is here for five to six thousand years we say. We did not come from somewhere else. The only guilt of us is being Christian, nothing else. We have always had our share from other Christian groups, share from the damage.<sup>273</sup>

There seems to be a clear tension between being “*plain citizens*”, even more an ‘indigenous population living on their historical homeland’, and yet still having to ‘share from suffering and oppression’ enormously only because they are Christian. Perception of such tension feeds the attitude of reservation and vigilance to stay as ‘plain citizens’, to differentiate themselves from other Christian groups in Turkey or any state that are popularly perceived to be Christian. The below dialog between the participant and me, whereby my misarticulating the question about the European Union integration process of Turkey reveals such restrained attitude:

Ö: Do you have expectations from the EU?

X.A: We er... don’t have any um... expectations um... from the EU.

Ö: Do you approve Turkey to integrate to EU?

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<sup>273</sup> Expert Interview, Mardin, 7.7.2011

X.A: Sure, we always support it. We want it to integrate.<sup>274</sup>

Visible hesitation and reluctance in the first reply reflects a concern about being seen ‘directly allied to Europe’ simply on religious grounds, which may recall the historically negative implication of the discourse, about Christians in Turkey, of ‘becoming the cat’s-paw for foreign [here Christian] powers’. Yet when the relation is established only indirectly, via being citizens of Turkey potentially integrating to Europe, then it is eagerly welcomed for the many expected benefits for the citizens in general, but also specifically for the minority groups. The mention above of Christians not posing a danger for the unity and integrity of the country but being willing to integrate into its social and cultural life is a powerful one reflecting perception of many Christian citizens in Turkey, and specifically many Syriacs in the research area of this dissertation. It is well an example of the reserved attitude, which I deem important to define the citizen position for many Syriacs in Turkey. The below narrative exposes such attitude:

[T]he very small Christian group left in Turkey will not divide Turkey. They shall not be in fear of it. This is a mild culture as I already said, a humane culture, one that merges people together. Not a combative one. We only want to keep it alive. We want it to be a special ornament in cultural mosaic of Turkey. Cultures are beautiful in this way.<sup>275</sup>

In some other interviews, although the participants specifically focused on the relative calmness of the current conditions and relations, thus on the perceived ‘change’ in the present, their narratives revealed the severity of some past experiences. One such narrative is below while the emphasis still is on the positive change lived “*today*”:

Even if we had dark days in the past as well as good days, they are all gone, it has finished! What is important is today. Thanks God nobody says anything to us now, we live the best days of ours in here, when we are out in the street nobody is cursing, running after or throwing stones to us. No, thanks God

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<sup>274</sup> Expert Interview, Mardin, 7.7.2011

<sup>275</sup> Expert Interview, Mardin, 7.7.2011

nothing such is left, these incidents have gone. We are more comfortable. [Hope it will continue as it is.] Hope so, hope so... (F, 52, Syriac, Mardin [M31]) Those daily forms of encroachment and violation were also mentioned by some participants as the ground for Syriac children's frequent drop out of school. One, who is a primary school graduate, for instance, noted "*I could not go on with my schooling, no day of us would pass in the Muslim neighbourhood without rowing and brawling*" (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). I've already mentioned above the main reason for drop outs to be the limited opportunities in public sector employment and the traditional strength of crafts as the basic economic sphere for Syriacs.<sup>276</sup>

A much visible consequence of everyday violence, as I already mentioned repeatedly, was e/migration. A participant, who returned Mardin after living years in Istanbul compared conditions of "those times", when his family decided to migrate to Istanbul, with the present time conditions he faced after his return migration:

Christians then were seen like second class citizens. They had anxiety then, when they were in street... sure it is what was lived before us, what our fathers told us... they said you were one step behind, you couldn't speak up in here. They had those problems then, the time of our fathers. Many migrated to Istanbul or emigrated to get rid of those problems. [...] I am here for the last 3 or 4 years; it is not the same with what was 30 years ago when we left here [for Istanbul]. The problems our fathers had gone through, our families; in comparison to them it is not so anymore. Well, when they hear we are Syriac they are much pleased, like it more, value us more, want to help more, remove hardships we have, I feel so. [...] They value the Syriacs so much that it flattered me. Really, they give much effort for us not to be harmed, I feel so thus I wanted to stay here; our Muslim brothers much value any more indeed. (M, 53, Syriac, Mardin [M29])

In the case above, the well off family migrated to Istanbul and invested its economic capital therein in search of being free from everyday violations they had faced in the locality. This is an important case proving that violation, here specifically collective violence, had enormous economic consequences not only

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<sup>276</sup> Bilge (1996:101) mentions various practices, revealing that educational system was neither objective nor secular, as a defining factor for Syriac families not to send their children to school.

for the Syriac community but for the whole region, and often the country as a whole, manifested in the escape of economic and human capital, qualified labour, and specialized knowhow. In many cases escape was out of Turkey, the consequences then being much more detrimental for the whole political and economic community.

Lack, escape or losses are not the only outcomes of emigration; there are also more 'constructive' ones. What came out during the interviews is that transnational links established via emigration of community members played formative in rebuilding the local place with the money sent by the emigrants back 'home'. The collective violence attempt lived in 1968, other national and international conditions added, had led to such an occasion as the participant mentions it in the following:

After '68, to Europe, Germany, via the Centre for Work and Employment [*İşveİşçiBulmaKurumu*] workers migrated. They worked... Only the man went; his family... He went leaving his spouse here, sent money back, or his spouse was going forth and coming back. These shops, the second floors were all constructed with the money of these workers of '60s. (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

An important effect of the experience of collective violence is on those 'stayers' after waves of emigration. Spatial closeness to the aggressors and continuing social relations turned, for those who did/could not move, to become sources of insecurity and distrust. This was especially so as there was the suspicion that those incidents were somehow connected to the higher national or international political conditions and policies, if not directly planned or backed by the actors thereof. The same participant reveals such state of insecurity and mistrust in the narrative below:

Not a court case, nothing. [...] nothing came to light. And we know each one of those who killed our people. And those people are longing for '90s today, saying I am starving, wishing for the 90s to come back. They are out of food; they shall kill people [...] to get money in exchange of head, in exchange of nose, in exchange of ear. [...] Those people are all in the downtown. We are



coming face to face with those people every day. (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

Feeling of insecurity, I claim, adds another urge for the Syriacs for being cautious, on alert, and watchful. Constant vigilance constitutes a form of subjectivity in itself and it is necessary to contextualize it with regard to citizenship positions, which I will try to do below. Yet still one further point to be made in the context of collective form of violation is the gendered violence, especially violence against women as in follows.

### **5.3.1. Gendered Violence as a form of Collective form of Violation**

Existence of “*Christian, Armenian, Syriac, or Yezidi grandmothers in many Kurdish families or aşirets*” (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27]) was an often referred phenomenon during the field research by participants of different ethnic backgrounds, but especially by the Syriac. Today it is well documented that Christian, especially Armenian, orphan or young women were adopted/abducted as wives or maids by the Muslim men especially but not exclusively during the periods of political and social turmoil. The phenomenon was referred in its relation to present relations in the narrative below:

60% of my customers daily coming to my [jewellery] shop call me [maternal] ‘uncle’ [“*dayi*”], I mean ‘*xalo*’ in Kurdish. Do you know why? From the very, very past, from 1914-1915 events, so many of our mothers in the past, our daughters so many, our...ours, were kept forcefully, now that mother [...] unwillingly married, gave birth to children. But at the end the children had become her beloved ones, and she told them some things, in a mother-child love told them things. Like your uncles are this and that people, Christians, Syriacs, Armenians she told. For instance I would say 10 persons a day call me ‘uncle’, ‘*xalo*’, ‘how are you’ and like, all these, I don’t ever know them, yet they know us. In this region, if they want to learn about the reality of this region, I don’t mean you, they shall not ask me, shall not ask the youngsters of our day either. Just go and wander around the villages in this region how many, how many people’s mother is Armenian, grandmother is Armenian, paternal grandmother is Armenian. (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26])

The named dates were the reference points for many; yet the fact that Christian women were abducted and made wife by Muslim men was repeated at different periods, and was still a matter at present. During my field research for instance, when I was in Midyat in the later days of July 2011, it had been five or six days that a Syriac “*girl*” was abducted by a Muslim man in rural Midyat. The family and the community members not knowing where she was were irritated, anxious, and trying to find and get the young woman back. It was noted that in these cases the Syriac families did not accept the marriage, and if the girl stayed with the abductor the relation with her is cut off. She is banned from the family for good. But if the girl could turn back somehow, they reaccept her to the family. In one such case, the sister of the participant was abducted by a Muslim in Mardin, but as the abductor’s uncle was a police chief they could not get any result from their applications so the participant believed. The resentment created by the event, together with his son passing away on a traffic accident, was the cause for his migration to Istanbul, although he had to return back after five years for his business did not go well. He commented on the event stating “*if it was out of love, we are not that sort of people; but on malicious intentions, by deluding*” (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). It mentioned by many that wilful marriages are nonexistent in Mardin and it was mentioned by clearly reference to the group boundaries in cases. One participant noted that there were some recent cases among the community in Istanbul, yet he seemed to find those marriages somehow justifiable as he noted “*when you adapt to modern urban culture with no religious discrimination these sorts of things can happen*” (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]). Although conditions of place and time could bring variations, in Mardin or Midyat marriage with Muslims was an undesired event. Below is a clear reference to the group boundaries about the past and present phenomenon:

Well the undesirable events taking place discomforts one’s soul. There are 10.000 girls and boys, as if that was not enough they have their eyes on ours. Never would a marriage take place, it hasn’t been so far. What happens is by force, through abduction. [...] We, in terms of our belief, have not intermingled with them willingly, haven’t constituted marriage, there are boundaries between us. Presence of boundaries is better. (M, 56, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM37])

In the narrative above, the categories of “us” and “them” are clearly demarcated through the absence of acceptable intermarriage norms between Christians and Muslims, whereby the boundaries have always been transgressed by force of the latter. This was also mentioned as one of the reasons for the migration of people, as the participant claimed “*They had an eye on their land, property, life, daughter, and they had fled*”, adding that “*the state’s non-protection of those people had been effective*” on the consequence (M, 56, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM37]). As Bourdieu (1986) asserts, the exchange of women, as other forms of exchange, transforms the thing exchanged into a sign of recognition and through the mutual recognition and the recognition of group membership which it implies, reproduces the group. It also reaffirms the limits of the group and institutes each member of the group as a custodian of those limits. In each occasion whereby a marriage is constituted, thus, the existence and persistence of the group is at stake. I argue that the above objections of the participants should be understood within such context of meanings and consequences for the group. Thus, gendered violence, abduction of women, should be taken as a form of collective violence where group identity, boundaries, and the very existence are at stake. Yet the scene is further complicated concerning the internal dynamics of the group itself as the whole issue is woven around the women. Migration being one consequence for the group as a whole, the other crucial one in this line was caging patriarchal control over the Syriac women resulting in denial of further education, work opportunities, and decreasing social mobility for them. MutayÖztemiz (2012) clearly pointing at the fact noted that one of the basic fears of the parents not sending their children to school was the treat of their daughters being abducted by the Muslims or the risk of their daughters willingly marrying to a Muslim. Claiming that such treat increased the pressure upon women, their education being impeded, thus her chances of taking part in the working life being severely decreased, he stated that any horizontal or vertical social mobility for the Syriac women was negatively affected in this way (Öztemiz, 2012). Against such background I further argue that the other role of

the gendered collective violence is to reinforce structural violence as the realization of women's potentials was severely hindered.

#### **5.4. Not Minority, Yet Citizen? Restrained Citizens, Shadow Minorities, Anonymous Integration**

Relationship between national inclusion and citizenship is important in that, as Ross Bond (2006: 609) puts it “formally, national inclusion has been established through the granting of citizenship to those (or at least a *majority* of those) residing within national boundaries”. While this points at the mechanisms of “external territorial exclusion” that characterizes nation-states (Stewart, 2000, as cited in Bond, 2006), it still does not mean that inclusion is automatic for those who are ‘within’. Internal exclusion may realize through denial of full citizenship rights to certain minorities through political, economic and social mechanisms, which formally operates to keep them out. As Bond (2006) puts it, even if they enjoy full formal citizenship status those groups may still, in the eyes of the ‘majority’, be excluded from belonging to the nation in which they reside, as they are not imagined, in Andersonian terminology, as fellow members of the national community. Either case brings negative social and material consequences for the individuals so excluded (Bond, 2006). Such perspective is in line with Yuval-Davis’ (2011) call for a differentiation of the notion of citizenship from that of belonging, whereas the former signifies the participatory dimension of belonging, there is also the more emotive dimension that is identification as I have already noted in Chapter 1. The important point to be made here is that those two dimensions may not always actually converge, and divergence of the two may manifest in both ways. In other words, being a citizen may not bring forth or go hand in hand with identification, of self or by others, with a political community, just as identifying with a political community may not automatically mean that the one who identifies with enjoys full citizenship rights. Minority experience in Turkey long testified such divergence between citizenship and national inclusion. Discrimination, exclusion, and overt

aggression have been among those experiences of ‘some’ citizens who were not seen to ‘belong’. An elaboration dealing with such divergence is made by Yeğen (2004: 56) in his analysis considering the theory and practice of Turkish citizenship, where he shows that “Turkish citizenship fails to overlap with or exhaust Turkishness in the full sense of the term”. Upon a “close” reading of constitutional texts, Yeğen argues that Turkish citizenship oscillates between a political and ethnic idea of citizenship and this, rather than being an accidental one, has a “genetic origin” in those texts. What the wording of the constitutions reveal, in his analysis, is that Turkish citizenship is not the unique qualifier of Turkishness -there is a considerable gap between the two categories indeed - and that different “degrees of Turkishness” are manifested in the utterances like “being a subject of the Turkish Republic” that is being a Turkish citizen, “being a Turkish subject”, “being Turkish” or “being of Turkish race” (Yeğen, 2004: 56). What all these indicators of Turkishness disclose is the “differentialist logic in the practices of Turkish citizenship”, which is generated by an “ethnicist logic” behind them and which “testif[ies] that Turkishness may not be achieved by some Turkish citizens”<sup>277</sup> (Yeğen, 2004: 57-58). The narratives below provide us with examples revealing how such discrepancy between citizenship and Turkishness was perceived and experienced by the participants themselves.

I have already referred above to “differentialist citizenship practices” through the narrative of a participant who established a link between the memory of 1915 and the more recently lived experiences of discrimination at official level. I suppose such experiences, causing an ongoing state of inequality, reproduce and feed at present the chained memory of violence and leads to a problematization of the citizenship status at least in terms of the rights it bestows upon its holders.

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<sup>277</sup> Yeğen, however, adds that differentialist logic was not the only, even the prevailing one followed in the early years of the Republic. Also compulsory assimilation was pursued, which indeed played a more constitutive role in the definition of Turkishness. This meant that Turkishness was something achievable by non-Turkish people, yet not without exception; Muslimhood was considered by the Turkish authorities to be the key to achieving Turkishness, whereas, non-Muslimhood was seen as the natural obstacle to achieving Turkishness. For details of the argument see Yeğen (2004: 57-58).

Below is a narrative whereby the participant engages in such problematization with a clear tone of resentment and perception of injustice in his answer to whether he thinks he adequately benefits citizenship rights:

No, not! Say I graduate from faculty of law, or political sciences, I would be a prosecutor or a judge. No, you can't! It is not in the legislation but you can't. If I was a radical Muslim I couldn't be either, this of course was in the past. Well, none in line of the state... say you could not be soldi... military officer. They did not accept [us] to military schools, I don't know how it is now, yet still we can't, we don't have such citizenship rights. We are citizens of Turkish republic after all, yet I can't say we benefit all rights. You can't get into MIT [National Intelligence Service] you can't get to positions of influence in the state etc. Not be a prosecutor or a judge. [Stops] I mean it's a stepchild treatment. [Stops] That we've always had. [Stops] Are we worried much about it? No! Yet it [equal rights and treatment] should have been [In a resentful voice].[Stops] (M, 33, Syriac, Mardin [M28])

The above reference to being treated as a “*stepchild*” reminds us the ‘father state’ versus ‘citizen child’ analogy, which I previously mentioned in the context of Kurdish experiences. Accordingly, being granted with full and equal rights seems to imply something more than being merely and ‘simply’ a citizen, which reminds the discrepancy between citizenship and Turkishness. ‘Full rights’ here apparently connote not ‘solely’ citizenship rights, which themselves are not fully benefited, but also and more importantly rights to belong. Within the father-child analogy, being granted such rights is equated with being accepted as a ‘child’, a ‘genuine’ one rather than a ‘stepchild’, which in this case denotes a citizen. Yet in terms of belonging, it is a lacking and almost a pseudo position, existence of which is mostly tolerated by the very father and the genuine child who over and above being a citizen is embraced by the warmth of Turkishness. In the existence of ‘privileges’ that not all but some citizens are entitled to, citizenship, which is the legal condition of national belonging, becomes far from a grantor of equality in terms of benefiting rights and opportunities. The examples that participant names above imply what I call the *invisible impediments* for belonging as in becoming a civil servant as many other Syriac participants often referred to. This indeed could well be seen as a sign of the discrepancy between Turkish citizenship and Turkishness. In his analysis, Yeğen points at such discrepancy as

evidence for Turkish State understanding the former to be something less than the latter. He notes that the requirement for becoming a state employee was defined by the fourth item of article 788 of the 1926 Law as ‘being Turkish’ rather than ‘Turkish citizen’ and was in use until 1965, whereas the current article [657] specifies ‘Turkish citizenship’ as the precondition to become a state employee (Yeğen, 2004). Despite the lack of legal blockage - this is the reason why I call it the invisible impediments- it is still clear in many experiences that civil service posts are not altogether available to the non-Muslim citizens of Turkey. This creates a tension for those who are visibly citizens yet invisibly something less than what citizenship should be matching up with. In other words, citizenship per se is not a signifier of national belonging in Turkey, not for all citizens. From a different angle, the various experiences of differentialist practices of citizenship as the participant above mentioned, disclose the fact that not all institutions and ranks of the state are open to all citizens indiscriminately. Through analyzing some published announcements concerning employment and enrolment conditions to state institutions in the early Republican period, Yeğen (2004: 56) indicates that there is a correlation between the different levels of state apparatus and different degrees of Turkishness; where the prerequisites of being of Turkish race and being a Turkish subject (citizen) apply differently for different institutions and what matters accordingly is that whether the institution is “at the heart of the state” like military, or “at the edge of the state” like state dormitories. A similar approach continues to this day. The above cases the participant refers to -being a prosecutor, a judge, military officer; enrolled to military schools; or a member of National Intelligence Service- could be seen as references to those institutions at the very heart of the state, “*positions of influence*” in the participant’s words, and they are seemingly closed to the non-Muslim citizens’ involvement. Yet again, I should note that two of the non-Muslim participants of this research were public employers and they emphasized that they did not face ‘any’ difficulties concerning their appointment or profession, with the essential exception one expressed that he always knew that he would never become an administrator at the institution he worked for. A non-

Muslim could thus occasionally be a public employer but would not be “*entrusted the position*” of an administrator of the institution s/he works for. Despite these infrequent examples, it became clear during the research that the widely held experience and so grown perception that the doors of the positions of civil service, thus of state, was closed to the non-Muslim citizens have had real consequences for individual lives. A very often mentioned one was that to continue one’s education appeared to be a difficult process without a practical reward at the end that is the opportunity of public employment, which provides relatively ‘secure’ conditions; thus, many dropped out of school to be engaged in artisanship and craftsmanship as they make the traditional occupational areas for the Christian community in Mardin. It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to measure with certainty -at least within the limits of the current research- to what degree is this situation determined by many other possible factors such as the limited or non-existent private sector employment opportunities in the locality; the personal/familial wish to continue family enterprise; opportunity to get a greater income through entrepreneurship compared to the moderate income levels the state service offers;<sup>278</sup> the structural reasons such as limited educational opportunities as well as the limited civil service posts available in these specific cities or the region especially some decades ago; and the role of ‘the chill factor’, the anticipation that they will not be employed in the public sector anyway. Still it was evidently mentioned by many during the research that they dropped out of school for there was finally not much to gain in terms of employment, and the period of schooling proved to be difficult for them as they frequently faced aggression of other children/people at the school or on the way to the school. Coleman (2012: 116) argued that for human capital “produced in schools the person who invests the time and resources in building up this capital reaps its benefits in the forms of a higher-paying job, more satisfying or higher status work, or even the pleasure of greater understanding of the surrounding world”. Thought within this framework it is

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<sup>278</sup> These were mentioned by many participants from all three groups, sometimes especially concerning the circumstances in the past, yet often also the present.



obvious that none of those “benefits” were valid for the Syriac population, at least to a very recent time. Some aspects in terms of social capital could be put as withdrawal within community and being limited with the production of bonding social capital; establishing bridging social capital through trade relations; and having only limited linking social capital, which is accessed mostly over religious community leaders and not as individual actors. These examples provide us with the opportunity to see how much loss may be caused in individual lives, as well as for the community and the larger society in general, through discrimination and ‘differentialist practices of citizenship’. Yet I should add that the conditions appear to have changed to a certain degree for the younger generation people who are now more able and more inclined to continue their education to higher levels and seek opportunities of employment outside the communitarian networks.

Claim for equal citizen status was, indeed, a recurrent theme during the interviews with Syriac participants, as the lack thereof causes an immense loss of ground for belongings. Below is a narrative which reveals such loss following multiple discriminations not only as a Syriac, a member of a religious minority, but as an ‘Easterner’, one living in a relatively disadvantaged region of the country:

In our own churches, community, foundations... there are human rights violations. Because of these lacks our people were perished and emigrated. It is not only the people of the region making them emigrate by disturbing and troubling them. It is at the very basis [...] In public posts, positions in military or in security, we haven’t ever arrived at such a class either. Well we have never got a position at a garrison. Never got a position at a police headquarters. Similar with civil service as well. This means second or third class treatment. And always our own region, the Southeast, Eastern Anatolia is declared to be the exile region. And the most painful it proved to be for the state. While we live here in hardship as different races, different nations [*millets*], different religions, it makes it worse, the one who is in charge of the civilian administration here. It makes us cry more. The single major basis for the migration has been the mal-policies and bad politics. Who suffers it most is the state, the government, yet it does deserve it. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27])

The loss disclosed in the above narrative is a loss not only of life and property, but also of people as a result of emigration of community members, thus of social, human, and economic capital. Violated through such loss are also “rights”, collective rights concerning the community, as well as individual rights concerning citizens who are ‘normally’ entitled to equal treatment and benefits. Added to these violations is, as the participant notes, the region becoming a destination for the ‘exiled’ public officers. The practice is perceived to be a problem, as was also mentioned by a Kurdish participant in the previous chapter, causing mistreatment of people by the exiled officers, malfunctioning of public offices, and an inequality and inadequacy in both the quality and the quantity of the services supplied. Already existing ‘hardship’ stemming from cohabitation of different religious, racial, or linguistic groups, is believed to get worse by a lack of effective management of the prevailing conditions, if not a deliberate failure in dealing with them. The consequent remark of the participant concerning the state suffering the resultant conditions of the ‘unfair’ treatment, implying most probably the long experienced Kurdish uprising and the armed conflict with the state, could be seen as a perception that the state ‘reaps what it sowed’. This in turn gives us a clue of the fury that the participant expresses about the wider set of policy making and implementation in Turkey. Perception of the insecurity and uncertainty is implied in the participant’s note that it is not only the other peoples’ encroachment or collective violence that causes the “*hardship*” for the Syriac people, but “*it is at the very basis*”. The expression “*basis*”, a reference to the root or the foundation of something, here implying the conditions of the very existence of an ethno-religious minority group, seems to reflect a perceived problem with the very ‘ontological security’<sup>279</sup> for belonging in that very group. AyşeZarakol (2016) notes that ‘ontological security’ is a basic human need that

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<sup>279</sup> Ontological security is first used by a psychiatrist, Ronald David Laing, who in his *The Divided Self* (1960) refers to a sense of presence in the world as a real, alive, whole, and, a continuous person, the absence of which causes the ordinary circumstances of everyday life to constitute a continual and deadly threat. Anthony Giddens then, in *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990: 92), defined ontological security as “the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action”.

comes from having a consistent sense of self and having that sense affirmed by others. Zarakol's (2016) conceptualization of institutionalised sources of ontological security, whether religious or secular, as providing a framework for the larger existential questions seems to well serve to understand the anxiety and insecurity expressed in these pages, since the state is bound to stand as one such source for its citizens. Failure of the state to do so, on the other hand, may paradoxically lead to 'ontological insecurity'. Below is an illuminating case on how ambivalence and inconsistency in the definition, representation, and hailing of the group identity is perceived to point to such lack of institutional sources and how in turn that may cause ontological insecurity for the individual with multiple belongings:

I do serve for military here, I pay tax but nothing returns me and I can't even benefit from my citizenship rights. Why can't I become a police? What's even more is that the one who marries me [s/he who is a Muslim] can't get [those positions] either.[...] Neither Turkishness <sup>280</sup> nor minority [status]. I mean we neither enjoy Turkish republican ID <sup>u</sup> nor benefit from minority rights. They make [us] community [*cemaat*] any time they like, make people [*halk*] at any other time, Turkish citizen when they like, and first-degree [first-class] Turkish citizen at other time. I mean it is however they like, whichever suits their interests. That's why I want an official definition. I should know what I am. (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

Participant's reference to the experience of neither being counted as an equal 'national' despite the legal status of citizenship they hold, nor being granted a specific collective status that endows them with due rights, points at a loss of ground for belongings and a perception of being in an ambivalent state, which renders Syriac citizens vulnerable to the changing play of power relations, interests, and political bargains. When we remember Bourdieu (1991: 236) stating that one of the elementary forms of political power consists in the almost magical power of naming and bringing into existence by virtue of naming, it

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<sup>280</sup>"<sup>u</sup>" means "and" in Kurdish. Although we interviewed in Turkish, he constantly used "<sup>u</sup>" to mean "and" rather than its Turkish counterpart "ve". This was actually a widespread utterance in the region, also among the Kurds, even when speaking Turkish. Yet this case the participant being a Syriac, and being able to speak Syriac, as are many in Midyat as opposed to the ones in Mardin, is important in showing the weight of Kurdish language in everyday life.

becomes clear why constant change in how a group is defined may cause an insecure state of being for the members of that group, as the change in naming means also the change in the very basis of existence. “Community” [*cemaat*], “people” [*halk*], “Turkish citizen”, “first-degree [first-class] Turkish citizen” being referred to as the varying names that denote Syriacs in the discourses of others; it appears that the agents of the act of naming also differ. A case in point revealed itself when I was introducing my work to a potential participant (M, 56, Syriac, Midyat [MM37]) who simultaneously was being visited by a Kurdish journalist. As I uttered the word “group” concerning the subject groups of my research, the journalist interfered with my wording and warned me that I’d better use “people” [*halk*] to denote these collectivities, as they would do so. “They”, in her words “we”, here was implying Kurds, specifically the Kurdish political movement. My usage of “group” was faced with her rage despite my explanation that group here had a sociological reference and did not bear in any means the intention of underrating the named collectivities. Yet, in the stage of interactions thus set I, one of a sudden, became an ‘outsider’, if not a ‘representative’ of the Turkish official discourse, which is in denial of the existence of these ‘peoples as they are’; while she, the Kurdish journalist, an ‘insider’ in ‘solidarity’ with the Syriac/Christian ‘people’ for the existence and true representation of ‘theirs’ as well as a spokesperson for the Kurdish political discourse. Important was, of course, that we acted our ‘roles’, at least in the perception of the journalist as the game maker, before the very eyes of a ‘member’ of that ‘people’. This story, I suppose, provides an example of how much ‘naming’ is related with power relations or, indeed, is always an act of power itself. The ‘power’ of naming and representation is not limited to the state but acted out by other collective or individual agents as well like members of neighbouring Muslim communities or of larger Turkish society, political movements, media and even academia. Turning back to the above narrative, what the participant criticized was clearly the arbitrary character of naming the Syriac people, which shifts in accordance with the changing in interests of the actors of naming, thus in turn causes an unsure positioning for the members of the very collectivity within the

constellation of the relations of power. On such ground, the participant stated that he “*want[s] an official definition*”. Bourdieu (1991: 239) defines official naming as “a symbolic act of imposition which has on its side all the strength of the collective, of the consensus, of common sense, because it is performed by a delegated agent of the state that is the holder of the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence”. Corollary to such “strength”, the official naming or the title is argued to be “valid on all markets and which, as an official definition of one’s official identity, saves its bearers from the symbolic struggle of all against all, by establishing the authorized perspective, the one recognized by all and thus universal, from which social agents are viewed” (Bourdieu, 1991: 240). From this perspective, the above participant’s demand for an official definition and his claim for the right to know what he is accordingly could be understood as a demand for an end to the arbitrariness of the naming and representation of the Syriac collective identity, and the ensuing consequences following from it. Official definition, in this line, will delimit the group boundaries clarifying the rights that its members are entitled to; and set the rules of the relations with the agent of that definition, the state. It will also bring forth a monopolization of the agent of definition, thus of the symbolic violence ensuing from that very definition, saving its bearers from the symbolic struggle against all as the legitimate monopolization calls for a recognition of the authorized perspective. Below is a narrative of the same participant telling about the need for such authorization, which in this case appears to be the ‘constitutional guarantee’ against arbitrary practices, inconsistent policy implementations, and as an assurance for ‘equal citizenship rights’:

I don't want the language course at Artuklu [University].<sup>281</sup> All is lie, tomorrow the subsequent Prime Minister may ban it all, may close it down. We don't want it. We want the rights that a Turk has as [defined] in the constitution, because I

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<sup>281</sup> In 2011 a Syriac language course was opened at Mardin Artuklu University with the initiation of the Institute of Living Languages. In the same year afterwards the same Institute opened a Master’s Program for a degree in Syriac Culture and Literature. In 2015 the Department of Syriac Language and Literature for Bachelors degree was established under the Faculty of Literature. These were all realized for the first time in Turkey.

do have nothing less than her. If the constitution says that there will be education in Syriac, then no Prime Minister would dare to close [the course]... All these are lie. Nursery [in my language] is forbidden,<sup>282</sup> but they provide me with language education at University. What's that? They are all shallow. [...] The alphabet of this language is banned, but they open a university course, that's bullshit! (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

Very much clear in the above narrative is the lack of trust regarding the durability and objectivity of the state policies, even if they seem in the short run favourable for minorities. Present rather is the search for constancy and continuity in the face of temporary and random execution of such policies. This, I suppose, is very much related to the phenomenon of the state being an important institution to derive ontological security from, that it acts as a shared ontological structure for its citizens through its claim to sovereignty and monopoly as Zarakol (2016) puts it. Such role, as well as the legitimacy, of the state derives from its capacity to provide order in the sense of making life intelligible (Huysmans, 1998, as cited in Zarakol, 2016: 2). Yet the above narrative makes it clear that the constant ambiguity and absence of consistency in the acts and policies of the state invalidates the role of it for providing order, which indeed makes life rather more unintelligible for many, especially for the disadvantaged or the unprivileged ones. This is also because ambiguity and inconsistency defy the generally held belief, on which the legitimacy of a democratic political system rests, that all political interests must play by a consistent set of rules which are generally regarded as fair and cannot be easily

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<sup>282</sup> Non-Muslim religions in Turkey other than the Greek Orthodox, Armenians and Jews are usually not permitted to use their buildings of educational purposes and have difficulty even training their clergy, to say nothing of educating their children in the faith (Hurst, 2012). The last Syriac school was closed down in 1928 and since then Syriacs were not permitted to establish schools for education. The Ministry of National Education refused the 2012 application of Syriacs to establish a school, for the Syriacs did not hold a minority position; yet legal process resulted in the establishment of a private nursery in Istanbul in 2014. Currently, attempts for opening a primary school are being made, yet financial problems and the difficulty of finding a physical place for a potential school are still huge obstacles in such aim. Retrieved from <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/16334/suryani-ilkokulu-destek-bekliyor> accessed on 26.8.2016. Erol (2016: 190) also mentions the opening of the nursery, with the name "*Özel Mor Efrem Süryani Anaokulu*", in Yeşilköy, Istanbul, which was possible only with the "historical" court ruling of the Ankara 13th Administrative Tribunal stating that Syriacs should legally be accepted as minority.

manipulated for political advantage (Blick et al, 2014). When this is the case, the very state as an institution may instead prove to be “ontologically threatening” as “it is unlikely that individuals will be relying on the ontological framework of that institution for their security” (Zarakol, 2016: 4). Yet still, not all institutions of the state are perceived to have lost their function of providing for security as it is evident in the dichotomy in the above quote between “*the Constitution*”, standing for a relatively stable institution, and “*the Prime minister*”, as the head of the executive, being perceived to be a more transitory thus of a less ‘reliable’ agency. Constitution, the very basis of the political community and the supreme authority, is stressed by the participant as the ultimate framework that could provide for security as a regulation included therein would mean protection under the Constitutional Law and exemption from arbitrary manipulation, at least in ideal terms. Thus, in such perception, if an authorization is defined under the constitution, it would make a ‘constitutional right’ reinforced by a set of mechanisms for its implementation and protection rather than a ‘political favour’ designed through the benevolence of the executive power. His reference to the constitutional rights of a “Turk” and justification that he has nothing less than a Turk, meaning he is ‘equally’ a citizen, is indeed very much related to the discussion on the discrepancy between ‘citizenship’ and ‘national belonging’ in Turkey. As I have already mentioned above, the former is not always and exclusively convertible to the latter, which itself is a source of ontological insecurity by the very vagueness it creates for the criterion of inclusion or exclusion.

Importantly, the below narrative will make it clear that a congruent expression to the one “*I do have nothing less than [a Turk]*” was articulated by the same participant with a specific reference to spatial/territorial belongings. Here it is important to note that the collective memory of the Syriac population as an indigenous people on the historical lands they inhabit in Turkey, Tur Abdin, serves in perceptions as a ground for their claim not to be counted as minority. In other words, there is a relation between their collective indigenous identity and

the current aspiration and right to belong, to be an equal citizen, and to being a national, on the other. The below narrative reveals such relation in a clear manner:

I do [feel like minority], I mustn't be a minority though; but I do... What am I lacking compared to a Turk? What does a Turk gives to this country more than I do? I do have more, not the Turk [has more] than me, these lands are mine, not of the Turk's, not! Neither of the Kurd's. Well, I have more not less; but I am lacking, because the opportunities are not equal, I cannot become a police officer for instance. I can't become a prosecutor, a judge or an army officer. This is a lack, let alone being minority. That's more than being a minority, I can't even become something. You are not counted in indeed, I'm not in... (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]).

Important here is the rhetorical question of "*what does a Turk gives this country more than I do?*", which could be read to mean what to merit being the host, being more equal, being more 'national'. The participant emphasizes that he is deprived of equal opportunities; and that it is even not a matter of feeling minority, but of existence, very much in relation to the discussion about the ontological in/security. Uneasiness with the issues of being minority, inequality and discriminative policies of the state is apparent in the above quotations. I argue that indigenous existence in the region and perception of being rooted in the specific territory they inhabit was suggested by the Syriac participants as a legitimizing ground to take part equally in the political community. This, itself, should be taken as a sign of will to belong. This means, indigenusness was called by many participants to claim belonging in the political community and territory on equal grounds, rather than being utilized as an element of superiority or separatism. Concerning spatial belongings, which I will be elaborating more in the Chapter 6, I argue moreover that indigenusness becomes a ground for people to reclaim or rearticulate their locality as 'home' within the contested space of political territory of the Turkish state. Symbolism attributed to the space gets stronger as people perceive themselves and their locality as being off the political community and territory in Turkey. These narratives also show us different contexts of belongings, as political and structural violence as well as



discrimination impede belonging in the political legal community in equal terms. Yet the expressions stressing ‘I belong to it’ and ‘it belongs to me’, concerning the historical space they are indigenous to indicate the claim for the right to the land goes parallel to the claim for the right to belong. A strong narrative in this respect is below, which is rich in its reference to the symbols of “*language*”, “*history*”, “*civilization*”, “*culture*”, “*spirituality*”, “*motherhood*”, “*homeland*”, “*material and immaterial wealth*”, that establish belonging powerfully in spatial and historical terms, yet still reveals a tension between perception of being minority and the claim to be the “*owner*”, the “*son*”, indeed the “*genuine owner*” and the “*true son*” of the historical space so symbolized.

In terms of numbers we are in minority. Yet I am the owner of here, genuine owner! With my history, culture, wealth, poverty, everything, I am the owner here around. I don’t see myself as minority in terms of these, because my presence here, spiritual [*“manevi”*] wealth is more than every other people’s, more than every other individual. I have here at least ten-thousand years of history. A past here. We have a history and a language that we gifted the world with civilization. Especially our language, we have a language of thousands of years which mothered almost all languages. We have such a civilization and these are known by all. Thus I don’t feel myself minority in this context. I am the true son of this homeland! In every aspect! For its material or immaterial wealth... thus I am not a minority in this respect. Yet numerically [speaks in a tone of reservation] we are small, we don’t have much population left. Otherwise we have more civilization here than Turks do. Our history is older, wealthier. In all respects we are more than anybody here, yet we are less in number, we are minority in that respect. (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36])

Another tension that Syrians experience concerning the issue of minority status is the socio-historically and politically overburdened symbolism of being minority and implied references of privilege or concession for which the non-Muslims were blamed in the official historiography of the late Ottoman and Republican era. This still is a haunting image in the official discourse and in perceptions of many people when they recall non-Muslims in Turkey. Such symbolic meanings and overt uneasiness with them are clearly disclosed in the quote below:

I must be [counted as] a Turkish citizen. Besides [there should be] the minority rights, if it [the state] signed the international agreements on it, we need to use

it. Indeed, I should have some privileges [stops and gives up what he has just said] we don't want privileges, human[ity] is the first, there is the identity problem, forget about the privilege, we don't want it! Race means the religion and the language of a person, what else if the religion and the language extinct...(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

The sudden and hasty twist in the flow of the narrative, with the participant's visible manoeuvre to give up his claim for minority rights besides equal citizenship status is important. He had an evident anxiety, if not fear, about being misunderstood and seemed to panic for uttering a taboo word that is "privilege" ["*imtiyaz*"] with negative historical connotations concerning non-Muslims in Turkey. The participant rather turned to a much vague claim for "humanity" which reduces the issue to a mere "identity problem" that would be solved with the survival of religious and linguistic rights of Syriac people. His abrupt disclaim of his mention of minority rights especially the due privileges and urging the researcher to "*forget about*" what he just uttered seem to expose the insecurity he experiences despite his reference to the legitimate ground provided by "*the international agreements*", meaning the Treaty of Lausanne.<sup>283</sup> The Treaty, through which minority rights in Turkey are defined and secured by international guarantee, was indeed referred frequently by the Syriac participants, frequently as the object of much confusion and debate, though. An overview makes it clear that the confusion, especially with regard to the relation of Syriacs to the treaty, is not only among the participants of this research, but in some of the written literature on the issue. One aspect of the confusion was the belief that the Syriacs were not included in the framework of the Treaty. A participant, for instance, stated concerning the provisions of the treaty that "*schools of Armenians, Greeks and Jews were left open. Only Syriacs could not stepped in, despite them being so dense they could still not benefit it. Europe had not known then that there are also the Chaldeans and Syriacs [here]*" (M, 51,

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<sup>283</sup> Oran (2005) notes that although the Treaty of Lausanne is negated by the demise of the League of Nations, it is still an issue of international responsibility for Turkey and a matter of internal law since the treaty is put in effect through internal law. Moreover, while according to the 1982 Constitution the treaty is at least equivalent to the constitution; by the constitutional amendment in 2004 it has become even superior to the related legislation. (Oran, 2005: 66)

Syriac, Mardin [M33]). When I warned the participant that the utterance in the treaty refers to all non-Muslim citizens but it has not been executed so, he recalled that very recently he attended to a symposium at the university where the very same thing was mentioned, murmuring now he gets that it was right. Concerning the issue, Oran (2005: 62) states that the only criterion the Lausanne Treaty puts for the minority definition is being a “non-Muslim” rather than religion, language, or race as the other treaties of the era protecting minorities did. Yet, although nowhere in the treaty the groups are specified<sup>284</sup>, from the very start the rights that should be granted to all non-Muslims in Turkey have only been executed for the historically three largest minority groups, namely the Greek, the Armenian, and the Jew. Smaller non-Muslim groups like Syriacs, Chaldeans, and Nestorians were deprived of what is verbalized in the 40<sup>th</sup> article of the treaty that is the right to establish, manage and control their schools, and use their language freely in these schools. Syriac foundations were not recognized officially until the execution started in January 2003 (Oran, 2005: 68).<sup>285</sup>

Another widely held discourse is that Syriacs<sup>286</sup> renounced their rights granted in the Treaty of Lausanne for the non-Muslims. It is important to note, however, that the claim itself is a debated one. There is a variety of positions arguing that

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<sup>284</sup> The treaty names, on the contrary, four groups who were endowed with differing degrees of rights: Non-Muslim citizens of Turkish Republic; citizens of Turkish Republic speaking a language other than Turkish; all citizens of Turkish Republic; and everyone who inhabits in Turkey. Yet in practice neither the rights for the latter three groups are accepted and implemented by the state, nor are the rights granted to the non-Muslims totally abided by. Even the three groups are not benefiting the rights fully (Oran, 2005: 67- 69).

<sup>285</sup> While the reason for this contradictory implementation is not clear, Oran mentions the potential reasons as a possible secret circular issued in 1920s-30s by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, execution of which was facilitated by the non-existence of a kin-state watching over the implementation of the rights concerning these groups; as well as the fact that many of these groups were then living in rural areas of the southeast Turkey (Oran, 2005: 67-68).

<sup>286</sup> It has been claimed that Patriarch of Syriac Kadim Orthodox Ilyas Şakir III renounced the rights on behalf of the community.

such renouncement is invalid legally (Oran, 2005);<sup>287</sup> that implementation of the due articles of the Treaty of Lausanne should be granted as a result of legal necessity and responsibility, not as a sign of good will of the state (Öztemiz, 2012); that Syriacs were not mentioned at the sessions of the Lausanne debates is normal since the Syriacs make a society that merged and identified with the Ottoman and then the Turkish Republican State (Tahincioğlu, 2011).<sup>288</sup> Regardless of the debate roughly outlined above, the discourse itself is revealing in terms of various tensions woven around it. Response of the below participant was important in disclosing such tensions when I mentioned the public institutions like elder nursing home or hospitals that non-Muslim minority populations in Turkey are entitled to have but Syriacs aren't.

Noooo! But we haven't considered ourselves to be minority! According to the Treaty of Lausanne we would be granted rights just as Armenians, as Greeks. Greeks have schools as do Armenians, have hospitals, we have nothing, we haven't claimed any right, we said we are Turkish Republican citizens, we are not minorities, and didn't claim any rights. We don't have any schools, any hospitals, or any institutions! We counted ourselves as of the state [*"Biz kendimizi devletten saydık"*]; I mean we are citizens of the state! We haven't seen ourselves minorities and expressed this at Lausanne, thus we don't have them. [*Would you like to have them and minority status?*] No, I wouldn't. I would like to be loyal [*"bağlı"*] to our state because our Bible commands so. It commands 'may you be devoted to your governments', 'you have to subjugate to the government that you are under rule of', and 'you have to conform to those

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<sup>287</sup>Oran (2005: 68-69) claims that the widely held claim that non-Muslims, including Syriacs, renounced their rights defined in the Lausanne Treaty at the end of 1925 is pointless and invalid legally because not the group but the individual is the subject to the right according to the Western human and minority rights conception. The right holders are the individuals as members of the group and not the group itself, even if the rights are utilized by the latter as a whole. Oran (2005) argues that this makes it impossible for the group or a representative of the group to renounce the rights on behalf of the rest. This is especially so if such rights were granted through an international agreement and as the 37<sup>th</sup> article of Lausanne Treaty, stating no law or official implementation could abolish those rights. Alexis Alexandris (1983) and Ayhan Aktar (2000) as cited in Oran (2005) also point that various forms of force were used to assure such renunciation and takes this as a base of invalidity of it. The argument that the custom has been in the direction of specifying only the three groups is also unacceptable legally according to Oran (2005).

<sup>288</sup>Tahincioğlu (2011: 311) notes that not Syriacs but Chaldean, Nestorian, and Assyrians were mentioned at the sessions of the Lausanne debates, although the size of former is at least ten times the latter then.

rules'. For what it is [otherwise]? As if another branch, no! The best is that one submits to its state. [*Then you differentiate yourself from Armenians and Greeks?*][*Speaks in anger and with certainty*] We've always expressed this, even at Peace Treaty of Lausanne. Just as now. We don't claim for such rights, neither have we claimed for a school, nor for a hospital. On our own... We are subjected to our state, we haven't demanded any privileges! [*Silence*] (F, 52, Syriac, Mardin [M31])

The above quote discloses a clear-cut differentiation between citizenship and minority status and an overburdened tension between the two, a tension which almost implies the exclusion of the latter by the presence of the former. Revealing in this line is the participant's dichotomous articulation of "*counting oneself as of the state*", "*to be Turkish Republican citizens*", "*to be citizens of the state*", "*to be tied to one's state*", "*to be subjected to the state*" and "*submission to the state*" on the one hand, versus "*to consider oneself minority*", "*to be minority*", "*to claim any right*", "*to be another branch*", and "*to demand privileges*" on the other. Citizenship and minority statuses are legally compatible ones and do not necessarily bear a tense relation as many cases around the world well exemplify. Yet the above quote makes it clear that being minority is perceived to be one of an excluding, dissociative, and othering process, whereas the participant claims for being included, being counted in, and belonging in the larger political community as an equal member. The basic means for the latter is seen to be the citizenship status, with a highlighted emphasis on subjection to the state. This certainly reveals the general frame of the construction of the relation between citizenship, national belonging and minority positions in Turkey. It was argued that citizenship was officially taken to be one of the key elements of successful nation-building; while the state had been the main decisive factor in the development of citizenship (İçduygu, A., Çolak, Y. and Soyarık, N., 1999). Minority identity, on the other hand, has often indicated not only a legal-political status, but also a social status (Yumul, 2006). So, I argue that the participant's rejection of minorityness and simultaneous emphasis on a state centred citizenship is a search for what I call *anonymous integration* in the larger society, escaping any visible particularistic stance that could easily turn to stigmatization by that very society. That she makes religious references and

imbues her focus on obedient citizenship with sacred meanings is interesting in this sense. By this means the participant seems to strengthen her position and turns the claimed subjection of the Syriac citizens to the state to a 'natural' and 'necessary' one. Yet, ironically, the very fact she refers to, religious belongings of the Syriacs, makes a source of impediment to the absolute realization of such anonymity as it varies from the religious belonging of the majority of the larger society, whereby the latter is an important definer of national belonging and identification. It has to be noted that such anonymity is further difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in a city like Mardin, whereby Syriacs make a visible community with all their social, economic, architectural, religious and cultural existence. Some participants accordingly mentioned the possibility of becoming anonymous in everyday social life in the metropolitan cities like Istanbul, for instance. The participant's wish for anonymous integration seems to refer, moreover, to an equal integration in the political community without the burden of being hailed as 'different' in a society where 'difference' is not always smoothly embraced especially when it is defined in religious, ethnic, or racial terms and when the 'different' one has the claim of being 'one of us'. Moreover, when the already mentioned argument on the discrepancy between citizenship and national belonging in Turkey is reminded, citizenship status that the participant refers to, in its current form, is itself far from providing for such integration in the national community if we think it to be the innermost circle.

There is also another dimension to the experience of being minority that although in practice the minority status, in terms of granting specific rights, is not provided for Syriacs, it still reveals itself in some implementations yet only to cause more impediments and create an edgy situation for the individual members as well as their corporate representatives. In this way it causes almost a double-negativity for them. An informing anecdote mentioned by YakupTahincioğlu (2011: 322) is about an occasion whereby representatives of the Syriac Orthodox Community visited the 10<sup>th</sup> President of Turkey to congratulate him after he took on office. Accordingly, when the President stated

that “Syriacs should not be counted as minority”, President of the Istanbul Syriac Kadim Church Foundation replied in an affirmative manner that while the Syriacs themselves are in the same idea, the bureaucracy unfortunately treats them as minority, say they count their foundations to be minority foundations and control them through the ‘minority desk’ in the cities. We can state that the story discloses a paradoxical position whereby the Syriacs, who had allegedly renounced the rights that the Lausanne Treaty granted to them, for they did not want, in this line of debate, to be treated as minority, are now treated as minority not in terms of benefiting the minority rights but, on the contrary, in terms of being suspected, restricted, and discriminated. The negativity of not having minority rights is added to the further negativity of not being treated as equal citizens. The inconsistency being framed in the socio-historical conditions of Turkey reveals a paradox for the Syriacs: *the paradox of being minority without being minority*.

A similar point is made by Mardin Syriac Kadim Orthodox Church Leader<sup>289</sup> who stated “[Syriacs] are minority indeed. Our foundation is under the rule of minority status. Yet we haven’t taken advantage of these minority rights”. He further noted “the reason for that is... It’s our fault indeed, [not] of the state”, and stressed that the rights “were not made a claim to” [*sahipçikilmadı*] rather than being “renounced”, which is still a debated issue as I noted above. His latter point is revealing as it discloses a story lived in late 1920s. Accordingly, the Syriac School<sup>290</sup>, the buildings of which were in the courtyard of The Forty Martyrs Church/Church of Forties [Kırklar Kilisesi/Kırk Şehitler]<sup>291</sup> in Mardin,

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<sup>289</sup> Expert Interview, Mardin, 7.7.2011

<sup>290</sup> He stated that it was a “Rüştiye” [Ottoman Junior high school], open to both Muslims and non-Muslims.

<sup>291</sup> It is also known as Mor Behnam Church, a Syriac Orthodox Church built in the name of Mor Behnam and Mort Saro, the son and daughter of a ruler; dates back to 569 AD. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mardin> accessed on 23.12.2016

was closed down in 1928 by the initiation of the head of the school himself, who was also the metropolitan bishop then. He mentioned his interviews with the elders who remember the head of the school himself sending a petition to the Directorate of National Education to close down the school. The director initially did not take the petition into official consideration and warned the head not to close the school permanently as they would regret doing so in the future, and suggested instead a temporary process defining the difficulties necessitating it. Yet he rewrote to the Director requesting the closing down and it was eventually realized. The participant referred to the unfavourable conditions of the era as a possible cause of such appeal that “*the number of students decreased, a problem of teachers appeared, and monetary problems emerged*” with “*rapid Syriac emigration*” whereby “*there were not anymore the conditions to keep on with the school. Syriacs and nobody had the means to deal with a school or education. Poverty started; everybody had to strive for her bread*”. Yet what he stated further reveals his already mentioned emphasis of not making a claim to the rights by the community itself: “*not the state but we closed it down. Once we closed it down we did not have a chance to reopen [...] because once a right is withdrawn it is not conferred again*”. This might be taken as a criticism of the approach and attitude of the community leaders, at least, regarding this specific issue. Yet in general it shows that keeping what one already has in such insecure conditions becomes an important strategy for the minority people in Turkey. This, I suppose, feeds a ***preserving attitude*** in the making of be-long-ings for the Syriac community.

An additional factor determining the attitude and perception of the Syriacs towards being minority is their relations with the majority society at least in the sense of the peoples they live together with. Since religious belonging is an explicit factor differentiating them from their neighbours, reference to it in relation to being minority was much visible during the interviews, as it was clear in the narratives on collective violence above. A revealing example of reference to religious difference was given by Tahincioğlu (2011: 311) in his assertion that



“Syriacs had served for all Muslim states from the very origin of Islam, pay their taxes, obey the laws, and were attentive not to make any mistake in respecting Muslim citizens”, yet still “they are so sad of being seen as minority and treated by some groups in a way that they have not deserved”. Evidently, he stakes a claim on belong(ing) in the name of Syriac people who fulfils properly the legal citizenship duties such as taxpaying and law abiding, but also ‘normative duties’ like “respect[ing] Muslim citizens”. It is clear that formal obligations applying to all citizens do not suffice, in themselves, to provide for effective inclusion for some citizens. This could well be understood with reference to the above discussion on the discrepancy between citizenship and belonging in Turkey. Importantly, moreover, he not only refers to service to the state and respect to citizens, but specifies them as being Muslim states, from the very origin of Islam, and as Muslim/majority citizens. Thus he establishes both a hierarchical relationship between the non-Muslim minority and Muslim majority and takes it beyond the limits of modern time and space.

The narratives up to here reveal that Syriacs experience at least four types of tensions regarding the issue of being or not being minority. Clearly, all four is related to the processes of inclusion or exclusion. The tensions are those between citizenship and belonging; between citizenship and minority claim; between being minority and belonging to the ‘nation’; and between ‘being treated as minority’ and not being legally granted minority status. What I argue upon the findings revealed heretofore and will be hereafter is that these tensions, added to others, lead to formation of *cautious attitude* among Syriacs in their relations to various political and social actors including the state and a mode of *restrained citizenship*. Below I try to elaborate on these patterns.

### **5.5. State, Society, *Aşiret***

Below is analysis on the relations of the Syriac participants with the state, the larger society, and the *aşiret* structures in the locality.

### 5.5.1. Restrained Citizens and Cautious Attitude

One of the arguments of this study is that Syriacs have a cautious attitude in their relations to the larger society, the other social groups they live together with, and importantly to the state. The cautious attitude appears to be fed by all such factors as the constraints of the legal-political structure, the local set of social power relations, the historical experience of discriminative citizenship practices, the memory of violence, and the religious culture. The cautious attitude could be defined with attentiveness not to be too demanding, insistent, direct, or visible, rather with being cautious and temperate in thought, and word, and deed. ‘Subjection to’, ‘obeying rules of’, and ‘identification’ with the state and the majority society are among the expressions of such attitude one encounters frequently. Simultaneously, however, there is the strong demand for equal citizenship status and claim to be ‘in’ as many narratives above have revealed, which allows us to define Syriacs as *restrained citizens*.

One analogy made by a participant implying the rule-obeying cautious behaviour of Syriacs was that “*two things an automobile has are very precious, one is brake the other is the accelerator; do you got it? If the driver knows their function he will never have an accident. If he steps on the accelerator rather than brake he will have accident*” (M, 70, Syriac, Mardin [M34]). Like the mechanics of an automobile, the mechanics of the social structure seem to necessitate Syriacs to know how to function the precious rules of the society. Below is a quote that is illustrative in defining the framework of the cautious attitude, which is being perceived by many Syriacs as a precondition of “*living together*”. The cautious attitude appears below to be related to adapting to the norms of the larger society, obeying the rules of the state, and submitting to the commands of religious/communitarian life.

Well, how these peoples live together, for sure some should step back, rather stay behind or be a bit milder so that they can live together. Yet I must first express that we haven’t indeed calculated that we should live in this country

being more moderate, more easygoing, or calmer. This is our essential doctrine [...] it is the very teaching of our prophet Jesus Christ. He says ‘to the one who slaps you in the cheek turn the other, to the one who wants your shirt, take off and give your coat<sup>292</sup>, knock the door it shall be opened to you<sup>293</sup>. You cannot expect a society who grew up with such a teaching to be aggressive, harsh mannered, or provocative. Because we were brought up in this manner, we have been so, we are so. [...] That’s to say we here, we’ve come to know how to live [together] with people; because nothing will ever come out of violence, if you respond violently to violence the result is obvious and you have to bear it. So you see, if we are living within this setting, should we live in this atmosphere, something to be accepted after all is that we live here as Turkish Republican citizens, and Republic of Turkey is a country of ours that we love. Well, we also know how to live [here]. What are they, what are the rules, your neighbour is a rule, our state is a rule, or the tax you are going to pay is a rule, customs and traditions; well if you comply with all these you won’t face much difficulty anyway. (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26])

The narrative makes it clear that it is not only legal-political life, in terms of obeying the rules, paying tax and complying with the state, but also the social life, in terms of relations with neighbours and paying attention to customs and traditions that one needs to take into account “*to live here*”, perhaps more so as a member of a minority people. Details of the cautious attitude could be seen in ‘the codes of behaviour’ implied above as the condition of “*living together*”, such as “*stepping back*”, “*staying behind*”, being “*a bit milder*”, “*more moderate*”, “*more easygoing*”, and “*calmer*”. Importantly, moreover, such attitude is not only grounded in the necessities of being a citizen, thus on what is ‘adapted’, ‘modern’ and ‘legal’, but also in the credal commands, thus on what is ‘natural’, ‘archaic’, and ‘essential’. This latter in itself is an attempt of naturalization of some sort of social behaviour. The participant telling “*I began to get much milder after I read the Bible*” wanted me to take the Bible out of the bookshelves and read the 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter, which mentioned the teachings he

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<sup>292</sup>Refers to the Bible verse “And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to take thy* coat also.” Luke 6:29, King James Version (KJV), Retrieved from <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Luke-Chapter-6/>, accessed on 19.12.2016

<sup>293</sup> Refers to the Bible verse “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”, Matthew 7:7, King James Version (KJV), Retrieved from <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-7-7/> accessed on 19.12.2016

referred to, and I did. His act signified the implication that such ‘mild’ attitude was not a strategy but a ‘cultural’ and ‘moral’ character of the Syriac people. Such character was emphasised by others as well. Narrative of the Hori episkopos reveals that such cautious attitude of Syriacs in their local social relations lead sometimes to a vulnerable position whereby their passivism or non-reaction is mistaken for being a reflection of cowardice and a ground for insult:

They are non-reacting yes, it is related to this. To give an example, I have many Muslim friends, while talking to them they tease us stating ‘you the Syriacs are not men’, ummm ‘you don’t countervail’, ‘you’re cowards’ and like they insult us. I say that it is wrong. You are wrong in telling this. It’s not because we are so, not because we are cowards we don’t steal, kill, or murder. We do these not, [but] for a reason. Those who do these you are afraid of, you respect them as men. We don’t act so; our culture does not permit it. We’re not revanchist, we don’t take revenge, don’t thief, don’t murder, we exclude anybody who engages in such misconduct. Spiritual leaders [“*ruhaniler*”] continuously give such talks in churches and at home [visits] asking people to stay away from evil. [...] Thus we stay in patience, not because we are afraid of, but our culture does not permit it. Once a culture does not let one [do something], that one is tied hand and foot. Her heart does not let her; does not have it in mind, cannot even imagine; and doesn’t practice. [...] I say please do not tease us. [...] And the Syriacs stood still when they were victims of violence; they stood still, but no way... [Then] they found [the solution] in escaping, they did not want to fight against, escaped. As the other side did not approach them in the same way, seeing them cowards they bully [“*üzerine gidiyor*”] them. And this is so wrong!<sup>294</sup>

He also mentioned the historical transformation that came after the community adopted Christianity. He noted that before Christianity Syriacs “*had six Kingdoms in this region*” which they “*lost all towards the third century*” due to attacks of “*the Roman and Persian Empires*”. Thus, while at that time they “*established empires, tyrannised, slaved people through violence, did enormous things*” as the “*culture of that period necessitated it, they believed and did so*”, after adopting Christianity “*Syriacs did not want to engage in politics anymore, they attributed more importance to spiritual life*”, “*they wanted to live Christianity in full sense and did so*”. Interesting is his historical reference to the

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<sup>294</sup> Expert Interview, Mardin, 7.7.2011

effect of Christianity on Syriac community in causing loss. Yet even if it meant “*great worldly loss*”, the participant noted that “*spiritually the Syriac [Orthodox] church is seen today to be the richest and the strongest in the Christian world. It is the church bringing up the most Saints. The Syriac church has been given the name of the mother of the Saints*”.<sup>295</sup> In these, he mentions the binding influence of such culture on individuals in that “*this Christian culture is a mild culture. If one slaps you in one cheek turn around the other. Love your enemy. When one loves his enemy, he is anyway not permitted to struggle with him*”.<sup>296</sup> One crucial result of violence as already mentioned before was migration/emigration. Among those who have stayed, however, the cautious attitude in social relations, as I try to elaborate in these pages, appears to be the main pattern. The role of the religious doctrine and the spiritual leaders in guiding people for peaceful ways of social interaction is clear in the above quote. Although the reserved and protective manner is the general pattern of attitude among Syriacs, one has to note that not each and every individual shared it. Although very rare, one participant, for instance, expressed open criticism against the philosophy of ‘offering one’s cheek’ in conducting social relations with the majority local society:

Turning the other cheek... I don’t need such a philosophy, I’m opposed to it because we’ve suffered it much; we were harmed by it. We have in history wars that are not fought for. We have lost folks. They [religious leaders] have always told about surrendering; always took refuge in Jesus, in Mary! I don’t need taking refuge, I can’t take refuge. So if you live among Muslims, you have to avail yourself of their philosophy; their groupings, struggles, fight. Of all we took our share. We had to become like them. [...] Some Christian families retired into their shell and this harmed them, since they couldn’t warm their relations with the neighbours up. As they withdrew into their circles they are impoverished emotionally, mentally and in terms of struggle. We’ve overcome it. We’ve mixed with the neighbours; we expressed our condolence to them, and they to us. We’ve attended wedding ceremonies and lived very close. Thus we could make them accept us, we’re Christians but we’re human and we, only by

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<sup>295</sup> Expert Interview, Mardin, 7.7.2011

<sup>296</sup> Expert Interview, Mardin, 7.7.2011

struggle, could make them understand that we are human as they are. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M, 27])

His argument, as it appears above, is clearly not a call for aggression or does not stand per se for retaliation. It could rather be taken as an emphasis to strive and seek, in his phrasing “struggle” to be “accepted” as one is. Though his mention of attending funerals or wedding ceremonies of Muslim neighbours was shared by other Syriac participants as well, in many of them such acts appear as a sign of conducting mutual “respectful” relations. Here the example stands for an emphasis on pushing relations to engage everyday life routines of Muslims on an equal basis as much as possible. This narrative is much an exception in its forthright manner and stress on active agency in social relations.<sup>297</sup> More common was the cautious manner in relations as I already mentioned. Indeed many narratives reveal a defensive rather than a proactive stance focused basically on the cultural and social existence of the community. “Preserving”, “sustaining”, “surviving”, “keeping”, “intergenerational transmission”, are the oft utilized concepts in such a stance as in the below narrative:

I am in charge of this church for 27 years. I love my country, my homeland, I love living here and we have strived to live here, we keep doing so, we try to keep our culture alive. We speak our mother tongue Syriac, we keep our customs and traditions. Even though we are left a small society we are trying to keep them alive. [Churches and monasteries] we try to keep them standing; they are our history, our warranty, we take care of them anyhow. We try our best to hand them down to the next generations.<sup>298</sup>

Such an emphasis of maintaining the cultural, religious, linguistic, architectural life and property as lively as possible was also clear when expectation from the state is asked. The expectation is articulated in such a controlled manner that it

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<sup>297</sup> It came out during the field research that the participant was a member of an extended family, a few households living in the same big house in a Muslim neighbourhood where no other Syriac family lived. The neighbourhood was defined by others as one where trouble was not absent. The participant’s focus on struggle, mingling with neighbours, and social occasions may be understood within such framework.

<sup>298</sup> Expert Interview, Mardin, 7.7.2011

reveals the cautious attitude, which may almost become apologetic. The participant noted the following as such:

Our expectation is, say the rights of the Lausanne Treaty to be implemented exactly as they are. This is our demand. ... We want this to maintain our culture, for it not to be lost. Not for another reason, I mean not to divide Turkey, not to harm but to contribute to the culture of Turkey. Our culture is a mild one. The state had forbidden teaching of Syriac language in the last years; we struggled against it saying that it's wrong, why you are doing this. At last the Directorate of National Education gave us a paper indicating that there is no problem with education in the church. Indeed, as we get deeper into the spiritual the more people get intellectual, we become better people as well. ... We the spiritual leaders [*"ruhaniler"*] do not engage in politics; they impede us for they fear this, but our culture is rather different. [...] In this little classroom<sup>299</sup> we only teach the hymns and prayers. And note this please that we want a continuity in this; we want it to be like a school so that the culture is not lost. Otherwise it will. This is not enough to keep it alive.<sup>300</sup>

The cautious attitude is reflected in relations of Syrians with the state and in their perception of it. Below is a narration recollecting memories from a past generation, thus both giving a clue about the intergenerational transmission of attitudes towards the state and articulating present expectations from it:

State was something very dear to my father, don't know, it was a value. He loved his state. We think of the state not as the party; he taught us all this: love your land, your flag, they were teaching this kind of things. Love where you live, love people, we all have these anyway. For sure love your state, this is what we should do; we don't have much demand from the state, what we want is that it counts us the same. Identities were an issue for some time, upper identities... We don't want to see ourselves to be looked down, not as a sub-identity, yet be at the same level! Kurds, Turks, Syrians, Laz, who else one is, shall be the same level. When we feel this we are pleased. We already love our state and something like that would make us happier, and I see it [realizing] for some years now (M, 53, Syriac, Mardin [M29])

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<sup>299</sup> The classroom he mentions was an adjacent part of the church courtyard, where I was accepted to attend a class with around 15 to 20 children of different ages. Children having their Syriac prayer books open before them followed Horiepiskopos in his teachings. Classes lasted for three months in summers, as children attended school during education period. They basically learn hymns, prayers, and rituals to be accustomed to the culture and not to be alienated. Yet Horiepiskopos asserts that it is not enough and utters the need for a more formal and continuous education opportunity to be able to main the culture truly.

<sup>300</sup> Expert Interview, Mardin, 7.7.2011

The will to side with what the state stands for regardless of who is the actual governing party is clear in the above narrative for both generations mentioned. There is, moreover, an evident discomfort for being the subject of an uncanny debate on current identity politics, which, for some period in Turkey, was crystallized in the discussions of Turkishness as an upper-identity. The participant takes the alleged position of sub-identities as a lower status and rather calls for equality of all differences in the manifestation of belongings. Demand for equality, not put as a demand at all, as in the assertion “*we don’t have much demand from the state, what we want is that it counts us the same*”, is not articulated as a challenge to the existing order of things but much as an appeal, realization of which would add to the “happiness” and already held “love” of the state.

A visible pattern concerning the relations of the Syriacs to the state came out to be living their social, cultural, religious life in peace. For many, the community life appeared to be the main area of negotiation with the state, the question of the existence of the community strongly leaving its imprint on the individual in defining her relation to the state. The state in any case was an authority to be declared loyalty, but to keep aside as long as everything was on its way. I have already mentioned references to the biblical command on subjection to the authority that governs. Already mentioned above was the memory and experience of violence, which has a critical role in defining the perception of state. Strong “allegiance” Syriacs bear towards the state is in many cases stressed to transcend any attachments to political parties, so is almost supra-politics. A participant critically pointing at that pattern in answering my question of “what is the state for you?” is quoted below:

Well the state... For one thing there is not a notion of statism [*devletçilik*] for Syriacs, I would tell you that. I mean it is the one who treats us well in that period. Otherwise, should it be the A, or the B, or the C, it is all story! They are all same unless they are one of us. You get it? Yet there is a serious allegiance to the state, attitude that we’ll stay subjected to the state. We haven’t had any problem with the state. Because we are not statist or populist or else. What is



our purpose? Our purpose is to worship freely where we are, and to live freely. If the flag above is red or white or yellow does not differ at all indeed, I mean we don't have such a statist tradition. When we look at the pages of history, for us it's always been like whoever came, I respect whoever is in charge as long as he doesn't step on my toes [*"gelen ağam giden paşam"*] [Does that mean 'I want nothing, only stand out of my light' [gölge etme başka ihsan istemem] Exactly! We haven't had any expectations from the state for all over history either. Yet each state damaged us indeed. We have always been harmed by all states, by all whom carry weapons. We are unworldly in a sense, even if we also think earthly. I mean isolation from worldly things in a way, more of a solitary... As I said, this indeed is the culture of Syrians. In history as well, no such idea of establishing a state, or now a municipality... No, because what is important for us is the other world. I mean it is a different way of thought. Syrians are keen on their life space, should they live comfortably, can worship; that's it, nothing else. (M, 33, Syriac, Mardin [M28])

The state above appears to be the power to side along with but not be engaged in directly or unreservedly. The essential focus above is that as long as Syrians are at ease socially, culturally, and economically, they try not to engage in political discourses and relations other than what they should do as citizens. The emphasis on "*life space*" is important here indicating the triad of well-being, security, and meaning, search for which was defining for many participants, regardless of ethnicity, in this research. Yet in this case, they are formed very much around the religious distinction of Orthodox Christian Syriac society. Relying on self organization of social relations, religious institutions, and economic resources was crucial in the maintenance of communitarian existence. Yet to keep the state at arm's length and to show loyalty to the one in power was crucial in order to sustain that very existence and to handle the conditions in any case.

A rather diverging pattern came to fore still with an emphasis on sustaining community existence in peace yet with reference to communitarian rights in a demanding and challenging discourse. The following expression of a participant was a good example of it:

We are not enemies to Turks; do not want to be enemies either, with no one! We too, like everyone, in peace want our rights to protect our culture, our history, our presence. Nothing else! Well I, I do not have objection to my upper identity

or my state being Turkish Republic. I do not object it. But if my rights are restricted then I will rise up (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]).

The emphasis on upper identity, Turkishness, and the relation to state, citizenship is important in pointing at the ground of allegiance with the political community; as the reference to Turks indicates a non-problematic relation to the larger social structure. Yet he also reveals a strong position pointing at the limits of such allegiance. This was an infrequent, but still a present form of belongings among the Syriac participants of the study.

### **5.5.2. Representation, Political Participation, Symbols and Discourses**

The overall cautious attitude emerged also on the matter of being represented and active participation in parliamentary politics. One crucial case was candidacy of Erol Dora for the 2011 parliamentary elections and his eventual election.<sup>301</sup> The conflicted character of the event for Syriacs was that he ran as the BDP [Peace and Democracy Party] candidate. The party being the main Kurdish political party had, as its predecessors, tense relations with state and with the government despite the then still valid project of ‘Kurdish opening’, created discomfort among many Syriacs anxious of being stigmatized as pro-Kurdish, thus, inferentially the logic followed, as opposing to the state. Despite many acknowledged that a Syriac becoming an MP is cheering, the fact that BDP was the party of his election caused open uneasiness among Syriacs especially in Mardin city centre. A young woman, for instance, stated:

Yes it was nice. For the first time one of us ran for being a deputy. That’s nice. Good in a sense. Yet to support or not is totally a different issue. At the outset,

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<sup>301</sup>In 2015 general elections four MPs, including Dora, were elected into the parliament, two from HDP, one from CHP, and one from AKP. The other three MPs were Armenian, and this was the first time after 1957, the last general elections that an Armenian entered to the parliament. One was a woman and this was the first time ever in the Turkish Republican Parliament. Further research should be conducted on their role, relations, and effect in Turkish politics, the larger political community, and in terms of the specific populations they represent.

yes a Syriac<sup>302</sup> becoming a parliament member is something good for us. Just for that. Yet I can't say anything about the party he stands for, that's his own view. (F, 21, Syriac, Mardin [M30])

The emphases of the participant that a candidate who is “*one of us*” and “*becoming a parliament member*” “*for the first time*” is in itself “*something good for us*” signify the importance attributed to a co-ethnic becoming a representative. The practical-political role of it in terms of power relations put aside, the symbolic meaning it bears is important. It is a sign of “inclusion”. Yet the reservation about ‘the party’ that Dora ran for candidacy and finally became an MP is important revealing that something in this case is not ‘right’ for “proper inclusion” of the ethno-religious community to the larger political community. Significant further is that her reservation is despite her criticism of the existing relations of representation both as a Syriac and as a young person, as she said “*none of us think we are represented properly to be honest. Because we vote and send to the parliamentary but they act as if they represent themselves rather than us*” and also added “*I don't think I am paid attention, especially as a young*”. Thought within this context, her words that “*one being a Christian does not mean automatic support [of the Christian electorate]*” (F, 21, Syriac, Mardin [M30]) gains prominence in illustrating the communitarian influence on individual voting behaviour. What stands for the good of the community is usually decided beyond the individual, yet often defines the individual. Similarly, many Syriac participants, especially in the Mardin city centre, noted that they did not support Erol Dora in the 2011 elections. An overriding argument was that candidacy took place without any consultation or given consent of the “*community elders*”, meaning mostly the religious representatives. Below is a thorough example of it:

We don't support him. As the Syriac community we don't support and we did not know about it; one of a sudden... [...] nobody was informed, without asking anybody in the community he acted on his own. [Furious] It was not an incident

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<sup>302</sup> He was argued not to be a Syriac by the community, and I was told that he himself made a declaration afterwards that he was not a Syriac but a Chaldean. Field notes, Mardin, July 2011

we supported, absolutely not! [What if it was not the BDP but say AKP or else CHP or MHP, would the attitude be different then?] It might have been, don't know. But it was not something we supported, he ran for it without asking us, asking anybody, from his elders, we have elders, no, nobody; no one knew that he would be a candidate. [Who would be consulted in such matters?] Well we have our metropolitans; one would at least ask their opinion. Is he not our religious elder? If there is a grandfather or mother in a family are not they consulted should something be done? Well he is the elder of our community; [he] should have been consulted at least. Nobody had a clue. (F, 52, Syriac, Mardin [M31])

Going into politics emerge to be not a total individual endeavour. The community with its own hierarchical relations, structure and norms is perceived and experienced to be the principle mediator for the individual in engaging with the state, as well as the politics. The analogy made by the participant between the family and the community in the persons of family elders and community elders is an important one in understanding the role of the community structure and the religious leadership for the Syriac individual. Bilge (1996: 86) notes that the Church and the spiritual leaders are the main elements binding the Syriac society to one another. I believe they could be seen as the principal symbols constructing the community in Cohenian sense. Here it is important to remind the historical role of the Patriarchate in establishing the relations with the state as it was recognized as both the ecumenical and the earthly leader of the Syriacs in the Ottoman Empire with each sultan signing *ferman* [command] for the Patriarch donating him with powers and rights on his community (Bilge, 1996: 87). As Bilge notes, though the Patriarchate moved out of Turkey in the Republican period, the Church and the clergy continued to play a critical role in governing the society. Erol Dora's 'not consulting' to the religious leaders of the community, thus, appears as a breach of the legitimacy of such symbols constructing the community as well as overlooking the established order of things in engaging relations with the state and the society, if not a breach of the very basis of the community itself. Recalling what Bourdieu (1991: 249-250) says about politics as "the site par excellence of symbolic effectiveness, an activity which works through signs capable of producing social entities and, above all, groups", importance of any such attempt of engaging in politics in

terms of re-production of community becomes clearer. As participants' reflections also indicate, doing politics in this case appears to be an issue beyond individual choice, and one necessitating the mediation of the community for support and acceptance. One should note that this is not exceptional to the Syrians, since doing politics in Turkey often depends upon the ethnic, religious, or kinship group support for the candidates. Yet not wholly being a matter of support, the perceived problem in the participant's narrative is the absence of the processes of seeking the informed permission, advice or the approval of the hierarchical leaders of the group which one embarks upon representing. Representation is very much related to symbolic power. Thus any attempt to hold or share that power is critically received by the conventional representatives of the community. The existing setting for community in Turkey with precarious social and political relations, whereby any reallocation of power is feared to cause vulnerabilities beyond individuals, may be thought to be a factor for such reception. The reservation of the above participant implying that the reaction might have been different were it not the BDP but any other party in the parliament is important in understanding such fear concerning the reorganization of power relations, especially in favour of a party whose position vis-à-vis the state is itself much fragile. The continued armed conflict and deaths adding enormously to that fear as the boundary between two sides was underlined by blood, taking side by the Kurdish political party meant for many being on a knife-edge. A clear account of such fear and substantiation for the perceived vulnerability were articulated by a participant in the following:

No, I do not support Erol Dora; I don't support Erol Dora, because he threw himself into that Party without taking our permission. He should have consulted with his community at least. Istanbul, Mardin, or whoever it is; on his own he stated 'I'm a Syriac' and became a member of that party. He could have taken of the community's [consent] at least; for he did not... we do not support him anyway. [...] He is not a Syriac proper I suppose, a friend of ours who converted to Chaldean Protestantism.<sup>303</sup> I mean he does not have his name in the Orthodox

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<sup>303</sup> A minority of Assyrians have converted to Protestantism during the 20th century, leaving the Assyrian Church of the East, Chaldean Catholic Church and Syriac Orthodox church in favour of the Assyrian Pentecostal Church and Assyrian Evangelical Church.

registry. Yet, we would of course be proud of his being on a party, for he has been elected an MP. [...] No doubt a Christian becoming an MP is very good; so I'm not talking about his being an MP. At this moment, one of us being in that party I see to be premature, much troublesome. [...] Well at this period, within these problems, look there are many problems, I mean we may not like [the results of that] we the Syriacs are named along with that party; he happens to destroy our relations with the state. See now we have 13 martyrs [*şehid*],<sup>304</sup> what would he say when he is asked his opinion; now I give him the microphone, 'what happened Mr. Erol what are you saying for the deaths?' He will panic, does not know what to say. Will he speak siding with the party or the state? Then we are in trouble. Am I right? Since everything is going well with the state at the moment, well... [...] Yet I love friends in that party as well, I know their problems as well, but well one of us being in that party at this moment is to me... had he been in the AK Party, or CHP we would be proud of, nothing to say, but now, a bit untimely that he was elected as an MP there, but still may goodness be with him [*Hayırlı olsun*]. I hope [*İnşallah*] he won't harm the community. This is our worry. [...] Yet at least the state does know it anymore. I guess it does now that we, our Syriacs, did not support him! (M, 53, Syriac, Mardin [M29])

He added that support of Syriacs would not have much counted anyway as “*Syriacs have [only] 350 votes in Mardin with about 80 families*”, while “*he got 54.000-55.000 votes*” (M, mid-40s, Syriac, Mardin) notably from the Kurdish electorate. Still his anxiety was apparent as he mentioned the “phone calls” he got from bureaucrats expressing their surprise that a Syriac ran for candidacy and became eventually an MP for BDP:

I'm anxious for sure, now at a time when our relation with the state is perfect, something like this may block our path. As I had many calls. Well bad things... [Of bureaucracy?]Of bureaucracy, sure sure. Well, [asking] were there no other parties left? Ran for it! And we try to express the matter, 'no it was not a person we chose for, on his own...'. He then declared it 'I did not run through the will of the community, that was my personal will'; stated this a few times. Stated. We respect him, but he put us into trouble, he is not aware of it that much. Those in Istanbul are also in trouble, many calls they are getting from the bureaucracy. [...] yet we have expressed our mind. Lastly we have read an

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Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaldean\\_Catholic\\_Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaldean_Catholic_Church) accessed on 10.3.2017

<sup>304</sup> Despite originally being a religious term, the expression “*şehid*” was intensely adopted by the conservative-nationalist discourse in Turkey, especially for the death of the security forces killed in the armed conflict against PKK, yet increasingly came to be used for all sorts of death of security forces and even other civil servants killed while on duty.

article in the newspaper, stating that he was not a Syriac, the article he himself... (M, 53, Syriac, Mardin [M29])

The expressions of having heard “*bad things*” on phone calls; the community being “*put into trouble*”; that it was not “*the will of the community*” but of the individual himself are clearly displaying the uneasiness and distress that members of the community have experienced. Fear of being excluded from the already established networks of power, thus losing the opportunity to take advantage of them, seems to be the main concern. Thought in this way, it is about losing the linking social capital, being stigmatized, and falling into a more insecure position not only in terms of political and social undertakings of the community but also in terms of individual economic endeavours. One apparent ‘defensive’ argument, in the above quotes, was that Dora was not Syriac anyway, meaning Syriac Orthodox, despite his and others’ initial declarations of being so. The named article, cut from a newspaper and kept as the evidence of his being not a Syriac, was shown to me by one participant, whom I quoted above in her criticism of Dora for not consulting the community elders. Regardless of its truth, the claim that ‘he is not a Syriac’ is a symbolic act indicating an effort to keep the position of the Syriac community firm in ‘siding with’ the state and by no means against it.

Others, on the other hand, revealed a dilemma that some Syriac voters experienced. When I asked if they supported Dora in 2011 elections, a participant stated “*even if we want to support, state will see us in a different eye, it will see us in that side*”; and added that “*support is only secretly, you can’t support openly. Yet this is here at the centre, it is different in the rural*” (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). Uneasiness about any possible suspicion of the state about the Syriac or Chaldean community having a pro-Kurdish and anti-state attitude is clear in the expression of being “*in that side*”, which implies ‘Kurdish side’ as the ‘other-side’. Taking side, if at all, should be by the state as the holder, by all means, of the legitimate monopoly of violence as well as the resources. A Syriac MP, even if his identity was ‘disputed’, being elected for

*HDP*, the political party of the Kurdish movement, was perceived to bring forth the likelihood of the whole community being related to the acts and decisions of the party. A participant revealed such perception in relation to an event causing anxiety at that period, the ‘oath taking crisis’<sup>305</sup> in the parliament following the 2011 general elections, in his words: “*the oath taking ceremony, totally chaos, even we may get harmed*” (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). He believed that “*the current government would not have accepted if they [Syriacs] had applied*” for MP candidacy, or that it was “*not possible in CHP, or MHP*”; still, he stated that “*I am not sure, but to be seen along with Kurds might be wrong*”. As he voiced his wish for more Syriac or Christian MPs being in the Parliament stating “*one would like them [MPs] be not only one, but three, five, ten*”, his reservation is an expression of insecurity and perception of instability regarding the political developments and the ever changing constellation of power relations within which the position of Christian minorities is substantially vulnerable. Revealed in these cases in terms of the processes of belonging is that Syriacs relate to the political sphere primarily not as individual citizens but as community members. Not a personal but a collective life imposes itself on individuals, as acts and decisions of each community member may well affect the life opportunities for the others.

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<sup>305</sup>In an article analyzing 2011 elections, it is noted that the post 12 June elections crisis which, “increased tension in the Turkish political system” took place after the unanimously taken decision of YSK [Supreme Election Council] to strip independent deputy Hatip Dicle of his seat, as the other independent MPs refused to take oath until he was reinstated (Başkan and Güney, 2012). The reason for the decision of YSK was that Dicle, “who had been elected in Diyarbakır with BDP’s support, lost an appeal in June 2011 against a 2010 conviction and 20-month prison sentence for spreading terrorist propaganda”, (Başkan and Güney, 2012: 171). Another aspect of the crisis was that an Istanbul court ruled against releasing the two newly elected CHP deputies who were also under detention awaiting trial and this led CHP deputies to decide not to take part in the parliamentary oath ceremony. “The crisis concerning CHP deputies was solved on 12 July 2011, after CHP and AKP signed an agreement in which they stated their willingness to cooperate in securing the release of the arrested CHP deputies” and on 1 October 2011, concerning the ‘oath boycott’ of Kurdish MPs, after a series of efforts by the then President’s and Parliamentary Speaker’s efforts “to convince the BDP deputies to take their oaths and participate in legislative activities as well as take part in the making of the new constitution” (Başkan and Güney, 2012: 171-172).



Another reflection on political engagements came from a participant who saw this specific case of MP elections as an example of the “*many political parties*” that “*have used [Syriacs] for the sake of their own benefits*” and “*still do so*”. Despite the reservations he had about the party and the candidate himself as they “*did not know Dora beforehand*”, he and his family “*still supported him and worked for him in the elections*”. He justified this act asserting his belief that Kurds now “*know very well that they were in the past manipulated against [Syriacs]*” (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27]). His justification contains important implications: first, that Kurds were agents of the past violence against the Christian communities of the region; second, that Kurds are now aware and accepting their role in such violence; third, that Kurds were manipulated, so the actors of manipulation were still some ‘others’, ‘Turks’ or the ‘state’ most probably; and fourth, now that Kurds do ‘confess’ their role in the past violence, there is a ground for establishing alliances on the basis of common interest. There is also the idea implied, here as well as in some other narratives, that Kurds recently are victims of a violence, of which they were the actors once. Though the term “manipulation” blurs the meaning of such agency, it shall reasonably be seen as an adaptation of the discourse of the Kurdish political movement and popular discourse. His reflection is as follows:

Though their elders, grandfathers left their grandchildren a bad, horrible past, today the men confess it, apologize to us. They speak about the mistakes of their grandfathers, everything... speak of the barbarism. It is somehow late but it happens, and this is something good for us, at least we shall look at the future with hope, we have a glint of life, we may still live together with these people, share something. Erol Dora was a means of relief for their conscience; their votes for him were a means of purification for the mistakes of their fathers and grandfathers in the past. People started to relieve their conscience. The vote they casted for Erol Dora were a result of that. It is nothing more than using Erol Dora for their intere... benefit and for the sake of the Party, [all] in the direction of its philosophy. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27])

A language of simultaneous hope and scepticism colours the participant’s narrative above. While ‘the confession of past barbarism’ and ‘apology’ is seen as a ground providing the opportunity for ‘living together’ and ‘share’ with the

successors of the aggressors; the specific case of having a Christian/Syriac candidate for MP elections is seen as a matter of ‘relief of conscience’ for them, a use for their own interests, and for the good of the party and its ideology. Syriac population becomes in such perception a tool and not the goal. Such perception indicates the weakness of bridging social capital -the lack of trusting, and reciprocal relations capable of producing common good among different ethno-religious social groups, as well as of linking social capital in terms of distrustful attitude towards power holders, here Kurds, especially when they have tense relations with yet other power holders, here Turks. The cautious attitude, as I have detailed above, shows itself here as well. ‘Warning’ alongside ‘consent’, which was uttered in meeting Dora prior to elections is a sign of such attitude, as the participant stated ‘they’ okayed him noting “*if you can speak out our victimhood... yet know that our number is small here, we do not have the right to demand much things, don’t!*” (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27]). Conditional consent is an important sign of the cautious attitude. It also appears in reflection of the participant on the meaning of Dora becoming an MP:

We casted our vote and sent him to the parliament. We have never given him weapons and send to the mountain. We sent our candidate... [Pause] He is their candidate, we only gave our vote. Go to the parliament and tell about your victimization, we will watch you. We’ll see. But we may not meet with the Kurdish politicians at the same point. Our points are different. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27])

The emphasis on acting out a basic citizen right, voting, and the shift of expression from “*our candidate*” to “*their candidate*”, as well as the narration on ‘victimhood’, ‘watching and waiting’, and ‘different point of view’ of the Syriac population are important points of reference for the cautious attitude this chapter tries to put forward.

Chatterjee (2005) mentions the right of representation and the right to hold office under the state as the two most important rights that make up citizenship. Drawing on this perspective, I suppose any reservation or worry for those rights

to realize fully, like fear of political participation on socio-political grounds, has to be taken as a sign of a tense citizenship position. Chatterjee (2005) defines, moreover, the vote as the great anonymous performance of citizenship, a ritual realized through an act of impersonation. The reservation in explicitly, if ever, voting for a Syriac candidate, especially when the party he ran for is in tense relations with the state, could also be interpreted within such perspective. For many non-Muslims in Turkey, not having been full-fledged citizens in practice, voter turnout is deemed to be a significantly important citizenship right which is fully available to their use. We can argue that apart from availability, anonymity is the merit of voting for a minority who does not want to get in trouble with the state for his acts and choices. Thus, when a Syriac runs for candidacy, there is always the likelihood of Syriacs being identified as the potential voter. This means the loss of anonymity especially in a small city where their ethno-religious identity is much visible. When the candidate is nominated by a party far from the mainstream political discourse, then it is much understandable for many individual Syriac to fear such loss and identification, which becomes apparent in their furious criticism against the candidacy, and insistent refusal of or hesitation in expressing any support for it.

Importantly, however, refusal and hesitation were not the only patterns concerning the electoral behaviour of the participants. Indeed, the disputed issue of supporting the mentioned MP candidate revealed many social matters like social and political trust, memory, co-habitation, alienation, estrangement, as well as re-presentation, thus providing important insights about construction of belongings. One participant expressing his support based his position on a comparative evaluation of state and the larger society, on the one hand, and the Kurdish political institutions and people, on the other.

There is no law in here. For there is no law, people get alienated. You ask me the trust to the police, say no. I need to trust to the police in the first place. Still when there is something I call 155. And I will call but I do not trust. These make one estranged little by little. You look on the other side, a position of MP... for what the hell do they grant that position for us, we ask sometimes, why? For

what we have? For only 500 votes? 500 votes! There are *aşirets* composed of 2000-3000 people, could grant it for one of them and get their 3000, 5000 votes (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]).

The 'grant of an MP position' for the community by the Kurdish political party, apparently establishes above an opposition with the unlawful state of order and distrusted state security forces. Below, he further solidifies the opposition with reference to municipal acts, even if only gestures, concerning the Christian population in their area of policy. Importantly, moreover, he refers to Kurdish people's reflexive, accepting, regretting manner in relating to the violent past that Christians were victims of. Memories of Kurds taking part in the massacres of Armenian and Syriac people of their cities lead in cases to contested spaces of present solidarity, commonality and trust.

Signs and expression of shame and apology. Gestures of celebrating feast days. In Nusaybin though only one Christian live, the municipality hanged a banner stating "Happy Easter". I lost my identity here, but in Diyarbakır they name a street after [a Syriac]. So we think of; we weigh it. What is its use even if we all become pro-party? What are we anyway? We are a single Kurdish family! We are only 450 people, not much indeed! Cannot even make a street. What are we? But you look at the approach, the country which shall behave me very well treats me like a foe, and the people I see as the foe approach me as a friend. Says: 'I was wrong'. Says: 'I'm apologizing'. Says: 'my father was a barbarian'. [...] Is there a Turk like that? And the Turk was not active anyway. No Turk came and killed us. Is it that difficult? But the one who had killed us says 'okay man, they had me do this'. Even not for they had him do, but he apologizes. (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]).

The above narratives sign another pattern, that of openly critical of the past violence and the present inequalities, discriminative policies, and excluding behaviours. In such context forming alliances with actors other than state becomes a legitimate option. The shifting ground for foe and the friend is a good depiction of changing identifications and reconstruction of present belongings. Still in the same line, yet a more pro-active position was articulated by another participant, a return migrant from Europe, in his narrative of forming new relations, institutions, and affiliations. A whole reorganization of everyday social

life, at least an attempt thereof, concerning both the intra-community and the inter-community relations is visible below:

We the Syriac have lived the life of a closed society; our relation with other peoples is very limited, same in the social life. We are turned inwards, lived within ourselves. We tried to break it; that was our aim. Syriacs should leave the life of the closed box. Because the world changes and Syriacs should catch up with it; otherwise we'll disappear within ourselves. Thus we need to get into the social life of the world in all areas, in education, cultural life, social life, economy, in all aspects we should get into the agenda of the world, or else our existence will wither away. With this in mind we established the association and tried to create a new way of life and succeeded in this. We included Arabs, Kurds, Ezidis and Turks in the activities of the association. From all *millet*s were coming to the language course, same with the *Telkari* courses and weaving. [M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36])

Such endeavours of establishing an association, though a cultural one in name, and targeting individuals of different ethno-cultural background, are crucially important in terms of establishing bridging social capital, re-presentation of community, re-forming be-long-ings, and having a solid ground for further constructing and mobilizing linking social capital.

The above discussions indicate that there is a variance of attitudes among Syriacs of Mardin towards political alliances, support for political parties and the manner in approaching the state. Three discursive patterns can be identified roughly: one is outwardly reactive against any path Syriacs diverging from the mainstream politics and the official discourse in Turkey; other is openly critical of state policies and in pursuit of establishing of alternative political alliances and new ways of relating to the state; and the last is hesitant in expressing criticism, although longs for reformation of the existing order of things in social and political spheres can be named as: the pro status quo attitude; the activist/critical attitude; the reformists/hesitant attitude. One should note, however, that a visible difference, indeed a tension between Mardin city centre and Midyat in espousing the first two attitudes respectively.<sup>306</sup> Yet these are analytical categories and are

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<sup>306</sup> Another research that mentions a difference of political attitude among Syriacs belongs to Su Erol (2016). Yet in her work the line is drawn between the attitude of Syriacs of Istanbul and

not exhaustive but dominant for the named groups. The third, more hesitant attitude, on the other hand, could be found in both Mardin city centre and Midyat. The below narrative provides a reflection on such difference and discloses the importance of existing economic relations in defining political attitudes respectively:

Right, Mardin is like that. Mardin would not vote easily. It is not because they don't want, they are afraid of. What if someone makes it out, what if one notices? And what if the state hears of?! Fear is there! Cause for that fear should people ask themselves. Of what are those people afraid? If no problem at all, everything is at ease [smiles] why are they in fear? This means what is said is not true. There is something to make these people fear. Be afraid of a simple vote. People should ask it to themselves, why? (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]).

The feeling of insecurity and “fear”, which the participant mentions above specifically in the context of elections and voting for the ‘Syriac’ candidate, is contrasted to the discourses of ‘there is no problem’, and ‘everything is at ease’, which reflected the perception that recently ‘things have changed’ especially in the AKP governments’ period. Still, however, the vulnerable character of the relation to the state becomes apparent in the many reservations made about a “simple” and basic right of citizenship, the right to vote and stand for election. The participant asked about the influence on Syrians of living in different surroundings and in contact with differently profiled peoples in Midyat, Mardin, or the cosmopolitan Istanbul pointed at some complicating factors defining behavioural patterns for the respective communities, like intercommunity relations, the need to live together with other peoples in the region, and the economic interests that are perceived to be susceptible to any shift in power relations:

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those of “Mardin and around”. Accordingly, the latter is claimed to show a more “political” character in acting together with BDP and being affected by nationalistic ideas gaining prominence in Diaspora; whereby the former adopts much of a “loyalty discourse” which is mostly embraced by the ecumenics and the elites of the community. Difference of attitude is stated to exist between those identifying with the perspective of the church and those of ordinary people that is between the metropolitan city the local (Erol, 2016: 217). To my findings, however, there is a visible difference between Mardin city centre and Midyat, including its rural settings, which the participants themselves well articulated.

The difference is that here people are aware of being a people [*halk*], and conscious of being the owner of these lands. They are aware that they need to live with Kurds in peace [*dostluğünde*]. So with Arabs. So with Yezidis. We are nested together. It is impossible for us to be enemies to each other. Those had happened, happened in the past we now know the cause for. Thus there is a rather more conscious lifestyle here. Thus we are closer to each other, to the Kurdish movement. Those in Mardin, living in the city, together with Arabs, and there Arabs as well are assimilated, they are Turkified. They are Turkified and assimilated. Syriacs, inspired by them, were assimilated closer to the state; forgot their language, cannot speak Syriac anymore, and feels himself more, much closer to the state. The reason for it is to protect his economy [economic well-being]. I mean he does not care what is left of Syriacness, if it is Syriac land or language, does not care anymore. He has his own world now. To maintain his world and economy he says 'amen' to everything the system calls for. Just like the Arabs. He lives it the worse in Istanbul. In Istanbul live people of miscellaneous backgrounds. It's almost like [smiles] nobody will know who the others are. [Why worse?] Because there people live totally reliant on economy [economic concerns]. On trade... Our people there reached a prosperous level now and do not want to lose it. There are also some alike in Mardin. But in Istanbul it's more than Mardin. Thus there they are more assimilated. Mostly to maintain it. Whenever we have a say here they start shouting there 'Oh! Do keep quiet, the state will drain us!' [Those in Istanbul?] Those in Istanbul, yet in Mardin too. When we make a little noise here [*çıldemek*] they tremble there. For they are afraid of [losing] their wealth, possessions, and trade. [...] We are more conscious on that, I mean on nationalism, that we are a people, our history, language, rel... our belief. We rather make claim on them. The economic thing is of secondary importance, for sure trying to generate it as well... (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]).

Syriacs in Mardin and Istanbul are seen economically more integrated to the national and international economic system and wealthier having thus more to defend compared to Syriacs in Midyat. Interestingly, moreover, economic belongings and cultural belongings are contrasted to each other, as materialized in the two respective clusters of community. In that, the concern to preserve prosperity, possessions, and business opportunities are put against the concern to preserve identity expressed with reference to history, language, religion, and ethnicity. The narrative turned at some point into rhetoric of 'nationalistic awareness', "*consciousness*" in the participant's words, and that of an opposition between national/ethnic versus economic interests. Economic concerns here were perceived to be hindering the perseverance for the 'cultural existence' of the community and to have an assimilating role in that respect. On the other hand, a narrative belonging to a participant who lived in Istanbul for long years after

migrating from Mardin in his childhood, and was a return migrant to Mardin at the time of the interview, provided insight on the economic structure of the community in Istanbul as well as their relations to the state within a perspective of the perceived recent political change for better.

We had adapted to Istanbul easily, we did not have much difficulty. Conditions of our community there is also very well, because we the Syrians are a hardworking people. We love working I mean, we keep away from chaos. We concentrate on our work you see, not engaged in mess, don't like such troubles anyway. Most of those in Istanbul are well-off, those who migrated from here, for sure because they are hardworking they are well-off. Well they are working. Our life there is nice we don't have any problem in Istanbul. We are much content with our state I would say, the current state; we love our land, we love our flag, we are happy here to be in our homeland, for living in these lands... you know we've been here for 6000 years in these lands, lan.. Ummm we are at ease, don't have any problem, any trouble, recently we feel we're much better. I mean we're pampered, something like it we feel, feel it and this is so nice. [Is it in the bureaucracy?] In the bureaucracy we feel it, as a Syrian citizen when we have a problem in the bureaucracy it is solved much faster. It is in the last 2 or 3 years we're much at ease concerning these matters. (M, 53, Syrian, Mardin [M29]).

'Being hardworking'; 'keeping away from chaos and trouble'; 'having smooth and loyal relations to the state'; and 'being pleased to live on the land to which [they] are indigenous' are important elements constituting be-long-ings for Syrians as expressed by the participant above. The same participant, who expressed his "*support*" for the AKP government, mentioned about his initial anxiety of "*a religious government*" taking power to "*oppress*", "*suppress*", and even "*convert [them] into Muslims*". Stating "*yet we did not come across any of them! On the contrary we are valued a lot!*" he added "*we are happy for that, there is much development in this AKP period*". (M, 53, Syrian, Mardin [M29]). Revealing how he was surprised by the sudden and visible 'change', moreover, he stated "*I don't get it, one of a sudden it was exploded, the interest in Syrians went through the ceiling. Nobody would know it. It was not so in the past, the Christians, we were afraid of*" (M, 53, Syrian, Mardin [M29]). The perception of 'change', apparently unpredicted and sudden, was shared by many Syrians in



Mardin.<sup>307</sup> It was perceived that there had recently been a relative ease in the legal-political as well as the symbolic-discursive spheres concerning Syrians, if not the Christian minority in general. One participant, who exemplified many cases of discrimination up to that point, strikingly replied in rather a positive outlook when asked if he felt an equal citizen taking use of his rights. His answer openly reflected his perception of recent change experienced both materially and discursively:

In the last 10 to 15 years I see that there is an effort for gradually... [re-ccording] our lost rights and law then, or gradually to erase our second or third class treatment, a will to erase it, to rearrange these through new legislations, new constitution. I feel that. Still I always, of being a citizen of Turkish Republic despite anything, we're content with it, what shall we say? Still, we won't give up these lands; we are here, up until we die. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [27])

Once again implied in the expression “*we won't give up these lands*” is the importance of indigenous belongings in formation of existing processes of belongings. Being a citizen of Turkish Republic for many Syriac is very much related to having the right to living on the historical homeland.

Trust to the state, on the other hand, is very much contextual as well as historically defined, as it bears the impact of collective memory of the distant violent past. Relation to the Turkish Republican state, in its early period, was a matter of existence for the community. Thus, collective memory is critical in framing individual belongings today, since it bears traces of ontological insecurity for collective identity. A participant despite having reservations about the current state policies still noted the following: “*we have yet trust in the state; if not trusted in the state... There is the other side of the coin. What would our fate have been if the Republic was not founded at that date? We might have not even existed today*” (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). He also considered the recent governmental policies in a positive manner, like the rearranged “*Law on*

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<sup>307</sup> Bearing in mind that interviews were conducted in 2011, such claims and perception of ‘change’ and ‘ease’ must be rechecked through a new research.

*Foundations*”, he stated that “*now, the policies of the state concerning the minorities are relatively good compared to the past*” and “*the government has overcome its confines*”. He mentioned in this respect the resources of the Foundations, whereby “*the state had once put obstacles for them to grow bigger*” and “*kept the minorities within a defined framework*” (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). Another participant, who claimed “*now the state opens all its doors to us*”, believed also that “*recently it’s better. There are revisions*” (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]). Those ‘revisions’, as they were articulated by various participants, refer to instances like ‘the changes in the Law on Foundations’, ‘the Syriac language course opened at Artuklu University’; ‘the perceived governmental decision that bureaucratic dealings of non-Muslims should be eased’; ‘the security forces waiting for them outside the churches during their prayers’ and ‘the opportunity to name their children in Christian/Syriac names, which previously was prevented as seen in Turkish names of some generations’. Perception of change in the last decade was much related to the policies of the AKP government; thus, I asked whether they support AKP trying to understand if such perception brought support for the party. The reply was important in pointing it up that the support and trust was not essential but contingent and contextual. The participant noted that “*it does not mean that we support AKP. We’re happy for a positive life space is prepared for us in Turkey, it might have been another party to do it better, but we got to hand Sezar’s right to Sezar. For us, it’s even scripted in the Bible*” (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26]). Safety provided by the state in specific occasions was also mentioned by some other participants as a ground of trust in the state: “*After the synagogue bombing in Istanbul the governor immediately sent security [officers] to us. Sure! Up to now we go to our churches in the company of security, they provide our security [forces], why should not we trust?*” (F, 52, Syriac, Mardin [M31]). These are important to point at the practical ground for trust, in that daily life experience is defining for trusting relations to the state institutions, especially when insecurity and vulnerability are otherwise the overwhelming experiences. Importance of everyday life practices becomes apparent for the younger generation, who had

most of their individual experiences in the recent relative ‘ease’ of policies and relations. One apparent example belonged to a participant, who recently had her bachelor’s degree in a different city<sup>308</sup> and worked at a public institution in Mardin on a contract basis:

Sure, sure, we have full trust in that. In no way there is discrimination in the state institutions. I never felt it. [The military, police, municipalities..?] Sure. I haven’t lived any problem with any institution. When I wanted to stay at the dormitory, for instance, I was granted the opportunity to do. Had no problem. Same with the hospitals, the one who comes to the hospital is served as a patient only. Same with [working at] the university... Everywhere is the same anymore. Just up to your work. If I do my job well, both the hospital will accept me and the university. But if I am not good at my job, even my own father may not work with me after some time. Thus, for I was not discriminated at the workplaces I do fully trust. The state institutions are really like this. So there is no problem in that. (F, 21, Syriac, Mardin [M30])

Her optimistic view about and trust in state institutions does not totally stem from generational effect but related to a variety of other factors like economic inclusion, as her family is a relatively well-off one; cultural capital and social mobility, as she was able to get higher education and get employment at a public institution; bridging and linking social capital, as she had mutually trusting relations during her educational and working experience; and not being exposed to direct violence.

The participants in some cases put reservations about the trusting relation and revealed perception of instability and impermanence in the acts of the government. What a participant stated in the following demonstrates the absence of a sense of durability and rootedness in the governmental acts that could be

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<sup>308</sup> She was not send to Edirne, a far north-west city, by the family although she won the university in her first year then. The reason was it was too far for the still young girl. Her uncle and other family members as well as her parents were involved in the decision. Yet after a while of work at a community institution, she decided to enter the university exam once more and this time won a university in a city, Mersin, relatively closer to Mardin. The family had relatives in the city and a younger member having had his university degree there beforehand, which together with the relative physical closeness provided a ground of security for her getting education there.

trusted as the state tradition: *“the state wants the Patriarchal centre to be moved [back] to Turkey.<sup>309</sup> How shall they assure that nothing [problematical] will happen tomorrow? What will happen when the state is changed?”* (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). What he means by the change of the state is the change of the government; and this reminds us the above discussion on the expectation of ‘constancy’ and ‘continuity’ in state policies, as would be in a ‘constitutional statement’ rather than more temporary governmental acts and decisions. Experience of the unstable relation with the state, or as meant here the government, is further mentioned by the same participant in another context: *“the state asked us to a dance and turned the music off! When the prime minister stated that synagogues and churches will be supported, we began with the restoration. Then they stated that the unattended churches will not be funded”* (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). As they had already started with the restoration of the Chaldean Church upon what they perceived to be a ‘promise’, they had to carry it out by getting donations from community members in Istanbul and the savings of the church. The expression “the state asked us to a dance; then turned the music off” well illustrates the frustration and resentment with the governmental/state policies. As the restoration of the church is not only a ‘physical’ but also a ‘symbolic’ act, the disappointment that results from the state not keeping its promise was about the ‘meanings’ as well as the material.

In other cases, the participants were openly critical and doubtful about what was perceived to be a ‘change’ by others. A participant directly discredited the perception of change asserting that:

That is total story! We have written down a list of the problems we have lived in AKP period, written all. We were planning to send to the government, to the Prime Ministry, to the Presidency, to the [Ministry of] Justice, to the [Ministry of] Internal Affairs. We haven’t lived in any other period the problems that we lived in the AKP period [Have you sent the list?] No, we are still afraid of. [Smiles] (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36])

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<sup>309</sup>Patriarchate is in Damascus since 1932, when it was moved from its historical place, Mardin.

The fear they had was that they were complaining about the local officers and were not sure about the reaction that may cause at the governmental level. The fear itself indicates the absence of a proper relation between the citizen and the public authority in terms of the responsibility of the latter and the right of the former to question decisions and implementations of public institutions. This is far behind the ideal of full and effective political engagement, which would mean taking part in local or national decision making bodies (Dertwinkel, 2008).

Another participant, critical about the policies not only about the Syriac or Christian minorities but about other disadvantaged groups as well, expressed criticism about the recent governmental policies of the about the ‘change of the state’ indicating a perception of the state as an unreliable and uncertain actor as follows:

We could not yet make it out what the government is. This government promised for a lot, promised a lot. Much hope arose, everyone, we had that hope too. But there is nothing at hand. Don’t know if others disrupt, or they do not realiz... don’t know... Yet it ruined all that it set its hand for the task. It said the Kurdish opening, [but] congested the prisons. Said the Roma opening, the men were exiled from their hometowns. May God forbid a Syriac opening!(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [M35])

The ironical expression about any ‘Syriac opening’ reflects a fear of the current state of things going even worse, which importantly has always the likelihood of happening and thus creates an ever present feeling of insecurity. The resultant is somewhat a tense and ambivalent relation with the state, whereby trust or will to trust mostly carries with it some sense of uncertainty.

Especially in the rural the very physical conditions, like infrastructural inadequacies, have also fed the tense relation strengthening the perception that the state have not really cared about the people and not fulfilled even its basic responsibilities. One participant for instance stated “*no education, no school, no work, not any opportunity was provided for these people. No transportation, no electricity, no water; all these came only very recently*” (M, 49, Syriac,

Midyat/Mardin [MM36]). His wife, who occasionally participated to the interview, added a rhetorical question with reference to everyday practices stemming from infrastructural lacks: “*until now we have drawn water from well. The first time a school was constructed in our region was 65s. Are we not human?*” (F, mid-40s, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin).<sup>310</sup> Presence of villages with no school or water to this day, and those villagers bringing electricity and water by their own efforts collecting money among them were what the couple further mentioned. All that could be named as structural violence visibly create a perception that “*the state has managed the region by turning it to a closed box*” (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]), basically referring to the detached and desolate conditions of the people living in the region -and not only the Syriacs. The Syriac, or in general the Christian, population too has got its share of structural violence their potentials being impeded and opportunities in life being diminished. This fact was harsher in the rural Midyat than in the urban Mardin. This, coming together with other variables like different constellation of power relations respectively, or other socio-historical peculiarities, makes a ground for the overall diverging patterns of relating to the public authority in these places.

### **5.5.3. The Role of *Aşiret* Relations in Forming Be-long-ings for Syriacs**

Above, I’ve on and off tried to note about the determining role of the power structure and the relations between the central and local power holders in terms of belongings of people in the region. *Aşiret* system is doubtless a critical element of that structure. *Aşiret* relations was especially powerful and vivid in Urfa and in Mardin, especially in rural for the latter. One could easily discern patterns of relations which were influential in organizing everyday life. Here I will suffice to mention the context where Syriacs are involved in those relations. An initial observation of mine during the field research was that the modern constellation of power and establishment of state in these areas were to a great

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<sup>310</sup> She was not included in the total number of participants as she was not interviewed thoroughly.

degree based on the already existing organization and institutions of power, through closely negotiating with and/or taking advantage of them. We understand from what Suavi Aydın (2013) writes that this is not distinctively a modern phenomenon concerning the relations between the centre and the periphery. He notes that despite various powerful states and empires reigned in the region, who really dominated the region were always the smaller emirates, for the pre-modern states had never had an extent of power enabling them to rule in an area so far from their centre and this led those very states to take advantage of the local dynamics (Aydın, 2013). This was the pattern in the Ottoman and the Republican era, too.<sup>311</sup> The Christian population wasnot altogether exempted from the power relations and the social structure controlled by the *aşiret* system, especially in terms of their security.<sup>312</sup>

When I interviewed a member of the leading family of an *aşiret* in Midyat he noted that among the 35 villages over which the *aşiret* was dominant there were

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<sup>311</sup> According to Aydın (2013), Ottoman rule was not exception and even when it attempted to centralize and modernize, success was only temporary with the help of huge forces it utilized in the region, while the local powers ended up in re-establishing their rule as the central power withdrew. On the other hand, while the exile policies of the early Republican period had been implemented for the leaders of some *aşirets*, in the long run regional power remained in the hands of the leaders of these *aşirets*, thus state power and representatives tried to establish their authorities through negotiating with these leaders (Aydın, 2013: 153). Yet, creation of local political elite “loyal to the Republic” through eliminating some centres of *aşiret* power, while favouring and including others in relations of clientelism was attempted; by this way stability of the local power was maintained and state established its existence through that stability (Aydın, 2013: 154).

<sup>312</sup> Concerning specifically the origin of the relation of Syriac/Christian people to various *aşirets* in the region, Aydın (2013: 144) notes that the establishment of Mîr Bedirhan’s power followed a similar process after discharge of Cizre-Botan *Beylik* that reigned in Tur Abdin region in 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century when Bedirhan and those *aşiret* leaders whom he had encouraged to settle in the region increased their oppression on the villages and towns, Christians of the region looked for *aşirets* to guard them and invited leaders of some warrior *aşirets* into their villages and towns. This was the way how the current *aşirets* in Midyat centre and villages entered in and became the protectors and leaders thereof (Aydın, 2013:144). After establishing symbiotic relations in Christian villages, those *aşiret* leaders wanted to solidify their power to rule over the whole region and turn Christians who cultivated their own lands into sharecroppers, which increasingly led to seasonal and permanent migration of Christian villagers (Aydın, 2013:145).

five Syriac villages. He pointed at the alleged nature of the relation claiming “*if aşirets do not protect them, Muslims would destroy them*”, *if we don’t guard they would kill them*” (M, 70s, Kurd, Midyat/Mardin).<sup>313</sup> Yet when the left behind property of non-Muslims in the region was the subject of question, the other side of the coin was revealed pointing at the ‘interest’ of the *aşiret*, the appropriation of the belongings: “*We registered the lands; we will give them back when they return. We want them to return. He [son of his uncle, the leader of the aşiret] both uses and protects the property, the estate; what otherwise would be is that other villagers will plunder them*” (M, 70s, Kurd, Midyat/Mardin). His note that their relation is good both with the state and with the people may be taken as a sign of the *aşiret*’s intermediary position between the state and the people.

Some authors mentioned Syriacs being “out of the *aşiret* order” presenting this as a reason why Mardin “has followed a different path of social development”, and why “especially the city centre, has always been more developed and had a modern social structure and outlook compared to other cities in the region” (Bilge, 1996: 86). This research, well noticing that the *aşiret* structure is not an intrinsic system of social organization for the Syriac society itself, however, reveals that within the socio-historical context they have lived in, in this case mostly in rural Mardin whereby they lived close to Kurdish *aşirets*, they were much influenced by that structure in terms of their economic, social, and political relations.

Important reflections were made by the Syriac participants revealing how *aşiret* structure and the power of its leader, the *agha*, have a role in ordering everyday life and relations. Below is an example, which points at the relation between the local power and the central politics, and the role of *agha* in solving social or criminal problems sometimes even bypassing the state institutions. It is important to note that this may even be perceived as a vacuum left by the ‘absence’ of state authority, if not a transfer of such authority. When I asked

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<sup>313</sup> Informal interview, Midyat/Mardin, July 2011



what state meant in their life, the participant clapped his hand, a gesture used for ‘falling short of’ or ‘absence’, connoting there is nothing to stand for the state, as he also verbalized it as in the following:

Well, we have no state. There is no state in Midyat unfortunately, there are *aghas* in Midyat. Whoever shoulders the *agha*, s/he is the state. And that seems wrong to us. I mean we don't try it, many have done, and still they are harmed.... Those *aghas* are as strong as to exile even a provincial governor. ‘Hellooo is it Ankara’, and the man finds himself [exiled] in *Şirnak*.<sup>314</sup> So the men [appointed governor] think this is Kurd, the other is also Kurd, nothing to do with me. I mean there is no state in Midyat. [To state] the otherwise is to lie. in Midyat prostitution increases, heroin as much as you wish, cocaine, hashish, arms trafficking, usury, burglary, murders, whatever you want is in Midyat. But [officially] Midyat is the most decent town of Mardin in terms of security, because none of them is taken to court. None of them! [Who settles the issues?] The *aghas* settle it down, get money both from you and me, and they keep it going [as it is]. (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

Another participant, concerning the position of Syriacs within such structure, stated that they are not exempted from it as they “*too live within the same culture*” and “*social life*”. His narrative, moreover, reveals clues about the changing form and function of the *aşiret* leader in parallel to the change in socio-political structure. The compensating even symbiotic relations with the state are also evident below:

The *agha* used to play a great role here; still he does, only in the last five to ten years it loosened a bit, yet with the village guards system *aghas* took on another position. Say while he ruled over as an *agha* in the past, now he does as the chief village guard [His wife chimes in: Or as a deputy] or as a deputy. I mean today their positions have changed too. And it is the system that the state has created and Syriacs are not exempted from it. Well when something happens you first go to the *agha* here. I mean the state is always at the second or third rank. It may be creating these systems itself yet it is left at the second or third rank. It [the state] uses other powers to be able to achieve its target. (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]).

*Aşirets* coming before the state institutions as an already established social, legislative, economic, and normative system in the region was articulated by many others, including Kurd and Arab participants of this study. This, I believe,

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<sup>314</sup>The east end city in the Southeastern Anatolian Region.

is an important finding underlining the power relations between the locality and the centre. Yet it would be wrong to assume that those sides are fixed and once and for all. On the contrary, it appears that when necessary this system and the existing cleavages among different local power holders were well appropriated by the state for its own interests as was also mentioned by Aydın (2013) above. An example of this I presented in the previous chapter concerning the two already conflicting Kurdish *aşirets* taking side as pro-state or pro-PKK positions in the rural Mardin context. Below the participant make it clear that such a fluid context of changing power relations may in some situations leave Syrians with an insecure position backed by no power as he articulates in “*neither the aşiret nor the state stood behind us*”:

I realize that all *aşirets* in here are interconnected strongly; they in a sense constitute a state within the state. Yet there is neither the state behind us... Only the state, but if that state has incompatible policies they [*aşirets*] corrupt them. In its old days the state has never stood behind us, neither the *aşiret* nor the state. But today as we are left few, being in minority, it causes the state to have a pitiful approach to us, like ‘oh, they shall not extinct’, ‘they shall not leave either’. They see us as the wretched, both the state and the *aşirets*. Like an orphanage, we are the orphans of them; they always remind what Mohammad the Prophet told for us that ‘these are my orphans’<sup>315</sup>. We know well that we are your orphans, do protect us, we say this. But [exhales], I would say may God not make us needy of them. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27]).

Feeling of insecurity and the ultimate distrust is obvious in the participant’s articulation in his closing phrasing: “*May God not make us needy of them*”, them here referring to Muslims. A very similar articulation was made by another participant in Mardin, who was principally reluctant to head for the *aşiret* involvement in a personal problem, implying the extra-legal or at least ‘un-right’ character of such solution and the possible outcome of the individual becoming ‘indebted’ in exchange of the ‘favour’ s/he received. Importantly though, he also expressed his expectation that the *aşiret*, as the holder of the defining power,

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<sup>315</sup> Hyacinthe Simon des Fr. Precheurs (2008), a priest witnessing 1915 in Mardin writes in his memories that the expression “orphans of Mohammad” was used by Muslims to denote the Yakubi. For him, the expression was also a sign of the cleavage between the Yakubi Syrians [Syriac Orthodox] and the Catholics, all Syriac, Chaldean and Armenian, of Mardin.

should “*side with*” or protect Syriacs concerning their disadvantaged position as a minority. Yet the likelihood of the relation of protection turning into one of subjugation was often anxiously mentioned as in follows:

*Aşirets* are still in here. Here in this region *aşirets* must side with who is harmed, and so if they shall back the honest it is so normal that they side with us. In the past for sure being under the protection of *aşirets*... yet in a way, it was because of the intimacy that developing naturally, if some were inclined to be unfair to our community, yes then *aşirets* did somehow step in. Yet if you ask if it was an interest relation or totally out of sympathy, it was both indeed, it was both. Speaking for myself and my family, I’ve never had such a relation to an *aşiret*, I did not have problem that would require the *aşiret*’s hand [*aşiretlik sorun*] either, yet it is not something I would prefer. Should I have a problem today rather than solving it through *aşirets*, I would prefer going for what is the right way of solution. They could settle my problem today, yet I may face different demands [of them] tomorrow. Thus... Yet had it not happened? It had happened. May God not leave anyone so desperate. (M, 44, Syriac, Mardin [M26])

Importantly, even he personally would not prefer *aşiret* involvement in a problem he is facing; he still sees it legitimate as a power to back the victim, and as a possibility in a “*desperate*” situation. Examples of the cases of what he mentions as *aşirets* “*stepping in*” in case of an “*unfair*” situation against Syriacs were given above to mention collective violence against Christian Syriacs by Muslim locals and the role of *aşiret* leaders or *aghas* in eliminating or preventing the event from deteriorating.

The seeming ‘mutuality’ of the nature of the relation was uttered by a participant who stated “*in Midyat, it is the system of agha, you would go by the agha, he will help you but will get [his reward] in return for it*” (M, 56, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM37]). ‘The interest relation’ was criticized openly in other cases. One participant, for instance, stressed that while one expects “*administration*”, “*negotiation*”, and “*altruism*” at the base of the *aşiret* structure, what they have always seen was “*self-interest, benefit, [and] banditry*”, which he saw as “*the basis*” of many who claim to be *aşiret* at the present (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27]). He even sees them as “*not proper aşiret*”, having “*150-200 years-old aşiret structures*”, but gaining power being “*only crowded people as they have*

*many children from multiple wives*”, whose “*grandfathers were shepherds in the past*”. He does point at a different face of the ‘protection’ relation of *aşirets* towards Christian populations, defining it to be “*a dirty game*”. Accordingly, it was “*nasty children [of aşirets] driven onto the innocent [Christian] people*”; yet on the other side having “*the case coming before it*”, the *aşiret* appeared to “*protect*” them, “*telling the people how to solve*” the problem. The actors of the “*strike*” and the “*protection*”, thus, were the same. The protection most often came in change of “*estate, monetary, [and] land*” of Christian population. He further stated “*wrong state policies and unjust system left us to the mercy of those aşirets*” and the state “*became responsible for the migration of people here*” (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27]). This was, he believed, the pattern continuing to the Republican Turkey from the Ottoman era.

Still one important point to be mentioned is the role of *aşiret* and the power of the *agha* to define the voting behaviour of the villagers or simply act it out during elections, of which Syriacs are affected as well when they inhabit within the boundaries of its power. A participant stated that despite Syriac votes varies between different parties normally, as it did in the 2011 elections, in rural they may not have the option of actually ‘voting’. It is because, he noted, “*in villages where feudal system prevails they vote openly. In the villages nobody goes to the ballot box; the headman goes and checks the electoral roll, votes [for all], signs it and sends the ballot box. No one will go to vote. How come a counter vote there...*” (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). This means Syriacs living in villages with Muslims that is in mixed-population villages take their share of the ‘order of things’. The headman actually votes in the foot of all the electorate in the village. As the case also indicates, the local power relations and rules of the *aşiret* system should be counted as another dimension to the life experiences of the collectivity, including their political ‘decisions’.

It appeared during the research that more involved relations of Syriacs to *aşirets* were still experienced in rural Mardin, Midyat and around. I referred to some

cases above like the recruitment of the one and only Syriac village guard by the *asha*, or the *ashas* defining the voting behaviour of the villagers. In Chapter 2, I also reflected in detail upon an experience of mine, as a researcher, in Midyat with the elder member of the leading family of a Kurdish *ashiret*, whose intention of helping me enrol a Syriac for interview well provided an example of the hierarchical power relations between the former and the latter. In sum, *ashiret* system, in this research, appeared to be an important asset of power structure influencing the everyday life for Syriacs.

## 5.6. Conclusion

For the Syriac participants of the study, being from a Christian minority society within a majority Muslim society both in the locality and in the larger political community; not having legal minority status and due rights; facing discriminative citizenship practices and *invisible impediments* at the national scale socio-economic structure; experience of all forms of violations, namely political, structural, symbolic, and collective; and the local power structure have been decisive in forming be-long-ings. Self organization of social relations both at local, national, and transnational scales; religious institutions, hierarchy, and structures, and economic resources, occupational knowhow and craftsmanship were also decisive in that context. Accordingly, the individual social locations, yearnings and resentments, and material possessions were highly influenced within the matrix the above socio-historical conditions characterized. Integration into power relations and rural urban difference also counted in variation at individual level.

This chapter argued that the basic pattern that Syriacs related with the larger society, the state, and Turkishness were through a visibly *cautious* attitude; a *restrained citizenship* position; longing for *anonymous integration* without much emphasis on difference; a *preserving attitude* towards what they already hold. State appears as something to keep distant but connected, and sometimes

resentful but mostly practical relations are established with it. Overall such pattern is conceptualized as *Compromising Type of Belonging*.

## CHAPTER 6

### LOCAL-I-NATION HOMENESS AND CONTENTIOUS BE-LONG-INGS

In this chapter, I define space as an important aspect of be-long-ings, being not only a source but an actor playing an important role in defining and delimiting them. First, I give a brief account of how I conceptualize spatial belonging. Second, I mention the context regarding national territorial belonging in Turkey. Third, I analyse the research findings which fall into three broad categories of spatial belongings, namely, national territory, locality, and trans-border space. Here, I point at how processes of violence, social capital, and economic inclusion/exclusion interplay in forming spatial belongings. Fourth, I provide a brief conclusion.

#### 6.1. Conceptualizing Territorial/Spatial Belonging

Understanding the relation between territory, belonging, and nation is important for the purposes of this dissertation, as be-long-ings were intensely revealed as spatial phenomena during the research. Space, in this dissertation, is taken as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, which are particularly constellated, meet and weave together at a particular locus (Massey, 1994). National territories, on a similar line, are seen as historical products both in their physical materiality and their socio-cultural meanings (Etherington, 2010). Gabriele Pollini (2005) states, moreover, that territory, although conditioned by the morphology of space, is essentially a social operation through perception of boundaries. Territorial belonging, therefore, is a form of social belonging, and may be grasped as “socio-territorial belonging” (Pollini, 2005).

Daniel Trudeau (2006) defines belonging to be “inherently spatial”, in so far “as politics are associated with distinct territories, whether imagined, metaphorical or material” and this brings that “the politics of belonging and exclusion “play a significant role in the production of social spaces such as landscapes and place” (Trudeau, 2006: 423). The assumed mutual belonging crystallized in the assertion that “the nation somehow belongs to the territory and that the territory somehow belongs to the nation” as the nationalist thought puts it as a means of legitimising nationalist control of territory is defined by John Etherington (2010: 323) as “national territorial belonging”. In this context, “territorial component of a national identity” is usually seen “essential because it allows boundaries between the imagined nation and others outside the group to be spatially displayed rather than merely mentally constructed” (Jones, 1996: 118). From the perspective of the nationalist politics of belonging, the national ‘we’ and the national ‘here’ always coincide; thus the presence of ‘ethnic’ minorities, for instance, challenges the commonsensical assumption that ‘the other’ who belongs ‘there’- that is, abroad, beyond the boundaries of ‘our’ homeland (Etherington, 2010: 333).

My focus, in this chapter, is on the processes of re-appropriation of the relation between nation and territory by the participants of this study. I try to illustrate their territorial experiences and perceptions, and point at the ways they adopt, redefine, challenge, or erase the proposed forms of national territorial belonging and construct alternative ones. Thus, following David Campbell (1998) in what he did for Bosnia, I deal with the array of practices and experiences through which ‘Turkey’, indeed competing ‘Turkeys’, comes to be.

Socio-territorial belongings, in research findings, present a multiplicity, without being exclusive to one another but rather appearing on a continuum. Locality, national territory, and trans-border space appeared to stand along the continuum with various combinations in practice and expressing belongings in their multiple forms. Violence, social capital, and economic inclusion/exclusion were



crucial in determining how socio-territorial belongings were formed. Below I provide a brief background on the relation of Turkish politics of national territorial belonging to the specific region this study looks at, the south-east Turkey.

## **6.2. Contextualizing ‘Southeast’: of or off the Turkish ‘National Territory’?**

As many other cases throughout the world, nation-state formation in Turkey was also a dual process of nation and national territory formation. The new state boundaries in some cases were drawn, as was in south east Turkey, dividing the existing populations of the Ottoman geography across the newly established states, namely Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. Mardin and Urfa, being cities at Syrian border, were directly affected by the process; Diyarbakır being indirectly affected by the consequences as was many other cities in the region. Creation of a new ‘homeland’ for the new ‘nation’ was not only defined by the outer borders, but further enacted by an inner redesign. The interior landscape was divided into seven regions by the First Geographical Congress in 1941, with old names from the Ottoman provincial [*eyalet/vilayet*] system like ‘Eastern Rumelia’, ‘Pontus’ and ‘Kurdistan’ discarded for the ‘Marmara Region’, the ‘Black Sea Region’ and the ‘Southeast Anatolian Region’ (Erinç and Tunçdilek, 1952). Accompanying to such redesign was renaming of many settlements, with vital implications for nation-building. Joost Jongerden (2009) asserted that republican renaming of settlements could be understood as a discursive erasure of the ‘Other’, through incorporation of places associated with ‘the Other’ into Turkish space, or, the conversion of space from one form to another. In terms of national politics of belonging, it is argued that “for those national identities that contain an element of language, the aim of nationalists is to embed the language in the national territory and demonstrate that it is part of the ancient legacy that the homeland has given to past and present generations” (Etherington, 2010: 327). In the context of Turkish politics of national territorial belonging though, as Jongerden (2009) well documents with reference to many made up names, the renaming

was a more de-historicization process rather than claiming the ancient legacy. The project was “to turn the inhabitants of the territory into Turks and convert the sovereign space into an expression of Turkishness” (Jongerden, 2009: 16).<sup>316</sup> In this project was included the exclusion of non-Turkish and non-Muslim people, but a nationalist incorporation of their space, such as churches, schools, and other buildings in the form of ‘material and discursive appropriation of space’ (Öktem, 2005).

South east Turkey, having been homeland for a large non-Turkish and non-Muslim population, composed of Kurds, Armenians, Arabs, Syriacs, Chaldeans, Yezidi, Zaza, Dom,<sup>317</sup> and others, was much effected by these policies of Turkish national territorial belonging. In the process of national re-construction and Turkification of the territory, the region that appeared in collective memories of different peoples as part of ‘Kurdistan’, ‘Mesopotamia’ or ‘Tur-Abdin’ had become ‘the Southeast Anatolian Region’ on Turkey’s official map. It was subjected to continuous territorial and population policies, like mass massacres and settlement policies (Dündar, 2007); isolation, incarceration, border alteration (Üngör, 2008); forced displacements of 1990s, the consequent burning and evacuation of villages, ecological destruction, poverty and deprivation, the material and discursive construction of the region as an ‘underdeveloped’ one and as ‘zone of terror’.

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<sup>316</sup>The extent of the pursued renaming policies of the state could be seen in the following statistics: “By 1968, approximately 30 percent of the names of the 45,000 villages that had been counted in Turkey were changed. In 1973, the Commission commenced work on larger scale maps, hanging the names listed in the topographical records of another 2,000-odd villages and nearly 13,000 of the almost 40,000 hamlets (again, around 30% of the total). Most of the name changes occurred in the eastern third of the country, the traditional homeland for most of Turkey’s non-Turkish (Kurdish, Armenian, Laz, etc.) populations” (Jongerden, 2009:10). The “Commission” named here is the Special Commission for the Change of Names [*Ad Değiştirme İhtisas Komisyonu*] which was established, under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior in 1957. For an account claiming that renaming strategies have a history going back to the nationalist government of the (Young Turk) Committee of Union and Progress at the end of empire and well extends to the later so-called liberal governments of the Democrat Party of Menderes in the 1950s and the Motherland Party of Özal in the 1980s see Jongerden, 2009.

<sup>317</sup> Local name for the Gypsy People

One argument is that “it is the locale, the place, the city, the village, the map where homogenization can best be studied and its implications be measured” (Öktem, 2006: 5-6). Agreeing with KeremÖktem (2006: 5-7) that homogenization “is hardly ever completely successful and leaves pockets of resistance and diversity” which results in a “constant tension between the hegemonic national project and the dealings of every-day life in the local”; I argue that “the locale” is also where heterogeneity, thus not only the national order of things but also the de-national order of things can best be studied.

Within the context of this study, Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa provided me with the locale to understand how ordinary people perceived and experienced the national and de-national order of things within their everyday lives. Here, I argue that ‘territory’, besides being an important aspect of national belonging, has become a catalyst through which Turkish national belonging is negotiated, challenged and re-constructed in south east Turkey, not necessarily at national-scale but increasingly at local, regional and trans-border scales. Below, I will try to point at the increasingly visible tendency of belonging to crystallize at territorial level in this broader context.

### **6.3. Contentious Forms Of Belonging**

Felling at home, in a basic manner, should be conceived in its relation to feeling safe, secure and in peace in some place; having established and willing to establish social networks and relations within; being able to afford a life. It is about socialization, habitual practices and embodiments, as well as emotions, identifications and admirations. It is both about conceptions and about practices. It is about mind and body.

A basic theme that I aimed to understand with this research was how people defined home, where-if ever- they felt at home, and if Turkey as the national territorial space provided for that hominess. In many cases space, territory or

landscape came as important themes in the narratives of the participants. Broadly, the locality/region, Turkish territory on the whole, and the border/trans-border appeared to make the various forms of space to which contentious belongings were interwoven.

As it came out in the research, the conditioning context for the experiences and perceptions of individuals in terms of the spatialities of belongings can be classified into three broad categories: first, territorial policies of the state; second, indigenous existence and concentrated population of the subject groups in the region; third, border, trans-border, transnational space that provide for relations and identifications with fellow communities across state borders. The first category could, further, be elaborated. Affects of war, with devastating consequences on the social, economic, cultural or physical existence of people; displacements with the consequence of uprooting of people from their locality and their resettlement either in the city centres in the region or their dispersion through the national territorial space; evacuation and burning of rural settlements, forests and livelihoods; economic policies and the consequent inequality of opportunities in the region leading increasing movements of seasonal agricultural or non-agricultural labour; or movements for other reasons (university education, touristic or various other visits) with consequent encounter with the 'national landscape' and with the 'national fellows' could all be counted within this category. Exposure to violence, social capital and economic integration came out as intervening processes within the above context to define the personal experiences of belongings.

### **6.3.1. *Discontinuous National Territory***

State policies, in terms of regional economic and structural policies appeared to lead the experience and perception of a "demarcated region" for many, crosscutting differences of age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Below is an excerpt from the narrative of a young Arab in Urfa, who comes from

a prosperous family and is himself educated and economically well-off, who does not conceive Arabs to be discriminated ethnically but to be exposed to ‘structural violence’ in terms of region based discrimination:

We, the Arabs, do not have troubles to tell the truth, as compared, for instance, to our Kurdish brothers. But if you take it regionally, we have troubles at the regional context. [...] Each administrative chief coming here, military, how to call it, the security forces, the soldiers, here always they... I don’t know, it is called here to be the exile place for instance; here the East, [in] this Mesopotamia area [pauses] secondary human position one is given [...] Even if I am a Turk, I call myself a Turk, no service is granted here. As a Turk I am not discriminated or despised, but eventually the service not provided here affects me as well. [...] Since this is the overall perspective towards the region, we have troubles regarding it. (M, 24, Arab, Urfa [U3])

In similar accounts, bad policies and lack of investments of the state were criticised as a general attitude which conditioned not only the circumstances in the region today but also the perception of ‘others’, the ‘westerners’ towards the region. Below is such an account whereby the narrator emphasized that she loved her country [Turkey] very much, and did “*not want to go even to the most developed country*” wherever it is. Still, contextualising herself within an ‘Easterner’ identity, she articulated that:

Up to my university life I felt myself as an umm [...] as an individual coming from a less developed community; less developed, I mean socially and economically. Well, I was coming from a lower socio-economic structure. I thought of it as a place in which the state does not have much interest and kept distant. [...] Should different policies were taken up it wouldn’t be like it is today, that’s certainly so, in terms of investments especially, should there be more investments in this region we might have been not speaking on these today. Incorrect policies [led to] a perception of here by others, I mean the Southeast, as a different place, as if it was not a part of the whole country, a different place; and the effort of many South-eastern or Eastern child is for this, to prove that it is not true. (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17])

Others’, by implication westerners’, demarcation of southeast “*as a different place, as if it was not a part of the whole country*” as the participant perceives it to be so, importantly reflects an image of being cut off, isolated, if not marginalized. It is as if the wholeness of the country demands proof of an alleged

‘part’ of it. In such context, mainstream spaces like a university education in a western city are, for the “*South-eastern or Eastern child*,” where s/he has to make an “effort” to “prove” herself.

A similar line of thought appear in the below narrative, reproducing the dichotomies of ‘modern versus pre-modern’ -“*feudal*” in this case- and ‘developed versus underdeveloped’, whereby a linear measure of development is established from the least modern/developed to the most: Southeast/region - Istanbul/Turkey -Europe/West.

[Asks himself] Am I more inclined to the west? I might be, but...the differences between the west and east is, the region having been left underdeveloped, its feudal structure. It shouldn’t be like this, the east holds back, the west will go ahead. We [Turkey] are a hundred years behind Europe; Southeast is yet 50 years behind Istanbul. We [Syriac, Chaldean, Armenian] have many people internalizing the image of the West, [they are] western, keep going and coming back [to Istanbul], staying there for a while... each part of Turkey, everywhere in Turkey should be like that (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33])

Importantly, however, in this case the participant’s narrative reveals a different aspect of the east versus west dichotomy. Accordingly, whereas ‘we’ [Turkey] are lagging behind Europe, ‘we’ [the Christians in Turkey] are catching up with and “*internalizing*” the West [Istanbul and Europe], yet ‘we’ [Southeast] lag much behind either of them [Istanbul and Europe]. Intentionality of the verb “*having been left underdeveloped*” [“*geribırakılmış*”] is important to note here, since it is a shared assumption of many regardless of ethnicity. The perception of the region only at the margin of the national territory was a common one among various participants. And for some that proved a paradox with the policies and deeds of the state in promoting the rhetorical discourse of ‘unity and indivisibility of the country’. An overt expression of such perception was articulated as below:

Well, that’s true, the country is ours. [...] we have also shed blood there, Turks had too, Arabs too, Circassian too. The country is ours, but the service it provides is different. When you look at that service and this, it is as if our

president is different and their president is different. I feel like this. Look, I live in the East, look that's the same, our country is the same country, our flag is the same, our Republic of Turkey is the same, so why do you serve differently, what we are surprised for is that. I really think that it means they do discriminate, well if a child goes and see there [West], and then sees the East, even that child will say 'I swear they do discriminate!'. If it were you, you would say that as well. [You should] go and see there [villages] around. If only it was not winter now, I would take you to the villages [evacuated and burnt]. (M, 50, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D8])

We may read the seeming adaptation of the participant to the discourse of national politics of belonging in Turkey, with his references to 'shared history', 'having shed blood for the country' and symbols of nation-state like flag or the republic, as a base for his claim for equal belonging. Still, however, his image of almost 'two different polities', roughly of the west and east Turkey, is significant to show the extent of the marginalisation and discrimination perceived and experienced. It points at a perception of sharp difference between the East and the West. Villages evacuated and burnt during the warfare are called by the participant to offer witness to that difference.

Other policies, such as designation of the eastern cities as destination for political exiles; the civil servants being paid more for their 'Eastern Service'; many policies in the region, appeared to have fed the experience of the discrepancy through the 'national territorial space'. A consequent perception is the violation of the locale space. Below is a narrative that criticizes such policies:

[They are] coming as colonists, they exile their fundamentalists and encumber us with them. Should someone have a wrong in Izmir, Istanbul or Konya<sup>318</sup>; [they] let him go to Şırnak, Batman or Siirt!<sup>319</sup> Send us the good, why do you send the evil? Why do you send to the Southeast the thief, fornicator or the dishonest? If we are backwards, send us the educators! I [deliberately] don't speak Turkish most of the time, [they ask] why I not know; I don't know, it is not my fault, not knowing it is not my deficiency, it is state's [fault]. It should

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<sup>318</sup> Western and Central Anatolian Cities

<sup>319</sup> Eastern and South-Eastern cities

have constructed schools instead of constructing gendarme stations! (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3])

The above narrative is important in various ways. One is that it points to a perception of ‘internal colonization’ of the ‘Eastern’, here specifically Kurdish, space by the Turkish policy makers and discourses. It unveils the contradiction of the discourses of ‘backwardness’ on the one hand, and lack of due education policies on the other. Her decision not to speak Turkish<sup>320</sup> can also be understood as a resistance against what she perceives as the ‘colonizer’, and to claim her own symbolic space. Reference to the gendarme stations signs the space becoming one of control and repression, a ‘space of violence’. Violation of space seems to encircle the space, drawing visible boundaries around, and establishes sharp dichotomies between ‘here’ and ‘there’, as well as ‘us’ and ‘them’. Violation of places and the consequent demarcation of the space are grounded deeply in the everyday experience of many people, who experienced the war conditions. Cosy and familiar home of one could easily be exposed to overwhelming ‘space of the national’ in its very brutal and militarized sense. Below is a narrative, where comparison of locality with other [western] cities, brings forth the national territory as a highly split one, in terms of the socialization processes and the discourses one is exposed to in the context of everyday life:

I mean there is not a clear equality. Because the only state official coming to my village [in my childhood], the only state officer I saw was the soldier. The second technological vehicle I saw other than the car was plane. The plane flew over me all the time. The third thing I had ever seen was the panzer. I wonder if the children living in Karaman, Bayburt [or] Izmir see them. He does not, in my judgement. I suppose, he does not live these things. Yes legally there is the whole equality. Legally, they are written. All people are equal, all citizens... But

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<sup>320</sup> When I met her where she worked, she spoke only Kurdish to me for a while and Turkish only barely, as we sat on a table with others and spoke mostly in Turkish, since my command of Kurdish was only basic level. Initially, I even thought that she did not know Turkish very much. Only after we set for the interview, she started to speak Turkish very fluently and without accent. So, the reason she does not prefer to speak in Turkish but Kurdish should be seen as a deliberate decision concerning her identifications and de-identifications rather than not knowing Turkish.



for me there is no equality in those terms... I mean it is really difficult to live under these conditions, under these difficulties. (M, 18, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D5])

The idea of “national territorial socialisation” is argued to be a means by which “historically contingent forms of territorial identities, symbols and ideologies are instilled into the social and individual consciousness” (Paasi, 1996, as cited in Etherington, 2010: 325). These cases point, I believe, at a process whereby the Turkish national landscape is constructed as a discontinuity through the national territorial socialisation people are experiencing. A very critical example of such socialisation and the consequent shift in the perception of ‘national territory’ came out in my pilot work.<sup>321</sup> The narrator, having come to Ankara from Diyarbakır in 2007 for his university education, recalled his most shocking experience in terms of his perception of the distance between Diyarbakır and Ankara in the following:

There was an inconsistency between the distances, [that is] when I looked Ankara from there [Diyarbakır], which was closer to me, and when I looked Diyarbakır from Ankara. Totally different places. [...] Diyarbakır was so farther from here [Ankara]. There is a totally different life. It is not like looking to Istanbul from here, or to Trabzon. [...] For sure life conditions are different, this and that are different. But I realized some other thing that was the biggest factor, here the war is not being felt, I have never felt the war here. But there you feel the war. Because you feel the war your perception differs, it creates a difference of perception in you. [...] The war felt here and the war we felt there are not the same. [...] You don’t hear bullet sound here; here, people are not being killed before your eyes. [...] For sure police violence is in this country too, in this city, or in Istanbul, people are killed by the police, or people slaughter each other, I don’t mean that. The war, we don’t feel the war here. [...] It does not touch us [here]. (M, 23, Kurd, from Diyarbakır)<sup>322</sup>

Ankara being closer when imagined from Diyarbakır, yet Diyarbakır being much farther when it is imagined from Ankara is remarkable expression of the relative experience of space, or the national territorial be-long-ing. It is not merely about

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<sup>321</sup> Although the pilot work interviewees are not counted among the total number of participants of this dissertation, I included excerpts from some of them as I deem them to be important to further deepen our exploration of the research question.

<sup>322</sup> Pilot interview, 21.10.2010, Ankara.

symbolism. It is the very lively practical experience. It is about two different life-worlds; different forms of everyday life practices, concerns, and priorities; and different forms of relations. Yet, more importantly, it is about different realities. For the participant the realities of everyday life in those respective cities were so far from each other that any connection he perceived to exist between the two beforehand, before coming to Ankara, had disappeared or at least severely broken. The continuity of the national territory imagined from Diyarbakır was disrupted; the ‘longing’ and the will to belong there turned into some sort of disappointment in Ankara. A disappointment to realize that the belonging as it was imagined once had indeed no equivalence ‘on the other side’.<sup>323</sup> Diyarbakır and Ankara standing for an eastern and a western city respectively, but also for the periphery and the centre, the latter being the capital city, only adds to the intensity of the experience.

The image of discontinuous national territory came out not only of the critical articulations of the west, the state, or the national but also of the admiring ones. Western Turkey, in these articulations was mentioned as a ‘developed’, ‘prosperous’, ‘educated’, and ‘modern’ space of existence with better opportunities of life, be them related to education, occupation, entertainment, or social relations. Sometimes, mostly for women participants, it was even a place of ‘gender equality’ and ‘women freedom’. A clear example with reference to physical construction of space to provide for leisure time opportunities came in the follows:

Everything is more modern in the west, the structure of the cities... There is nothing in Urfa regarding sociality, not like social events as in the west. [For example?] Entertainment, music halls, cinema, shopping malls. Now, shopping

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<sup>323</sup> Very much related to this narration came out of my diary notes of research. I had noted the following: “When I conducted pilot in Ankara I contemplated on violence and belonging, and I could see that violence had weakened belonging. But, still, I (appear to have) evaluated from the perspective of the larger society, pitying that some were breaking off with here [Turkey/west/Ankara]. Whereas here [Diyarbakır], I feel myself far from Ankara. It is as if this has never been a part of the larger territory. As if [it was] on its own.” Field diary notes, 22.02.2011, Diyarbakır

malls have also been constructed here. Before, nobody in Urfa knew what a park was. (M, 56, Kurd, Urfa [U18])

Global spaces of consumption like shopping malls, and leisure like parks being integrated to one's locality is articulated as signs of modernity, which is longed to catch up with. With very similar references another participant, revealing the individual repercussions of those 'modern' spaces for social occasions especially on the young people, stated "*Istanbul makes me feel like a bit loser to be honest*" (F, 21, Syriac, Mardin [M30]) as there were incomparably much opportunities for social activities there like theatre and cinema halls, cafes, exhibitions, shopping malls, and green areas some of which are simply non-existent in Mardin. Istanbul, as the 'modern face' of Turkey, was a usual reference point in similar articulations. Below is a narrative, where the territorial space as the local, the national, and the transnational are almost necessarily linked in a linear progression for one's upward social mobility:

I wanted to move to Istanbul a few years ago, for a joint venture with friends, I did want it very much, but it was not destined to be [*kismetolmadı*]. [So you would prefer if it were?] Yes. Well, for one to develop oneself, I mean one living in the village first looks towards Urfa. [...] After one moves to Urfa from the village, then he imagines Istanbul. [...] When you move to Istanbul, you can imagine Europe directly. I mean you are closer to your dreams. You can see many things clearer. (M, 40, Arab, Urfa [U5])

The village, Urfa, Istanbul, and Europe are linked almost as complements to each other, like each step of a stair, in the way to "dreams" of one, with an expansion of sight and getting nearer to the destination once in Istanbul. Yet still Istanbul is not imagined as an 'empty homogeneous space' in this case, and the class dimension of belongings is introduced to the picture by the participant who indeed did not want to live in a peripheral point of the city, but to benefit all the beauty, information, density, communication, and social relations that the city could provide for. Already having well-off conditions, the participant indeed did prefer living in Urfa to such a peripheral Istanbul life. If it was not for betterment of life opportunities, the best was not to lose the already held ones.

One significant narrative, where Europe, Turkey, and the locality were linked in a reverse manner in preference of living in Turkey was uttered by another participant. She was a pious, young, Kurd; admiring ‘Turkishness’; wanted to marry a ‘Turk’, for she believed Turkish men were good mannered and kinder to women than Kurds. She was content to live in Urfa, yet could prefer in a Western city, namely Istanbul, as long as it provided for a religious, pious everyday life for its inhabitants. Crucially, moreover, her narrative revealed that the national territory she ‘imagined’ did included ‘west’ but not further ‘east’, which she identified as ‘a space of “terror”’:

Friends are sometimes saying that they would have liked to move to Europe, thinking that Europe is better than Turkey. There are ones who does not love Turkey. But I love my Turkey very much. [*So you would like to live all over Turkey?*] Yes. [*Would you like to live in more eastwards?*] No! [*In Van or Şırnak?*] No! Yuck! When I hear of them... since this terror thing came up, one hates it. We already had eight martyrs yesterday. We are deeply upset. (F, 17, Kurd, Urfa [U16])

One visible pattern is discernible in those and similar narratives of the participants. It plots Turkish western territory as almost an ‘empty homogeneous space’. In articulations revealing such pattern there usually appears a *selective appropriation of the national territorial space*, which is ‘imagined’ in a fragmentary manner and a sporadic link is established with one’s and a named or an anonymous point in the western Turkey. Surprising to me as someone coming from the supposed to be ‘west’ of the country, was that the ‘West’, for many participants, started immediately to the west of their locality. Cities like Gaziantep or Adana, for example, the former officially within the South Eastern Anatolian Region, as the formal name goes, and the latter in the eastern Mediterranean region, became part of West in perceptions of many, because they were taken to be “*industrialized*”, “*developed*”, and “*modernized*” just as ‘the West’ was, but ‘the East’ was not. These cities, presumably, would not count as ‘west’ for many people in further western parts of Turkey. In many other narratives, for instance, the West included the Black Sea Region as well, which is to the north of the Turkey’s political territory, let alone to the research area of

this study. An important component of such perception is seemingly ethno-social constitution of the population living in the defined area. West is usually associated with a perceived ‘Turkish’ population, the changing socio-demographic structure of many ‘western’ cities through migratory movements making a complicating factor though.

There is more to the story, however. Social encounters of many ‘eastern’ participant in the West with the allegedly ‘westerners’ brings west as a dense and heterogeneous territorial space interwoven in various experiences, observations, and discourses, adding to my argument that ‘national territorial space’ as a whole was not perceived and experienced as a continuous, homogeneous, and vacant space. Dispersion throughout ‘national territorial space’ and the experience held there provide an important ground for such encounters, as will be detailed below.

#### **6.3.1.1. Away From Home: “As nearer we get together, as farther we draw away...”<sup>324</sup>**

Disruptive consequences of armed conflict, economic policies of the state, the uneven development indexes, the consequent unemployment and inequality of opportunities in the region seem to have led increasing movements of seasonal agricultural or non-agricultural labour out of the immediate locality, mostly towards more developed cities or simply where one can pursue opportunities of employment. Western cosmopolitan cities provided for better opportunities of employment for the educated professionals as well. In other cases, increasing numbers of students seeking university education or movements for ordinary motives of visiting relatives or friends, and touristic visits constituted cases of encounter with the supposed ‘national landscape’ and with the ‘national fellows’. Here, I argue that increasing personal experiences of “*strangeness*”, “*uneasiness*”, “*prejudice*”, “*humiliation*”, “*fear*”, or manifest “*discrimination*” as a consequence of such encounter, pull many people back into their localities,

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<sup>324</sup> M, 30, Kurd, Mardin [M3]

making the locality a safer space to take refuge. Such experiences contribute to the split image of the political territory along with the recurrent dichotomy of East and West. The split, however, becomes more than a matter of defining two different territorial spaces; and appears almost as a symbolic divide where ‘East’ and ‘West’ come to reflect different ‘order of things’.

Prejudiced perception of the ‘westerners’, that many people encountered or is informed about, seems to lead a defensive articulation of ‘identity’ of the locality, which often overlaps with the ethnic identity especially with regard to Kurds. A participant recalling her visits to the relatives in Istanbul or Izmir illustrated the neighbours’ surprise when they learnt she was coming from Diyarbakır with their “*eyes and eyebrows mov[ing]*” suspiciously, and saying “*you don’t seem to be Diyarbakırlı at all*” (F, 44, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D24]). She took the manner to be an “*insult, which they are [even] not aware of*” and asked annoyed, “*how do you imagine a Diyarbakırlı that you think I am alike?*” (F, 44, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D24]). “*Diyarbakırlı*”, though a spatial designation, implies almost automatically the Kurdish identity, space and ethnicity being thus converged in those perceptions. In a very similar emphasis, the below narrative lively recalled a dialogue and accompanying manners, whereby such prejudice this time was directed towards Kurds in relation to the narrator’s coming from Diyarbakır. The scene was set in Ankara this time, in a bus on its way from Çankaya to Kızılay.<sup>325</sup> The narrator offering her seat to an elder woman stated:

She sat, she was an old woman, I offered my seat very naturally, that is so normal. She said so neatly [Echoes a gentle voice] ‘thank you daughter’. She said [Echoes an Istanbul accent kindly] ‘nobody offers her place in here anymore’; I said ‘thanks God we still have it there in ours’. [Giggles] She asked ‘where are you from?’. I said ‘from Diyarbakır’. [Mocks the voice] ‘Aaa! What’s up?’ [‘*hayrola?*’] [Furiously repeats to pull attention] ‘What’s up!’ I said I have relatives here, I came to visit them. [Whispers] ‘Are you Kurd?’ asks so quietly [...] I said ‘yes aunty I am Kurd’, but I said it loudly. [...] [Mocks inner Anatolian accent] ‘Aaa you don’t seem to be daughter’. I asked ‘why?’ ‘What of mine does not seem to be, aunty?’, ‘what are Kurds like?’ [Echoes the inner

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<sup>325</sup> Çankaya is an affluent district of Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. Kızılay is a central district of the city.

Anatolian accent] ‘Oh my daughter, your accent, clothing are not like Kurds’. And many examples like this! This was just an ordinary anecdote... (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12])

Articulation of here and there with reference to the act of offering one’s seat in the bus to an elderly woman, brings forth the perceived value of the act, regretting its disappearance “*here*”, in Ankara, in ‘the West’ on the one hand; and being thankful that it is still “*there*”, in Diyarbakır, in ‘the East’. The author of the act and the narration deliberately puts them against each other, reversing in a manner the prejudiced discursive dichotomy of ‘incivility’ of the East versus ‘civility’ of the West. In mocking and echoing the other’s accent, voice, and way of speaking, which shifts from one of neat, clear, regular Istanbul accent, representing the ‘modern nation’, to that of inner Anatolian accent, the narrator poses a challenge to the idea of the empty homogeneous time and space of Turkishness, points at the heterogeneity of Turkishness itself. The niches and fissures of the ‘imagined community’ thus become visible in the practically dense time and space of the political community. Diyarbakır and inner Anatolia, the latter in the body of Ankara, comes momentarily very close yet simultaneously very apart. Indeed, I listened to many people, especially Kurds, telling that they cannot understand the accent of the people in Aegean, inner Anatolia, Black Sea regions or other specific places. Their emphasis was that they also speak Turkish with accent, but at least in a “*correct*” and “*understandable*” manner. Similarly, others also compared their experiences in a ‘western’ city concerning offering their seat to an elderly or a woman, positing the West at an odd and disgraced place vis-à-vis the normative and humane space of the East, which ‘yet’ enjoys such values.

I listened to many stories, about prejudiced or overtly discriminative attitude the participants or others they know had encountered in different ‘western cities’. Stories of university students “*not being rented a flat because [they were] from Mardin [or Diyarbakır]*”<sup>326</sup> or “*drop out of the school at 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> class, [others]*

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<sup>326</sup> (M, 50, Kurd, Mardin [M7])

*even being killed*<sup>327</sup>; violent encounters of the seasonal construction workers, who faced “*attempt of lynch, friends being injured severely*”<sup>328</sup>; people being “*kicked out of the shop[s]*”<sup>329</sup>; professionals not being employed; deals being cancelled are among those. Subjects of these stories were Kurds or mistaken to be Kurds; and all the mentioned events took place in the last decade.<sup>330</sup> Indeed many old generation Kurdish participants, regardless of their ideological-political affiliation, stated that they did not experience such discriminatory attitude of the ordinary people in the west, usually referring to some four or five decades ago. Thus the important point to be noted about these experiences is the increasing ‘shared’ character of those experiences, and the high awareness that they are shared or experienced in similar forms. Captivating about the narration of such stories is their cumulative character, in that one immediately adds to one’s own narrative each recurrent piece of discriminative attitude experienced personally, or else heard, read or watched about. The narrative, apparently, ceases to be something where only personal experiences are woven into, but becomes one into which experiences of others are also drawn as almost one’s own experiences. In other words, shared experiences make up a collective experience/idea/memory, or a collective narrative, which accumulatively gets bigger as it rolls on. It reflects the experiences of an ‘imagined community’-imagined this time at the local/regional space- no matter if it pass over the internal differences within that community or “gloss over the fissures” within

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<sup>327</sup> FGII

<sup>328</sup> (M, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Informal Group Interview [4])

<sup>329</sup> FG2

<sup>330</sup> This should be related to the changing perception of Kurds in the imagination of the larger Turkish society mostly in the last two decades, which constructs itself through the increasing exclusionary discourse and practices of the ordinary people towards Kurds, whom they encounter here and there, especially within ‘their’ locale. For a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of this ordinary form of exclusion see Saraçoğlu, 2011.



that space (Anthias, 2005: 21). This was what I called the helical memory of violence in Chapter 4, a process creating its own time and space.

Consequently, what becomes important in terms of the perception of discrimination seems not only to be the actual discrimination, which is strongly there, but also the anticipation of being frozen out. Both discrimination and anticipation of being frozen out, moreover, increasingly lead to a tendency of pulling in to the locality, the region. Locality becomes a place, the 'home', that would be left even temporarily only should it really worth doing it, as in the case of a Kurdish participant, recalling his past decision about where to study: "*I thought if I would study sociology, METU or Boğaziçi would worth going out [of Diyarbakır]; but if not what will I do in Anatolia, Aegean, why should I go, here is Diyarbakır, stay here and study*" (M, 33, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D1]). In another case, the participant stated that "*interestingly, the West is never among the options in our plans for the summer vacations*" (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12]). The role of her anticipation of being frozen out in an ad hoc chat here and there in a western city was apparently a ground for not preferring a western city for vacations. How such anticipation framed one's life chances was revealed in her reflection: "*it besieges all your perception of the world*". Indeed, it was the feeling of "*total strangeness*", when she is in a western city "*like going to one of the countries in Europe, or like going to a country in another part of the world*". Violence being a determining element defining her relation to space, she further reflected on formations of be-long-ings for her stating "*perhaps if I haven't had this identity, perhaps if I had had a normal childhood, my rights not being assaulted and harassed, for sure there are very nice places in the west of Turkey, the geography, the people and so on...*" (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12]). Indeed what she has gone through was so decisive in constructing her belongings that, Diyarbakır being the unique place she would like to continue her life in Turkey, an alternative place for life would be "*not absolutely in Turkey*", nowhere

comparable to Diyarbakır, but possibly in “*The South*”,<sup>331</sup> the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq. Pulling in the locality was evidently there in this case that Turkish territorial space in total did not offer a secure and meaningful life for the participant.

The tendency of pulling in has real consequences for individual lives. It seemed that, the young in the region who were especially vulnerable in terms of opportunity structures, such as education or employment opportunities, were more and more deeply affected by the process. Expert interviews at university departments revealed the phenomenon of pulling in for the young in terms of their preferences of university, thus mobility for education. It was stated that “*many parents ceased to send their children [to western cities] because of the perception of Diyarbakır in the West*”; that “*students coming from outside are mainly from Adana, Mersin, Hatay; then Inner Anatolia, partly Black Sea and Aegean [regions]*”; that “*Geography department at Dicle University closed with at a higher [exam] point than many geography departments in the West, since students going out to west from the [south-east] region are very few*”; that “*a student, who could enter Faculty of Law at Ankara [University], entered Department of Geography at Dicle university*”<sup>332</sup>; and “*Faculty of Arts and Sciences and Faculty of Education are ever more populated with students from within the region [South-eastern and Eastern Anatolian regions]*”.<sup>333</sup> It was also stated that student profile of Faculty of Law and Faculty of Medicine are still diverse with students coming over from other regions. The reason was argued to be that Law and Medicine are still study areas worth going ‘anywhere’ available. The University entrance exam became a source of double fear for many Kurdish students, the fear of not being successful at all -which is not exclusive to Kurds-

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<sup>331</sup> ‘South’ refers to ‘South Kurdistan’ in Kurdish cosmology.

<sup>332</sup> The latter requires less grade in the university entrance exam, thus in this case the student preferred to be in Diyarbakır to being in Ankara with excess of grade at hand.

<sup>333</sup> Notes taken during expert interviews in Diyarbakır, 15.02.2011

and of being discriminated upon being successfully entered a western university. Ethnicity itself increasingly becoming a ‘real’ and ‘valid’ ground for being frozen out, discriminated or violated the tension that would be caused by either option is apparent. Below the participant expresses such tension, her articulation revealing the discontinuity of the larger political territory torn through ethnic lines between Turks and Kurds. Fear in time and space imbues be-longings of her.

I always have a fear in me; that fear... [What sort of fear?] What if I don't succeed in the exam? What if I succeed and go to another city and do not get the education I need because I am discriminated, I am not provided with the opportunities that others are? I have such fear, because I have seen it with people I know. [What did you see?] In Muş, all were Turks, brother of a friend was studying there; he could conclude the 2-year [school] in 4 years. That's [because] he was a Kurd. (F, 20 Kurd, Diyarbakır [D10])

Neither the experience nor the anticipation of being frozen out in the West is something that only Kurds have gone through. Arabs and Syriacs, too, recollected experiences of prejudice, the feeling of uneasiness or vulnerability in their encounters in the west. They did not mostly, however, perceive their ethnic affiliation as the ground for facing such attitude, but rather their “*accented language*”, “*their outlook*” or “*their behaviour*”. Those experiences in many cases, importantly, cut across socio-economic status as well. A young Arab woman who comes from an esteemed and well-off family in Mardin, for instance, told that: “*in my childhood for instance, when we travelled out [outside of the city/region] we couldn't tell proudly that we were from Mardin, [it] was a sort of humiliation, seeing ourselves inadequate among others [...] I used to feel this when we went to Istanbul*”. The following example of hers made the context of that “*feeling of inadequacy*” clearer: “*They [children of the aunt, who married a Turkish man in Kayseri<sup>334</sup>] used to speak a neater Turkish; we had an accented Turkish, we pronounce “k” with emphasis [...] that's why, to be honest, I used to feel like a loser*” (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17]). These narratives, where the East

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<sup>334</sup>An inner Anatolian city eastward to Ankara.

and the West crystallise almost as two different cultural-symbolic spaces, point at the way how space is experienced as an almost embodied source of belonging. A very detailed example of such embodiment could be found in the below narrative, which the participant articulated about her experience in Ankara during her bachelors and masters' education:

[The difference is there] in every detail, even the headscarf here and there is not the same. That makes you visible, makes you different there... [it is] very identifiable, even if it is a very small detail; then your accent, your way of speaking, okay you revise yourself after a while, but at the beginning it makes a difference for many people. Then there is this eating and drinking, dressing, speaking all these are different, I don't know, I feel like everyone should live where she belongs to. It is very difficult to cope with [anywhere else] [...] Indeed, I feel in peace only where do I live now, apart from that I am not peaceful. (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4])

Her references reveal a perception of 'cultural difference', with an accompanying feeling of being 'out-of-place' in the West, which is not where she feels "*she belongs to*". In her narrative a high degree of spatial, cultural, symbolic division is vividly apparent between east and west, whereby in the latter you have either to "*revise yourself*" accordingly or to keep apart. Thus, her call to keep on to "*live where one belongs to*" could be taken as a sign of locality becoming the "core territory", outside of which many individual feel vulnerable (Vanderwerf, 2009). One clear expression of such feeling was articulated by another participant who stated "*in Diyarbakır I have the feeling of togetherness, outside I feel mother naked*" (F, 44, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D24]). It seems that, the locality, despite all its 'lacks', 'problems', 'inconveniences' inside, provide ever more a reliable, if not safer, space to take refuge against the exclusionist, if not aggressive, "*outside*". Social ties and networks of relations 'inside' the locality appear to provide for "*the feeling of togetherness*" as against the loneliness, vulnerability, and insecurity one feels "*outside*". This shows, on the one hand, the absence of bridging and linking social capital throughout the allegedly 'national' territorial space, and, on the other, the power of the bonding social capital shaping the local space as one of be-long-ings. Importantly, in many

cases, participants of all the three research groups referred to their distinctive and stronger local/ethnic/religious social capital vis-à-vis generalised social capital, both concerning the larger political community and territory, and in terms of inter-ethnic/inter-group relations within the same locality. Especially in the case of Diyarbakır, however, it should be noted that the alternative social capital constructed through Kurdish political movement, as I have detailed in the Chapter 4, plays an active role in reconstructing, appropriating, and redefining the place, the whole city, as a space of collective be-long-ings. Diyarbakır in itself appears to stand as a source of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital, a politicized and ethnicized Kurdish social capital and space alternative to the larger Turkish social capital and space. The city space, whether imagined or material, is intensely, though not exclusively, woven around and through Kurdish alternative social capital. Yet, following Anthias (2005) drawing our attention to the fissures, losses, absences, and borders within the collective places that are glossed over through imaginings of belonging, I have already shown in Chapter 4 the existence of the fissures, inner boundaries, and tensions within such alternative social space and capital. Urban versus rural or migrant versus local splits, class, ideology and political party allegiances were the most visible grounds around which those tensions were defined. In this context, I have pointed at the downsides for some individuals who could not find a place for themselves in that collective space and its resources. Still, moreover, construction of Kurdish alternative social space and capital is not an exclusive process as many institutional, whether governmental or non-governmental, ideological, and entrepreneurial practices and discourses in the city compete over generating values, trust, and networks of relations.

Experience of locality as a space of social networks was apparent in other cases as well. One stated that: *“I feel suffocated [in the West]. Seeing different places is good, but after a week, I say let’s go [back]. [...] I don’t feel comfortable, [...] I think because I don’t have a network there. My family is here, my aşiret is here, my relatives are here, there is no one there, all alone”* (F, 25, Arab, Urfa [U9]).

The weight given to all those bonding social relations, especially *aşiret*, came as a surprise to me concerning a modern, educated, professional, young woman. She was referring to social capital, basically bonding and bridging, that defined the local space as a preferable place for her as a source of ‘power’ backing the individual. Reference to *aşiret* is especially important in this context. When asked she replied that she embraces “*Arab nationalism*”, and continued with a narrative that she certainly wanted to marry an Arab despite her family members’ hesitation. Thought in the context of her narrative, ‘Arab nationalism’ much refers to be able to maintain a ‘distinct’ identity -however it is defined- and to live somewhere that being an Arab is ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable’ -mostly understood as living amongst other Arabs. Importantly, social capital became a good tool to operationalize the relation between territory and belongings. Various participants from all three groups referred to their distinctive social capitals in the locality: their local/regional relations; their family or ethnic/religious community ties; and trusting, mutual, solidarity relations. Implied, or sometimes openly expressed, in these references was the absence of comparable social capital, both structural and cognitive, at a higher, national, linking level. This meant actual ties and trusting, mutual, supporting relations within the context of larger political community were experienced and/or perceived to be lacking. The generalized Turkish social capital, if we may call it so, was not simply there for many participants.

Social ties become especially important for Syriac people of Mardin and Midyat, in terms of religious-communitarian relations. This is much explicable, when their position as a ‘minority of minorities’ is recalled in the face of Muslim Arab and Kurdish communities in these places. A clear expression of such importance was as follows: “*I would not think [of living] somewhere my people do not exist, never would I think of it!*”(M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]). Here the place where one’s people are does not only connote the people per se, but communitarian relations, religious places and cultural inheritance as a whole. In these examples, locality becomes *the space of social capital*.

An important point to note here, moreover, is that crystallising in some of the above narratives is their gendered characters. Women refer to the bodily experiences such as the “identifiable” way of wearing “headscarf” or feeling of being “*mother naked*”, regarding their experiences in “*outside*” or in the west. Experience of the space is intensely a bodily experience and these narratives have the potential of providing insight about the negotiation of gender and spatial relations in specific contexts. Importantly, moreover, the participants in these cases are educated and relatively well-off women, with an important degree of social capital within their locality.

Yet another gendered and bodily experience of the space was articulated by a participant, with no education and less economic and social capital, in much a conservative language whereby the local spatial order of bodily appearance for women was preferred to some of that other cities she visited like Mersin. She defined people in Urfa and Mersin “*as different as chalk and cheese*” [“*dağlarkadar fark var arada*”] (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). Her detailing of the “*difference*” when asked was direct and clear in pointing the female body as a boundary between ‘us’ and ‘here’ versus ‘them’ and ‘there’.

They are very naked; we are not used to it. Only a t-shirt on them and shorts, nothing else. I mean the one here in ours is so different to the one there. Well, headscarf is not that important for instance, I mean among the youngsters now you find headscarf very rarely. But there, they are open down here! [Points at her breast level] I am not comfortable with it. Well I say one cannot stay here even one day. (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7])

Women’s bodily appearance and clothing being spatialized marking the boundary between here and there she identified with locality stating “*don’t know everyone has her own local clothing, but I myself am very pleased with the clothing of Urfa, well long, nice, like this, we are contended with it*”. She implied some limits of ‘openness’ transgression of which is unacceptable noting “*there are those who are open, head is open, leg is open, but not that much open*”, “*their behaviour abhorrent to us*” (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). Indeed, her reference

is to a whole lot of difference of lifestyle and mindset as was visibly revealed in the dialogue between the woman wearing shorts and t-shirt in Mersin dumping waste bin and the participant [U7] who decided to face the woman “*not to take her sin upon herself*” and “*tell her that she did not like at all how she was wearing*”. The woman (W), on the other hand, was aware that she was looked at and was found odd. Religious symbols and rationalization is clear

[U7]: I swear I will say it to your face. What you do, wearing so open, we do not do by our husband.

W: You shall see me in the beach, see how I am there.

[U7]: [Mocks] in the other world too you shall say ‘see me in the beach’. Doing this, you don’t think the underworld, do you? Look we are covering our head; say, our clothing is long, no part of us is seen, and still we see ‘My God save me, oh God!’

W: Right, you are right as well. Anyway forget about it, will I be born once again?

[U7]: The human goes underworld only once; well you don’t go down there and come up back. (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7])<sup>335</sup>

Her experience of outside locality being visiting acquaintances in different places basically for weddings or funerals, she claimed she wouldn’t like to live somewhere like Mersin. She refused her relative asking her to stay by them for a week, stating “*I would go mad if I stayed a week here*” (F, 32, Arab, Urfa [U7]). Female body as a space of patriarchal and conservative order becomes the space by means of which be-long-ings are negotiated.

Yet in some other cases, the locality is experienced as a caging social space for women, whereas “*outside*” or ‘the West’ is practiced as a place where one feels rather more “*free*”. A participant, who was taking training courses in a governmental social centre to get a hairdresser’s certificate and be able to have an occupation for example, articulated the locality again with reference to bodily experiences such as clothing, making up, yet this time with a focus on spatial [im]mobility of woman:

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<sup>335</sup> I turned into a dialogue what she narrated univocally, leaving out the phrases of “*I said*”, “*she said*” in the original articulation.



I also want to live outside; there is much gossip in Urfa. You cannot, for instance, fancy up and go out, should you put on eye liner, should you make up it will set tongues wagging. You cannot go out and wander around freely. I went to Istanbul and Izmir for instance, could freely go out my pants on, not here! [But now you have your pants on?] Because I have my coat on covering it, I did not have [to wear] a coat there. Not like here, if I you don't wear your coat on, they will start gossiping. (F, 33, Kurd, Urfa [U17])

'Wandering freely' in the city without being confined by the clothing codes of the locality follows from becoming anonymous in the metropolitan city whereby everyday life provides for relatively more secular public spaces. In yet another case, experience of "*working outside*", both in the region and in Istanbul as a western metropolitan city, was epitomised in the statement "*I discovered my freedom while working outside*" (F, 26, Kurd, Mardin [M1]). Defining the experience of "*being a woman in Mardin*" as "*a rich one but repressive as much as that*", the participant stated "*I have stayed outside for long; the freedom, comfort, individuality, and refusal of the man's authority it granted to me*" (F, 26, Kurd, Mardin [M1]). The tension between her experience of "*struggle*" and "*overcoming difficulties*" outside and her experiences inside "*deeply troubled her*"; the latter both at home concerning her father's attitude to her mother –both politically active people- and within Kurdish political movement in the region. West, the 'outside' of caging relations of locality, in this case provided a space for her to cultivate her individual existence. Personal experiences, which are defined through one's social locations and contexts from which belongings are imagined and narrated (Anthias, 2005), become important in terms of conditioning spatial be-long-ings, and gender relations are critical in the process. The experience of locality as a limiting space, however, was narrated by men as well, in this case the emphasis being especially on inadequate structural and employment opportunities. An extreme example came to fore in an informal chat in a taxicab in Diyarbakır as I was heading to airport to fly back to Ankara. The taxi driver immediately took the opportunity of talking about his experience in a western city, Izmir –comparably a western, cosmopolitan city- where he lived for 15 years before he very recently was summoned to Diyarbakır by his father back to take his place in his taxi. He was 23, trying to get marry through an arranged

marriage. He explained his motivation to marry, with his “*dreams*” as to “*have a child [visibly male], send him to military service, and see him grow up*”. His dreams for his child, however, were far beyond the limits of ‘dreams’ he projected for himself: he would be a pilot. The problem was that he “*wanted to see him flying, yet one cannot be [a pilot] here around, but surely in Izmir*”.<sup>336</sup> Diyarbakır lagging far behind the place to realize his dreams for his child was certainly a space of limits for him. Although presenting an extreme case in terms of the searched ‘opportunities’, this is still telling about spatialities of belongings constructed through limitations and possibilities whether imaginary or actual.

Local power dynamics is another factor conditioning spatial belongings for the participants, having their repercussion on inter-group relations. Processes of belongings become even more complicated if one is a ‘minority’ not only at national scale but within her locality. This is many times the case for the Christian vis-à-vis the Muslim Arab or Kurdish people. A Syriac participant in Mardin referred to such complication in following:

Only in my own region [I feel myself in peace]. In our Mardin ... there were Diyarbakır Armenians, they were telling that ‘we were ‘*gâvur*’<sup>337</sup> in Diyarbakır, then we moved out to Istanbul, and there they called us as ‘Kurds’. We have experienced the same. We are already known with this epithet in Mardin. Yet, [I] have a total Eastern look myself, can’t change it. We<sup>338</sup> have neither blue eyes nor blond hair. Our skin is not white either, it is pitch-dark. In places we go for business, when people see our eastern accent, they don’t have a positive look on us. [They] think we are from Diyarbakır [meaning Kurd], some from Mardin,

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<sup>336</sup> An informal talk with a taxi driver in Diyarbakır (M, 23, Diyarbakır), 2.3.2011

<sup>337</sup> “*Gâvur*” literally means infidel, but used as an inferior stereotype for the non-Muslims in Turkey. Irony is that Diyarbakır is mostly a Kurdish city currently, and the Armenians who were called ‘*gâvur*’ in Diyarbakır most probably by Kurds, were called ‘Kurds’ by Turks or others in the west.

<sup>338</sup> This “we” indeed stands for the person himself, he means “I”. The description of the “outlook” cannot be generalized to all Syriac people of Mardin, since many of them does not share the physical definition here.

some Eastern... I mean because we have the eastern accent, we frighten them. So, I want to leave there immediately and return to my own city. I tell myself that we don't frighten them here. And we've nothing so frightening anyway. (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27])

Having detailed various accounts whereby the Syriac community encountered violent attempts of Muslims (Arabs/Mihelmi and partly of Kurds) in their very locality, another Syriac participant articulated on the importance of peace and security in the locality, especially where one does not feel at home within the larger political territory/community. His uneasiness both in space and in time comes to fore in the following:

[Do you feel to be host in Turkey anywhere outside Midyat?] No, I saw myself as a foreigner as I did in Europe, or another country. Well, that is the reason the pain is more painful, I mean a person suffering on his own lands, in his own hometown, in his house would hurt much, and it did so, it hurt much. Let alone these stories are very recent... (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

Social dynamics complicating the 'homeness' of the locality, are not limited to the above. Inadequacy of the locality in terms of the opportunities available for one to pursue her goals of education, occupation, or better life conditions came out to be an important complicating factor. Thus pulling in or being pushed in may well mean being deprived of many options beyond the boundaries of the locality, which leads a perception of 'being stuck into the locality'. A student preparing for the university entrance exams stated, for instance, that "*thinking that education is not so good here, I might like to study in the West, in Istanbul for instance, at the best universities of Istanbul, places like Izmir or Ankara*", but pointed at how the "*fear*" of being discriminated in the west affects his life and decisions in the following:

That fear cuts off my expectation from life [...] When I think of this east-west thing, let alone having [university] education, I do not have any expectations from life [thinking] what will I do if I have education, I already can't go to west, here there is no opportunity for employment, even if there are some jobs I can get, I do not have the talent for them (M, 20, Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG2[3])

Feelings of desperateness and hopelessness imbue the above narrative. The fact that the minimum entrance grades for many departments at the local universities, especially Dicle University in Diyarbakır,<sup>339</sup> get ever higher with increasing numbers of local students applying to enter, makes life for many students much difficult. One stated that “*the intelligent will enter into Dicle [University], they won’t go out, we’ll go if [our grades are] low*” (M, 19 Kurd, Diyarbakır, FG2 [2]). Rising numbers of local students applying to enter especially to Dicle University but also to other universities in the region should be seen as a consequence of the tendency of pulling in to the locality. Surprising in comparison to past patterns in Turkey in general, let alone eastern regions, whereby those who got the higher grades headed towards the western universities which were deemed to be ‘better’, now a change takes places as the motivation to stay in the locality and attend the university there increased. As the demand for the local university increases, the required exam results for entrance also rise too. In this case, those who get the lower grades would leave for average universities in smaller cities of Anatolia, whereby who could get the higher entrance grades for the local university, would stay ‘home’.

Locality becoming the only viable option corollary to the policies of the state and the attitudes of the larger society also lead resentment in individuals with higher cultural and economic capitals. A 35 year old lawyer, for instance, stated that:

Approach of the state started to imprison us to a very small region, I have complaints about this. In the past, I used to attach more importance to the concept of “*Türkiyelilik*” [being from Turkey], I used to emphasize it more, but most recently they have started to confine us to a very tiny area. (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7])

“*Imprisonment*” and “*confinement*” are important concepts here for us to understand the experience of pulling in or being pushed to the locality in a more

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<sup>339</sup> At the time of my research, Dicle University in Diyarbakır, Mardin Artuklu University in Mardin and Harran University in Urfa were the only universities in the respective cities and they are all state universities.

comprehensive way. For those who have the means for social and physical mobility, exclusion from the larger territorial space means caging in a rather limited area with lower opportunities of life. Geographical isolation, especially in a disadvantaged peripheral area, does increase the lack of social relations along with being far away from various sources, be them social, economic, or cultural. When people are socially stuck in a region distant from network centres and are denied access to the sources of larger society the ground for social capital to emerge and grow shrinks. As one is forced to drift apart or walk off from the larger political territory, estrangement from the larger political community follows after, no matter if belonging to that larger community was formulated in a rather inclusive way and with an apparent territorial connotation, which in the above case was implied in the concept of “*Türkiyelilik*”. When the territory loses meaning, so does the territorial formulation of belonging.

The emphasis on being isolated in or stuck to a region should also be thought in relation to the repeated call of many participants for “those in the west”, “Turks”, “westerners”, come and see their way of life in their locality, even live “here” for a while as was mentioned in Chapter 4. As social capital inheres in the social relationships that exist between individuals (Johnston and Percy-Smith, 2003), invitation of many participants of all ethnic backgrounds, though especially of Kurds, to the ‘others’ to come to their everyday life spaces to witness and share all what is experienced, should be grasped as an invitation to develop understanding, trusting, mutual, and cooperative relationship between the ‘easterners’ and the ‘westerners’ so to speak. In light of Gordon Johnston and Janie Percy-Smith’s (2003) argument that positive experiences of trust and cooperation within a group or community enhance the likelihood of such exchanges in the future, thus creating a ‘virtuous circle’, the call of the participants is a clear expression of the wish to turn the vicious circle lived up until now into a ‘virtuous circle’ in the present and future.

One concluding remark is that, as many people have experienced and perceived the south-east off the Turkish landscape, an “Easterner” identity comes to be ‘shared’ by many Kurd, Arab and Syriac people, despite their differences in terms of ethnic, religious, linguistic terms; or of their differing identifications with Turkishness. Still, the construction of such Eastern identity is not a smooth, fixed and linear process; but rather one in the personal experiences of which the cultural, economic and social capital intervenes as differentiating factors. Still, the experience of the locality for its inhabitants needs more elaboration, which I will be doing below.

### **6.3.2. The Space of Locality/ Close to Home**

Geographic mobility is conditioned by many factors, economic, cultural and social capital being important among them. The general pattern for many participants concerning their preference of sustaining life in the future was to keep on living in the locality, where they already lived. However, it should be noted that it was not always the negative experiences or the anticipation of being frozen out outside the locality that led to such preference. Indeed, a fair number of people had experiences other than those detailed above. In some cases, they established business in a western city but went bankrupt and opted to return back to their city of origin basically for economic reasons. In others, they had visits to different cities or even to different parts of the world, had positive experiences there and are now just in the ordinary course of daily life, up until another break. Some emigrated to and established a life in Europe, after quite a while engaged in return migration. Some were born and bred in a western city, started to live in their home city after retirement of their parents, and opted to settle a life there.

Some planned for migrating out, to a western city or Europe, but had no opportunities to pursue their goals to the end -some still would like to move out if opportunity arises. Some have not even been outside of their city of inhabitancy in their whole life, except going to their village or town within the

city boundaries. Yet others did not or will not to leave locality because they thought it is difficult to live somewhere else, especially in the West, due to higher expenses, crowd, and harsh way of daily life. Thus, it came out of the interviews that, the tendency to live in locality, a strong one though, could indeed be verbalized in many phrases such as “*being content with*”, “*being at ease with*”, “*complying with*”, “*feeling secure in*”, “*feeling obliged to*”, “*having a mission to*”, “*having struggled for*”, “*deeply rooted in*”, and “*having all ties and relations in*” the locality. These phrases stand for the various ways of engaging with the local territorial space, and the meanings attributed to it in the context of this study.

Etherington (2010: 325) argues that nation and territory are linked in two major ways: First, “physical features of the land are directly incorporated into national identity”; second, “at a more symbolic level, nationalist interpretation of the land leads to the fusion of territory and other elements of national identity such as culture, language, common myths and history”. Within the context of this study, I argue that the link between the land and identity is re-adopted, and established ever more strongly, at the local level by the Kurd, Arab and Syriac population of south east Turkey. Articulations of the participants, whereby such re-adoption became clear can be classified into two broad categories. On the one hand, the locality is a dignified space of culture, religion, language, history, and of social capital, whereby re-adoption is established through embracement of them. On the other hand, the locality is a contested space of violence, whereby the re-adoption is realized through references of “*struggle*”, “*resistance*” and “*regeneration*”.

#### **6.3.2.1. Locality as the Dignified Space**

In many cases, the recurrent themes emerging in those articulations were “*history*”, “*culture*”, “*religion*”, “*language*”, “*memory*”, “*sacred places*”,

“ancestors”, “ancient lands”, “civilization”, “mission”, “values”, “customs”, and social ties such as “family”, “aşiret”, and “people/community”.

Some participants referred to piety in their locality as a ground for their identification with it, stating, for instance, that “*since religion is more widespread here, I love it [Urfa] more*” adds that if they need move out of the city, she would like to go Istanbul, because she knows, from her friends that “*Istanbul has also districts which lives religion [are pious]*” (F, 17, Kurd, Urfa [U16]). Urfa city itself was also conceived by many, with reference to the attributed sacredness of many places and the historical image of the city as a sacred city. I listened to stories about Urfa, being the birthplace of Abraham and where his miracles were realized; being the birthplace of Job, where there is also a tomb of him; and being a city blessed by the Jesus Christ according to the myth. It was added, moreover, that Urfa was a sacred place, for both Muslims and Christians. I was taken to Job’s tomb by one participant in his effort to show me the important sacred places of the city. I was asked if I visited those places in other cities as well, especially in Mardin. The myths about the ancient city were referred to by many participants of different ethnic backgrounds.

In other cases, “values” and customary behaviours like deference to the elder were referred to in relation to the local space. in response to a question about his will to migrate/emigrate, one participant stated, for instance, “*here customs are nice; my daughter [always] phones me, she shows respect to me*” while “*youngsters in Europe are leaving home when they are eighteen*” (M, 56, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM37]). Locality appearing as a space of values was articulated with other references as well. In one such case, the participant stated that:

If I have to [...] I would like to move out to Izmir [...] perhaps because I had my childhood and adolescence there, because I have a network [there] [...] otherwise I would not give up Diyarbakır. People of our Diyarbakır are really praiseworthy. They know what humanity is; they know hospitality; they know



values, customs and tradition. Forgive me, I apologise [but] they know honour<sup>340</sup> (F, 49, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D11]).

Other participants pointed at their locality as a symbolic space of one's language/s, or where they can speak mother tongue. One stated that even if she loves Istanbul very much, and is happy with her friends in Ankara where she studies, she does not feel much comfortable there, with a reference to language, in the utterance of which she feels herself at home:

But Diyarbakır, for instance, say Mardin, Antep, when I go to these [cities] I feel comfortable, as if everyone is my relative, as if I know everybody. For example, when I first went to Ankara [for university education] everybody was speaking Turkish. Once, I was in bus, two at the back were speaking Kurdish, I was extremely touched [...] God, how nice it was. I felt so happy. Because I had not heard it for a while [...] I did not want to get off the bus (laughs). [...] I felt like I was in Mardin. (F, 22, Arab/Kurd, Mardin [M16])

Perception of Diyarbakır, Mardin, Antep as both familial and familiar, could be understood with reference to cultural similarity, as well as physical closeness. Her experience in Ankara is striking in revealing how the language, Kurdish here, turned an odd space, the bus, in an alien environment where everybody spoke Turkish, into 'home' one of a sudden. Her 'happiness', 'being touched', 'not wanting to get off the bus' as she heard Kurdish being spoken by total 'strangers' are signs of her identification with the language, turning the strangers into 'familiar' ones. The language itself turned into of home. The symbolic space of the language defined her be-long-ings.

The long historical existence on the lands they inhabit were another reference point of many participants dignifying the space for them. Many participants, regardless of their ethnicity, age, gender or economic welfare, used the expressions of "*our lands*", "*our region*", and "*our geography*" however the boundaries are defined. The reference was sometimes more specifically to

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<sup>340</sup> Apology of the participant reflects a gendered discourse woven in patriarchal language as speaking about sexuality, what the expression 'honour' here signifies, and various implications about it is usually deemed taboo.

‘Mesopotamia’,<sup>341</sup> ‘Tur Abdin’,<sup>342</sup> or ‘Kurdistan’ as historical regions. Images of these regions are important in the collective memories of the Kurds, Arabs and Syriacs. “*Mesopotamia*”, an ancient Greek word, means “[land] between rivers” and refers to the larger area between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. “*Beth Nahrain*” is the Syriac equivalent of the word Mesopotamia and used by many Syriacs in reference to the region. “*Mezrobotan*” is the Kurdish Kurmanjî equivalent of the word. “*Mezopotamya*” is the word used in Turkish as an equivalent and it is used by all the three peoples of the region.<sup>343</sup> Tur Abdin, “Tur” being mountain and “Abdin” servant, means the “mountain of the servants (of God)” and is thought to refer to the monastic life in the region (Özmen, 2006). The name “*Tur Abdin*”, is embraced by the Syriac Orthodox Christians of the region; while Kurds refer to the area as “*Tor*”, the people of the region as “*Tori*” (Özmen, 2006: pp.163). Tur Abdin is important for Syriac/Assyrian people with its countless churches and crucial monasteries, and the fact that Syriac Orthodox patriarchate was here until 1932, when it was moved to Syria. Mardin (Özmen, 2006) and Midyat are part of Tur Abdin.

With or without reference to these historical names, many participants articulated their places of inhabitancy and the south-east Turkey in general as “*authentic lands of ours*”. Locality in these articulations appeared to be a space of indigenosity. Each group has a claim of indigenous belonging to the local/regional territorial space, which is perceived to be (part of) their historical

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<sup>341</sup>Mesopotamia corresponds to modern-day Iraq, the north-eastern section of Syria and to a much lesser extent south-eastern Turkey, smaller parts of south-western Iran and Kuwait. Retrieved from (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesopotamia>).

<sup>342</sup>Although the exact boundaries are argued to be disputed (Özmen, 2006: 161-162), broadly it incorporates the eastern half of Mardin Province, and Şırnak Province west of the Tigris, on the border with Syria. Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tur\\_Abdin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tur_Abdin)

<sup>343</sup>These different usages were articulated in an informal interview by an elderly Kurdish man, who was an esteemed member of one of the biggest *aşirets* in Midyat. Field notes taken in Midyat, July 2011

homeland. The claim is epitomised by the simultaneous expressions of “*this geography belongs to us*” and “*we belong to this geography*” articulated by many individuals from all three groups, that is Syriacs, Arabs and Kurds. Below are some examples of such articulations about ‘being deeply rooted in the locality’:

I was born in Harran town. Harran is already an Arab centre up until the period before the Umayyad and it still is. And for hundreds years... more than a thousand years this is Arab geography and we have accepted it to be so. So I was born in the Arab region. [...] [Would you like to go and live in an Arab country?] Our land is here, this is already Arab region, it has belonged to Arabs for the whole history and it is an Arab geography; I mean either here or an Arab country does not make a difference to me. But I would [rather] like to go for a visit, meet people there and blend with them, or them to come here. (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1])

We were here for 700 years before Christ. Was Urfa not the homeland of Hz. Abraham? Are Arabs not the children of Ishmael of Hz. Abraham? Presence of Arabs here is so natural. Besides, we had been here before Kurds and Turks came. But most interestingly today the voice of the loudest is being heard; Kurdish brothers are now so loud and they are being heard. And as if the east is Kurdistan, consisting only Kurds, but in History Kurds are in Hakkâri region and that region was called Kurdistan. [...] (M, 37, Arab, Urfa [U24])

“*This is already an Arab region*” and “*presence of Arabs here is so natural*” are important expressions of the close link between territory and various forms of be-long-ings. Historical and mythical references with the claim that “*we had been here before*” ‘the others’ reveal the contestation over geography and the tension concerning territorial belongings. Kurdish claims over co-habited territory were a point of concern and reaction for many Arab participants of the research. For various Kurdish participants, on the other hand, it was political violence complicating spatial belongings.

I was born in this country. We are united as hand and nail, we can’t be separated. I can’t break myself off these lands. Mardin is mine! My grandfather was born here, my grandfather’s grandfather was born here, [and] my father was born here. [...] But do I have to trust this state? I don’t! Because, the state have not granted me such trust; it had burnt my villages for years; forced my uncles to be village guards; forced the ones who did not want to be [village guards] out of their villages. (M, 30, Kurd, Mardin [M3])

The participant's expressions "*Mardin is mine*" and reference to the birth place of the paternal lineage<sup>344</sup> as a ground of right to the place are important in revealing the role of space forming be-long-ings, not only individual but also collective. Belonging becomes a birthright, through familial, indeed patriarchal, lineage on the territory. The other references of the participant as "*being united as hand and nail*" through territory not to be separated; and the unlikelihood of breaking oneself "*off these lands*" should be thought in relation to the larger political community and territory as crystallized in the expression "*I was born in this country*". The local territory, yet, is strictly a part of the larger political territory, "*this country*".

The emphasis on territory as intrinsically connected to what one is was openly revealed by almost all Syriac participants. Be-lon-ings, in their multiplicity, were articulated clearly with reference to the indigenous presence in the area. Some of the articulations were as follows:

I always feel I belong here. I always feel safer in here [...] I would not do without Mardin. [...] our values need not to be lost; I mean our religious spaces are very important to us. Everything shall be done to protect them. Because our ancestors have protected them for thousands of years, we should take on that mission at least. For instance, although there is not even one Syriac person in many of the villages, the churches thereof have been restored. They are visited even if once a year; I mean we are not breaking off [our ties with them] we take care of them. Otherwise this much church and building would not survive. [...] For me the homeland is the lands inherited from my ancestors. I mean their history here, traces of them, the reason I am still in here [is that] they had carried me up until today [...] our monasteries, buildings, they are all witnesses to history, they are founded by our ancestors, the civilizations they had established, that is the homeland for me. If I am a Syriac here, I am here a Syriac. I have a value as a Syriac in here. I am nothing in France, in Germany, in Istanbul [...] because these lands are the ones my ancestors had founded, they granted [them] to us. I have this feeling of belonging. [...] If you came here to speak to me, you do it because I am here. [...] I may not have that value in another part of the world or say in [other cities]. You would look for a Syriac of Mardin not a missionary living in France (M, 33, Syriac, Mardin [M28])

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<sup>344</sup> Paternal lineage is important in defining one's collective identity and belongings. I encountered various occasions whereby Kurdishness and likewise Arabness of the person was defined and determined by the father's ethnicity.

We don't ever want to leave it; it [Midyat/Tur Abdin] is our own homeland. Here means history, life, everything. It is the cradle of the civilization. [...] Where shall we go? When we go to Europe, the language is different, the culture is different, and here customs are good. (M, 56, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM37])

This is our... We identify here as our homeland indeed; you know we had been here when Turks were not, is that right? I think our home [Turkey] is so beautiful; really Turkey is a place worth living! When I go and see other places, nay if one goes down it is all poison, Iraq, Iran, Syria... unbearable... after you see those, it is Eden here. [...] My father had a great service to the churches and monasteries [here]. That was the biggest factor for me to come back over here. He said 'go my son, there are churches and monasteries in Mardin, go and take care of them, if you could help do so, you shall do good things'. It has an effect on my coming to Mardin [...] Now, I try to help as much as I can, I am here now and happy to be here. Should people are educated a bit, only if it recovers itself a bit, it would become one of the most beautiful places of the world. That's why I think nobody would like to leave this homeland, where should they go? (M, 53, Syriac, Mardin [M29])

Above narratives are important in revealing a very strong tie linking the indigenous space and the identity. Space in this relation appears as almost an ontological phenomenon. Relation to the space appears as a matter of fact; an effortless, spontaneous, natural relation to the territory and being inherent to it from time immemorial. Indigenous space itself makes the significant belongings. Territory as the inherited homeland has brought the mission of protecting sacred places as the ancestors have done for thousands of years. As the territory is the space of historical material and immaterial belongings; it becomes a means of survival in physical, cultural, symbolic ways. Territory is the space of collective identity and collective memory; as it is the space of meaningful and valuable being for the individual. The larger 'national' territory, on the other hand, is a comparative space with current relative peace and modern opportunities it provides for. Yet in the last quotation, the participants abrupt shift from a discourse of "*we had been here when Turks*" to one of "*our home [Turkey] is so beautiful*" and "*worth living*" unveils the tension of indigenous belongings and unequal status as citizens. This was a tension recurrently articulated during the interviews.

Another point to note in the context of the local being a space of indigenes is that there is an ever more visible and tense contestation over the territorial space of the locale, which might be thought to be a contestation regarding 'overlapping homes' in the claims of the three regarding groups. Not everyone was on equal footing in such contestation, however, and violence could appear as a complicating factor in de-forming be-long-ings. Important in revealing the relation between violence and territorial belonging was the narrative of a Syriac participant:

Now, at the point you ask me [about emigrations] personally, I haven't lived anything that is good or comforting. Asking my father it is the same, asking my grandfather it is the same. Well, nothing to mind is left in this country except for their sanctuaries, for their churches or monasteries. Well, for what shall they feel sorry for leaving this country? Why? Should there be anything normal all through life, only one; each ten years are repeated the same incidents. For sure, some events triggered the migration off; and the man looking behind sees not a sign of light! What is done is done in 1915, after 1915 some people left, how shall they live anymore, how shall they encounter these people? In '20 or '24 another massacre around Hakkâri; Hakkâri was all wiped out of the Assyrians. [Silence] Then in '42 the capital levy, my grandfather served in military for four years, after he turned back he went for the capital levy, the recruitment [as manual workers]. It was not [only] a capital levy then, it was again a cleansing; Ismet Inonu had summoned all the men. Because they did the same in 1915, they took all the men and killed them, after that they implemented it. They would do the same then, I think Russia prevented it that time, it has been said so. I mean in 40s, well just after the capital levy they amassed all the men, said that we will have you built the railways in Aşkale and so, they made us built all the railways. (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

In the face of crude violence ties to the larger political territory and community are weakened, remaining only the bond with the local, indigenous territory as the ancestral space. It is important to note here that the same participant, criticizing the exclusive nationalist discourses and ensuing violence thereof like "*killing in the name of homeland*", claimed that "*homeland means people*", and thus emphasized the importance of peaceful relations and living together for a proper definition of homeland. Homeland is defined beyond the land with reference to positive relations and peaceful existence upon that land. As it is clear above, in presence of violence and its memory the issues of migration and emigration, just

as being minority and citizen, have appeared to be tense matters and caused uneasiness for many participants. They were already there throughout many interviews without being asked; but if asked especially with reference to personal decisions or projections, were more than often faced resentment and rage. This observation should be understood against the historical-political context of movements and migration within the concerned geography, where these were almost always embedded with violence. For people with personal experience or collective memories of forced expulsions or resettlements, both the actual practice of living within that place and movement out of that place become uneasy questions, as it does for the construction of the symbolic space of 'homeland'. When personal experience of violence was less, at least in its direct form, migration and emigration were less complex issues for one to reflect on.

Pointing at the relation between violence and migration, another instance was the reflection on the fact of internal 'migration'. Especially in Diyarbakır it was almost only understood as 'forced migration'. People felt the urge to explain that in their case it was 'not migration, but...' all meaning that they were not forced to get out of their villages but 'decided' to do so. The open confrontation that the displaced people had to go through with the state security forces and the destitute conditions they had to endure in the host city seem to play role in the refusal of the appellation. Thus, migration became often a classed, ethnicized, at times criminalized process for many, even for those who are themselves poor, Kurd, and migrants to the city. Reasons for 'coming to the city' in these cases were mentioned to be economic problems, family/community dispute, and/or criminal act/*aşiret* force. In another case, the participant told that after marriage they had to live the village first because they did not inherit lands to live by, first went to town then came to the city. The motivation was to find more resources to be able to establish a life for the nuclear family. When I asked the date of their "migration", his wife interfered saying "*it would not be called migration; we have left the [parental] house*" ["*Ona göç denmez yani, evin üzerine ayrıldık*"] (F, Kurd, mid-30s, Diyarbakır [D14]). Apparently, the term migration referred to forced migration and migration out of economic reasons, for instance, is

regarded as a more ordinary process. Even no migration is so spontaneous, voluntary or straightforward; the absence of direct and overt ‘force’, eases the perception of the movement. Moreover, in the decisive conditions of poverty and economic exclusion, migration to Europe for better life opportunities becomes an option, if only at an imaginary level. Asked about that option, a participant noted *“if there was work, I would like to go to Europe, because an easier life, to leave a better future to our children”* (M, 41, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D13]); while his spouse implied that it was not a real option in case conditions at ‘home’ got better *“if only they give us a house, establish work, besides our children shall not be humiliated this much”* (F, Kurd, mid-30s, Diyarbakır [D14]). ‘Home’ basically referred to locality in many cases, yet in order to be a real home it awaited inclusion to the larger political territory as its inhabitants did so to the larger political community.

One crucial point to be made both methodologically and theoretically about migration is that I, somewhat normally within the framework of this study, only interviewed with people actually living in the locality, asking them if they have ever wished to leave. But the fact is that there are also those who had already left, and thus are not there in the locality anymore. Once being the part of that very locality, they are still important in a few ways. One is that they are a crystallized example of those breaking points where people opted to leave ‘home’. Home here stands for the places, relations, and emotions. Things came together to make them decide to undertake the action; and experience of violence or the threat thereof were crucial among those ‘things’. Their leave can be read as lacking and/or tense moments of be-long-ings. The absence is the reminder of those moments to the ones who stayed or had to stay behind. So those who had gone are indeed still there, invisibly though, and have their role in construction of belongings. The other is that social capital moves out with people moving out, as I already noted elsewhere in this dissertation, meaning that all those networks of relations that provided accumulated wealth, knowledge, and knowhow; socialization patterns, emotional support, and role models; or transmission of



culture and collective memory are also gone. The remainders as a whole are left with such 'absence'. These may have repercussions for the remainders especially when thought in terms of being a community, especially in the case of Syrians, like getting smaller in numbers, in economic and social assets, and in terms of power relations. Important to note is that when conditions of life are violent to a degree that people think they can't bear it they move on –migrate/emigrate- if they have the resources; those who don't have the resources, however, may tend to put up with the situation. This certainly leads to a degree of 'bias', through resentment, rationalization, or any other cause. Thus, such bias of still living there in the locality should also always be taken into account to grasp the formation of current be-long-ings.

One crucial manifestation of the perception of being deeply rooted in the locality is the intense identification with the place, where locality appears almost as an *embodied space*. In some interviews, participants gave detailed accounts of the names of the specific places, their past and present ethno-religious composition, with a reference to the geographic characteristics of those places, and even relating them to the personal characteristics of people living in those places. Many participants frequently referred to such expressions connoting local geographical/territorial belonging. One broad categorization<sup>345</sup> in Mardin, for instance, was “*Berivani*” [lowlander in Kurdish; Turkish equivalent is “*ovalı*”]; and “*Çiyayî/Çayî*” [highlander in Kurdish; meaning “*dağlı*” in Turkish, but Turkish form is not used as an equivalent per se]. “*Çiyayî/Çayî*” was a general expression in Mardin, which could be sub-categorized as: “*the barren side of the mountain*” [denoting Ömerli/Omari area in Mardin]; “*the river side of the mountain*” [denoting Surgiçi area in Mardin]; “*Dori*” [highlander in Arabic; Syriac equivalent is “*Turi*”]; denotes the Midyat (Mardin) -Cizre (Şırnak) area]; “*Deştî*” [plateau in Kurdish, denotes the geographical place of Mazıdağı area of

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<sup>345</sup> The categorization, the meanings and denotations were uttered during my fieldwork in Mardin, by a PhD student, who is from Mardin, in our discussions on the field. Fieldnotes taken in Mardin, July, 2011.

Mardin]. It was also stated that there are many such names denoting small regions even composing of a few villages sometimes; which are almost attributed sacredness by their inhabitants, for some of whom the scope of territorial belonging is not so large and might even be limited to that small region of villages.<sup>346</sup> Another sign of the local belongings being already highly territorialised may be that many groups or *aşirets* are named with reference to the place of their inhabitancy. Conception of territory, moreover, is shaped through historical regional and sub-regional names and borders even to a degree that the present official boundaries of the administrative districts, be them city, sub-region, or region, do not mean much. One can easily hear Kurdish people speaking about “*Xerzan*”, “*Botan*”, “*Serhed*”, “*Amed*”, or “*Dersim*” regions, for instance. In all these examples, the relation of collective memory, territory, and be-long-ings becomes apparent, turning locality into an embodied space.

Another form of locality appearing as embodied space is revealed in the identification of people with the geographic figures, characteristics, and territory itself. One clear expression of it came from a participant in Midyat in an articulation of the features of Tur Abdin region with reference to the terms “*Tur*” [mountain in Syriac] and “*Turyuyo*”<sup>347</sup> [hillman/highlander in Syriac]. “*Turyuyo*”, he said, was used to denote both the language being spoken in the Tur Abdin area, and the manners and attitude of the Syriac people thereof. Embracing the connotations of “*Turyuyo manners*”, he said “*our head is stiff [just like the mountain], but I am happy with this; if I am reborn, I would wish to be like that*” (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36]). Indeed, difference in terms of characteristics of the highlander and lowlander were perceived to be so clear, sometimes converging with ethnicity, that a Kurdish participant, himself having highlander origin, claimed for Arabs, who “*inhabited the plain*” that

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<sup>346</sup> Geography Department, Dicle University, Field notes taken in Diyarbakır, 15.2.2011

<sup>347</sup> Wikipedia mentions that “the Assyrian/Syriac people of Tur Abdin call themselves *Suroye* and *Suryoye* and traditionally speak a central Neo-Aramaic dialect called *Turoyo*”. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tur\\_Abdin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tur_Abdin))

*“they cannot survive on the mountain”* (M, 56, Kurd, Mardin [M13]). In another case, strength of the stones and the people were likened in that Diyarbakır, both the city and the people, despite the whole indifference and bad treatment stood on their *“own foot only because they are so strong”* (F, 57, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D16]). The strength of the city was due to its *“stones”*:

Do you know how strong the stones of Diyarbakır are? These black stones my dear. These black stones [Basalt] absorb cold in the winter. Doesn't make you cold, not, if you are inside it doesn't make you cold. And absorb heat in the summer. And in summer it's hot. The head of Diyarbakır [people] is just like these stones, retains its strength against everything, it is strong. Well, strong as these stones, because they are people who are grown up on these stones. (F, 57, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D16])

Identification between the local territory, stones, and people in their resilience and toughness is important in revealing strong spatial belongings. A very similar focus came from another participant talking about the burnt forests, who stated *“these oaks are not like their pine trees, their roots are so deep, as you destroy they will green again, they are as tenacious as Kurds are”* (M, 43, Kurd, Mardin [M6]). The expressions about *“our oaks”* versus *“their pine trees”*, referring respectively to Kurdish and Turkish landscape, is important in revealing the perceived boundaries. Identification of trees with stubbornness of Kurds, on the other hand, is critical in terms of local spatial belongings, as the participant reclaims the space as his/Kurds' own, and not necessarily part of the larger national territory. His expression *“there is, indeed, an inner country, ours... that we thought belonged to us”* (M, 43, Kurd, Mardin [M6]) is an overt expression of such perception. In another case, the participant in response to where was home/land for her stated that *“homeland is my own identity, my own land, my stone. Believe me I had not preferred the joy and pleasure of Izmir [when I lived there] to my mountain”* (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3]). In yet another case, the participant defined homeland for her as *“my water, land, trees”* (F, 45, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D6]). Relation of Kurds to the land itself was narrated also as being strong and natural, this time by a Turk in Mardin, mostly referring to soil as a means of production. She compared the relation of Arabs to land with that of

Kurds, whereby it is “*mostly a wealth asset, a relation of affluence*” for the former, whereas “*relation of Kurds to land is a relation of existence, sort of attachment to the soil, owning the land, perhaps affected by being the most crowded nation on earth that does not have its own state, they establish rather a rooted relation with the land. They take root on soil and want to own it*” (F, late 30s, Turk, Mardin [M25]). In all these cases, what is clearly visible is a strong local spatial belonging, whether with references to historical, imagined, and symbolic homeland, or to actual social, economic, and geographical relations.

Such identification of territory and people was also mentioned by others especially within context of nationalist thought and movements. Etherington (2010: 326) refers to the emphasis of many nationalist movements on “the intimate relationship between nation and the physical characteristics of the land, such as climate, geographical or geo-strategic position, shape and so forth that are said to affect the character of the people”. Many places become sites of national importance in this process. The two major ways in which nation and territory are linked in, accordingly, are that physical features of the land are directly incorporated into national identity, or territory and other elements of national identity such as culture, language, common myths and history are fused together by a nationalist interpretation of the land (Etherington, 2010). Guibernau (2007) also argues that territory, people’s primary source of nourishment a crucial component of the nation’s wealth, achieves a completely different meaning when turned into landscape as it is turned into a symbol of the nation which embodies traditions, ideas, aspirations and sentiments, some of which evoke a strong sense of national belonging.

Findings of this research, too, reveal that relation with the space and meanings attributed to the landscape are visibly important in forming belongings. What was disclosed in this part, moreover, is that locality and not the larger national territory is crystallized as the primary element of identification at all levels and for all groups. Accordingly, the patterns defining the experiences of locality as

well as the meanings attributed to it, as was detailed up to this point, may be classified as the following: *locality as a space of values and religion*; *locality as a space of language and culture*; *locality as the space of social capital*; *locality as the space of indigenesness*; and *locality as a space of identification and embodiment*. All these meanings and experiences enable a conceptualisation of the locality ‘*as the dignified space*’. However, there are other experiences of the locality, which turn it into a contested space of violence. Below, I will engage in defining that space.

### **6.3.2.2. Locality as the Contested Space of *Violated Be-long-ings***

In many interviews, the image of the locality as a safe inner space was challenged with reference to such issues as “*fear*”, “*poverty*”, “*threat*”, “*death*”, “*confiscation*”, “*displacement*”, “*exclusion*”, “*evacuation*”, and “*expulsion*”. Bearing upon those articulations, this chapter argues that it was all four forms of political, collective, structural and symbolic violence complicating the experience of locality as “a decent, safe and salubrious place” (Trudeau, 2006: 423). Experience and memory of war, displacements, and the conditions of state of emergency were important factors conditioning belongings in their various forms, and the relation with the territorial space. In brief, what came out of the research within this context was that locality turned to be ‘*a space of violated belongings*’. How such violation was realized could be summarized as follows: the relation of the individual to her inhabited territory and the environment was ruptured through forced migrations, evacuations of villages, devastation of the nature such as burning of forests; inhabited territory was transformed into a space of everyday violence and surveillance; relation of the individual to collective memory was ruptured by the inhibition of memory transfer through dislocation and dispersal of community members, extermination of the lived/inherited spaces, and change of habitual patterns of living. In these, violation of existing spatial belongings appears to have brought, simultaneously,

the damage of accumulated social capital, sources of subsistence, and symbolic belongings.

Dispossession, loss of property and livelihood was a common experience of many who had gone through the evacuations of villages. Many participants, who were forcibly displaced, mentioned that they had to leave their fields behind; lost their sheep, goats and cattle or had to sell them underpriced; that their houses were burnt with everything in. It is not long part of 'history' for many, since they are still living in the conditions of deprivation, and fear of any similar experience should they return to their villages. Despite the Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project launched in 1994, the perceived uncertainty and feeling of insecurity impeded people to return to their village. A participant revealed such fear clearly stating:

All [our] fields are left there [in the village], they are all there still. Our village consists of twenty households; go now you will see all are wrecked, nobody goes. Should this [Kurdish] problem be solved, everybody would go. At that time, they burnt all and sent us here; what if they shall again come and burn, why I shall go and built a house to no avail. If this problem was solved, everybody would go and built a house; because it is embedded in the person... (M, 50, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D8])

As it is apparent above, feelings of anger, anxiety, fear, resentment, distance, lack of confidence imbued the narrations in many such cases. Dislocation is always a matter of dispossession as it was clearly revealed above. Economic destruction often continued where migrants had ended, struggling to establish new lives yet being exposed to new forms of violence. Below are two quotations where we can see examples of such violation.

[I]n 93, I was a child [...] not yet having seen much, we were drifted apart from our village [in Muş], our culture, from all of ours. [...] why were we? Why did we come here, why was I excluded? [...] we came here [Urfa]; yet, they did not rent a house to us. We've gone through all this. (F, 36, Kurd, Urfa, FG3 [K1])

Many, who were forced out of their villages, left all their sources of livelihood, subsistence, and houses behind. Still, it was not only the material belongings, but also the intangible, moral, communitarian values and spatial belongings at stake. Expressions of being “*drifted apart from*” one’s “*village*”, “*culture*”, indeed “*all of [theirs]*” and the apparent wish to return back to one’s village that is “*embedded in the person*”, as they were articulated above, are examples of the process. Moreover, long residence in an area would contribute social capital through multiplying and tightening social relations, expanding trust, mutuality, and solidarity. This is another reason why forced migration should be seen as a violent act, as it cuts individual or a community from established social capital available to them, or inhibits further social capital to form.

Another example of struggling to establish a new life in the city came from a participant (F, 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D4]), whose brother and maternal uncles returned to their village<sup>348</sup> after “*the government has permitted it*”, yet she and her husband could not return, since they had no land of their ‘own’ and no money to build a house. The land was owned by the men of the family. It is important to note that the participant and her husband were once called on, by her brother and maternal uncles to come back to ‘their’ village when they were in Adana for a year to work. They did so and spent their savings to build a house on the land of her brother. Then all were burnt and they became renters in Diyarbakır. She, as a woman, seems to have not inherited any land of the paternal family, since she refers “*yes, we love the village, but it is not ours, it belongs to my brothers. As it is not ours... No good from the people. [...] It belongs to my [maternal] uncles*” (F, 40s, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D4]). She defines the village where she was born and bred and where all her family members lived as of not her own, since village means land -to build a house and to cultivate- and she has no right to land of her own. Within this context my question asking “do you long for the village?” interrogating the aftermath of the evacuation, was

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<sup>348</sup> A village of Diyarbakır

relegated to be 'meaningless'. Longing for was defined through belongings/possessions. Sense of be-longing was challenged in the absence of property. Belonging appeared to be more than a 'sense' and was underlined through its material base. Not only state violence -burning of the village, forced displacement and dispossession- but also structural violence -conditions of poverty, patriarchal norms of inheritance, and ill physical health- set the stones of that material base of be-long-ing/s for the participant. Be-long-ing/s, thus, also were engendered.

It was not only the Kurds, but also the Christian people of the region as well, who were affected by the displacements, evacuations and/or burning of villages. Many Syriac and Chaldean villages were also evacuated in the process. One participant (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]) stated that "*most of our community was exiled during the evacuation of villages, they could not even come here [to Mardin], [but fled for] Europe, most Chaldean villages in Cizre, Şırnak, Hakkâri, Siirt, Diyarbakır, Mardin*". Anger, anxiety, fear, resentment and distance in his manner and voice in telling these are understandable when it is thought there are only "*three Chaldean families left in Mardin now*", while he remembers that only "*in 1968 the Church<sup>349</sup> was full of Chaldeans of Mardin*" (M, 51, Syriac, Mardin [M33]). Such a huge transformation, indeed loss, in such a short period is sure traumatic in terms of its consequences for the community. In these cases, however, it was not only the state, but also the other groups, Kurds and Arabs, involved in the process of violation, both in paramilitary forms and more mundane acts of appropriation of belongings of the Christian populations. A participant articulated the process of such violation with reference to the 1990s when death and threat of death was everywhere within everyday life:

People were expelled in this way, [Syriac] villages of Midyat were full then, they were full... After the villagers had gone, pro-state people [village guards]

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<sup>349</sup> Mardin Catholic Chaldean Church



came and settled on our belongings. We don't have land registries, now cadastre<sup>350</sup> started [in the villages] for 5-10 years, each side claiming [the belongings] to be theirs. All the world knows that they are Syriac villages, Syriacs were there and no Muslims. The state sidesteps, too, and they build mosques in our fields, occupy our houses and not move out [...] Forget about the lands not being ploughed for ten years, they are confiscated by the Treasury<sup>351</sup>. They become belongings of the Forestry<sup>352</sup>. We have problems in each village with [the State] Treasury, with the [General Directorate of] Forestry, [and] with Muslims. We have problems with these three groups in our own lands, on our own property and estate. If you lodge a complaint against them [the occupier villagers], you became enemies; if not, you are forfeited your estate. (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

As it is revealed above, contestation over the territorial space was not only at a discursive but also at a material level in the form of land disputes; appropriation of evacuated lands, villages, constructions, or other belongings. With reference to the Indian nation-state with relation to the Muslim-owned and Muslim-inhabited properties and Pakistan state with relation to the properties of Hindu and Sikh minorities Daiya (2008) shows how property becomes critical and contested site in the production of the new nations. Throughout this dissertation many cases revealed that a similar process took place regarding the non-Muslim property in the mentioned places. Armenian, Syriac, and Chaldean individual or community properties were appropriated by various individuals, *aşirets*, and the state itself. In many cases, Kurds and other Muslims were witnesses and collaborators of the state acts, and the collective memory of this is alive in the region. Interestingly, yet, here 'ethnicization' of the property is intricate and Kurdification and Turkification of the lands and property are simultaneous, whether as allies or as rivals.

One recent dispute over the belongings of Christian population, took place after the cadastral work in Midyat in 2008, when headmen of three Kurdish villages

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<sup>350</sup> By the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre

<sup>351</sup> Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Under-Secretariat of Treasury

<sup>352</sup> Republic of Turkey General Directorate of Forestry

applied to the Treasury with the claim that Mor Gabriel Monastery in Midyat was occupying the lands of the villagers. On January 2011 the Turkish Supreme Court expropriated hectares of land of Mor Gabriel Monastery and appropriated it to the State (Atto, 2011). The Supreme Court decided in July 2013 that the estate of Mor Gabriel Monastery belonged to the Treasury. However, the issue of returning the Non-Muslim Foundations' belongings, was included in the so-called 'democratization package' of the government; and in October 2013 Council of Foundation<sup>353</sup> decided the return of the lands of Mor Gabriel Monastery.<sup>354</sup>

Atto reveals the importance of Monastery for Assyrians/Syriacs with regard to the reaction unfolding after the event. People from all over Europe came together in Berlin to speak out for the survival of Mor Gabriel Monastery, with a shared sense in their hearts and expression on their lips "I am the daughter/son of Mor Gabriel' in Suryoyo (*Ono u abro/bartho d-Mor Gabriel no*)" (Atto, 2011: 2). The "shock" that Assyrians/Syriacs went through led to the biggest event ever organized in their history in Europe with the urge to catch the attention of the international audience. Reception of the event by the Syriac people in Diaspora with reference to their perception, fears, attachment, and meanings attributed to the Monastery was well revealed by Atto (2011: 5-6) whereby the Monastery stood as "an important symbolic centre for Christianity"; "embodies the roots of Assyrians/Syriacs in their homeland, the symbol of their rootedness"; "the connection to the homeland"; "a symbol in the conscious development of a myth of survival". Accordingly, the loss of Mor Gabriel Monastery would mean that they "will be permanently cut off from Tur 'Abdin, which is considered as the very heart and hearth of their homeland"; "will be deprived of their relationship with their historical artefacts in the homeland"; "will no longer be able to say

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<sup>353</sup>Turkish Republic Prime Ministry Directorate General of Foundations

<sup>354</sup> Retrieved from [http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/150468-mor-gabriel-arazisi-vakfa-iade-edildi?bia\\_source=bia-email](http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/150468-mor-gabriel-arazisi-vakfa-iade-edildi?bia_source=bia-email) accessed on 7. 10. 2013

who their parents were and where their roots lie”, “the hope of the continuation of their existence as a distinct people will have been irrevocably snatched from them”; “the last remaining Assyrians/Syriacs lingering in the homeland will also be forced to flee and seek refuge in the Diaspora”; they will be “cut off from the *athro* (homeland) both physically (because of living in the Diaspora) and symbolically (by ceding their ancient monastery to the ‘others’)”; they will “eventually be absorbed, disappear, and extinct as a people”; and it will be “the end of Christianity in Turkey” (Atto, 2011: 6-7). Atto (2011) refers to Assyrians/Syriacs as a people who have never ceased to express their distinct collective identity and maintain it even in the Diaspora. Still important to grasp the tension in forming spatial belongings for Syriac people is Atto’s (2011) reminder that especially the older generation refer to their position back in the homeland as that of “*yasire* (hostages)”, while they see themselves as “orphans (*yatume*)” in the Diaspora. Seen within such perspective, the extent of the trauma experienced by the people concerning the Mor Gabriel Monastery land dispute is much visible. The Monastery and in general the region referred to as Tur Abdin are crucial in the maintenance of collective identity, memory, and be-long-ings not only for the Syriac in Turkey, but also in Diaspora. Those in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon were also mentioned by the Mardin Syriac Kadim Orthodox Church Leader to “*come and visit here*”, which is “*a core centre*” for all Syriacs.

Appropriation of Christian belongings took place not only in rural area and after 1990s displacements; but well in the city space and recurrently at different periods. One participant articulated how he perceives himself, and the Syriac community in Mardin with connotations of deprivation and dispossession, and with reference to the decreasing number of Syriac people in Mardin. Below is a highly spatialised articulation of self-perception in the background of local power relations and representations:

Do you know how I define myself even today? One day I say, one day if you, passing by a city, see a ruined house neither having a roof or a ceiling... we neither have a roof that could protect us from the hot or the cold, nor a floor that

could keep us standing on our foot. The right and left walls of ours are demolished; the only wall of ours is yet leaned against the wall of a Muslim neighbour. S/he keeps it just because of her own shame; but keeps telling a ridiculous story called tolerance. She just holds our wall. Those are us, we are a collapsed house, and nobody could explain it to me another way. We are not a chateau. We are not a mansion, either. The melodies of tolerance, you see, hear or listen to, have no relevance. We have twelve churches, we barely crowd one church. They shall not mention us about tolerance; we [now] have demolished houses and a demolished community, there are the demolishers and there are the demolished. This is us! (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27])

The narrative importantly provides a highly abstracted representation of a silenced history of the forced acquisition of properties, whereby loss of possessions, social capital, and community appear to be critical factors in construction of be-long-ings. Criticism of the discourse of ‘tolerance’ as already mentioned in the previous chapters is also visible here. Transformation of the cultural and linguistic space of the locality, as well as the demographic transformation as a consequence of the large numbers of Christians fleeing the region and the country, was articulated also in the context of Midyat. Locality becoming ‘a space of fear’ and ‘a space of defence’ was well articulated below with regard to the co-existence of ethno-religious communities in Midyat and Mardin. A challenge of the discourse of tolerance, both official and more local, is also visible in the following:

Unilateral peace is always Fear!<sup>355</sup> We were almost always at defence, even [being] in defence we have difficulties today. Well, life in defence [silence] to be honest, not [safe] in the summer, because we sleep outside in the courtyard, but only in the winter after locking the door ‘ohhh I feel safe’. ... Is this life? Is this the tolerance? Is this brotherhood? ... Live aside those plates, stating [Midyat is] ‘the city of religions and languages’, all are lie! Whoever tells it, he is lying. Midyat is not a city of religions. Midyat was the city of a religion, they did it religions, will again be [one] religion; Midyat was a city of language, [they] did it languages, will be [one] language!<sup>356</sup> ... Anybody coming outside

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<sup>355</sup> The emphasis on the problems of ‘unilateral peace’ was articulated, during the interviews, by many Kurds vis-à-vis the relation with Turks, which means there are always unequal power relations among these groups and between them and the dominant one.

<sup>356</sup> His conception is that, Midyat have been changed from, predominantly, a city of Christianity, to a city of co-existence of Islam and Christianity; and now is tried to be turned into a city of

looks at the signs and [thinks] ‘ahh it is lovely, this is Turkey’. What is Turkey? In Turkey, all throughout Turkey, the future of any Christian throughout Turkey is not clear. It is also for the Alevis, for the communists, for the leftists now, and was always so for the Jews... It is me who must say these. I anyhow do not attack you. I don't long to appropriate your possessions. I don't kidnap your wife, neither do I your daughter. So what? Ask me, I do experience these! For sure you [owners of the discourse of toleration] live in tolerance, [but] not me! (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

Multiple forms of violation - collective, symbolic, gendered, or political- are clearly articulated in the above narrative. Criticism of the discourses on “*tolerance*”, “*brotherhood*”, and Mardin as “*the city of religions and languages*” indicate symbolic violence re-presenting the factuality in a distorted and misleading manner. The narrative also indicates a perception of absence of mutuality in maintaining ‘peace’ in all the social and political relations the Syriac people have. Peace here refers to inter-communal relations as well as the relations with the state, which is believed not to have come “*for a thousand years, a thousand four hundred years [which, all through that time] was always unilateral*”, with Christians willing for it and acting with due respect. “*Unilateral peace always is fear*” is a critically important expression in revealing a lack of ‘positive peace’, which causes an experience of “*life in defence*” whereby danger may be unexpected and untimely. The participant asked where he felt himself the safest and in peace replied as follows:

In Europe! If you take it as a person, that's in Europe. But I did not prefer [to emigrate]. Well, I reconcile myself to be insulted here but not to die in Europe. I only will lose my life here, but there will I many things. Why should I live in Europe? In a foreign country, where education level is very high, you will have many loses till you catch up with it. [...] Not easy to live in a foreign country, let alone Europe. But as a human being, not because of religion, it is the most comfortable; you may sleep in the middle of the street, no problem! (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35])

When thought it in relation to what the participant said above about the insecurity of sleeping in the courtyard of his house in Midyat ‘sleeping in the

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Islam. It might be seen even more complicated regarding the language, since, currently Kurdish, Arabic, Syriac, and Turkish are the spoken languages.

middle of the street in Europe with no problem' is quite an important contrast. Fear of violence in the locality, as in uneasiness even at one's own courtyard, points at the degree that cosiness of 'home', as any idealization of it, was complicated. Similar accounts were articulated by Kurds, in relation to political violence. Below is one such articulation, where the intimate space of home turns into one of anxiety and fear:

As [other] people living freely in their country, here we shall live so; why do we not? Why are we, in our own country, own home, afraid of sleeping? Whenever the door is knocked at night, we all rush to the door, wondering what had happened. Why they have got no such fear there? (F, 56, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D3])

Longing for decent, safe, and supporting places to live is apparent in above narratives, whereby just the opposite is experienced in the current circumstances. Such experiences feeds the perception of discrepancy in the wider political territory of the alleged 'nation' and leads to the sense of being far off, if not wholly excluded from it. A discourse of 'difference', in an extreme form, of the region was claimed to be caused by media representations, legislations, and official policies, whereby it is formed almost as a criminal space, of utmost violence, vandalism, and terror. With reference to the change in the Penal Code in 2005, some experts noted that "*the region turned into almost a criminal region*" with "*the difference between the one in the mountain and the one in the plain being blurred*"<sup>357</sup>. Yet the re-presentation was not only limited to the armed conflict or the Kurdish issue, but also included various instances of everyday life phenomena. Both in material and discursive ways the locality turns to be a space of violence.

One pattern, which locality becoming a space of violence leads to, is a re-appropriation of local space through developing a protective attitude towards it, defining locality as 'a space of struggle', or being identified even becoming one with the geographic and natural space. Below is a narrative whereby such re-

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<sup>357</sup>Expert Interviews in Mardin and Diyarbakır.

appropriation might be seen, as the participant articulated on being outside the locality. She “*never*” felt peaceful in the West and has “*a strange phobia*” when she was “*out of Diyarbakır*”. Locality, in this case, turns into ‘a space to take care of’:

Whenever I go out of Diyarbakır [...] I have the feeling that something will happen to Diyarbakır. I won't find it when I return back, or something will happen and I won't be able to return back. Say for instance a coup d'état will be staged and I won't be able to enter into those lands again. See, I don't think [...] that I am in a safer place, what I feel is: why am I not there? Or how can I return there? [Is this because you feel as a stranger where you are?] No [...] I feel it like a home that I must protect. The land, it is about the land, or what I feel about these lands. It does not have a logical explanation. There is no logical explanation for your eyes getting wet when you look at a mountain. It is just a mountain, mountains are everywhere in the world. It is stone, nothing about it one may think. But it is something different; you see even the stars to be different, for instance. It smells different. Because you attribute a different meaning [to it]; it turns the witness of your collective sorrow. (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12])

The land, mountains and stars becoming personified; the sense of sharing sorrow; and the protective attitude towards the ‘home’ left behind, could well be compared to the perceptions of people in Diaspora towards their place of origin (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Bearing such comparison in mind, one can argue that being away from the local space, and especially being in the West, becomes for some people a very similar experience of being in Diaspora.

Another participant articulated his witness of the burnt and evacuated villages and forests. His visit to the village of his father's uncle, whereby he spent lots of time in his childhood, was the specific place in this case:

The house, all has been burnt! The trees! We used to have all sort of fruits thereof. [...] walnuts, pomegranates, mulberries, [...] apricots, plums, whatever you can imagine! Them, they burnt all! [...] Everywhere in the world, there are forest fires, but everywhere in the world there is the right to put the fire out. We did not have the right to put the fire out in our forests! The woods are burning, but you cannot go and put it out. They say to us, everywhere in the world, burning a single tree is a crime against humanity [...] Gosh! No single one goes and puts it off?! Was that so? Are we idiots? Or are we enemies of the nature? No, one must not have put it out. We knew who put them in fire; the ones who

did not want anybody to hide within the woods. But we also knew whenever something [important for the state] happens, how all the planes, the fire-fighting helicopters, and others tried to put the fire out. The forests on the other side of the Euphrates; our woods were orphans just as we were. [...] the oak, the others, poor of them [...] We were solacing ourselves saying that these oaks are not like their pine trees, their roots are so deep, as you destroy they will green again, they are as tenacious as Kurds... (M, 43, Kurd, Mardin [M6])

Identifying with the forests and trees that are imagined to be as persistent and resistant as Kurds, in this case, not only attributes a symbolic importance of the local territorial space, but reclaims that space as one's own. In this sense, local space is reconstructed to be 'Kurdish territorial space', increasingly drawing away from the 'Turkish territorial space'. The utterance of the expression of "*the other side of the Euphrates*", which connotes the 'East', 'the South-East', 'the Kurdish geography' in the popular and official discourse, despite his being on 'this side of the Euphrates' in Diyarbakır at the time of utterance, may be taken to reverse the inherently discriminatory discourse and serve to the reconstruction of the space as one's own. Moreover, one should note that there also take place a rather collective reconstruction of the space through formations of alternative collective belongings and socio-spatial networks; as well as material and discursive re-appropriation of the space through back-naming, recalled memories, collective practices, and everyday relations. These follow, especially, the politics of belonging articulated by the Kurdish political movement.

The local space turning into 'a space of struggle' as was revealed with reference to "the resistant trees" above, also came to fore in other narratives. An obvious articulation of it came from a Syriac participant, who responded the question where he was feeling himself at home and in peace, stating that "*we have struggled enough to live here. We are one of the cornerstones of it. I mean our children, us, our youth, here, Mardin is special to us*" (M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27]). Yet another articulation of Mardin being a space of struggle reflected the tension of migrating/emigrating versus staying. The participant stated that "*a very small number of Syriac people are left, you know. Perhaps they would have liked to move out too, but they had stayed, thanks God they have stayed. At least*



*they had taken care of the churches and the monasteries. If they had gone also, here would have been lost totally*” (M, 53, Syriac, Mardin [M29]). One further articulation came from a participant who left Midyat/Mardin at the age of 13 lived five years in Istanbul, and then migrated to Sweden with his family where he lived 23years before returning home to Midyat nine years ago at the time of the interview.

I mean most of my life has passed outside. And we came to such awareness; wherever we go there are problems. Wherever we live there are problems. All peoples have problems. We can never escape of those problems totally, wherever we go. Seeing it is so, we shall solve our problems living in our own land. If ever we will die, we shall die here. (M, 49, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM36])

The experience of living “*outside*” and “*awareness*” of the problems anywhere, locality became a space of preference, a space for solution for one’s problems, a space of struggle, survival, and eventual death. The link established between one’s “*own problems*”, and “*own land*” to seek a way out for them, or else “*die here*” is important in revealing the depth of territorial belongings, especially thought in the context of return migration.

The notion of struggle was articulated by Arab participants as well. A participant, this time regarding the unequal opportunities and cultural differences between West and East, stating that “*the young there is more inclined to take initiation, here they are not either because of the family structure or the socio-economic conditions here, to be a young there is more advantageous. But, still, to struggle here is better than everything else*” (M, 24, Arab, Urfa [U3]).

I should note here that violation of local space here is not only understood with regard to political, collective or symbolic violence, but also to structural violence as well. Poverty accompanying the consequences of other forms of violence, especially if they were experienced directly, limits one’s opportunities even greater and may lead to a loss of hope in the future. The idea that “*we are*

*suffering in our own home*” (F, Kurd, Diyarbakır, Informal Group Interview) was a widespread one among many participants. Indicating the role of economic exclusion and absence of social capital, moreover, it came out of the expert interviews that there were “*people not even going out of their houses, because of poverty and loss of trust*”.<sup>358</sup> Interviews with institutions, especially in Diyarbakır, showed that many institutions were specifically concerned with enabling people come out of their homes, and, thus, are organized and plan their policies with that specific concern in mind. The women and the poor are the specific targets in this context. I visited centres, for instance, which aimed at helping women to be productive and ideally make money out of that productivity, while at the same can wash up and have their children in the nursery. The latter two enable women spend more time at those centres; while at the same time make some basic needs available to people who cannot afford them in their houses, such as laundry machines. The effort to keep the poor, the deprived, the women in the loop points at a real problem, whereby neither the locality, here the city space, nor their home can provide the safe and secure place for some people.

Above locality appeared to be a contested space of violated be-long-ings, a space of fear and anxiety, of threat and death, of displacement, confiscation, and loss, of poverty, gendered discrimination and patriarchal dominance, as well as of space of resistance, of struggle and taking care of, and of material and discursive re-appropriation. It should well be added that in previous chapters I have already depicted how inter-group or within-group tensions woven around the class, ethnicity, urban-rural, migrant-local split could well converge with spatial segregation turning locality into a space of fissures.

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<sup>358</sup> Expert Interview, Diyarbakır

### 6.3.3. Continuous Space across the Border

The last critical territorial space in terms of defining belongings, within the context of my study, came to appear as the trans-border space. Urfa and Mardin, being at the Turkish state border with Syria,<sup>359</sup> and Diyarbakır bordering the two cities in the north, are affected by the very existence of the border and by the space beyond the border, in all political, social, cultural and economic ways. The Turkish-Syrian border was defined with agreements signed between Turkey and France in 1921, 1926 and 1939.<sup>360</sup> The border divided continuous social, economic, cultural and political spaces, as well as families, villages, *aşirets*, cities, and peoples to two separate sides. In the existence of such bifurcation, proximity to Syria, Iraq, Iran borders; to other Middle Eastern countries; and very recently to the Kurdistan Regional Government added diverse dimensions to articulation of belongings in terms of the everyday life, opportunity structures, social capital, identifications, and contestation over territorial space.

In the field research, trans-border relations and identifications appeared as an important conditioning context in terms of political territorial belonging. The experience of people living on the border; their social and economic relations across the border; and the meanings they attribute to the border and the trans-

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<sup>359</sup> At the time of my fieldwork, the war in Syria had just started. The cities in which I conducted research were not yet much affected by the fleeing refugees and other consequences. Still, I witnessed a young woman and her five-year-old daughter taking refuge in acquaintances in Mardin.

<sup>360</sup> Concerning the historical background of trans-border migration Bruinessen (2012) states that the first waves of migration took place in the wake of the First World War, after the settlement of the Turkish-Syrian border and when France established its authority in the Syrian Jazira. Christians of various church affiliations chose to live just across the border, under French rule. In the mid-1920s, the suppression of the Sheikh Said revolt in Turkey led to the flight of Kurdish tribesmen across the border (including tribes that paid heed to the government's call to oppose the rebellion). Qamishli and the surrounding villages became like a mirror image of the Tur Abdin: we find the same communities on both sides of the border, but after eighty years or more of separate existence, these communities have grown somewhat apart and have different memories of their common past. (Bruinessen, 2012: 7-8).

border were important elements of such context. Accordingly, three basic arguments could be uttered following the research findings. First is that space across the border provides continuity of the ‘roots’, ‘peoples’, ‘lands’, ‘languages’, ‘traditions’, ‘culture’, and even ‘markets’ forming multiple belongings of Kurd, Arab, and Syriac people in the area. The second argument is that trans-border space as a continuity has a role of complicating belongings in terms of Turkish political territory and poses a challenge to the current national order of things, as it leads to a call for a re-appropriation of definitions, representations, policies and even boundaries. The last argument is that the trans-border appears to be another space of violated belongings as the very definition of the border and the consequent policies ruptured the relation between the ‘fellow members’ of the communities settling them across the state borders.

During the interviews, recurrently articulated themes were the shared language, traditions, culture; continuing intra-community relations including trade and/or petty goods smuggling, job market relations, marriages, kinship relations, and *aşiret* ties. Concerning this latter, it was noted that in case of *aşirets* being bifurcated across the border, their organizational structure was also divided in that both sides had their own leaders, yet there was usually concurrence between the two.<sup>361</sup> Yet another manifestation was the experience of being exposed to oppression by the respective sovereign states, which proved for the participants ‘a continuity of pain’ suffered by the fellow community members across borders. Kurds and Arabs suffering across the border were mentioned respectively by Kurd and Arab participants. A direct expression was the crying of a participant, a Kurdish man and a teacher at his 50s, mentioning the rape of an Iraqi woman by a soldier in the eye witness of her husband. He could not help his tears falling while damning the Iraqi state on the one hand, and blaming it to be USA game, on the other.<sup>362</sup> Trans-border became a space of shared pain of fellow members.

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<sup>361</sup>Expert Interview, Urfa, 17.10.211.

<sup>362</sup>Expert Interview, Urfa, 17.10.211.

In many respects, it seems that the prominence of borders in Turkish mental map, which is usually decisive in perception of national belonging, realized for many of my participants totally in a different context of trans-border relations of kinship, trade, marriage, shelter seeking, political involvement, and sometimes a virtual or potential ideal of ‘homeland’.

Trans-border space was expressed in many interviews, as ‘the space of roots’ which were 300 or 500 years old in some cases. Origins from various places in Iraq, Syria or Yemen were mentioned, by Kurds, Arabs and Christians (Syriac/Chaldean) especially in Mardin and Urfa. Many stories about aunts, uncles, cousins or other relatives being left on the other side of the border were told. A typical articulation is as follows: “*Our roots are in Syria. After the Misak-ı Milli borders were drawn some of us were left on this side, some on the Syrian side. We have relatives in Syria, whom we see often. They come over here, and we go as well*” (M, 24, Arab, Urfa [U3]). Another articulation, which gives details about the process of ‘partition’, is as follows:

My grandfather is Kurd. My grandfather’s village is in Syria, lands are left there. Half of the aşiret [*Şeddadi*] is there, half of the relatives remained there after the border was drawn. [...] My grandfather had two wives; he left one of his wives and the children on the other side; took the others and came to Urfa. Being polygamous became an advantage for him; there he kept his lands too. [Aunts were in the village there on the other side] They were coming over here; even their clothes were different... (F, 63, Kurd/Turk, Urfa [U15])<sup>363</sup>

Division through space bringing forth reorganization of social life as apparent above is a good example of the continuity of trans-border space. Some people, however, could not maintain their relations across the border for different reasons. In some cases, the elders knew each other, while the descendants simply lost the connections in time. Below is an articulation about the loss of connections, for which the participant holds responsible the inhibiting policies around the time the border was drawn and his current disabling conditions.

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<sup>363</sup> She defined her mother to be a Turk, indeed to be a “*Tu... a local of Urfa*”. This expression “the local of Urfa” is so often used in Urfa, to connote “urbanness”, “Turkness”, which sometimes mean to veil “whatness” in reality.

I don't know most of them [relatives in Raqqa in Syria] not going and seeing [...] it was difficult then, prohibited! [...] When the state does not permit, will you go by force?! Now, I am not in a condition to be able to go, the old age, I don't have a cause either, difficult... When the border went in between they were left there and us here". (M, 72, *Urfalı*, Urfa [U23])

Still, relations were especially frequent and dense in the early years after the border was established and border crossing was a lot easier. As one participant noted then people "*were just crossing the border, now they pass over on a passport*" (M, 47, Kurd, Mardin [M8]). The frequently used expression about the border throughout the interviews was "*they were left there and us here*", referring to an haphazard reorganization of the space, which at once divided 'us' into 'us' and 'them', and 'here' into 'here' and 'there'. The perception of the haphazardly-drawn boundary was well expressed in the following argument of the same participant above: "*When the borders were drawn, the interests of the state were taken into consideration; not the relatives, living spaces, villages of these people*" (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). The expression is a clear example of the trans-border appearing as a space of violated belongings. Indeed, division of the space was so sharp and sudden that in many cases bifurcated places of inhabitancy, as well as relations, families, and local economies, seemed as continuous from a far. One participant referred to such a case noting "*I lived in Ceylanpınar, as you come to the city up on the hill you see a big city, when you are down in the city, it is so small. The reason is that the city was divided into two halves by a road [the border between Syria and Turkey] all having relatives on the other side*" (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). It was another emphasis that those places which were left on the other side of the Syrian border were often more developed while the parts in Turkey have been stunted, underdeveloped, or vanished altogether, which was taken as a sign of inadequate investment in the region.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>364</sup>Expert Interview, Urfa, 17.10.211.

Trans-border was not only ‘the space of origins’, which could be defined being in the past, but also ‘a space of social relations’ across communities, Kurds, Arabs and Syriacs of the south-east Turkey, on the one hand, and the fellow members in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt on the other. Relations continuing despite frontiers were much visible in the past. A participant (M, 47, Kurd, Mardin [M8]) recalled his witnesses in his childhood in Şenyurt, the name of Derbesiyê of Mardin after the border was defined, which was separated from the Derbesiyê of Syria with the railroad composing the national border between Turkey and Syria. He articulated many little stories about the thousands of people lining up on the both sides of the wire-mesh that was 400 meters long, during the Eid days to see their relatives across the borders and under the surveillance of the soldiers.<sup>365</sup> His lively memories showed that such meeting provided an occasion for petty trading as well as socialization.

Still at present various familial relations, marriage relations, *aşiret* relations, and ‘criminal relations’ like seeking shelter in case of a conflict at ‘home’, are taking place pointing at various formations of social capital across the border. Occasions of rites of passage like funerals and weddings, for example, were mentioned as important moments where communities are connected across the border. One participant stated concerning their relatives in Syria that:

Relations were not affected much, not separating [us], [kinship] is strong for us; when we have a funeral [our] representatives must go to pay condolence for instance. [In the past] for some time they were not able to come and go. But we still have a family tree there and here as well... I, for example, did not see most of them, but I can see their names in that tree. (F, 28, Arab, Urfa [U4])

Apart from the actual social relations, strength of which is claimed, existence of the family tree is important in revealing the value attributed to genealogy and the symbolic meanings of those continued relations even for those, who have not ever personally been in contact with ‘fellow family members’. The tree is the

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<sup>365</sup>Eid days have been special occasions in Turkey, whereby the state permitted for such meeting of people across the border.

symbol of unity and connectedness, even if the branches embodied in people are dispersed across physical boundaries. Communities are imagined across the border, no matter the ‘national frontiers’ separate them.

In some cases, trans-border becomes an ever more gendered space for marriages. It was articulated by many female participants, especially in Urfa, that there was an increasing tendency among the Arab men in Urfa to marry Syrian women for the second or third wives. That the Syrian legislation permitted polygamy for Muslim men eased such motivation of men. Perception of Turkey as a safe, stable, prosperous country, on the other hand, was argued to be the source of motivation for Syrian women. Recently, it became obvious that the war conditions made such marriages occur more frequently. Another example of trans-border becoming a gendered space for marriages is applicable to Syriac people in Mardin. The size of the community in Turkey, specifically in Mardin, getting decreased being one rationale, marriages with Armenian and Syriac women of Syria is an increasing tendency among the Syriac men in Mardin. At the time of my field research, it was stated that there were “20-25 brides from Syria” in Mardin, some of which I met during my stay there. I also listened from a male participant the detailed narrative of how his own marriage with an Armenian woman from Syria was organized from the start to the end. The narrative proved an important case where social capital, in this case bonding and bridging ones, acted out its role in everyday lives of individuals with regard to such community related decisions as marriage. Trans-border, in all those cases, appears to be a space of continuous social capital for all the concerned groups.

Physical proximity and the more directly established ties in the past, moreover, contributed to the experience of the trans-border as continuous to the local space turning it into an ‘alternative’ place in case of emergency. One participant mentioning her paternal grandparents had been to Syria for a while in the past, her father born and brought up in Syria up until age of eight, and still having an aunt and a cousin in Syria stated that her “*father goes forth and back, went at*



*times twice a week just as going to Yenişehir*” (F, 22, Arab/Kurd, Mardin [M16]).<sup>366</sup> “Yenişehir”, literally the new city, is the name given to the recently expanded urban space of Mardin down the hill, where the old city stands. The ease and frequency going forth and back to Syria just like going to Yenişehir, thus, turns the trans-border almost a continuation of the local space at least in perception. Importantly, moreover, the reason for the paternal family to live in Syria “*for a while in the past*” was that the grandfather shot a gun in a wedding and wounded a man unintentionally. The grandfather fled for Syria in case the man dies, supposedly with his wife; but the man had recovered and they returned back to Mardin. In this case, the trans-border space and the connections thereof, seem to provide a shelter to escape the possible consequences of being arrested, but also importantly of a bloody vendetta that would have started between the respective families should the wounded man had died.

It was frequently mentioned that in disputes between two *aşirets* or groups of people, whereby an act of maiming or killing is committed, the perpetrator fled or help to flee across the border and take refuge in the established relations there. The concerned state criminal law not applying across the border, and the hope to disappear without a trace made the ‘option’ appealing. Another participant (M, 47, Kurd, Mardin [M8]) narrated a story passing 45-50 years ago in a village of Şenyurt, Mardin. A man killed two brothers in the village and continued with his work as a driver carrying people between the villages. He took precautions against the relatives of his victims. Meanwhile, the family of the deceased contacted their relatives in Syria, asked for help, and a young man was sent across the border to Turkey to take the revenge. The murderer not knowing the relatives in Syria was caught unawares when he took the man in his jeep just as an ordinary passenger paying his fee. The driver was killed on his way and the Syrian relative fled back for Syria. Similar events took place on both side of the border. In some cases, after fleeing for Syria the perpetrator was followed across

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<sup>366</sup> Whereas the historical city up to the hill is the old city, it is not being referred as “Eskişehir”, the old city, by local people but simply as “şehir”, the city, or Mardin. Field notes taken in Mardin, July 2011.

border to Syria by a male family or *aşiret* member of the victim and was executed there. The involvement of the respective states in many cases was mentioned to be none or only minor. Physical geographic conditions, the continuous dense networks between the communities across the border, and the relative weakness of the state authority on those occasions were the articulated reasons by the participants for such non-involvement. Yet within the context of this study, the phenomenon could be interpreted as deconstruction of national borders through continuous ethnic social capital across border, as well as reconstruction of trans-border space and be-long-ings. In such context, social capital becomes a tool of making do with the state authority.

Trans-border in cases of Syriacs too provided ‘a space of shelter’ this time vis-à-vis the aggression of the local Muslim communities. One participant (M, 37, Syriac, Midyat/Mardin [MM35]) mentioned his grandfather migrating to Beirut in 1965 because of the problems and aggressions his son faced in Midyat. Various other occasions were lived both in Midyat and Mardin. Trans-border provided a space of shelter in the face of state’s policies and acts as well. 1942 Capital Levy, which was laid mainly upon non-Muslim populations, and 1964 exile of the Greek people of Istanbul caused uneasiness of the Syriac people of the region, the former directly and the latter indirectly. The consequence was Syriac people fleeing for Syria in 1940s and for Lebanon in 1960s. In border residential areas, like Hasekah [*Haseki*] and Qameshlo [*Kamişli*] in Al-Jazeera region of Syria, stated to be many Syriac people who fled Turkey during WWII. Many Syriac people who couldn’t afford to pay the 1942 Capital Levy, for instance, fled the country for Syria. A participant mentioned the event stating “*they had to change the flag*” (M, 72, Syriac, Mardin [M32]), meaning they had to get across to the territories of Syrian state. It was also argued that “*people who have fled the country [around 1940s], could not return back not to be arrested*”, because of the “*changing border legislation*” and the strengthened borders during the Presidency of İsmet İnönü [1938-1950] and “*many people had to stay there in Syria*”; and “*both Christians and Kurds were affected by the process*”

(M, 42, Syriac, Mardin [M27]). The border region of Syria was claimed to have continued providing a space to take refuge for people in the region, mostly Kurd, but also Syriac even in the last decades up until very recently.<sup>367</sup>

Further, trans-border appears to have provided a space for an important economic activity for the people of the region. Many people, be them Kurd, Arab or Syriac, and of any age recalled their relatives, men and women, having smuggled for some time. They were mostly bringing tea, cigarettes, fabric, clothing, or other petty stuff from Syria to sell in the local market, without paying customs and without any legal permissions or entitlement for border trade. Trans-border, in this sense, also formed an important ‘economic space’ in daily lives of the people in the region in general. The state took some precautions to prevent people from smuggling, like establishing security areas, gendarmerie troops, and lastly mining the fields along the border in 1956. Indeed breaking off the ties with the trans-border places through the boundaries drawn is seen as a cause for leading the regional economy to a stagnated and gradually backward condition wholly dependent on agriculture and husbandry, whereas traditionally strong trade relations held beforehand had a great role in the prospering economy and development of the border cities (Bilge, 1996).

The availability of trans-border markets due to the physical proximity of the border in contrast to the ‘national’ market was articulated to be one basis of such economic activity, one participant stating “*the border is closer to our village than [city centre of] Urfa; Syrian cities are closer [than any Western city]*” (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]). Another participant who mentioned the same rationale argued that “*going to Syria was like going to another village*” and articulated the details of the “*so normal*” work of petty smuggling despite the risks as follows:

Smuggling in our region was so normal. So natural, asking ‘what do you do? Well, I smuggle’. One would take two sacks of tobacco on his shoulder, Russian

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<sup>367</sup> With the Syrian war the phenomenon might have ceased or been reversed.

tobacco, or Mardin or Muş tobacco, and go to Syria crossing the border; would bring back two sacks of tea from Syria. [He] risked being wounded; or his life, dying in the mine field, his corps being brought back to the village [by others]. This was around 1974-75s. (M, 47, Kurd, Mardin [M8])

The difficulties of the job and the risks were accounted by another participant (M, 56, Kurd, Urfa [U18]) who stated that smugglers were doing the job “*on the back of horses on the hilly mountainous areas, along the mined field*”, “*being killed or losing their legs [in mine explosion]*”, getting involved in “*armed conflict with the gendarmerie [or] being arrested*”. They sometimes “*let the herd go first to make a path, if the field was mined, the herd perished*”. It was overall “*a dangerous trade*”, compared to present, where now “*they bring them in big amounts via customs*”. The same participant again, mentioned a rationale, in reference to which we can assume why smuggling was so widespread despite all those risks: “*at that time they made lots of money out of smuggling, they could buy houses or fields. Not everybody wanted to become civil servants, because the salary was low. Running a shop was not profitable either. So, many gave priority to smuggling*” (M, 56, Kurd, Urfa [U18]). Some other participants, however, objected the term “*trade*”, and stated that it was for most people to earn a bare living. One, whose grandparents were engaged in smuggling in the past, stated that:

It was not a trade, not for profiteering, just to bring some bread to home. [...] I did not hear anyone getting rich through smuggling, neither from my grandfather nor from my grandmother. [...] Nobody had the idea of getting rich evading tax against the state. Neither my grandfather nor my grandmother knows Turkish (M, 20, Arab, Urfa [U1]).

The objection is important in revealing that border and trans-border space was perceived by many local people almost as continuous to the local space. The participant’s emphasis that neither of his grandparents knew Turkish, thus didn’t have the knowhow to be able to break the laws like tax evading, was to prove that they did not have the intention or motivation to do so. They were just earning their life. The emphasis is also a simultaneous sign of the locality being

experienced as far from the central national ‘Turkish’ space. Objection to the term “*trade*” was uttered by other participants too, this time with reference to the structural violence people in the region was experiencing. It was, thus, not only the availability of cross border trading conditions but also the inadequate life chances in the locality, or even generally in the ‘home’ country. Smuggling to earn one’s life was almost the optimum way for many people in the region and not necessarily on the immediate border areas. A participant whose uncle once smuggled stated that:

It was not trade; he had to do that. He was starving; there is no factory, no trade. Those who have 5000-10000 acres of lands, the *agha* [the feudal landowner], they were working for the *agha* like slaves, without even getting the annual wheat or flour he needs. Should he want to go to the west [there is] no industry. He has to, what else he can do; he will do smuggling, no other chance! The smugglers were not only the people here, not only those on the border, but those coming from Lice, Kulp,<sup>368</sup> Diyarbakır, Bingöl were going to Syria. Some parts of the Eastern Anatolia were smuggling; those who are closer to Iraq were passing across Iraq, while those closer to Iran were passing across Iran. (M, 47, Kurd, Mardin [M8])

Smuggling was perceived by many to be a routine and ordinary economic resource for the region indeed. Still today, it is argued that the “*region stands on the border trade; [trade in] Şırnak, Van, Hakkari being informal*”; this was laid as a ground for the state policies to ensure border control, in that “*the reason for the state to improve the border security is an aim to lessen the economic sources [of the region] as much as preventing the PKK to enter in*”.<sup>369</sup>

One last argument about the trans-border as an economic space is that such space is another source of questioning the notion of border for the ordinary people and challenges the ideal of the naturalness of ‘national boundary’. An important articulation reflecting the perception of continuous space and the ordinariness of

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<sup>368</sup> Lice and Kulp are towns of Diyarbakır.

<sup>369</sup> Expert interviews in Mardin and Diyarbakır.

trade through that space was narrated by a participant who recollected a memory of his:

One of my friends, he has a university degree, when he was at university he intermittently got disappeared, it came out that they were in sugar trading across the border, I used the word 'smuggling', said him that I hear he was smuggling. He said 'well they have drawn a line on the supply of Allah, and the name for trade became smuggling!' (M, 29, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D21])

The expression "*the supply of Allah*" is an important articulation depicting the perception of the naturalness, continuity, even sacredness of the land by people for the subsistence of whom land has great importance. The expression also points at an obvious contrast between such perception, which re-appropriates the land and claims a right to it, on the one hand; and the rationale of the nation-state, which sets and tries to naturalize the existence of boundary as the foundation of its own existence, deeming any trespass as 'illegal', on the other.

The last pattern in the experience of trans-border space is that it appears to provide a ground for re-articulating the relation with the political territory and the political community in Turkey. That is, it becomes *a space for a re-articulation of Turkishness* in its territorial aspect. Such re-articulation comes out in different ways: distancing from or getting closer to Western Turkey; claiming for an adjustment of the border policies by the state; or seeking for opportunities to move out across the border.

In some cases perceived cultural, linguistic, religious closeness to and emotional identification with the trans-border space provided for such re-articulation. Below is a narrative, comparing western Turkey and Syria upon the experience of border crossing. In this case the reason for border crossing for the well-off family was casual shopping, as the women in the family found accessories there finer like shoes and bags.

We used to go to Syria; crossing to Qameshlo on administrative [“*idari*”] permission was possible then. When we passed over there, I used to feel that those people were very much like me. Found them even closer than [those in] a western city of us. I think, this is something related to language, something led by the fact that we spoke the same language; we could speak Arabic to them. That makes one feel closer to those people I guess. (F, 32, Arab, Mardin [M17])

People in Syria, notably Syrian Arabs, being closer to an Arab in Turkey than people in Western Turkey, namely ‘Turks’, is crucial in disclosing how shared language and culture, and not simply physical geographical closeness play a decisive role in defining be-long-ings. Important in this context is the argument of Anna Triandafyllidou (1998: 598-599) stating that “national identity expresses a feeling of belonging that has a relative value”; accordingly, “fellow nationals are not simply very close or close enough to one another, they are closer to one another than they are to outsiders”. In the case above, it is not the “fellow nationals” but seemingly the “outsiders” who are to be felt closer to. Relative closeness to Syrian ‘others’ in all physical, ethno-social, linguistic terms is a factor blurring the notion of ‘boundary’ and the dichotomy between the ‘us’ versus the ‘others’.

In yet another case, kinship relations, religion, race, culture and perception of a common historical geography was articulated as a ground to urge a revision of the national boundary policies of the state. Below is an open demand for the right of border crossing to Arab countries without passport and visa by the Arab citizens of Turkey.

I don’t feel myself separate from other Arab countries, indeed I feel myself a part of them. But I also see myself a very genuine part of Turkey. And I think that all these boundaries are nonsense! [...] I expect some tolerance should be granted for us concerning the border issue. [...] We are all Arabs here, relatives, son of my uncle, but still I have to cross to the other side upon a passport, passport and visa, and that visa I cannot get in Urfa, I either go to Ankara or Istanbul, Izmir, Antep... We have such a problem. Such a tolerance is granted to the Greeks and Turks, just because they live on the same soil; but the same tolerance is not granted to us today. These are the people we share the same religion, race, culture. We have such an expectation [from the state authorities]. (M, 20, Urfa, Arab [U1])

The feeling of continuity and actual relations with trans-border communities in neighbouring countries seems to feed the feeling of the ‘meaninglessness’ of the current state borders in many narratives. The same participant above argued, for instance that “*there is no difference [between the Arabs of those countries and Arabs in Turkey] definitely. The only difference is the soldiers and the bullets flying over*” (M, 20, Urfa, Arab [U1]). The sensed and experienced socio-cultural continuity across the borders, in this articulation, is perceived to be only politically broken off, the political discontinuity being concretized in the “*boundaries*”, “*soldiers*”, and “*bullets*” of the respective states. Old and new, symbolic and actual, multi-level relations of the people in the region as a continuous space, thus, becomes a ground whereby the boundaries are rendered “*nonsense*” for the participant. In this way, the naturalness and legitimacy of ‘established’ nation-state boundaries is questioned, and new border regulations specifically defined with regard to the socio-cultural structure in the region are called for.

There emerges another pattern, although not much a strong one, concerning trans-border space. As the politics and the territorial space in the Middle East is reorganized, trans-border is becoming a viable alternative of settling a life for some people. This was especially the case with Kurds with regard to the recently established Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), as some participants articulated a potential for them to opt for KRG should the conditions did not get better in Turkey. In one case, the participant articulated a clear sense of ‘homelessness’, whereby neither locality, nor Turkey in general, or Europe provided a secure space in his perception:

Well, nowhere is secure now. [...] If you say west [western Turkey] recently it is [worse], should one go to the west, cannot say ‘I am Kurd’, [or] fear saying ‘I am from Diyarbakır’. There is such danger there; and here is the danger of the state. One doesn’t have a solid home in Turkey. I have many friends migrated to Europe [...] but Europe is not as before... (M, 50, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D8])



Neither of the options being satisfying, even when available, makes migration across border to Kurdistan Regional Government another option, if only a hypothetical one for the participant at the time of the interview. Regarding the idea of moving out to the “South”, he stated, that “*In truth, I think of it. Believe me some of our villagers are there; they come and tell about it, the order there is much better than here*”, “*I shall go and have a look at the situation. [Will you stay if it is good?] Believe me, should my family also come, it would be better if we stay there*” (M, 50, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D8]). He was overwhelmed by the accounts of people visiting KRG almost utopian image of the state that had told about.

A further articulation of the ‘South’ being a potential alternative to Turkey was uttered by another participant, in a similar sense of insecurity and resentment towards the state policies:

I don’t have a personal feeling of rapport [...] I am indeed not a Kurdish nationalist; I even used to see myself more as a *Türkiyeli*. Istanbul is a place, to which I feel belonging more than Erbil. I mean I would always prefer Istanbul; but things that would force me to chose Erbil might happen, [like] a plot against my life, prevention of my basic freedoms [...] And if I won’t be [here], then that would be an alternative; even if I do not have such sense of belonging I would think of it then. Then I would say this state deserved it. Because one would not like his descendants too live the same things. (M, 35, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D7])

For others who already define themselves as ‘Kurdish nationalist’, living in KRG may become a more feasible option. A participant who visited the region to attend a meeting stated for instance “*I wanted to stay, wanted to live there. Despite all the negativities; and I know that so serious problems are being lived there*” (F, 30, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D12]). Moreover, the political experience across the border was taken in this case as a reference point to take lesson from, concerning negativities of power relations, for the local ethnic/national community.

For others, visiting KRG, being in the ‘South’ was much an emotional experiment with symbolic meanings attributed to it:

I went to Duhok and Erbil, I had the feeling of wandering around in my own country; I certainly did not have the feeling of being abroad, never had that. I even felt some resentment, ‘why do I have to have a passport for my own country’. I was so touched, cried indeed, when I saw the Kurdistan flags. [...] I took photos of it; I did not take photo of anything else but the waving flag (laughs) (M, 33, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D1]).

References of the participant to his perception of “*wandering in [his] own country*” and not being “*abroad*”; his encounter with “*the wavingflag*”; as well as the experiences of being “*touched*”, feeling “*resentment*”, and “*crying*” are all important signs of the processes of be-long-ings for him. The role of border and trans-border in this case is decisive in defining one’s identifications, longings, projections of what he is and where is ‘home’. Ethnicity, collective memory, and ethno-national symbols embodied in the trans-border space almost invalidate the Turkish ‘national boundary’ in the perception of the participant. As similar narratives make it clear, in the face of violated be-long-ings, questioning of the rationale behind and the implementation of “established” national boundaries with Iraq, Iran, and Syria often went together with construction of ‘new’ boundaries within the larger political territory, “Turkey”; as well as emotional boundaries with the larger society, “Turks”.

Yet in other cases, further east beyond border is far from being desirable as was openly stated by one participant when asked about how she felt towards Iran, Iraq, Syrian Kurds: “*I have respect them as human beings, but not like well... It would not be a centre of attraction for me; I would turn my face towards the West but never there! The lifestyle, I feel myself much closer to Turks*” (F, 44, Kurd, Diyarbakır [D24]). Such utterance came despite her harsh criticisms of Turks towards Kurds in their discriminative attitudes, and even despite her own feeling of being “*mother naked*” outside Diyarbakır. Still, however, when it is the real question of establishing one’s life, west and not further east, either in

Turkey or beyond border, was “*a centre of attraction*” to her. The mostly favoured western city in Turkey in many cases was Istanbul. In this case, she likened Istanbul to Diyarbakır in its “*dynamic spirit*”, which she believed makes one “*robust*” as “*people in here are always on their guard, as if any moment can something happen*”, whereas she found other cities like Antalya and Ankara, for example, “*spiritless*”. Yet, a western city, preferably Istanbul, may be an alternative option to live in for the participant, but not anywhere else in the ‘East’. Concerning the trans-border, in general thus, it seems that despite the existence of a sense of identification, rapport, and belonging to trans-border communities, it appears that many people lack the wish to set up an actual life there across the border. Discourse of modernity is the one that usually jumps into the perceptions of the people at this point, which means Turkey is perceived as being more “*modern*”, which usually goes hand in hand with the “*Western/European*”, “*developed*”, “*prosperous*” vis-à-vis the more “*traditional*”, “*backward*”, even “*primitive*” countries of Middle East. Recent political upheaval and war add to the perception of Turkey as a relatively stable country, both in political and economic terms. It is also apparent that the more one is economically integrated, the less one sees across border as a feasible alternative for living. It is mostly the economic interests and conditions of making money, rather than ethnic identifications, that is applicable in defining trans-border as a viable or nonviable place to establish a life in future projection. In this part I tried to define the trans-border as *a space of roots, a space of violated belongings, a space of social capital, a space to elude penal sanction* whether modern legal or traditional, *an economic space, a gendered space of marriage*, and *a space for re-articulation of Turkishness* whether challenging or reinforcing it. Overall, the argument is that the trans-border space is experienced and perceived as a continuous space to the locality, which becomes at times a factor complicating belongings in terms of Turkish political territory. Challenging “the epistemological premise that there is a stable and fixed correspondence between nation-boundedness and national identity” (Kay and Taylor, 2005: 467), it questions the current national order of things, and calls for

re-appropriation of the definitions, representations, policies and even the boundaries.

If we could think larger political territory, at a higher level, as Turkish social structure with various forms of be-long-ings it provides for, we can argue that actual trans-border relations of Kurd, Arab and Syriac populations of Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Urfa act as elements impeding closure of Turkish social structure; and as processes creating different forms of social capital for them. In this case, it is reasonable that the norms, expectations, and acts of people living in the named region are bred through these trans-border relations as well as those of Turkish social structure. Cultural codes, everyday life, thus social capital of the region should be approached within this perspective. Such perspective in itself is challenging to methodological nationalism.

For many cases presented here we can roughly speak of a continuum of belongings. The continuum certainly concentrates in the locality, lingering at both sides to west, the western Turkey, and to east, the trans-border space. The most visible pattern is that continuum signifies a weaker attachment at western Turkey; is most clear and sharp in the locality; and gets blurred but still existent in the further eastern trans-border space. The locality being a strong centre of belongings is valid for almost all participants of different backgrounds. The continuum getting weaker at western Turkey, both practically and symbolically, is especially visible for Kurds, not exclusive for all though. Many Kurds increasingly grasp trans-border space in ethno-national terms, yet allegiance at practical level is still low for many, the primary source of spatial belongings being the locality. At the practical level, yet, the locality being a strong centre of belongings is traceable for all the three groups. Concerning Arabs, the experiences in the western Turkey drew many to locality that appears as a strong mode of belongings. Yet at symbolic-discursive level, Turkish political territorial space as an abstracted entity in its wholeness is highly identified with as the 'true home' by many Arabs. Trans-border space of co-religious-ethnics, Muslim

Arabs, on the other hand is part of the continuum of belongings, existence of Arab political communities providing a feeling of 'security' in terms of identity. For the Syriac participants, moreover, again the locality is central and primary space of belongings, mostly with relatively stronger practical and symbolic level constructions of belongings in the western end of the continuum. The trans-border space is part of the continuum of belongings, both in terms of past and present time relations in social, economic, and ethno-religious spheres. Such continuum was strengthened by the fact that The Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate<sup>370</sup> is in Syria since 1932, first in Homs then in Damascus from 1959 on, where it was moved from its long established place in Mardin due to adverse political conditions in Turkey.

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

It has been argued that "living somewhere means being exposed to the continuous stream of discourse produced by a local society and experiencing events which differ in kind from those happening elsewhere in the world" (Dijkink, 1996:2). In this chapter, I tried to provide an account, not an exclusive one though, of the various streams of discourses and ways of experiencing events that the participants of this study have gone through regarding where they live. What I further did here is to reveal the multiple processes of be-long-ings and to show how and when they are formed. The larger political territory of Turkey, the locality, and the trans-border space appeared to be three vital categories of space in the context of this study, constituting a continuum for multiple belongings of the Kurd, Arab, and Syriac peoples. Continuum, however, should not be understood as linearity. It is more about being relational, whereby different levels of spatial practices and be-long-ings make up various combinations and influence each other. Briefly, three visible patterns of spatial be-long-ings could be discerned in this context, whereby processes of violence, social capital, and economic exclusion/inclusion had defining and determining roles.

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<sup>370</sup> The Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

First, the national political territory was experienced and perceived to be a *discontinuous space* by the subjects of this study. Not only regional state policies, but dispersion through Turkish political territory and the encounters thereof were the main factors conditioning such experiences and perceptions. In this context, it is well depicted that modern processes in Turkey like the modern state policies; geographical mobility either as seasonal labour that was defined through the conditions of modern market economy; or as students, traders, visitors, simply as citizens, moving across the larger political territory for various reasons led by modern life; and discrimination, freezing out, or other violations experienced thereof have encumbered any possible smooth imagining of the national territory as a continuous and inclusive space where distinct peoples feel and perform be-long-ings on an equal footing. The finding about the discontinuity of the national political territory is further critical in the context of Benedict Anderson's (1991) classical definition of nation as an imagined political community, a wholly modern process imbued by a conception of a deep horizontal comradeship regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each. Findings of this research reveal that as the national territory is not capable of providing a continuous space for imagination, so the nation is far from being conceived as a 'deep horizontal comradeship' for most of the participants of this study. Be-long-ings being inherently spatial insofar as polities are associated with distinct territories, whether imagined, metaphorical or material (Trudeau, 2006), it is shown in this chapter that national socio-territorial belongings in Turkey have not always realized as inclusive, enabling, and supporting processes for various categories of citizens. The processes of violation, lack of generalized social capital, and economic exclusion were defined and depicted as a ground for the phenomenon. Any concern about politics of belonging in Turkey aiming at creating social spaces should take these processes into consideration.

Second, the locality proved to be a space, where be-long-ings have crystallized to be the strongest. Locality, here, is conceptualized as *a dignified space*, on the

one hand; and as *the contested space of violence*, on the other. Cardia (2002) notes that prediction of the literature on violence is that as violence increases in a neighbourhood, identification with, emotional involvement, and commitment to the place and the sense of belonging to a collectivity will decrease, with the ensuing consequence of hampered development of social capital. Cardia's (2002) research does not corroborate the prediction; nor does this research, not totally. Locality, understood as larger than a neighbourhood in this research, was almost in all cases was a space of strong identification, often emotionally involved, with relatively high levels of commitment and sense of belonging. I have already detailed the divergent cases above, underlining the role of violence in bringing them, yet the general pattern was strong identification with locality. The various factors referred to by the participants as a ground for such identification were 'history', 'culture', 'religion', 'language', 'memory', 'sacred places', 'ancestors', 'ancient lands', 'civilization', 'mission', 'values', 'customs', and social ties such as 'family', '*aşiret*', and 'people/community', bringing locality as a space of values; of language; of social capital; of indigenoussness; of struggle, and of embodiment. Still, moreover, it is well depicted that the experience of discrimination, the perception of being frozen out in the wider political territory and community, as well as exclusive discourses perceived to be directed toward the region as whole were other factors definitive in bringing identification with locality. There is, further, the 'bias' of the remainders, as waves of people left the locality at different periods following violations of various sorts. The strong local allegiance should not be interpreted as accidental, however. It may indeed be seen as the 'normal', expected in the usual flow of things, especially when it is thought that characteristics of the agrarian society are still profoundly prevalent in the research area. SinišaMalešević (2010: 193) notes that in the traditional agrarian world, a person's loyalty was mostly limited within the confines of her immediate surroundings, and sense of solidarity was rigidly linked to his or her social status, whereas it is the social and territorial mobility that encompasses large numbers of diverse, but morally equal, individuals, on which the modern social order rests. The findings of this research, however, are

important not only pointing at the strength of local be-long-ings, but also acknowledging the role of the very modern processes in producing them, as outlined in the previous paragraph concerning the national territorial belongings. In this context, it was apparent in the narratives of many participants that social and territorial mobility, to the extent that it was realized, have not always brought about encounters between “diverse, but morally equal, individuals”. The emphasis of this part, thus, is not simply that local belongings are strong, but that larger political, social, cultural, spatial policies could not somehow generate be-long-ings extending beyond the locality. On the contrary, those very policies and acts have in cases pushed those be-long-ings to shape within the “confines” of the locality, be it regional territory, or space of communal relations.

Third, the trans-border space appeared to provide a continuous space across the border regarding historical, social, cultural, and economic relations and identifications of the participants. As Daniele Conversi (1999: 557) argued “by virtue of their connective nature, boundaries are permeable and operate as points of closure as well as points of overture”, the border as a legal-territorial boundary appeared for all the three groups as permeable and operated as point of closure as well as point of overture concerning the Turkish social structure and national belonging. The national border acted as a boundary to traverse the other side, relating or even aspiring to the other, and normalization; as it may have simultaneously acted as a barrier evermore closing oneself to the ‘other’ within. It could, thus, be argued that it is not only the local/regional or supranational space that challenge the national scale of territorial belongings, the production and reproduction of which is a constant process that aims at maintaining it at the top of the spatial hierarchy (Etherington, 2010), but also and importantly the trans-border space.



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSION GROUNDING TURKISHNESS IN THE EXPERIENCES OF VIOLATION, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION/EXCLUSION**

Grounded in the research findings is the argument that there are basically three social-historical processes, interplay of which play constitutive role in making and unmaking of belongings for the participants of this research. These processes are violation, access to and mobilization of social relations, and inclusion/exclusion in the running economic system. Although one of these three processes might become more salient in each different case, the overall pattern is basically defined by interaction of the three. These were the basic categories of the attempted grounded theory, and their content was systematically developed through the research findings. To be able to contextualize the emerging concepts of the substantive theory of the field that this study aims at reaching, I have tried to relate them to the existing literature throughout the analysis. Thus, what is at stake here is not testing the categories of the existing literature. Rather, as they are empirically identified in the specific context of this research they are expected to extend the existing literature in terms of their novel substantial content, adding to and challenging them.

Making propositions is one way of concluding in grounded research studies (Urquhart, 2018). Below are given eleven propositions, which are reached as conclusion of this research. They are basically abstracted from the findings that are analyzed in detail throughout the dissertation. They are interrelated and relations are indicated as they are explained.

## 7.1. Propositions

### 7.1.1. Be-long-ings are about *Being, Longing, Belongings*

Belonging for the participants emerged to be about their positions and relations; their desires and pities; and their possessions and dispossessions. This study proposed the hyphenation *be-long-ings* as an analytical tool to provide for a comprehensive analysis of the complexity, multiplicity, and multidimensionality of the substantive experiences. In such endeavour, it takes up the opportunity of dividing the word “belonging” as to give the meanings of *be-ing*, *long-ing*, *belonging-s*. The compound meanings that each part contains are respectively *the states*, *the lacks*, and *the possessions* that this study argues belongings are about; as well as *the processes* the suffix “ing” and *the multiplicity* that the plural suffix “s” suggest in relation to belongings. It is all this substance at once that the concept “*be-long-ings*” in its hyphenated form refer to in this study. Such reconceptualization is firmly grounded in the experiences, perceptions, and reflections of the participants that are coded, constantly compared, abstracted and categorized in line with grounded theory methodology adopted in this work. Within the terminology of grounded theory *be-long-ing* emerged as the ‘core category’ of the theorization this research aims at, whereby ‘the sub-categories’ *being*, *longing*, *belongings* are ‘the properties’ of the core category, as are *the processes* and *the multiplicity*. Below are provided some of the ‘open codes’ substantiated in the research data, through which I ‘selectively’ reached these three categories as properties of belongings in this study.

*Being* is very much related to the expression “*I am*”. It is all that one defines herself as, and others define her. It is very much positional and relational. It may be positively or negatively expressed. *Being* indicates an aspect of *belongings*, which for the participants of the study have crystallised through their experiences of ethnicity, point in the life course, gender, the regional or local identifications, place of origin, religion, denomination, piety, memberships, political ideology,

citizenship, economic well-being, and physical or mental well-being. More specifically, the following were coded as *beings* for the participants: their being Arab, Kurd, or Syriac; Muslim or Christian; Orthodox or Catholic; Sunni or Alevi; Shafi or Hanafi; man or woman; young or old; poor or well-off; employed or unemployed; educated or uneducated; literate or illiterate; monolingual, bilingual or trilingual; of city or village origin; migrant or local; forced migrant; *Mardinli*, *Diyarbakırlı*, or *Urfalı*<sup>371</sup>; easterner; member or a leader of an *aşiret*; heir to a culture; member of a rooted family; member of a larger family/group spreading through trans-border; sympathizer with or an activist of a party, a political movement, a group or an ideology; pious, secular, non-believer; optimistic or pessimistic about the future; satisfied or unsatisfied with the present conditions of life; observant of rules and law; Turk/Turcoman, Turkish citizen, Turkish national. *Being* was usually perceived to be the most essentialized form of belonging by the participants, though such perception was not exclusive, since reflection on how it changed over time in a single person's life experiences was not rare. Turning points in one's life were usually indicative of those changes. Experiences of being as named above were constitutive in making and unmaking of belongings for the participants. They were themselves contextually, historically, and socially constructed and changed or redefined along time. Therefore even *beings* are processes.

**Longing** is very much related to the expressions “*I wish*”, “*I regret*”, “*I hope*”, “*I want*”, “*I seek*”, and “*I yearn for*”. It is all one aspires to, unrealised or waiting to be realized. It is also about the experience of loss in one's life. It is very much emotional and cognitive. It may be positively or negatively expressed. *Longing* indicates an aspect of *belongings*, which for the participants of the study have crystallised through their demands, wishes, desires, yearnings, pains, resentments, regrets, projections, or ambitions. More specifically, the following were coded as *longings* for the participants: yearning to have equal and fair life opportunities for education, health, employment; available adequate

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<sup>371</sup>Being from Mardin, Diyarbakır, and Urfa respectively.

infrastructure; social and economic inclusion; treatment in a socially responsible way and through caring policies; fair representation through media and popular discourses; to be free from poverty and discrimination; to be free from violence and surveillance; to have safety and security. *Longings* emerged to be related to migration, emigration, dislocation which often meant loss of belongings, such as loss of economic properties, social relations, cultural places, symbols and values. Yet they also emerged to be related to seeking migration as a way of escape, gateway, or new life opportunities. *Longings* emerged in relation to the loss of people, relations, places, or possessions both at individual and collective level. Past or more recent episodes of violation were articulated to cause for such loss. *Longings* were related to the trans-border relations or relatives that were set apart through the national border drawn across already existing continuities and integrities. *Longings* were related to re-establishing the relation between the individual and collective memory transmission of which was interrupted through dispersal of community members via e/ migration, forced migration, or deportation; extermination of the lived/inherited places; change of habitual patterns of living; and the geographical renaming. *Longings* were related to re-establishing the relation between the individual and collective cultural identity persistence of which was interrupted through language or name ban. At a more personal level longings were articulated in relation to the re-appropriation of agency and subjectivity one is deprived of through direct or indirect violations; lack of access to necessary social relations or due to exclusive, limiting social relations; and economic exclusion. *Longings* were at both individual and collective level; were related to local, national, and trans-national space and relations; or concerned past, present, and future prospects of life. Any defined lack or search for alteration of their experiences and conditions could be a ground for longings and they were often framed in the immediate power structure surrounding the individuals. Experiences of *longing* as named above were constitutive in making and unmaking of belongings for the participants.

*Belongings* is very much related to the expressions “I have”, “I own”, “I inherit”, “I possess/dispossess”, “I acquire”, “I seize”, “I exploit”, “I hire”, “I rent”, “I earn”, “I need”, “I appropriate”, “I qualify”. They are all you have or you have not that has economic value or can be turned to gain economic value. They are very much economic and material. They may be positively or negatively expressed. *Belongings* indicate an aspect of *belonging*, which for the participants of the study have crystallised through their personal or familial possessions like movable or immovable properties, the agricultural lands, wheat and provisions, cattle and livestock, devices of livelihood, as well as qualifications that could be turned into economic assets for the individual. On collective level *belongings* were religious places, sacred places and buildings, foundational lands, inherited artisanship and productions, all tangible and intangible cultural heritage. *Belongings* were related to social ties whether family, *aşiret*, local, trans-border, ethnic, religious relations, or the ones with the members of the larger society that could be mobilized for making economic capital. *Belongings* were related to GAP irrigation project bringing prosperity to landowners and work opportunities for farmers; the perception of an unequal distribution of the gains of the GAP project through ethnic and political lines; agricultural rentier economy in large properties of land; *ağalık* based upon traditional land ownership and potency. *Belongings* were related to seasonal agricultural labour migration linking locality to the national economy. *Belongings* were related to the land changing hands along ethnic lines, creating new tensions and power dynamics. *Belongings* were related to the properties divided along the border. *Belongings* were related to the widespread conditions of unemployment, precarious jobs, difficulty of finding jobs, difficulty of getting what one earns, working through outsourcing, working without social insurance, unsafe conditions of work, work accidents with no repayment; lack of industrial sector and insufficient investments to produce employment and wealth. *Belongings* were related to the traditional craftsmanship and inherited occupations along ethno-religious lines. *Belongings*, for the participants of the study, played role both at individual and collective level. They were articulated

with local, regional, national, or trans-national references. They were very much related to the power relations. *Belongings* were constitutive in making and unmaking of be-long-ings for the participants.

*Be-long-ings* for the participants are constructed not only in positive ways, but also in a negative ways. Absence has a constitutive role on belongings just as presence. Therefore, belongings were not merely about their membership or inclusion, but also about their non-membership and exclusion; not only about their physical experiences, but also about their feelings and aspirations; not only what they are, but also what they are not; not only what they have, but also what they have not.

*Beings*, *longings*, and *belongings* are the key elements definitive in making and unmaking the processes of National Belonging for the Arab, Syriac, and Kurdish participants of the study. Such re-conceptualization of belonging is important as it takes account various dimension of the phenomenon. Positions, senses, possessions are all counted as well as the fact that they are constructed in relational, contextual, and contingent grounds. In this sense, the social, spatial, practical, emotional, and economical aspects of belonging is taken into account. Analysing belongings in this way enables us to answer the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions as well as the ‘what’ questions. Turkish national belonging, in this perspective, becomes embedded in all these processes and needs to be approached as such.

### **7.1.2. Be-long-ings are Complex, Multiple, and Multidimensional Processes**

Be-long-ings emerged to be *processes*, making and unmaking of which is constant and take place through relations constituted in the minute details of everyday life as well as in the macro level socio-political, economic, and discursive practices. This study traced the turning points even in a lifetime of single individual whereby belongings were radically redefined, sometimes in

almost opposite directions. In others, more gradual changes in lifetime of the participants, crystallized through experiences, led alteration in their positions, yearnings, and possessions. Collective experiences and collective memory as well as personal experience and practice mattered in the course of change of belongings. Belonging in this study, thus, emerged not to be a once and for all possession, nor a static position. It is contextual, contingent, relational, and is a process being constantly made and unmade even when seemingly essentialized. It is not something that one has or has not; it is something that happens. Belonging is dynamic. It constantly changes and crystallizes through experience that are conditioned at both micro and macro level processes. This is an important finding of the research and a crucial proposition of its attempt of theory building, as it indicates that Turkish national belonging is not essentially experienced according to people's ethnicity, but is rather conditioned through historical-social processes, among which chiefly counts how that ethnicity was officially and popularly treated both in material and discursive aspects.

Belongings of the participants were *complex*. The issue was often not about if one belonged or not. It was rather in what ways and how did participants experience be-long-ings in its various aspects and under which conditions did they do so. Even in the most steadfast articulation of national belonging there was a complicating dynamic that prevented any closure of the process to become a categorical experience. Some manifestations of such complexity emerged in the analysis as in the following types of experiences:

Having high cultural capital; bearing economic and professional entitlements; being eager to become an anonymous member of the larger community; yet being stigmatized or discriminated solely on ethnic grounds, and simultaneously being excluded from the ethnically defined frames of belongings on the ground of not fitting enough; or alternatively opting to negotiate with such inner ethnic frames.

Having the sense of belonging emotionally; being economically included; positioning oneself within the larger community in terms of symbolic and cultural discourses; having strong social relations to be mobilized for one's benefit; yet being stigmatized/discriminated on spatial/regional terms, let alone being affected by the structures that are impeding one's realization of potential. Being excluded from secure formal economic market relations; being excluded from welfare rights and adequate opportunities for education, housing, health, and security; being excluded from inner social circles defined on ethnic communal grounds; feeling total isolation.

The above are only few of various manifestations of the complexity of the processes of be-long-ings as emerged in the research. Grasping complexity of belongings is important to better approach the issue of national belonging, as it is not a one way, simple, or continuous process but an intricate one.

Belongings of the participants were *multiple*. Emerged in the research was the simultaneity and non-exclusiveness of various belongings as familial, kinship/*aşiret*, local, ethnic, linguistic, religious, regional, national, and trans-national for the participants. The relative weight of each form of belonging differed for each participant, depending not only on their demographic characteristics, and the contextual peculiarities of each form of belongings, but also on the socio-historical processes that this study defines to play the primary role in defining them. In some cases, all named above could well go together. In others, bundles of them grouped together excluding or only partially relating to others. Whether these forms of belongings were inclusive or exclusive of each other was a significant determinant in such relation. National belonging emerged in this study to be one form of belonging among others yet not quite an equal one. Even if one might have expected the national belonging to organize all other forms of belongings, it did not emerge to be case in all circumstances. Sometimes it was dependent upon other forms of belongings and negotiated with them to establish itself. Existing balance of local power relations, socio-cultural



structures, regional modes of production, and long established social cleavages were often decisive in defining the way and extent for such establishment of ‘the National’.

Belongings of the participants were *multidimensional*. During the research, the political-structural, discursive-symbolic, and spatial-territorial relations revealed themselves as important contexts for be-long-ings. The experiences of the participants concerning the political, legal and economic organization of life were categorized as the *political-structural context* of national belonging. Their entitlements and duties with regard to citizenship status; their relations to the various state and governmental institutions; their relations to *aşiret* as a social, juridical, economic organization of life; diverging political actors like parties, political movements, governmental or non-governmental organizations, armed organizations with political claims; and market relations were all grounded in such context. The experiences of the participants concerning the discursive practices, and symbolic organization of life were categorized as the *discursive-symbolic context* of national belonging. Such context is basically about the symbolic and discursive constructions of ‘reality’ or the symbolic order of things as was named in the analysis. The experiences of the participants concerning any form of representation; cultural meanings in collective memories; symbolic forms of power, capital, and violation; and the role of official and popular discourses within their everyday lives were all grounded in such context. The experiences of the participants concerning the organization of life in place were categorized as the *spatial/territorial context* of national belonging. The experiences of the participants concerning local, regional, national, trans-national level spatial practices, policies, and relations; the role of borders, border policies, and trans-border relations in their everyday life in a socio-historical perspective; rural-urban dynamics; any form of migration; any short term physical mobilization for occupational, touristic, or educational purposes; architectural heritage; and the discourses of indigenous belongings were all grounded in such context.

Be-long-ings are complex, multiple, and multidimensional processes and all four characteristics are related in intricate manners.

### **7.1.3. Embodied Be-long-ings: Belongings are Embodied, Gendered, and Performed**

Be-long-ings were experienced by the participants as *embodied* processes. The following were some of the very bodily experiences whereby the narratives were articulated around by the participants, or were emphasized as focal experiences making and unmaking be-long-ings for them: *codes of dressing; manners, ways of behaving, and bodily gestures; speaking languages, speaking Turkish fluently and properly, speaking with or without accent; outlook, care, beauty, tattoos, embellishment; pain, suffering, ache, injury, wound, physical deterioration, impairment, incapacity, loss, and death; hunger, malnutrition; surviving in its very material existence; wandering, walking, staring, grouping together in public space; worshipping and wearing religious symbols; wearing or acting bodily political symbols; marching, demonstration, throwing stones, burning oneself to death or other forms of political suicide; imprisonment, torture, maiming; drug using, prostitution; labouring; migrating; killing or dying.*

Body emerged to have a constitutive role in forming and deforming belongings through and in its practices, manners, habits; the meanings and symbols attributed them; its very existence or absence physically. Body also emerged as a space whereby power relations were acted out and negotiated. Female and male bodies became targets for such enactments of power and the ordering processes.

In some cases, bodies were stuck between conflicting powers, places, or discourses. In others, they were submissive and obedient. Still in others, they became the very space and/or tool of resistance or the way out. Not only femininities but also masculinities were reconstructed in the process. New

subjectivities emerged to form new forms of be-long-ings whether the bodies were the tools, the space, targets or subjects of those competing processes.

In discourses of “honour” regarding women, the female body was the object of reproduction of communal boundaries, patriarchal and conservative orders. Female body often emerged as the space by means of which be-long-ings are negotiated between ‘us’ and ‘them’ ‘here’ and ‘there’. Furthermore, in many case female body and life are emerged to be ordered along the rationale of economic and ethnic belongings that are interwoven into power relations. In general terms as well body emerged as a site of boundary making. In many cases, bodies were stamped between the dichotomies of modern versus traditional; rural versus urban; pious versus non-pious; western versus eastern; Turk versus non-Turk; public versus private; acceptable versus unacceptable; care versus violation; empowerment versus disempowerment. It was not merely individual body at stake, but also and importantly the social/communal body and the national body in competing discourses, practices and policies. The social boundaries of domination and power as well as symbolic meanings were being reconstructed through technologies of body. In some cases, even the local space, ethnic community, or the nation were perceived as an organic whole just like a body.

Although none of the three groups that participants of this study affiliated with were totally homogeneous in terms of the experiences of the individuals, still there were visible patterns of be-long-ings formed through similar experiences. Accordingly, in terms of embodied be-long-ings for Kurds, not exhaustive but predominant patterns of experiences could be conceptualized as *violated bodies*, *suffering citizens*, and *resisting subjects*. In terms of embodied be-long-ings for Arabs, not exhaustive but predominant patterns of experiences could be conceptualized as *modernizing bodies*, *adapting citizens*, *compliant subjects*. In terms of embodied be-long-ings for Syriacs, not exhaustive but predominant

patterns of experiences could be conceptualized as *modern bodies, absent citizens, targeted subjects*.

One more point to be made about embodiment of belongings is that psyche and well-being of individual psychology also emerged to be intricately related to bodily experiences. Experience of violence had the defining role within this context. Violence *marking its influence all through one's soul; children embodying traumas of prior generations in their emotions and pain; psychological ruptures being experienced preventing one to construct her personality in a socially healthy way; the political being imprinted in what one deems to be essentially herself turning to become the ontological; not knowing what psychology was until one's experience of forced migration* were some of the striking examples articulated by the participants. These were exclusively the experiences of Kurds and Syriacs, as mentioned here is basically the direct and physical forms of violation. Still, however, other more indirect symbolic or structural forms of violation also have their mark on the psyche of people. *Loss of confidence, lack of pride in one self, self-doubt, self-censorship, mind-split, ambition to overcome the prejudice* were all articulated concerning such instances by both Kurd and Arab participants. Still, other more positive properties were also articulated by the participants, which they thought they gained through their harsh experiences. They were especially younger generation and middle-aged participants, and not exclusively but mostly Kurds. *Increased maturity and responsibility, individualization, enhanced socio-political awareness, being more hard-working, conscientious, and diligent, and having stronger social ties* were among those properties whereby they thought they had a stronger hand due to the difficult conditions they had to endure in life compared to their Turkish counterparts. Feeling pride and confidence in one's very body was another expression whereby Turkish national belonging was expressed in psychological and physiological terms by some Arab participants. Indeed, conceptualization of longing as a building block of be-long-ings should itself be thought within this context.

Conceptualizing social-psychological and emotional processes as embodied be-long-ings was grounded in the experiences of the participants whereby they lived and expressed them as bodily processes. Conceptualizing these processes in terms of be-long-ings is crucial for specific reasons: they have trans-generational influences, affecting how generations are brought up and how they position themselves within the larger social relations; they shape individual and collective memory, which linking past to present conditions current acts, decisions, and perceptions; they shape subjectivities; they influence inter-group relations; individual they strengthen, if not construct, communal be-long-ings, with especially negative experiences pulling together; and there may emerge generational differences as the younger people brought up in violent conditions tend to be more inclined to have a critical, unhesitant, and even radically contravening attitude against violation. Be-lon-ings are embodied psychologised processes.

Be-long-ings were experienced by the participants as *gendered* processes. Gendered practices, norms, relations, and discourses had a constitutive role in forming be-long-ings in both everyday contexts of life and in terms of national belonging.

Social boundaries were organized along gendered contexts mostly around dressing codes or proper manners of behaviour for women. Often hierarchies were established in references of women comparing the advantaged position of other ethnic women, like Kurdish women mentioning privileges of Turkish women concerning issues like schooling, divorce, child-bearing or rearing; Arab women mentioning Turkish women having more freedom, living in more developed conditions, and Kurdish women being active in politics and more visible in public space, and being more powerful.

Mixed-marriages through ethnicities or religions were always gendered processes constructing communities and social belongings, organized along the

discourse of “giving or taking girls” of other ethno-religious groups. Trans-border ethno-religious social ties become an ever more gendered space for marriages and ways of constructing communities. Gendered collective violence, as in cases of abduction, reinforced structural violation in solidifying the attitude of not sending girls to school and as the realization of women’s potentials was severely hindered.

During the research concerning many areas of everyday life like lineage, marriage, body, labour, social relations, political engagement, and public versus private space visibility often emerged a tension between a sexist language and perspective and challenging gendered experiences and articulations. In many women’s experience, engaging actively in governmental or nongovernmental organizations, or in party politics proved to be empowering. This was the case not only for Kurd but also Arab women. In case of organizations, women who benefited them as well were empowered in their everyday domestic lives, in relation to men, in terms of self-respect and development, and within public space. Femininities and masculinities were restructured through political engagement, mobilization of new social networks, and experiences of violence, and economic exclusion.

Violation, in all physical, symbolic, political, structural, or collective forms, was often experienced as a gendered process in its tools, contexts, or consequences effecting women and men in specific ways and forming be-long-ings for them in profound ways.

Critical in terms of national belonging was that Turkish state was almost exclusively perceived and experienced as the holder of the masculine order and ordinariness in its acts and deeds, whether as a violating power or a caring and ordering father. Rarely also the Turkish state in its harsh treatments was analogized to a ‘stepmother’ treating an ‘orphan’. National belonging was

experienced as a gendered process also in acts like military service, or discourses like the mothers of the nation.

Be-long-ings were experienced by the participants as *performed* processes. Practice and lived experience emerged to be crucially defining in forming belongings. Especially violation in all its forms emerged to be one such experience. Experience of violation became a link between the individual and the collective. It also formed a boundary between those who have and who haven't gone through similar violent experiences, regardless of the attitude of the latter to such experience. The boundary was drawn not only between the perceived perpetrator group of violation and the exposed one, when thought in ethnic terms or in domination relations. Thus, it was not only between Kurds and Turks, or Christians and Muslims, but also within the group who have experienced violence and who did not. Violation emerged as a boundary making experience. Individual lived experience had also transformative role on the individual's relation to adopted hegemonic discourses, and habitual practices. Individual experience of any direct or indirect violation redefines one's own self-position and identifications, longings, and even possessions.

Performances like collective gatherings, social or political, forms belongings. Not only political protests, meetings, marches, commemorations, or celebrations; but also social gatherings like weddings and funerals are sites whereby belongings are made and unmade. The very often articulated call for they/the westerners/Turks should come and see us/here/east also is a sign whereby social capital, both in terms of social relations and of norms, trust, and mutuality, is only formed performatively, through coming together and sharing.

Emphasis on the role of performance and practice in forming be-long-ings is an important outcome of this work as it denies belonging solely as a mental process. It is not merely a matter of 'thinking', or 'perceiving', but a matter of a multiplicity of intricate processes as 'experiencing', 'feeling', 'possessing',

‘acting’, or ‘inhabiting’. The mental aspect, on the other hand, is also a structurally, historically, and socially embedded one. Approaching belonging in such a perspective enables one to see its relation to the politics of redistribution of power and resources, not only material as in structural interventions but also symbolic as in the pursuit of representation (Anthias, 2005; Farmer, 2010).

#### **7.1.4. Violation is a Constitutive Process Making and Unmaking Be-long-ings**

Violation appeared to be an agent of social formation of belonging, with a capacity to structure reality of national belonging; a form of social power charged with meanings that leave stamps in the lives, minds, bodies of the participants of the study. Grounded in substantive field of research, one basic relation emerged between the category of violation and the core category of national belonging, in that violation in its multiple forms has a constitutive role in making and unmaking national belongings for the Arab, Syriac, and Kurdish communities of southeast Turkey.

The dissertation took violence with an emphasis on its meaning ‘to violate’; since it emerged in the research findings not as something, fixed and objectified, but as some process, of violation. Experience of various processes of violation in shaping much in one’s life, both materially and symbolically, was obstinately insistent in the narratives of the participants from the very beginning, the pilot study, to the end of the research thereafter. At the initial phases diverging experiences of violations became apparent, specific aspects of which were crystallized as the research was proceeded. The phenomenon almost imposed itself on the study, thus framing it in a refined way, which would allow grasping the multiplicity of forms and ways it was experienced, emerged as an indispensable path to follow. Articulations of violent experiences and recollection of memories were so vibrant that it became inevitable to explore them in their complexity to have a grasp of the processes whereby peoples’



belongings were constructed or deconstructed and to relate them to the wider context of social power relations and the larger political community.

Experiences of violation were articulated in relation to political actors and relations; social and inter-communal relations; economic relations, infrastructures, and opportunities; legal rights and duties; body, psychology, memory, and emotions; spatial organization of relations, and properties; and discourses. Violation, in both tangible and intangible ways, had a formative and transformative effect on all these spheres defining how people lived, felt, acted as well as were positioned in space or in relation to others.

Following are some of the open codes abstracted from the articulations of the participants of their experiences and feelings that were selectively coded as violation: *being impeded; natural flow of life being broken; being stuck spatially; being uprooted from one's own place of residence; being denied equal and adequate rights and opportunities; being denied the opportunity of flourishing in a peaceful, safe, and enabling surrounding; being re-presented in a certain way to deny one's own will or self-identification; being trapped between interference and judgements of different actors; not being able to seek one's own ends, interests, pursuits; being deprived of agency and subjectivity; being denied the individual privacy and will; being denied the ground to fulfil one's own capacities; being denied the ground to cultivate one's self-respect, identity, culture; being denied the unity of the body and mind; being denied a right to living.*

A basic conclusion of the dissertation grounded in the experiences of the participants is that violation of bodies, memories, properties, places, symbols, relations, or aspirations is a pivotal mechanism of making and unmaking of belongings within the national context as it leads to formation of new subjectivities; spaces; social actors; social capital; social, political, and economic

relations that materialize in confronting, reacting, adopting, negotiating the violent processes.

#### **7.1.5. *Violated Be-long-ings: Existing Be-long-ings were Violated as the Various Forms of Violent Processes Created Ruptures in the Already Established Bonds, Unities, and Continuities for the Participants***

*Violated Be-long-ings* refers to ruptures in the already established bonds, unities, and continuities of individuals or collectives. In other words, *Violated Be-long-ings* are formed through violation of beings, longings, and possessions. The social, political, economic, spatial, and discursive infringements led to ruptures in the socio-spatial positions, ties, and achievements; projections, desires, and aspirations; and the physical, mental, and socio-economic well-being of individuals and groups. Below are some of the individual, collective, and spatial ruptures grounded in the experiences of the participants.

***Ruptures in the relation between the individual and the inhabited territory*** were led by forced migration and consequent evacuation of villages and devastation of the nature; deportation

***Ruptures in local belongings through transformation of the local space into a space of everyday violence and surveillance*** were led by constant interrogation and intrusion by security forces; attacks of armed organizations; political demonstrations breaking into vandalism; increasing criminal activities like theft, drug-selling; and collective attacks on religious grounds

***Ruptures in the relation between the individual and collective memory*** were led by the barriers set before memory transmission through migration and the consequent dispersal of community members, extermination of the lived/inherited places, change of habitual patterns of living, and the renaming of the local and regional territorial space

*Ruptures in the relation between the individual and the collective identity* were led by the ban on/assimilation of/non-providing for the development of mother tongue language; banning name giving specific to a language or a culture; silencing, disguising, marginalizing local social histories through official historiography, education, and media representation

*Ruptures in the unity of the body* were led by physical abuse, torture, mutilation, and killing

*Ruptures in the emotional unity and self-esteem of the individual* were led by poverty; deprivation; force; and prohibition

*Ruptures in the relation between fellow members of the communities across the state borders* were led by border policies

*Ruptures in local economies* were led by inadequate investments; extermination of tools of production in animal husbandry and agriculture; escape of economic capital from the region; loss of knowhow through emigration of skilled artisans; plunder and seizure of others' belongings.

*Ruptures in the relation between the national-citizen and the larger political community* were led by social, discursive, political discrimination based on categorical ethnic identity, especially for Kurds; economic exclusion; violation of equal citizenship rights; violation of safety, wealth, and meanings attributed to life and existence.

#### **7.1.6. Violation Had Different Actors, Tools, Forms, and Consequences**

Experiences of violation for the participants differed from each other in terms of their characteristics, contexts and consequences. All, however, took place in a modern context, and were well modern phenomena. The variety of experiences

made possible identification of different categories of violent experiences. Coding, constantly comparing, and categorizing the variously detailed articulations of the participants on their experiences of violation, I ended up with the broad differentiation of four fundamental forms: *violating political agents*, *violating structures*, *violating discourses*, *violating collectives*. These became the four sub-categories of the category *violation* in the theorization process. It should be noted, however, that these forms of violations are interrelated to each other in intricate ways. Not only that what is included in one form of violation could also be included in another, but also in that one form of violation may cause the other or accelerate it in practice.

#### **7.1.6.1. Violating Political Agents**

Following are the open codes abstracted from the articulations of the participants, which were then selectively coded as *violating political agents* in this study: *memories and experiences of armed conflict; state of emergency; brutality of security forces; maiming, killing, torture, and surveillance; attacks of paramilitary or other armed political forces; forced migration, exile, and resettlement; destruction of livelihoods, burning of villages and forests; massacres and deportation; discriminatory citizenship practices and the denial of citizenship rights; being caught up within the conflict of opposing powers like Hezbollah, PKK, the military, and the political elites.*

Political violation is a direct form of violence the agent of which is definite and is known to the victims. It is mostly, but not exclusively, a form of physical violence. Articulations of the violent experiences led by political agents were always overt and had decisive role in formation of be-long-ings for the participants. Frustration, resentment, fear, feeling of insecurity, criticism, anger, rage, revenge, pessimism, isolation, alienation, and loss of trust were the most visible reactions to the experience of political violation in the articulations of the participants. The experience had direct influence on unmaking and deforming of

already established belongings. Personal experience often has an immediate and radically transformative effect on the individual directly exposed to political violence. Indirect experience through witnessing, hearing, or memory of experiences of one's social ties has also a formative effect on individual belongings, a more gradual and partial one though. If political violence was experienced systematically and extensively by a group of people defined over some form of shared identity, then it had a strong influence of leading to categorical closure for such identity and in forming and underlining group belongings. Who exerted violence had a decisive role in the variation of formed alliances to other hegemonic political actors.

Violation coming from the state apparatus and agencies was the most recurrent form of political violence referred by the participants of this study. This is theoretically an important point to underline in a study dealing with people's experiences of belonging to the established political community -the nation- in framing of which the state has had the defining role, as has been the case in Turkey. It is also important when thought with reference to Weberian understanding of state as the legitimate holder of the monopolistic use of physical force within a defined territory, which is often taken as something different than the illegitimate and illegal violence. Yet, it is reminded in the literature that the most destructive and extensive instances in recent history have been state organized and sanctioned (Ray, 2011). Still, moreover, Understanding state political violence as part of a strategy of political domination, rather than as a result of abnormalities within the political system or exceptional circumstances brings us to always consider it as a central element in the politics of state-building and maintaining (Poynting and Whyte, 2012); and intimately connected with ideas of sovereignty (Sarat and Culbert, 2009). When viewed within the perspective outlined above, political violence in Turkey appears to be a form of violence being exerted not only to a specific group, be it ethnic, religious or any 'minority', but one exerted to all 'citizens' to varying degrees. Such perspective provides a deeper insight for this study. Yet still, it was important to specify the

occasions of political violence where they emerged in intense and manifest ways as this study attempted to do. One point to be made is that violating political agents emerged to be diverse in the experiences of the participants and they were no less influential in forming be-long-ings.

Kurds and Syriacs were the two groups who were most exposed to political violence. Interplay of violence in these cases with mobilization of different forms of social capital and processes of economic inclusion/exclusion were decisive at producing divergent forms of subjectivities at both group and individual level. Reactive, Confronting, Alienated forms of subjectivities were experienced by Kurds, while more cautious, restrained, compromising forms of subjectivities were experienced by Syriacs.

#### **7.1.6.2. Structurally Conditioned Violation/Violating Structures**

Following are the open codes abstracted from the articulations of the participants, which were then selectively coded as *violating structures* in this study: *underdevelopment, lack of public investment; unemployment; precarious jobs and lives; clientelism limiting equal access to job opportunities for the ones outside of those networks; poverty, dispossession, economic deprivation; war torn local economy (animal husbandry and agriculture); marginalization of the region within the larger economic space of the country; ecological destruction; violent urban space limiting the life opportunities; instability and insecurity; social exclusion; problems of social insurance arrangements; blood feud/vendetta; patriarchy and sexism; drug addiction; inadequate public health provisions; problems of education system; inadequate urban infrastructure; lack of adequate problem solving institutions; absence of socially responsible and caring governance, bad governmental policies.*

Unlike the overt indications of political violation, the above named instances of violation, which stem from or embedded in the very formation of the economic,

spatial, social/cultural structures, or infrastructures as specified above were not always openly expressed to be instances of violence by the participants of the study. This may partly be interpreted in relation to the former's being a direct, and the latter's being an indirect form of violence. Nevertheless, they were always there in the narratives, in the participants' articulations of their experiences full of resentment, anger, worry, hopelessness, on the one hand, and criticism, demand, or most vivid oppositions and claim making on the other. Most of the participants were clearly aware that their rights to a just, equal, affluent life were violated through conditions that were constraining, disempowering and debilitating them, regardless of whether they could identify them or not. Very often some perception of exhaustion, hindrance, containment, helplessness, hitting the wall imbued the narratives. There was sometimes a more urging perception of being on the edge of an abyss.

Structurally conditioned violation was experienced mostly as regional based discrimination by the participants and all the groups living in the region were affected regardless of their ethnicity. Many participants sensed that full realization of individual potential was being hindered simply because they have lived in south-east Turkey. This was a ground whereby space became an important constituent of be-long-ings. The experience of violating structures was often seen specific to a region, 'east' in general 'south-east' in specific as were repeatedly named by the participants, even though in some cases a more refined differentiation was made concerning rural-urban differences alongside the eastern-western one. Experience of being discriminated not on personal, ethnic, linguistic, social terms but on regional ground, made the region itself become underlined in forming be-long-ings for the participants. Often a comparative language was used with regard to standards of life, socio-economic opportunities, structural organization, services and infrastructure in 'western cities' of Turkey. Longing for fair, just, equal, adequate and reliable structures became a visible part of those be-long-ings for all the participants. Personal experience mattered in what specific context such longing was expressed, yet it

was there by itself. The ground for demands was repeatedly and strongly their citizen position. When the state, as a long-standing higher order structure, was seen as responsible for its policies towards the region, disapproval and criticism of the bad policies followed regardless of the participant's positive attitude towards what the state stood for, acceptance of the status quo of power relations, and strong identification with the official discourses on Turkishness of the state institutions. Even when a more durable 'culture' was seen responsible, effective interference of the state was called for. Violating structures, thus, brought space and state as intricate components of be-long-ings for the participants.

Still, one has to note that the degree of being influenced by those conditions that defined here as violating structures was not the same for every individual, as it was the case with the other forms of violence. Being a woman or man; young or old; Kurd, Arab or Syriac; educated or uneducated; poor or prosperous; employed or unemployed; as well as the intersection of those categories all mattered in such influence. Accordingly, the extent of a poor, uneducated, Kurdish woman and an affluent, educated, Kurdish woman of being affected was different, the former being more severe. If one had access to effective social capital to mobilize for one's own good played role in circumventing the influence of those structures. Likewise, if one was excluded from the economic market personally the influence of structural violation was felt to be tougher and more durable. In other words, social capital and economic inclusion at personal level can compensate the negative effects that may ensue from violating structures.

The conceptualization of violating structures served to reveal the social machinery of oppression leading to the current order of things. Moreover, it brought in the historicity of the individual experience of suffering as well as the distribution of suffering along diverse categories of peoples. It uncovered what was seemingly normal and ordinary, and pointed at the 'abnormality' in it. It provided tools to link the current individual incapability to older and broader



relations and organizations than their immediate causes. It linked today to the past, the local to the transnational, and the survivor to the death. It linked the researcher to the wider context of the worlds of the participants.

Still, emphasizing the role of structures does not mean denying individual agency in altering, negotiating, and making do with the structure in various ways. To the contrary, understanding the structure not as a fixed and static 'thing' but as a process, that is "the ordering of interactions across time and in space" (Jonathan Turner, 1987 cited in Farmer, 2010: 335), this study tried to find out the ways participants interacted with the structuring processes of the 'nation' and the 'national'. It led the emergence of how individual citizens experienced the 'structure' that 'the nation' sets for in what it offered, imposed, denied to or provided with. Conceptualization is also important in terms of social policy making for structural interventions, which this study reveals are fundamental to create egalitarian distribution of power and resources, whether material or symbolic.

### **7.1.6.3. Violating Discourses and Symbols**

Following are the open codes abstracted from the articulations of the participants, which were selectively coded as *violating discourses and symbols* in this study: *categorical denial of an ethnic or ethno-religious identity other than normative Muslim Turkishness, constrains on its culture, language, or symbols; criminalizing and stigmatizing discourses towards a categorical identity, culture, ethnicity; offensive attitudes or discrimination towards symbols of a categorical identity, religion, or city; enforcement of religious conversion against Christians; denying differences through similarizing and standardizing discourses like "we are all Muslims" ("hepimiz Müslümanız") and "we are all brothers" ("hepimiz kardeşiz"); insulting and offensive discourses towards non-Muslims like "giaour" ("gâvur/fille/kâfir") or "the Armenian offspring" ("Ermenidölu"); discourses of terrorism; discourses of martyrdom; excluding and militaristic*

*discourses over home/land or marking places with Turkish nationalistic slogans; denial of past violent episodes; perception violation as 'the normal' violation as the order of things; assimilationist education and cultural policies; naming, nicknaming, ignoring self-definition/naming of people; categorizing citizens as "community" (cemaat), "group", "people" (halk) at will; violent representations by media; pitying, victimizing gaze, and attitudes denying people's agency; looking upon oneself/others to be inferior because of their way/accents of speaking Turkish; orientalist discourses towards 'east' and 'eastern' people; concealing discourses of the "culture of tolerance" (hoşgörükültürü), "the city of cultures" (kültürlerşehri), "the city of languages and religions" (dillerdinlerşehri) or "the cradle of cultures" (kültürlerinbeşiği), making the past and current intercultural tensions in the cities unheard, the power relations invisible and the existing fissures irreparable; dichotomizing discourses of modern versus primitive, civilized versus savage/barbaric, enlightenment/illumination versus darkness, educated versus ignorant, urban versus rural framed around a central dichotomy, the former parts signifying west/westerners/Turks versus the latter signifying east/easterners/'others' [non-Turks].*

Participants of all backgrounds, age, gender, and ethnicity mentioned experiences or perceptions that defined here to be violating discourses and symbols. Their articulations referred to cases whereby they were harmed, discriminated, taken advantage of, or deceived whether as individuals, or more in collective terms as ethnic, cultural, religious groups, the city or the region, or what they referred to be 'East' in general. Violation might have stem from the contents, tools, contexts, or consequences of those discourses or symbolisms.

Violating discourses and symbols act in two ways, not unrelated from each other, as grounded in the findings of the research. First, they impose the means of understanding; shape, disguise, construct reality; structure and reproduce the

existing order of things as just and legitimate. Second, they are violent acts and discourses directed towards the symbolic sphere of life.

Conceptualization of *violating discourses and symbols* is important within the context of this research for it is grounded in the questions of legitimacy, representation, meaning, and naming. It is directly related to be-long-ings in terms of people's self-definitions, positioning, meaning attribution, longings. As a form of violation as well it is related to other forms of violation regarding the consequences it leads to. Direct, physical, political, economic, or collective acts of violation may ensue from violent discourses and symbolisms.

It was also important in providing tool for the question how did Turkishness as a symbolic, discursive, and cognitive space function in forming be-long-ings for the individual participants of the study. It helped further to see other forms of symbolic, discursive, and cognitive spaces in their roles and meanings for the participants.

#### **7.1.6.4. Violating Collectives**

Following are the open codes abstracted from the articulations of the participants, which were selectively coded as *violating collectives* in this study: *overt collective attacks, bullying, and intimidation towards Syriac/Christian populations in everyday life; clandestine attacks on symbolic objects and places of Christians; local collective participation in mass murder of Christian populations in the past; pillage, looting and unjust appropriation of belongings of Christians by Muslims (Kurds, Arabs, Turks/Turcomans); abduction of Christian young women by Muslim men; lynching attempts and attacks against Kurds, lay persons as well as politicians and party buildings, in different western cities and towns; aggression, threat of violence, or overt attacks in football matches against Diyarbakır football team in western cities in the name of*

*Turkish nationalism; instances of vandalism and violation of everyday life in pro-Kurdish demonstrations and protests.*

Conceptualization of *violating collectives* is important within the context of this research for it is grounded in the processes of constructing and solidifying intergroup social boundaries, and directly influences making or unmaking of belongings. Articulations around experiences of collective violation could be very detailed and precise in describing the process, depicting the causes, pointing at the consequences. In terms of the Syriac experience, as violation took place in the locality and undertaken by the neighbouring communities, mass e/migration was the immediate consequence with the following loss of social, economic, and human capital not only for the Syriac population but also for the local and regional socio-economic existence as a whole, still further for the national when they emigrated. For the remainders for whom the face to face relations continued with the same communities, sometimes the very aggressors themselves personally, withdrawal into in-group relations; hardening of intercommunity boundaries; burdening memory for the present conduct of relations; the anticipation of facing something similar anytime in future; feelings of insecurity and distrust were the outcome. Since instances of interstate crises also were times when harsh collective violence was experienced, future became more unpredictable in a volatile international system. Real life consequences like drop out of school, or denial of girls' education may have followed in the existence of threat of violation. Role of the gendered collective violence reinforced structural violence as the realization of women's potentials was severely hindered. Collective violation in such context was not merely an issue of the past, but inescapably of today and here for the Syriac participants. Since religion was the apparent basic motivation of violation, construction of community boundaries was also solidified around religious symbols in this case.

In terms of the Kurdish experience, on the other hand, as violation took place far from the locality, and was undertaken on the ground of ethnic belongings, in the

name of nationalism, or through utilising discourses against ‘terrorism’, the consequence is usually withdrawal to local space, reinforcement of ethnic identification, and development of a reactionary type of positioning. Direct experience of lynch attempt was rare among the participants of this study, but any such instance against any Kurd anywhere had its influence in shaping be-long-ings for them. Those incidents took place in ‘western’ cities. Western may be denoting to Black Sea Region, which is north, or a place immediately west to the locality, in that case meaning that it is not inhabited by Kurdish majority. The acts being realized in the name of Turkish nationalism, by whom identifying themselves as ‘Turks’, regardless of their ethnic identity, alienation from, resentment towards the larger society also followed. In many cases, the victims were agricultural migrants, construction labourers, or other ordinary people making class an important aspect of collective violence, which in turn have led to expressions of Kurdish inner group solidarity over class cleavages. Categorical collective identity becoming a base for violation underlies collective boundaries and solidifies intra-group be-long-ings.

#### **7.1.7. Belongings are Constructed through Re-membering**

Emerged in the analysis was that long-lasting, categorical, systematic violation in its direct or indirect, past or present forms tend to take a collective nature as it shapes collective memory. It emerged in many cases that such memory becomes a space whereby individuals re-member themselves to that collectivity.

In terms of the Kurdish experience, collective memory emerged to have a helix-like movement of re-membering through linking and taking in each and every violent experience, regardless of it being minute, direct or indirect, past or present. I named such experience as *helical memory of violation*. Helical memory of violation constructs Kurdish be-long-ings in a way merging individual and community, today and ever, here and all over. It is embodied by individuals, become a part of a collective narrative, define and underline the

boundaries. It constructs a collective body and a collective psyche. It forms a Kurdish time and space as a ceaseless cycle.

In terms of the Syriac experience, collective memory emerged to have linked all forms of violating experiences, past and present, further back to one point in time, 1915. I named such experience as *chained memory of violation*. Through the feeling of insecurity strengthened with every recent violating experience - political, collective, or symbolic- a perception that not much has changed is reassured. *Chained memory of violation* promotes withdrawal into community relations, while developing some self-restrictive, restrained and reserved attitude both in inter-group relations and with the larger political community and the state. It constructs Syriac Christian be-long-ings influencing all aspects of positionings, longings, and economic activities, or decisions about possessions.

Violence in this study, being in line with the arguments of Rotker (2002), was often articulated as an urgent a call for amendment of the social contract; pointing to the models of solidarity or the cultural/symbolic reconstruction; and telling much about its relation to identity, belonging, and the political community. As much it was about the body, memory and cognition of the individual; it was about the structural, discursive, and political codes of the larger community and the state, and potentially of deconstructing them.

#### **7.1.8. Social Capital: Mobilization of Social Relations, in What Form and to What Extent, is Decisive in Forming Be-long-ings**

This dissertation asserts that the role of social relations in their being sources for individual and social group benefit is decisive in forming national be-long-ings. The concept “social capital”, which itself was a grounded concept (Urquhart, 2018) was the theoretical coding in the process of conceptualization, whereby previous steps of open and selective codes were related.

Access to and mobilization of social relations of various sorts appeared to have role in forming/deforming be-long-ings in several crucial ways. Social capital was not a concept predefined at the beginning of the research, and no specific questions to 'measure' social capital were asked. In relation to the research question, however, many areas of social relationships were covered during the interviews; areas like interethnic and intra-ethnic relations, neighbourhood relations, economic partnerships, relations with the wider Turkish society, preferences and practices of marriages; problem solving processes in daily life; relations with trans-border Kurd/Arab/Syriac people; associational membership; social tensions; social trust and political participation. Representatives of various institutions and civil society organisations active in the cities were also interviewed, as the need to do so did arise while in the field. What emerged during the fieldwork was the importance of social networks and connections, as well as of their absence, in defining be-long-ings for individuals not only in terms of their identifications, but also in terms of their very life chances and opportunities. Access to and mobilization of familial, local, institutional, ethnic, religious, or trans-border relations emerged to have a function of providing for the security, wealth, meaning attribution for the individual as well as generating trust, solidarity, and mutuality. The intricate role of social relations became most evident through divergent cases, in the experiences of the participants who lack enabling and inclusive social ties. Some extreme cases, where participants had no or only very limited access to social ties and networks to draw on when in need of help and assistance, showed that presence or absence of such access played a crucial role in dealing with the problems of everyday life, including health, unemployment and poverty. In extreme cases, isolation, detachment, poor health, and malnutrition could follow. On the other hand, mobilization of social ties in various forms became a source for manifold opportunities. It is important to note, however, that social relations were not always enabling, but well acted in a constraining manner for individuals at specific contexts.

Relating such conceptualization to social capital literature came only after the fieldwork. Social capital became part of theoretical coding, providing the study with tools to deal both with the complexity of social relations and with the diversity of their role in shaping identifications, groupness, and boundaries. Categories abstracted from the experiences of the participants which were theoretically coded as social capital in this study are *family ties and marriage relations; ethnic fellows, friendship, community relations; religious fellows and organizations; trans-border ties; aşiret ties; local relations; local institutions; political participation, parties and citizenship*. Below are detailed the roles and functions of each category of social relations in forming be-long-ings for the participants.

#### **7.1.8.1. Family and Marriage Relations**

Family emerged to be an important source of mobilization for one's benefit, though in cases it also acted as a source of constraint especially in terms of individualization for young members or for women. *Family name and reputation* provided for opportunities, trustfulness, and enabling relations for the members of the family; this was especially visible for Arabs who were socially organized along *aila* [family] lines. *Extended family* was a source of economic support, finding house and job, learning crafts, or establishing one's own enterprise not only in locality but wherever its members were spread. Existence of established family, relative, community ties in a place played *enabling role in decisions* of migration destination, place to study, place to live, and place to establish economic activity. *Child bearing* emerged as a source for women of low socio-economic status to take place in public space, as the companion of children played an enabling role for the women to be out in the face of limiting patriarchal structures. Close knit family and community relations could well *constrain* individual will, decisions, mobility, and use of resources.



*Marriage* emerged to establish both including and excluding social relations either constructing social bonds among groups of people or defining boundaries between groups. Marriages were established among relatives with a concern over *distribution of economic possessions and reproduction of the group*. Marriage between Christians (especially women) and Muslims were disapproved, the consequence being losing family and community relations for the Christian women in case it occurred. Forming family ties through marriages between individuals from different *aşirets* or ethnicities (Arab-Kurd) were sought for to establish crisis resolution, gain of status and power; and enabling relations. Difference of religion, language, worldview, or culture could become an obstacle for establishing marriage, thus keeping social relations in bounded limits.

#### **7.1.8.2. Ethnic Fellowship**

*Ethnic fellowship* emerged to be an important source of mobilization for solidarity, mutuality, gathering information, not necessarily in itself though, but particularly in the existence of another ethnic group, especially a competing or threatening one. *Ethnicity based separate neighbourhoods* were widespread in the research area, which could well function to enable in-group relations and solidarity, yet lead to relative isolation from the out-group(s) and solidify boundaries with them. *Ethnicity based associations* provided a space for identification, mobilization, resource distribution among the co-ethnics, not necessarily always on equal grounds though. *Friendship* was defined to be an important source of support and assistance especially in Kurdish society, which emerged almost as an extension of ethnic community.

#### **7.1.8.3. Religious Fellows and Organizations**

*Religious orders and tariqah* emerged to be an active source providing links, resources, shelter, economic and social support, guidance to needy, including the poor and the students. Although *similar religious affiliations* play role in

providing for support and assistance, *religious difference* may function as excluding social capital as a lack of trust, reciprocity, marriage relations between Christians and Muslims. Yet there are trade relations where local economic market is shared by both. Religious difference often was a base of *collective violence* and discrimination towards Syriacs/Christians, therefore depleting social capital both in terms of social relations, solidarity, and reciprocity, and in terms of trust, shared obligations, norms, and values.

*Community relations* provide for trust, solidarity, shared norms and obligations, information and safety in the case of Syriacs as a religious minority group, though not without intra-group tensions. *Syriac religious leaders* play a central role in decisions in the name of the community; are being or expected to be consulted for the approval and support in individual decisions like running for candidacy in politics. *Community religious places* like the church courtyard and monastery provide safe and secure socialization for members, especially for the young and the children.

#### **7.1.8.4. Trans-border Ties**

*Trans-border ethnic or religious ties* especially across the neighbouring countries of Syria, Iran, and Iraq have provided a space for Kurds, Syriacs, and Arabs for marriage arrangements, visits and shopping, legal or extra-legal economic activity, shelter from violence, security seeking in criminal acts, resource mobilization, identification, and future projection.

#### **7.1.8.5. Aşiret**

*Aşiret* emerged in the experiences of the participants as *a source of identity*, identification, roots, lineage; as *a mediating authority* in social disputes; as *a structure to keep social order* and to provide for a hierarchic social structure where status of the individuals are predefined; as *a 'legal' organization* with the

power of enforcement and with its laws and norms; as *a structure functioning across border* and organizing trans-border relations; as *a political power* to support or challenge the political system; as *a social organization* arranging marriages of poor young men, supporting members (especially men) in finding jobs; as *an organization for solving problems* in the lack of trust towards the state institutions; as *a source of security and protection* against other *aşirets* and against the state; as *a connection to the governmental institutions*, as a way of/to politics; as *a mechanism of social control*; as *a constraining institution* of people's agency, freedom, will and choice; as *a patriarchal mechanism* regulating marriage especially for women, and confining women's labour to domestic space or agricultural work.

*Aşiret* as a crucial network of relations organizing social and economic life was especially strong in Urfa and among Arabs, but among Kurds as well. In Mardin it was strong especially in rural yet still had an influence in the city, though a limited one. In Diyarbakır it was not much visible as a current mechanism of power, yet was mostly referred to as a past phenomenon.

#### **7.1.8.6. Local Institutions**

Relations to NGOs, associations, municipal, and governmental institutions in the locality operated for the individuals *as a way out of poverty, immobilization, and isolation* through engagement in economic activity, learning, socializing, self-expression and empowerment. Municipal institutions supplied facilities of *training, education, employment, support and assistance* especially for women, children and the poor. Foundations, associations, and other communitarian social organizations -independent of their immediate location- played crucial role in *generating funds and other resources* for restoration of the religious places, building infrastructure, or other communitarian purposes.

#### **7.1.8.7. Local Relations**

Being a native/local of a city provides for enabling opportunities and status by the local and central administrative power. Tensions between being urban versus rural, migrant versus local define dynamics of exclusion and inclusion. Occupational-sectoral division of labour going along with ethno-religious segmentation emerged as an enabling structure which sustains relations at a definite level between different ethnic/religious groups however limited they may be. Crafts training and inter-ethnic employment interconnects different communities to a degree; Syriac craftsmen and tradesmen as mediators, consultants in cases of conflict among the Muslim shopkeepers; Role of co-habiting and ensuing local social relations has a role in dealing with the memory of violence for those Syriacs who continued to live in the locality as opposed to those who e/migrated; Loss of knowhow, resources, and crafts was experienced in the locality upon e/migration particularly of Syriac/Armenian/Chaldean people; Lack of trust, insecurity, and not being on equal grounds experienced by Christian people within the larger Muslim society in locality; Hidden relations of “kinship” through having “married” Armenian women by Kurds especially during 1915 period. Responsible reflection on and admission of past violence sets the ground of present social relations between Kurds and Syriacs.

#### **7.1.8.8. Political Alignment, Political Structure**

Kurdish political movement has provided a space for mobilization of social relations, developing solidarity, trust, and new forms of alignments within the Kurdish society. Kurdish politics has rearranged the ground for inter-communitarian relations and inclusion of Christians or other previously marginalized populations. Political parties acted as a source of social relations linking people to power centres through political mechanisms, and/or supplying opportunities and benefits through relations of clientelism. Different political ideologies usually impeded social relations; ethnicity based/nationalist politics

acted as a criterion defining social boundaries, relations, or distance between Arabs, Kurds, Syrians, and Turcomans. Ethnic, cultural, and territorial policies of the state had a function of interrupting the accumulation and maintenance of existing social relations, forms of organization, and networks of solidarity; while impeding establishment of new ones with the larger society in a smooth and inclusive way. State has relied on existing forms of social relations and organizations within these groups as in negotiating with *aşiret* power, local notables, and acting along existing social cleavages.

#### **7.1.8.9. Relations with the Larger Society**

The expressions “*people in the west*” most often referred to “*Turks*” in the articulations of the participants, and this was usually understood as the larger society. *Encounters and relations with the people in the west* emerged to be a crucial source of be-long-ings at the national context. Whether one has experienced *inclusion or exclusion* had a determining role in defining boundaries or (de)constructing positions and identifications. Experience of prejudiced behaviour, discrimination based on ethnic, linguistic, religious, physical differences, or lack of reciprocity emerged as an obstacle to trusting relations with the wider society and a barrier for an inclusive formation of national be-long-ings. *Memory of the past experience of shared social relations* with the wider Turkish society played an enabling role for the older generation of Kurds in terms of current be-long-ings at the national context and future projections. Most were ready to take the hand the state and the larger society would extend to them. Above categories of social relations and networks were abstracted from the experiences of the participants. Conceptualization of social relations in their various forms and in relation to their function in individuals’ lives as sources of mobilization for one’s acts, desires, and gains; and revealing their enabling and constraining roles became an important tool to explain mechanisms acting behind people’s be-long-ings. It provided a better grasp of the organization of local social networks, hierarchies, and power relations as well as of the links to

the central power relations, social relations, and institutions. This is because the study at hand is not only concerned with interpersonal relations or intermediary associations and organizations with regard to social capital, but also and importantly the macro-level societal institutions as well.

Wider social, political, economic processes proved to be important in the context of this work, in terms of forming social capital not only at intra-group and inter-group levels concerning Kurds, Arabs and Syrians, but also between individuals and the larger society. Exclusive or inclusive reception within the larger society plays determinant role in formation/deformation of trust, expectation of reciprocity, or shared norms and obligations. This is to say social capital formation is often beyond individual choice and decision, and embedded in the wider societal and political processes. Ignoring these processes would cause blaming people for not engaging, being included, or participating because of their own cultural and social baggage and relations. This in turn would prove to be a violating discourse.

The intricate relations and social capital formation processes were categorized as bonding, bridging (Putnam, 1993) and linking (Woolcock, 1998) levels in line with the existing literature. Accordingly, I categorize relations of family (nuclear/extended), kinship, and resources emerging thereof being as ***bonding social capital***; relations with ethnic organizations/fellows/politics, religious organizations/religious fellows, NGOs/associations/ syndicates, local ties between different groups, friendship, and resources emerging thereof being as ***bridging social capital***; relations with governmental and state institutions, political parties, relations with the wider society as ***linking social capital***. *Aşiret* relations and the resources emerging thereof, on the other hand, emerge as acting at all three levels, so I count it as all bonding, bridging and linking social capital. Still, moreover, one has to note that permeability between these categories was high in the experiences of the participants that they confirm to be mostly analytic categories to help deal with the intricacy of the phenomena.

The findings of this study extend the social capital theory in the specific substantial area of research. Yet there are some novel contributions of the research as well. The most important contribution of this study to the theory of social capital is that parochial relations as well may act as linking social capital. Unlike Putnam's (1993) theorization, whereby parochial social networks and exclusive social ties founded on homogeneity like kinship, close friendship and neighbourly relations or of people from similar religious or ethnic groups are considered to be bonding social capital; in this research, *aşiret*, family, ethnic or religious groups through their own organizational structure could well function as linking social capital that help individuals gain access to resources, ideas and information from formal institutions for social and economic development.

While class, age, gender, health, education, employment, family circumstances, and characteristics of the area of residence are enumerated to define a person's access to social capital (Nombo and Niehof, 2008); in this research additionally ethnicity, religion, and minority-majority relations both within the local and national social context emerged to be important for access to social capital.

Bonding and bridging social capitals may compensate individual for the effects of structural violence, and provide her with the necessary resources for self-realization. Locally rooted, high-esteemed, and wealthy families played such role for their members, especially the younger ones. Various associations and institutions operating in the locality played a crucial role in supplying means for training, employment, economic gain, food, clothes, laundry, baby-care mostly the poor, the disadvantaged, the women, or the young who had somehow access to them. Having access to and mobilization of linking social capital for one's own or group's benefit, moreover, strengthens identification with the larger society and with what is suggested by 'The National'.

Longing for further and genuine contact with, to be seen and known by, and to have knowledge of the Westerners/Turks/the larger society many participants is

to be understood as a wish for the establishment of bridging social capital between the ethno-religious minority groups of the research and the majority society, between the East and the West, between the non-Turk and the Turk. In this vein, it is longing for a reversal of excluding social relations to inclusive ones, and going beyond the hierarchical and unequal ones to establish strengthened horizontal relations. What is at stake is a reconstruction of the political community as the Andersonian ‘deep horizontal comradeship’, yet, this time not only as imagined but also as *connected*. Obligation to others is critical for such reconstruction of horizontality, which was often perceived to be lacking in the experiences of the participants in their relation with the majority society or in intergroup relations in the locality. David Miller (1995) elaborates on the idea of a deep horizontal comradeship with an ethical argument that owing special obligations to fellow members of the nation goes together with the acknowledgement of a national identity. What emerged in this study was that trusting relations were few and perception and experience of mutual obligation was low in general both in the locality between cohabiting ethno-religious social groups, and between them and the larger society.

Conceptualization of *alternative social capital* is another contribution of this dissertation. ‘Alternative’ here stands for the compensating and substituting network of relations to the normative hegemonic forms of social relations and ensuing norms, values, and mutual obligations in the larger society. In other words, alternative to the social capital formed in the space of Turkishness. It is the contingently politicized and ethnicized formation of social networks as opposed to tacit everyday formations of social relations. It is constructed through the reorganization of a web of social relations, places, and discourses in everyday lives of individuals providing new opportunity structures for them. What emerged in the field was that experience of violation helps formation of alternative social capital. This was the case with two participant groups, the Kurds and the Syrians.



In the Kurdish case, conditions of radically uprooting of existing socio-economic relations especially through the experience of violation coming from official political agents, coming together with hindering structures, become a ground for a reframing and consolidation of social and political relations. Discursive and material re-appropriation of resources and space by the Kurdish political movement has created an alternative social, political and discursive space pulling in increasingly more individuals as their various needs are fulfilled materially and/or symbolically through that space. Various organizations, associations, institutions, even occasions like weddings and funerals have added to that space, becoming areas of newly appropriated social relations, norms, trust, mutuality, and solidarity. Boundaries of the collective identity being at stake, both through a push factor -violation- and through a pull factor –re-appropriation of material and discursive resources by Kurdish politics- an *alternative social capital of Kurdishness* was formed. Especially those who were somehow excluded from resources of the normative space of the nation/Turkishness, through different forms of violation, exclusive social relations, or economic exclusion, were likely to articulate into the alternative social capital of Kurdishness. Access to and mobilization of such capital emerged to be vital especially for individuals who were devoid of resources at many levels. These new forms of Kurdish social capital emerged to have provided for the participants the opportunity to share experience and information, to reduce self-doubt and regain self-confidence, to articulate and express dissent, to satisfy immediate basic needs, to find out ways of making life, to get employed, to develop solidarity, to engage in collective action, to link to power and decision holders, and to build up trust, shared norms and values. *Alternative social capital of Kurdishness* reconstructed collective memory, collective identity, and linked individuals to collectivity in intricate ways. Still such social capital was not automatically inclusive and could well exclude individuals or families leading in some cases to severe isolation for them. The politicized nature of the alternative social capital of Kurdishness could have acted as a ground for such exclusion, active political engagement in Kurdish politics becoming an implicit criterion to be included. Very much

related to this context was the conceptualization of a form of subjectivity in this study: *collecdividual*. It refers to re-articulation of the relation between the individual subjectivity and the collective through merging of the former into the latter. In other words, it is the individual embodiment of collective be-long-ings, the subject positions 'I' and 'we' coming together and individual reconciling her will into the group, however tactical these may be.

Conceptualization of alternative social capital for the Syriac participants of the study could be related to the experience of resorting to transnational links or the supranational space at times of threatening collective violence in the locality. In this case, the already dense and well organized intra-group relations, religious difference from the majority society both in the locality and in the larger society brought formation of strong social capital for the members. Yet, in the existing conditions of weakened position in power relations in the face of various forms of violation, and ensuing loss of people and possessions through e/migration, experience of insecurity could become ordinary in everyday life. Peculiar in the experience of Syriac community was collective violence basically on religious grounds coming from the local neighbouring Muslim population. Important in those occasions, especially in recent ones through enabling opportunity that technology of communication has provided, safety could be secured via transnational links. Transnational social capital mobilizing the national level power centres the local occurrence could be interfered with effectively. The alternative social capital established through the transnational ties, here 'alternative' to the national and the local, thus becomes a security source.

Two resources of social capital were named to be "knowledge resources" and "identity resources" in the work of Falk and Kilpatrick (2000). In the former, interactions draw on internal and external resources of common understandings related to knowledge of community, personal, individual and collective information, whereby the latter to personal, individual and collective identities. Knowledge of skills, values, common physical resources of the community,

networks, procedures, rules and precedents; and interactions producing and reproducing identities of self, others and places, shaping and shifting identity-formation to facilitate people's agency, willingness or capacity to act for the benefit of the community, and providing the framework for people to re-orient their views of self and others in order to be willing to act in new ways are the roles they attribute to those categories of social capital (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000: 17-19). It is in this sense that they relate identity resources with building a sense of belonging and encouraging participation. This dissertation argues that social capital emerged as both knowledge and identity resource for the participants of this study as well. Various forms of social relations as were named above played roles of producing, reproducing, using knowledge and information at local, national, transnational levels, as they acted in shaping, shifting, deconstructing identities for the participants. Yet the contributing argument of this work is that *alternative social capital* emerges to be a *security resource* in addition to its being knowledge and identity resources. Alternative social capital acting as a security resource for the participants is valid in both Kurdish and Syriac cases. In both cases the experience of violation plays decisive role in forming such capital. In both cases, all four forms of violation were experienced. In the former, the ethnicized, politicized, local re-appropriated space creates or reorganizes the web of relations, the resources, places, and events, which provide increasingly more security, in both material and immaterial terms, for the individuals who experience insecurity out of that space. In the latter, existing transnational links provided the source to turn to in case of insecurity in the locality. Occasions of collective violence that Syriacs encountered were impeded through those links. In both cases, insecurities faced were resolved mainly out of the national context. In several cases, that very context could become the source of the very insecurity. Conceptualization of alternative social capital is important in revealing the formative role of violation in forming/deforming be-long-ings.

### **7.1.9. Processes of Economic Exclusion and Inclusion is Decisive in Forming and Deforming Be-long-ings**

Importance of socio-economic status was a presumption of the research, thus the sample was drawn accordingly and the interviews covered due issues as was specified in Chapter 2. Some pressing issues popped up during the interviews, especially with lower status participants, even when the topic was seemingly some other issue. These were unemployment, need for regular income, not having social insurance, dispossession, and insecurities of rented accommodation. Poverty in various cases was the central focus of life, expectations, and future projections for the participants. Moreover, economic interests were variously decisive in defining political and social alignments within the same ethnic group. Yet, what emerged during the research was that it was not merely being poor or wealthy, or what socio-economic indicators would reveal as 'lower' or 'higher' status, but importantly the perception and/or experience of being in or out with regard to dominant economic relations, which here understood as being excluded or included, and importantly who the actor of such exclusion or inclusion was. Thus, a specific conceptualization of economic dimension of exclusion/inclusion in relation to be-long-ings emerged as a requirement of the findings.

Being included at individual level emerged in this study basically as the opportunity to securely and equally taking part in a stable sphere of income making. In this framework, analyzing economic exclusion and inclusion at individual base through looking at the relations producing them and seeing if they are shaped along ethnic, religious, regional, gendered, or ideological/political divisions is important. Moreover, it became clear in the research that it was not only individual level whereby economic inclusion or exclusion was experienced to be crucial, but also the ethno-religious group as a category; locality of residence compared to each other, to others in the same region, and to western cities; the region among other regions in Turkey, in many

cases taken in a dichotomy between East versus West; and Turkey within the international sphere. Therefore, five distinct but intricately related levels were discernible in the findings in terms of the processes of inclusion and exclusion: the individual (participants), the social group (Kurd, Arab, Syriac), the city (Diyarbakır, Mardin, Urfa), the region (Southeast Anatolia) and the country (Turkey).

Unlike the structural violence, here specifically is focused on relations forming the processes of inclusion and exclusion whereby usually the agent of the process is defined. Structural violence may or may not result in economic exclusion. Still, inclusion is as important a process as exclusion to be considered separately. In this context, through which ways, and by whom individuals are excluded or included defines the patterns of be-long-ings. Being excluded or included by the state, the larger Turkish society, and the national market, on the one hand, or in ethnic niches, by ethnic fellows, through trans-border relations, by other hegemonic claimants like the Kurdish political network or *aşiret* structures, on the other, all counted in the formation of these patterns. The above are not categorical alternatives, however, and usually there are connections between the two identified ‘poles’.

Below are categories that I defined through selective coding. What they refer to, given under each title, were open codes categorized together to constitute the selective codes, which in turn constitute the theoretical coding: economic exclusion/inclusion. Namely, below are detailed Inclusion/Exclusion through *Public versus Private Economic Sphere; Institutions in the Local; Economies of Land; Economy of Politics; Socio-Economic Isolation; Economy of the Psyche; Economy of the Local; Ethnic Economies; Trans-border Economies; Gendered Economies; Economies on Move; Informal, Underground, Extra-Legal Economies.*

### **7.1.9.1. Socio-Economic Isolation**

Turkey lagging behind Europe, Southeast lagging behind other regions in Turkey in terms of economic development and level of wealth produced. Insufficient industrial and economic investment in the region, which could have produced employment opportunities and wealth both at local and national levels. Exploitation of labour; as well as unjust distribution of resources, opportunities and growth defined along regional and ethnic terms with ensuing resentment towards national economic policies for not being inclusive and not operating on a level playing field. Vicious circle between increasing racism and nationalism, on the one hand, and economic exclusion, on the other; with increasing social distance and unmaking of bridging social capital between Kurds and Turks/the larger society. Collective violence and discrimination faced by Kurdish workers in various places in western Turkey. The need for coexistence of political and economic solution to ‘Kurdish problem’ was a commonly shared perception especially but not exclusively by Kurds.

Widespread conditions of unemployment, precarious jobs, outsourcing, difficulty of getting employed, difficulty of getting the wage earned, working without social insurance, unsafe conditions of work, and work accidents with no repayment. The vicious circle for the poor, who drop out of school for economic difficulties, yet face increasing demand of higher educational levels for getting employed. Poverty and economic discrimination was a strong base for criticism of state economic and social policies even for those who politically consent to it.

### **7.1.9.2. Public versus Private Economic Sphere**

Public sector employment was most recurrently seen as a stable, reliable, economically secure area of employment and source of regular income. Young and old, male or female, Kurd or Arab, many participants longed for public employment for themselves or for their children. Even in cases when they had a

strong criticism of the state for its violations this was the most common pattern. The basic motivation for getting education for those participants was to be eligible for being employed in public sector. At personal level, economic interests usually gained priority for taking part in public education system as teachers despite opposition to official ideology. Such more recent factuality was in high contrast to the situation in the past, some four decades ago or more, whereby border trade activity and any private enterprise were more preferable to public sector employment as they were more profitable and easy to conduct within the local network of relations, although public sector employment was more available not in terms of quantity but in terms eligibility criteria. Yet there were also few young participants, all Kurd, mostly male, who strictly refrained from public employment, or doing anything for the state, or even would necessitate engaging with the state unless it was compulsory. In some extreme cases even private hospitals could be perceived as a way out of state's surveillance by the younger Kurdish participants.

For the Syriac participants, on the other hand, public sector employment was usually out of question; as collective experience proved public sector exclusion, they believed they would not be able to get employed and most dropped out of school at an earlier stage. Still, there were some exceptions, with one young participant who got higher education being employed in a public institution, though not with a permanent status; and two elder participants already being public sector employees for long time.

### **7.1.9.3. Institutions in the Local**

Institutions of municipalities, governorships, police headquarters, religious orders, foundations, associations, and food or clothe banks played bridging role for a way out of economic hardship for the poor, the marginalized or economically excluded people. They granted bursaries to children and young people. Many local institutions had the claim of making a change in women's

lives by way of empowerment through learning, socializing, self-expression and economic gain. They provided literacy courses, various courses on health, law, human rights, safe motherhood, adolescent communication, birth control, personal development, entrepreneurship and occupational training for women. They provided opportunities for women do washing, taking childcare and preschool services for their children, and engage in money making productive activities.

#### **7.1.9.4. Economies of Land**

Agricultural land emerged to be a crucial aspect of belongings for the huge landowners and a significant source of livelihood for those agricultural labourers who basically share crop through agricultural rentier economy on those large properties of land. This was especially visible in Urfa and Mardin. Ethnicity was a cleavage along which economies of land had operated. Perception of an unequal distribution of the gains of the GAP irrigation project through ethnic and political lines, basically favouring Arabs over Kurds was common among Kurds; while most Arabs thought GAP brought prosperity to landowners and work opportunities for farmers. “*Ağalık*” [feudal land lordship] based upon traditional landownership and potency was still visible in Urfa. Bonding social capital had been used as a precaution for land reform to take place in 1970s through distribution of large lands among the extended family members.

In Mardin, the state from Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic had endowed families mostly Arab that collaborated with itself and worked for it with large agricultural properties. Privileged families, mostly Arab, had also gained land at times of registration of landed property through getting unjust proprietorship certificates using the advantage of being educated, or simply being literate. Land has been changing hands recently, however, creating a new tension in power dynamics in Mardin, as Kurds start to buy, not always peacefully, lands from



Arab urban families for whom they were actually cultivating the lands as being “*ortakçi*” [sharecropper].

#### **7.1.9.5. Politics of Economy**

Following were the perceived economic politics of the state especially by Kurdish participants: Economic investment in the region becoming a trump card for the carrot-stick policy to secure pro-state political allegiances and a tool for dealing with Kurdish politics; Distribution of resources and entitlements unevenly between different groups following ethnic and political lines; Green card allocation, an important source of social security for the poor, as a tool of punishment for pro-Kurdish political allegiance; Poverty, hunger, theft, drug sale rising in the cities as a weapon against political mobilization; Corrupt electoral system whereby donations, privileges were distributed as bribery in exchange of vote; Gain of wealth through engaging in pro-state allegiances, with individuals, groups, organizations or villages backed by the state in exchange

Wealth and power sources provided through religious communities [“*cemaat/tarikat*”] in exchange of established allegiances; Experience of some Kurds of being excluded by Kurdish municipalities in distribution of economic rant and services, for they do not openly express loyalty or not effectively engage in pro-Kurdish party politics; Relations of patronage and clientelism in economic activity, which cause exclusion of those who don’t have the required social contacts.

#### **7.1.9.6. Economy of the Psyche**

Lack of economic and social capital leads to deprivation of tools for dealing with individual, familial and household problems and for self-help; Poverty leads to personal stress, loss of self confidence and trust, feelings of helplessness, being insulted and victimization; Economic hardship leads to family disputes and

quarrels, deprivation and self-isolation; Social help and charity policies are perceived as tools of creating dependent, unconfident, passive, and confirming individuals, charity creating alms culture and producing inert people who refuse to work

#### **7.1.9.7. Economy of the Local**

Being a local of a city implies economic or symbolic capital; Economic, symbolic, and social capitals go hand in hand within the local power structure; Urban and rural spaces are continuous in economic and social terms concerning property and landownership, annual rents, education decisions, food supply, familial and kinship relations; Local social capital acts as a source of economic security and opportunities of work defining locality as the place to live in or attach to

#### **7.1.9.8. Ethnic Economies**

Christians (Syriac, Chaldean, Armenian) were mostly craftsmen and self-employed (goldsmith/silversmith/jeweller, filigree master, tailor, carpenter, dentist, ironsmith, whitesmith, hatter, stove maker) and very occasionally civil servants; many Muslims learned crafts and trade from Christian (Syriac, Chaldean) population, and many occupations today are inherited, not always peacefully, from Christians; Decisions of education strictly followed the established ethnic niche for Syriac people; crafts learning at a young age and early school dropout was an established pattern due to the insecure social atmosphere, lack/limit of other employment opportunities other than self-employment, and the readily available familial enterprises; Economic division of labour/occupational-sectoral segregation which parallels to ethnic segmentation was an enabling structure to maintain relations between different ethnic groups; Turkey's high rank in the world gold market owed much to the Syriac/Christian entrepreneurship.

#### **7.1.9.9. Transborder Economies**

Border trade, both formal and informal, emerged as a significant economic activity for the whole region. Petty smuggling of tea or coffee, or cloths was an ordinary trade activity for Kurds and Arabs. Enhancement of border security measures by the state depleted trans-border economy in important levels. Crossing the border for casual shopping was also frequent for all groups until very recently.

Short term trans-border employment in Syria, Iraq, and Iran of the participants also showed up in the data. Kurdistan Regional Government provided an economic space for Kurds as well as others especially in construction and transportation sector. KRG was perceived by many Kurds to take care of her citizens, to be a welfare state, and to have no economic problem.

In terms of future projection for a viable place to establish life, the relative economic prosperity and stability of Turkey and established opportunities of making money for individuals overweighed the ethnic or religious identifications towards trans-border kin-states for most of the Kurdish, Arab, and Syriac participants.

#### **7.1.9.10. Gendered Economies**

Marriage emerged as a way of organization of wealth and economic capital. Childbearing could be seen as a way of labour supply. Unequal gendered rules of allotment of inheritance applied especially for Arabs, girls usually had no share. Patriarchal allocation of domestic resources and responsibilities were visible especially in rural background participants, with boys getting education, whereas girls make money as agricultural seasonal labour necessary for them to get education. Women's oppression was multiple through poverty, patriarchy, state policies, and violence. Economic capital could override ethno-religious origin in

marriage relations. Increase in the number of women working outside domestic space as result of changes in the organization of agriculture with GAP and increase in industrial production in the local city space.

#### **7.1.9.11. Violent Economies**

Loss of social, economic, human capital as a result of Christian emigration; Confiscation of Syriac, Armenian, Chaldean properties by the state via different institutions (treasury and the forest ministry); Continuing issues of return of the state confiscated foundation properties of Christians; Seizure of Christian properties and wealth by individuals and *aşirets* after mass deportation and massacres of early twentieth century; Capital Levy (1942) causing non-Muslims who could not pay the levied taxes to flee of the country; Wealth as a base of personal/collective violence against Christians; Syriacs being unlawfully held to ransom by the powerful *aşirets* in exchange of ‘security’; Lack of necessary conditions of security and trust for non-Muslim return migration.

Economic deprivation and loss of property following collective attacks of Hezbollah; Forced migration policies causing loss of livelihood, denial of the tools of adapting to the new environments, and ensuing deprivation; Young people and children working during vacations or in school time or dropping out of school in order to work.

#### **7.1.9.12. Economies on Move**

Out migration for economic reasons, like the locality having no further potential for enlarging the already established enterprises or to secure economic capital; Migration/emigration provided for flourishing economically in cases of capital owners; Rural migrants making the peripheries of the urban spaces and economies; Rural urban migration as a result of GAP irrigation project and villages drawn under water after the construction of dams; Seasonal migration of

agricultural and construction labour as an important way of making life; State's agricultural and economic policies leading to uprooting of people for seasonal agricultural labour; Problems of travel, sheltering, sanitary and safety during seasonal labour; Humiliation, discrimination and exploitation during seasonal labour in western cities; Agricultural harvest having started in villages after the law of Return to the Village.

#### **7.1.9.13. Informal, Underground, Extra-Legal Economies**

Smuggling as an ordinary and widespread economic activity until the 'securitization' of the borders through mine fields along the border areas; Forced migrants having lost the means of livelihood and denied the means to adapt to their changing lives engaging in extra-legal ways of life earning; Smuggling, drug sale, prostitution, white slave trade as forms of economic activity.

The findings of this research were in line with conceptualization of economic exclusion both in its participatory and discriminative dimensions (Dertwinkel, 2008, that is both in terms of access to income making productive activity and in terms of equal and dignified experience of work. It was also relational, both in terms of the relations and relative positions of the research groups vis-à-vis each other, and each of them with the larger society. Economic exclusion in this research, too, emerged to be a matter of being in or out and was very much related to capability of actors in reproducing their resources.

The important contribution of this research to the economic exclusion literature is that not only exclusion but also inclusion by itself, and not a negation of exclusion or not 'the normal/ordinary' process, is as important as exclusion in terms of forming be-long-ings. This means that inclusion as a positive process should be analysed with regard to its agent, mechanisms, and consequences. Who is the including agent, what are the instruments of such inclusion, and how did it effect individual life were all decisive in forming be-long-ings for the

participants of this study. If the actor was state or governmental institutions; if it is any ethnic network, party, association; or if it is any religious organization or community are all influential in how be-long-ings are shaped. If inclusion is through right-based official mechanisms of citizenship; or if it is through relations of clientelism, informal ties, or in exchange of allegiance are all important. Such perspective enables us with tools of better grasping the phenomena of alienation of individuals from the state or formation of alternative social capital.

The other contribution is that economic exclusion and inclusion should be thought at different levels. Five levels emerged to be central in this research. Individual experience was always important in forming be-long-ings, and the experience of exclusion brought criticism and questioning of the excluding agent even when the individual identified with that agent categorically. Experience and perception of exclusion at the group level usually strengthened the categorical identity formation and group level be-long-ings; caused future expectation of exclusion, which was analysed through the “chill factor”; and helped construction of a reactionary attitude towards the majority society or the state. Regional exclusion was mostly related to structurally conditioned violation, though at times it was perceived as the consequence of deliberate official policies, and as it was a shared experience helped formation of region-based be-long-ings, or ‘easternness’ as a categorical identity. Exclusion at city level was perceived along the regional discrimination on the one hand, yet along discrimination where it is mostly homogeneous in ethnic terms, as in Diyarbakır, or in Kurdish populated areas of Urfa in comparison to the Arab populated areas. Exclusion at the country level, as a last point, is the perceived position of Turkey within the international sphere, whereby the general pattern was to compare Turkey with Western countries, read mostly as Europe, and with the neighbouring countries, or Middle-East in general, some of which are the kin-states or an important amount of their population is of the same ethno-religious background with the research groups. Generally, the former was seen as better

than Turkey in terms of life conditions economically, whereas the latter worse. Still, relative status of each specific group in each state, and the participant's current economic conditions had a role in how they perceive them.

#### **7.1.10. Turkishness Has Three Constitutive Pillars: State, Turks, Home-land**

Turkishness was not a single, identical, holistic phenomenon in the experiences of the participants. State, Turks, and Home/land were three central pillars on which the experience of Turkishness was basically founded. Variations of experience with Turkishness may have emerged even in a single case. One could harshly criticize violating acts and discourses of the state, for instance, while eagerly embracing and looking for modernization understood as development coming through the state's hand. One might embrace the official state discourse and define herself as *Türkiyeli*, in terms of homeland, yet still criticize Turks in their discriminating gaze and practices. Or even the experience regarding one pillar could have changed over time. Being Turk, for instance, could be identified by dressing neatly, speaking fluently, behaving properly, thus was something to be yearned for in the past, yet at present such perception could have lost its weight, even altogether, in one and the same case be it an individual or a category of people.

##### **7.1.10.1. Turkishness as the State**

State is the most important pillar constructing Turkishness in the experience of the participants. Nationness was associated by the participants mostly with the state with regard to their relations and encounters with it and the perceptions shaped thereof. Thus, the basic argument rooted in the findings of the research is that political/structural context is crucial in the formations of national belonging in Turkey and the main actor at this context is the state with its decisive role in relation with various other actors, e.g. individuals, communities, local elites, religious organizations, aşirets, NGOs, political parties, or other states.

Importantly, the state as an important agent of making and unmaking belongings became tangible for the participants through what it has done and what it has not done, which at times took the form of *excesses* and in others *lacks*.

It is important to note, however, that in this dissertation ‘state’ was not approached as a single, homogeneous and fixed entity. Rather, what emerges in the experiences of the participants is in line with the argument that state is not “a thing, system or subject, but a significantly unbounded terrain of powers and techniques, an ensemble of discourses, rules and practices cohabiting in limiting, tension ridden, often contradictory relation to each other” (Brown 1995, as cited in Aretxaga 2003: 398). Emphasis on the experiences and ways of relation with the state enables the study to point more at those processes, contradictions, divergent practices and discourses as well as the interactions of the involved actors in the relation.

The study argues that divergent ways of relating to the state, manifested roughly as *opposing to*, *embracing of*, *negotiating with*, or *longing for* it, were related to the divergent ways each of the three groups was articulated by the state as a categorical entity. Therefore their differing positions within power relations, local and wider, emerged to be important in defining the peculiar ways be-long-ings at group level were constructed. A perspective on different ways of exertion by the state enabled the study to contextualize different patterns of be-long-ings within the web of socio-historical, discursive, political, spatial, and economic relations. This was important for not being entrapped within an essentialist way of approach to the research groups.

More specifically, the study identifies three sets of ideal types regarding the political/structural context of nationness which are rooted in the experiences of the participants. The ideal types are regarding the perception of, the ways of relating to, and more generally the forms of be-long-ings.



Three ideal types of belonging emerged to be Confronting, Conforming, and Compromising forms of Belonging. In the *Confronting Type of Belonging*, one can observe an oppositional, reacting, and challenging manner in the experience of Turkish citizenship; searching relations with the state. In the *Conforming Type of Belonging*, one can observe a consenting manner, taking advantage of status quo and hegemonic relations in the experience of Turkish citizenship; negotiating relations with state; In the *Compromising Type of Belonging*, one can observe a self-restrained, cautious manner in the experience of Turkish citizenship; resentful but practical relations with state.

Three ideal types of relation with the state are *Struggle/Conflict*; *Accommodative/Selective Alliance*; *Caution/Distance*. These are basically concomitant to the above three types of belonging. Thus, Struggling or Conflicting Form of Relation with the state is more salient in the Confronting Type of Belonging; Accommodative or Selective Allying with the state is more salient in the Conforming Type of Belonging; and Reserved and Distant Form of Relation with the state is more salient in the Compromising Type of Belonging.

Three ideal types of perception of the state are *State as the opponent/the foe*; *State as the power backing us*; *State as something to keep distant but connected*. State as the opponent/the foe is all taken in negative connotations and mostly in furious distrust; State as the power backing us is taken to be the patriarch, usually with an inclination to accept whatever its decision is; state as something to keep distant but connected is taken to be the provider of opportunity, and the more one takes advantage of it the better it is, not endowing much trust but having a will to keep it arms length. These three patterns are again roughly compatible with the three types of belonging. Thus, the perception of the state as the opponent/the foe is more apparent in Confronting Type of Belonging; the perception of the state as the power backing us is more apparent in the Conforming Type of Belonging; and the perception of the state as something to

keep distant but connected is more apparent in the Compromising Type of Belonging.

The above sets of patterns in threes, however, are only ideal types, and things in real life are not always this bold and thorough. Still, they provide significant insight to grasp the intricateness of the experiences and perceptions of the participants of the current study. Lastly, the above three patterns basically, though not exclusively, overlap with the three subject categories of this study. More specifically, Confronting Type of Belonging is more vibrant among Kurds; Conforming Type of Belonging among Arabs; and Compromising Type of Belonging among Syrians. That is to say, field research points to the following: Kurds are more in a manner of struggling, demanding and challenging in their experience of Turkish citizenship; are searching in their relations with the state, which is much shaped around struggle and conflict; and many perceive the state as the opponent, if not always the foe. Arabs are more in a manner of consenting, taking advantage of status quo and hegemonic relations in their experience of Turkish citizenship; have negotiating relations with the state, which is much shaped around accommodative or selective alliance; and many of them perceive the state as the power backing us. Syrians are more in a manner of self-restraint and cautious in their experience of Turkish citizenship; have resentful but practical relations with the state, which is much shaped around reservation and caution; and many of them perceive the state as something to keep distant but connected.

Associating the ideal types with the research groups does not mean, however, that all Kurds, Arabs and Syrians are aggregated into homogeneous categorical units. A premise for such reservation is that ethnicity in this work is understood from a constructivist perspective that is as a socio-historical and practical category, and not from an essentialist perspective that is as a fixed and culturally pre-determined one. Yet still, it is not only a theoretical embracement. The very findings of the research show importantly that not all Kurds, Arabs and Syrians

fall into the same categories defined above. The ground for such divergence, as well as the overlap, shapes the basic arguments of this dissertation in bringing forth the role of three socio-historical processes in the formation of belongings. Ultimately, it is these processes of violation, social capital, and economic exclusion/inclusion that define the above mentioned patterns. These processes operated for the participants in being exposed to political, structural, symbolic or collective violence or to different combinations of them; being able to mobilize and draw from various social relations and networks when in need of; and being included in economic activity, having equal opportunity of access to resources, or having the capability of leading a life 'meaningful' to the individual.

Still, the role of ethnicity or ethnic belongings is not undervalued in this study regarding the named overlap between the groups and the ideal types. Here comes in the questions of: to what degree these ethnic groups are treated as a categorical closure; to what extent the individuals with that ethnic affiliation have been affected by that treatment; is that treatment an actual or a past one; and who is the actor of that treatment. It is clear, in the findings of this study, that the more the number of individuals defining themselves with an ethnic affiliation is affected by similar processes, the more the likelihood of the categorical overlap is occurred. It has also become apparent in this study that as the agent of the treatment -the real or imagined cause of the experience- becomes identical for many people -the cause being the state for many individuals for instance- or as divergent agents become or are perceived to become similar with each other -like the Turks/the majority/the larger political community being perceived to stand for the state- again the role of ethnicity is polished and the likelihood of the overlap to occur increases. It is crucial to note that the more people with similar affiliations are treated as categories, as in the state developing ethnicity based policies, the more the overlap occurs.

Thus, there is such an overlap between the ideal typical categories and the groups, because Kurds, Arabs, and Syrians were approached and exerted

differently by the state and the larger political community; and experiences of many members of the respective groups resembled in historical, political and structural terms. Yet there is also divergence within the named categories, because the socio-historical processes of various forms of violation, of social capital, and of economic exclusion/inclusion could have differently influenced the individual participants.

#### **7.1.10.2. Turkishness as Turks**

The second pillar constructing Turkishness in the experience of the participants is the image of and encounters with Turks. One central shared perception is *Modern Turks*. Turks were mostly perceived to be urban, educated, well-mannered, fluently speaking people, having neat and wealthy life standards by the participants. Still, the variation in such perception is significant to understand formation of belongings. It was still largely visible among Arabs. For Syriacs such perception was mostly a source of affinity with Turks, who distanced themselves from neighbouring Kurds and Arabs in this manner. While the image of modern Turk had been something admired and desired by Kurds in the past, it was not always the case at present. This might well be related to the transformation that Kurdish society have gone through in the last decades with increasing numbers of middle-class, educated, professional people with high social and spatial mobility. Alternative space that Kurdish political movement had created also had an influence on such transformation, as there was a visible reactive attitude especially among the younger generation of Kurds against such perception, who instead engaged in building their own ways of communication and appearance. Being resolute in speaking only Kurdish and deliberately refusing to speak Turkish was one such form of re-appropriated means of communication, although it was not a widespread one in such strictness. Indeed, from all three research groups there were participants reversing the perception of 'modern Turk', indicating the heterogeneity of the experiences by western/Turkish people themselves, whereby urban-rural, local/regional, class

differences all mattered. Accented speaking of Turkish language by those people, which is difficult to understand by others, for instance, was specified to deconstruct the arguments that Kurds do not speak Turkish fluently. Differentiation between the rural and urban west in terms of life standards and the former's similarity to the eastern was made by others, both Arab and Kurd, young and old, mostly male. One more point to be made is that positioning of each group of research participants in terms of modernity was relational to each other and to the image of Modern Turk. Conceptualization of *Relational modernities* in this regard refers to the perception that Turks/the westerners are modern; Syriacs are alike modern through being influenced by European institutions of education in the past, having had trade relations with Europe, and links to the trans-border cultures and economy under influence of Europe; Arabs in Mardin through sharing the urban culture and dominant position in the central power relations have adapted to the Syriacs and become modern accordingly; Kurds in Mardin being the latecomers to the city are the last in the hierarchy of modernness in perception of others; while in Urfa the perception usually is the reverse, with Kurds being more modern than the latecomer and the rural linked Arabs. In Urfa the Turcoman/Turk population is deemed to be the most modern one, their dominant position in the city centre, urban culture, and speaking Turkish being the main cause. The above are about how these groups perceived each other. Apparently, rural-urban dynamics, and position within power relations were defining in such perceptions. The same criteria may apply to the inner group variation within Kurds in Diyarbakır, with the local, established Kurdish population perceiving themselves to be more modern than the later coming Kurds from rural, especially through forced migration. Yet, in this case the relation to the modern state being the pivotal factor, regarding violation, the economic market system, or education, Kurds may be argued to engage with modernity in their own way. The space that Kurdish political discourse and movement creates has an important role in such engagement.

Another perception was *Indifferent Turks*, which mostly referred to uninterested and unresponsive attitude of Turks/people living in the West towards harsh life conditions, violation of rights, sometimes even the very existence of those living in the East. Such perception was very much visible among Kurds regarding all forms of violation they experienced. Resentment, frustration, anger, and alienation usually followed such perception. In some cases, solution to the Kurdish problem in Turkey was argued to come only through informed interest and pain felt by Turks for what Kurds have gone through. Insufficient social contact with Turks/the larger society mostly for their lack of interest was commonly shared even concerning everyday conditions of life, and there was a strong call for Turks/those in the West ‘to come’, ‘to see’, ‘to know’ here/us/our life in the East/Southeast. Another expression of *Indifferent Turks* was based on experience in big cities of both Arabs and Kurds, mostly young women and men. Uncaring crowds not responding to the people suffering in front of their very eyes, or individualistic lives far from engaging in solidarity with others were some articulations about individual experiences. In some cases, such context was related to criticism of modernity, which was related to diminishing communitarian ties and blasé individual attitude.

*Immature Turks* was another perception concerning the larger society or people in the west. Many participants, mostly young or middle-aged, male and female, believed that harsh life experiences brought them early age maturity concerning the practical realities and relations of life. The need to struggle against several of forms violation in life led to empowerment of the individual in their case. Young people mentioned comforts of life for their western counterparts like pocket money given by parents in comparison to seasonal labour required of them at vacation times, which they needed to do to earn their pocket money while simultaneously preparing for university entrance exams. Self-control of theirs while expressing their ideas however strong they are, in comparison of ease of Turks doing it regardless of how baseless their ideas are was another dichotomy expressed in this contexts. A baseless self-confidence stemming only from a

dominant social position was perceived to belong to Turks which is deemed to be an immature behaviour. These were basically expressed by Kurdish participants, yet were shared by some few young Arab participants as well who were educated and mostly critical of existing power relations in the larger society.

### **7.1.10.3. Turkishness as home/land**

The third pillar constructing Turkishness in the experience of the participants is territorial belonging. Turkishness as home/land most recently and increasingly, become a highly contentious one, the result being a focus and re-appropriation of the local and regional space; claiming a right to the space of Western Turkey; and recurrent reference to the trans-border space, all of which potentially challenge the official politics of territorial belonging and its imagery of homeland. Concerning the conceptualization of homeland by the participants it is possible to identify three ideal types. First, belonging to a *lost/memorable homeland*, whereby the reference is to an archaic/ancient people and geography; second, belonging to an *actual/negotiated homeland*, whereby the reference is to the existent state borders and political territory; third, belonging to a *contested/potential homeland*, whereby the reference is to struggling for redefinition of the political territory in terms of re-appropriation of political structure. Three patterns basically, though not exclusively, overlap with the three subject categories of this study. More specifically, in general terms, *lost/memorable homeland* applies to Syrians; *actual/negotiated homeland* applies to Arabs; *contested/potential homeland* applies to Kurds. Associating the ideal types with the research groups does not mean, however, that all Kurds, Arabs and Syrians fall exclusively into homogeneous categorical units. Although these are predominant patterns for the named groups, they are specifically convenient at analytical level and not mutually exclusive of one another. Collective memory, experience of violence, indigenous claim to the space, construction of alternative social capital, power and economic relations were all important in bringing forth the above pattern.

### **7.1.11. *Vionation, Cautionation, Modernation, and Localination* are Four Fundamental Forms that ‘Nation’ Forms in the Experiences of the Participants**

*Vio(n)ation* refers to the construction of *nation through violation*. The argument is that be-long-ings at national level are constituted through multiple processes of *Violation* in everyday experiences of the participants. Violation in this perspective is not merely a deformative process but a formative one. Various forms of violations were nested together in individual lives to shape their positions and identifications, desires and longings, and possessions and dispossessions. *Nested Violations* gain a collective nature as they are experienced by a categorical group of people. Especially in the Kurdish case they helped form a collective body and a collective memory playing a significant role in constituting collective be-long-ings. Confrontational, reactive, alienated forms of subjectivities were formed through violent mediations. In the case of Syriacs as well nested violations, in their direct or indirect, past or present forms, were decisive in defining the relation to the state, which is a crucial constituent of Turkishness. Although Arabs, too, were affected various forms of violations, especially of structural and symbolic, they were not exposed to systematic, long-lasting, or categorical violation of political agents or collectives was decisive in shaping their divergent forms of be-long-ings. In Kurdish and Syriac cases, on the other hand, everyday life at times could have emerged as a *Violent Order of Things* as relations, discourses, space, as well as bodies, psyches, and memories were reordered through violation, which has become the standard of life for many. Since such order became the fundamental basis for articulating into the national, Turkishness emerged as a Violent National Order of Things in many cases.

*Cautionation* stands for the argument that cautious attitude and restraint, the most visible pattern of subjectivities among the Syriac participants become the main basis for articulating into the nation. *National be-long-ings* being



constituted through *cautiousness*, in other words *nation through caution*, is conceptualized here as **Cautio(n)ation**. Subjectivities constructed through cautious attitude are seen not only in their relations to the state and the larger society, but also towards the other groups they co-habit in the locality. Their being Christian among Muslims, violent experiences they have gone through within the local power relations, the historical experience of discriminative citizenship practices, the constraints of the legal-political structure, the memory of violent past all feed the feeling of insecurity, being on alert, watchful, and cautious. Such attitude leads to a form of subjectivity not too demanding, insistent, direct, or visible, but self-restraint in thought, and word, and deed. With their strong demand for equal citizenship status such subjectivity is here called *restrained citizenship*. Showing loyalty to the state and power holders, relying mostly on self resources of the community, and keeping the state at arm's length emerged to be crucial to maintain their very existence. Importantly, for Syrians well organized social relations with an inner hierarchical structure, established religious institutions, and leading economic activity and resources all at local, national, and trans-national scales were crucial in maintenance of communitarian existence. Community be-long-ings which are enabling for individuals in many sense, could also turn to be constraining for individual will in decisions like engaging in active politics, or emigration. The burdening memory of violations, within such context, becomes fetters for present belongings and future projections, as they may have the feeling of indebtedness towards the community's future and chose to not to leave home. Yet still, present disabling conditions of existence mostly hinder a peaceful way of belonging, turning Syrians to *fettered citizens/subjects*.

**Modernation** stands for the notion of the *Nation* being constituted through negotiating and taking advantage of the *modernizing* processes of the state in the everyday life experiences of citizens. In other words, it refers to the construction of *nation through modernization*, which here is conceptualized, following a simple word twist, as **Moder(n)ation**. The argument in such conceptualization is

that a fundamental foundation on which Turkishness is negotiated by almost all participants was modernization, which is embraced basically as an opportunity structure. What is understood by modernization was mostly development in economic terms, progress in public services, urbanization and socio-spatial planning, prosperity and better standards of life. Citizenship provided or was expected to provide the central enabling instrument to take advantage of that opportunity structure. The ground for demands was repeatedly and strongly the citizen position whether the participants were critical of it or praising it. In relation, the state needed to be the provider and guarantor of those opportunities. Within such context, if the state supplied development, wealth, and structural facilities; includes the citizens economically on equal terms to grant a self-sufficient citizen position; or exclude them causing insecurities and vulnerabilities became the determining ground for allying with or challenging it. A related way of engaging with the modernizing practices emerged to be integration to local power structure through negotiation with the central power. Especially, the urban local groups were endowed with hegemonic position vis-à-vis other groups whom they compete in the locality. Their alliance to Turkishness, thus, had a strong relation to their own hegemony. A basic divergence between different categories of people was founded upon such inclusion/exclusion and local/central power dynamics.

One more point to be made in terms of the opportunity structure that Turkishness as a modern form of belonging provides for is that it is comparative. Turkey was more modern than Middle Eastern countries but still not modern enough as Western/European countries for many participants. Repeatedly, Middle Eastern and Arab countries were referred as ‘backward’, ‘non-modern’ even when they were seen as economically wealthier. On the whole, modernization emerges as a central “ethical and political value system with which people judge their own and others’ belonging” (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 199) in Turkey.

Modernization is also understood as *civilité* in manners and attitudes, in dressing and speaking, and in socialization patterns and gender norms. The process of individualization was also referred to as a corollary of modernization. Longing to keep up with modern opportunities and behaviours was the predominant pattern among the participants regardless of their background. Turkishness as a modern form of belonging was mostly about the time dimension of be-long-ings. Turkishness, in this context, supplied the fundamental framework for relating to the modern contemporary world.

Yet, although there was a general affirmative attitude towards what modernization was understood to be, its criticism in some cases was articulated around the importance of the communal, traditional or conventional in positive ways. Importantly in these cases, the dichotomy was established between the west and the east, the corrupt and the genuine, the fake and the sincere, or selfishness and solidarity whereby the former signified the modern while the latter signified what is perceived to be the communal, traditional or conventional. The dichotomy in this context was apparently between us and them.

It is still important to note that all experiences of the participants, including the excluding and discriminative ones, were defined in modern context and conditions. The state structure, forms of violations, economic market relations, migration, dispersion through the national territory for educational, or occupational reasons and encounters with the larger society were all framed in modern contexts. Modernity itself is multifaceted in these experiences and does by no means produce a homogeneous and straightforward form of belonging.

***Locali(n)ation*** is a conceptualization of the *Nation* being constituted through Localization, which basically manifests in withdrawal into locality. It is, in other words the *nation through localization*. Territorial belonging in this study emerged to constitute a continuum along the locality expanding on the one hand to the trans-border, on the other to the larger national space. The basic argument

is that locality is at the centre of territorial belongings. The fact that all three groups had a claim of indigenous relation to the territory they inhabit is the most important source for it. Locality emerged to be a source of collective identity, collective memory, and basic social and economic organization of communal relations whereby personal interests were also defined however temporary they may be. Through a discourse of heritage from ancestors, the relation to the locality as home to culture, religion, language, and peoples was established almost as a natural and spontaneous one. Existence of Kurds, Arabs, and Syriacs in neighbouring countries, and continuity of familial, marriage, *aşiret*, economic, religious, cultural relations to them make trans-border space as another crucial source of belongings, which denies a categorical closure of national territorial belongings. Territory at national scale, on the other hand, was experienced through dispersal of people for educational and occupational reasons; seasonal migration whether as agricultural or construction labour; touristic visits; familial or communitarian ties; or military service for the men. Encounters in those experiences and whether they were received inclusively or exclusively were definitive in formation of be-long-ings at national territorial scale. Importantly, if prejudice, misrepresentation, overt or implicit discrimination, or any direct violation was experienced, such encounters became a source for withdrawal into locality to establish everyday life relations. As the larger society was polarized over Kurdish issue, one shared experience became prejudiced treatment on the ground of Easternness, sometimes Arabs or Syriacs being 'mistaken' for being Kurd. Regional economic and cultural policies of the state failing at egalitarian redistribution of resources were also influential in such distancing between the eastern and western territorial belongings. As the national scale ceases to provide for a continuous, inclusive, and enabling space for various forms of be-long-ings on equal base, it becomes a *discontinuously* experienced territory, increasingly exclusive, and far from providing homeness in general. Homeness, in such context, is formed basically at the locality. Yet, for the local is part of the national, and local socio-economic interests are still best articulated to the national scale, it is negotiated at the national. Thus, Turkishness as the legal,

social, and economic framework within which the local operates, and still in relation to the trans-border, becomes home only in a conditional and discontinuous way.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### **Demographic Characteristics**

Gender  
Date of Birth /Age  
Place of Birth  
Education  
Occupation/Current Work  
Marital Status  
Household number (household members' education, occupation)

#### **Migration Experience (if exists)**

Forced migration  
Socio-Economic Conditions Prior to Migration  
Process of Migration: reason for, date, origin and destination of migration  
*Post-Migration:*  
Economic, social, cultural results of migration  
Moments of encountering with other communities  
Effect on the self-conception, daily habits  
Dispossession, impoverishment, deprivation

#### **Economic/Professional Life**

Regular income earning /basic source of livelihood  
Social Security System  
Whom/which institution to apply when in need of money  
In case of establishing co-partnership at work/applying somewhere to work, would you prefer someone/somewhere with the same ethnic/religious affiliation to you?

Dou you think your ethnic/religious affiliation has an effect on your professional life/what kind of an effect?

Would you prefer to be employed as a civil servant/is there anyone in your family who is a civil servant / Have you/them faced any obstacle or restrictions concerning your will to get a position/in your position due to your ethnic/religious affiliation?

Possessions (self/family – current/prior to migration) (house, flat, car, field, garden)

### **Language**

Which languages do you speak? What is your mother tongue?

Which languages were spoken in the family in your childhood? Were there any spoken languages other than Turkish by grandparents/other relatives?

Were those languages transmitted to you? Do you teach/plan to teach them to you own children?

Do you think being multilingual effects your daily life/in what way?

Have you/your family members ever experienced any trouble concerning your usage of those languages?

Would you like to be educated in your mother tongue?

Do you think other groups in Turkey should be able to have education in their mother tongues?

Did/would you prefer to give your children names with meanings in your mother tongue?

How do you think the trend of name giving has changed, if ever, when previous generations of your family concerned?

Is there anyone in the family/close relatives who was troubled with her relations to the official institutions because of her name?

### **Marriage**

Did/ would you prefer marrying someone of your ethnic/religious/sectarian affiliation? Why did/would you so? Has your family a say on this issue?

Did/ would you prefer your children marrying someone of your ethnic/religious/sectarian affiliation? Why did/would you so?

Is there any group to whose member you would not marry/would not like your children marry? (Kurd, Arab, Syriac, Armenian, Jew, Ezidi, Turk, Christian, Alevi, Muslim, Hanafi, Shafi, Atheist)

Is there anyone among your family members/close relatives who engaged in mixed marriages? Do you know about their positive/negative experiences?



## **Religion**

Are you a pious person; does s/he pray; where and how often?

How the specific religious days are conceived and practiced?

Have you ever faced discrimination because of your religious affiliation? (by the state, other community members in your locality?)

## **Neighbourhood Relations / City Life**

The reason to prefer-if preference- the current/potential –if planned- neighbourhood as living space

Do you have neighbours with different ethnic/religious/linguistic affiliations?

How are your relations?

What kind of relations do you have?

(e.g. friendship, relatively-distanced neighbours, marriage relations, borrowing money when needed, helping each other when needed) Whom do you trust in these occasions?

Do you feel free to express about your identity among your neighbours? Have you experienced any kind of discriminative/biased attitude or word concerning your identity?

In what terms are there resemblances or differences between you and your neighbours?

Have you ever had a problem with the members of other communities in your city?

What is the usual way that you would try to solve such problems?

Do you feel home in the city you live? Have there been times/spaces where you felt yourself as a guest or stranger?

How do you call the region/city/neighbourhood you live?

## **Perception and Experience of Territory**

Is there anywhere you to be your “memleket” [hometown]? Where?

What is the meaning of the hometown for you? How would you define it? What you miss/liked most there?

What was its difference from the current city you live?

Have you ever thought of migrating to another city? Where? Why?

Do you have relatives in other cities/regions? Where? Why did they leave?

Have you had the experience of seasonal migration/work?

Where have you been until now?

What were your experiences?

Have you ever experienced discriminative attitudes because of your ethnic affiliation?

Which other cities/regions in Turkey have you ever been and for what reasons?

Where there similarities or differences between these places and your own city?

Where have you felt yourself more secure/complacent? Why?

According to what criteria have you/your children made her choice of university?

Was the city/region important for you?

In what sense was it so?

Do you feel yourself at home in Turkey? Have there ever been times/spaces/occasions that you felt as a guest/stranger?

Is there any city/region that you would not like to live in Turkey?

Where?

Do you have family members/relatives living outside Turkey?

Where?

What for are they living there?

Do you retain links to them?

Do they come to Turkey, or you go there?

Do you think there are differences life in there and Turkey? What kind of?

Do you identify yourself with the Kurd/Arab/Syriac People in Iraq/Syria/Iran/Lebanon/Arab Emirates?

Do you have relations with them? (e.g. economic relations, marriage, kinship, migration, other)

Where is home for you? Where is homeland?

Have you ever thought of emigrating? Why? What was the reason for you not to?

### **Self-definition/Group Belonging (ethnic/religious/national)**

How do you define yourself? Was this the same in the past?

How would you define Kurds/Arabs/Syriacs to someone who wanted to know it?

What are the specific characteristics of Kurds/Arabs/Syriacs compared to others in your city/Turkey?

Are there similar or different characteristics between Turks and you/the group you feel belonging?

Are there elements that make Turks and Kurds/Arabs/Syriacs close to each other? Are there ones that makes them distant?

Are there factors that make Kurds/Arabs/Syriacs close to each other? Are there ones that make them distant?

How the intra-group heterogeneity is perceived by Kurds/Arabs/Syriacs-other Christian groups themselves?

Are there elements that glue different groups, peoples together in Turkey?

### **Distance-Closeness to/Spaces of Encounter with the State**

#### ***School:***

Did you feel to be discriminated in you school life because of your identity/affiliations?

How was your encounter with many ceremonial acts of taking oath, singing national hymn, national flag, cult of Ataturk, national day celebrations, narratives in the History classes at school?  
[the symbols of national identity]

Were there alternatives symbols, narratives, strategies you were engaging in, in the face of the above ones?

***Military service [for men]:***

Were you discriminated while undertaking your military service? (if had)

***Daily Life:***

Do you feel discriminated in your daily relations with the official institutions because you identifications? (e.g. at school, hospital, governmental institutions, bureaucracy) Was it similar in the past?

Have you ever experienced any problem regarding the information in your identity card?

What way do you follow to solve the problem you have with the official institutions/ policies?

(e.g. acceptance and not objecting to; bring an against the responsible institution/agent; family/relative support; mediation of the tribal leader, agha, kirve [godfather]; application to the gendarme, police/state security forces; consult to a political party, municipality, association/corporation, NGO, church, mosque)

***Political Participation:***

Are you a member of any association, syndicate, foundation, political party, club?

Do you vote in the local/national elections? What is your expectation while voting?

Do you vote for the specific candidate or the party s/he is affiliated to?

What commitment of the candidate is of importance to you?

(e.g. economic, ideological, ethnic identity, cultural, religious, other)

Which political party do you vote for? Which political party does your family vote/d for?

Have you ever stood for elections? Would you like to be candidate for and elected? Why/why not?

Has anyone of your family members/relatives been candidates in the local/national elections? Were they elected? If not, why?

***Representation:***

Do you think you (at individual/group level) have a word in the local government/administration? If yes how/ If not why not?

Do you think you (at individual/group level) have a word in the national government/administration? If yes how/ If not why not?

Do you think you (at individual/group level) you are represented in the Grand National Assembly?

Do you feel the need for a leader or party to represent you/the group you feel belonging to? What would your expectation be from such a leader/party? (e.g. cultural recognition; economic development/employment; security of life and possessions; freedom of belief/prayer; democracy; other)

***Citizenship:***

What the Kurds/Arabs/Syriacs expect from the Turkish Republican State?

Do you think you could take advantage of rights of citizenship? If yes how/ If not why not?

What are the most positive contributions of the state in your life?

What are the most negative effects of the state in your life?

Do you have trust in the state/governmental institutions in Turkey? (e.g. law, assembly, military, government, police, other?)

Do you have trust in the local institutions you get service? (e.g. educational, health service, municipality/ies, other)

Do you feel yourself as the host in Turkey? Or do you feel as minority?

What do you think about the process of integration of Turkey to EU? What would you think the effects of its final integration upon the group you feel belonging? Do you have expectations of the process?

These were the questions I would like to ask to you? Do you have any further comment or contribution to make? Thank you very much.

APPENDIX B: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN DIYARBAKIR

Part	Group	G.	B.of date	Education level	Place of birth	F. Mig	Date-Place of Mig./ whomig.	Reason of migration	Occupation Work	Form of Employment	Soc Sec	Soc Help	House owner	Marit. status	SpouseOccp./ Work	Father's Occp.
D1	Kurd	M	1978	University	Siirt/Kurtalan/village	N	1989/D.bakir/self	Politicalrepressions	Teacher	Temporal/Salaried	Y	N	Rent	Married	Teacher/not work	Imam/Civilservant
D2	K./Zaza	M	1946	Primary School dropout	Diyarbakir/Dicle/v.	N	1972/Diyarbakir/self	Economic	Retiredworker	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Headman
D3	Kurd	F	1955	Uneducated/Literate	Batman/Kozluk	Y	1994/Diyarbakir/self	Hezbollahviolence	Worker/ ngoemployer		Y	Y	Rent	Married	Worker/Muncpl	Husbandry/animal trade/landowner
D4	Kurd	F		Illiterate	Diyarbakir/v.	Y	1998/Diyarbakir/self	Forced m./village bunt	Bakes-sellsbread/ngo-municipality	Temporal/contract	N	N	Rent	Married	Worker	Worker/permanent-salaried
D5	Kurd	M	1993	High School St (preparatesforUniversity exam)	Diyarbakir/v.	N	2008 self	Education	Student				Own/fam.lvl	Single	NA	Farmer own lands/animals/seasonal labor
D6	Kurd	F	1966	Illiterate	Diyarbakir/Silvan/v.	Y	1993 self	Forced m./village bunt	Housewife				Own	Married	Self-employed	Husbandry/farming
D7	Kurd	M	1976	University	Diyarbakir	N	NA	NA	Lawyer	Permanent/Salaried			Own	Married	Doctor	Shopkeeper
D8	Kurd	M	1960	MassEducation	Diyarbakir/Lice/v.	Y	1999 self	Forced m./village bunt	NeighborhoodHeadman				Own	Married	Housewife	Villager/animalbreeding
D9	Kurd	F	1991	High School St (preparatesforUniversity exam)	Diyarbakir	N	1975-1980-1 gen. ago	Agharepression	Student				Rent	Single	NA	Worker
D10	Kurd	F	1991	High School St (preparatesforUniversity exam)	Diyarbakir	N	early 1980s 1 gen.ago	NA	Student				Own	Single	NA	Self-employedworker
D11	Kurd	F	1962	Someprimary School	Diyarbakir/Eg̃il/v.	Y	1970 familyDiyarb/1971 Izmir self/ 1985 Diyr.	MilitaryRepressions/ unde in Izrn.no child	Housewife	NA	Y	N	Own	Married	CivilServant	Headman/animal breeding/farmer
D12	Kurd	F	1981	University	Diyarbakir	N	1941/Lice Diyarbakir/2 gens.ago	Familyissuedec. of gr.mother	Teacher	Contract/doesn't work			Own	Married		Philologist/Etymologist/writer/mullah g.father/sheikh
D13	K./Zaza	M	1970	Primary School	Diyarbakir/Dicle/v.	N	2000 self	Economic	Worker/construction				Rent	Married	Housewife	Construction worker(plasterer)
D14	Kurd	F		Uneducated/Literate (takesliteracycourse)	Diyarbakir/Dicle/v.	N	2000 self	Economic	Housewife				Rent	Married	Worker/construction	Passed away when she was little
D15	Kurd	M	1979	University	Diyarbakir/v.	N	1990 self		Bank Employee				Married			Farmer/passed awaywhen he waslittle
D16	Kurd	F	1954	MassEducation	Diyarbakir/Silvan	N	1968/SaudiAr.self/1969 family.to Diyarbakir	Marriage	Housewife	NA	NA	N	Own	Married	Tradesman	Landowner/renting possessions/ production/politician
D17	Kurd	F		Open EducationUniversity continues	Diyarbakir/Silvan	N	1991/Muq-2006 Diyarbakir	Occupation/to Expand business	Housewife/partywomen branch volunt.	NA	Y	N		Married		Furnitureproducer-Shopkeeper
D18	Turk	F	1957	Secondary School	Van/Ahlat	N	1974 - Diyarbakir/self	Marriage	Housewife/partywomen Branch volunt.			N	Own	Married	Teacher	Municipalsecurityofficer/ munic.vice-mayor/councilor
D19	Kurd	M	1975	Primary School dropout	Diyarbakir/Lice/v.	Y	late 1980s	Militaryrepression	Worker/construction/ Unemployed	Temporal/Waged	N	N	Rent	NA	Housewife	Villager
D20	Kurd	M	1982	University	Diyarbakir	N	NA	NA	Lawyer	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married		
D21	Kurd	M	1982	University	Diyarbakir/Ergani	N	1992 forcedto be vill.guard	Forcedvill.guard	Lawyer	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married		
D22	Kurd	M	1954	Secondary School	Diyarbakir/Ergani	N			Retiredworker/NGOwork				Rent	Married		
D23	Kurd	M	1969	University	Diyarbakir	N	NA	NA	Teacher	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married		
D24	Kurd	F	1967	UniversityDropout		N		NA	Storekeeper				Own			
D25	Kurd	F		Illiterate		N			Beggar		N	Y	Rent	Widow		
D26	Kurd	M	1977	University	Diyarbakir	N	NA		Teacher	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Single	NA	Husbandry/farming

**APPENDIX C: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES  
OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN MARDIN**

Partept	Group	G.	B.of date	Education level	Place of birth	F. Mig	Date-Place of Mig/ whomig	Reason of migration	Occupation Work	Form of Employment	Soc Sec	Soc Help	House owner	Marit. status	Spouse Occp./ Work	Father's Occp.
M1	Kurd	F	1985	Uni Dropout&Occupational Ed.	Mardin	N	1950s grandfathercivilservant in thecity	NA	Coiffeur	Self-Employed		N	Own	Single	NA	Unemployed/brief period civil servant/9 years prison
M2	Kurd	M	1987/9[off.]	Universitycontinues	Mardin/v.	Y	1992	Village evacuated	Student	NA	N	N	Own	Single	NA	Construction worker
M3	Kurd	M	1981	Masters	Mardin	N	mid70s father/village to town/1980 Mardin	Economic, personal reasons	AgriculturalEngineer	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married		Worker/unemployed
M4	Kurd	M	1991	University&student	Mardin/Kızıltepe/village	Y	1995 Mardin/7 ys.in Istanbul/return Mardin	Village evacuated	Student/summer time work	Part Time/waged	N	N	Own/Family	Single	NA	Construction worker
M5	Kurd	F	1965	Uneducated/Illiterate	Mardin	N	1950s fathercivilservant/1.gen. ago	NA	Housewife/party volunteer	NA	N	N	Own	Married	Unemployed ex-prisoner	Civil servant/discharged
M6	Kurd	M	1968	University	Mardin/v.	N	sec.-high/high town, uni. Istanbul	Education	Teacher/Author	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N		Single	NA	PublicEmployed worker/retired in village
M7	Kurd	M	1961	High School	Mardin/v.	N	1972 sec. sc. town-high/uc. Mardin	Education	Imam/Civil servant	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Farmedowns small land in village/1995 vill. evacuated
M8	Kurd	M	1964	University	Mardin/Kızıltepe/Sub-district	N	2005 Mardin/	Occupation	Teacher/Head of School	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married	Teacher (Turk from Tarsus)	Village/hunting with his father/uncle smuggled
M9	Kurd	F	1962	Primary School	Mardin	N	1984 Antalya/ 1988 Mardin	Economic	Housewife	NA	Y	N	Own	Married		Building contractor
M10	Kurd	M	late 70s	University	Mardin/Kızıltepe	N	Mardin/ Self	Education/occupation			Y	N				
M11	Kurd	M	late 70s	University	Mardin	N	2011 Mardin	Occupation	Teacher	Permanent/Salaried		N	Rent	Single	NA	
M12	Kurd	M	1940	Illiterate	Mardin/Kızıltepe	Y	Kızıltepe/1995 Mardin	Village evacuated	Construction worker	Temporary/Salaried	N	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Village/own small land/husbandry
M13	Kurd	M	1955	Primary School dropout	Mardin/centre	N	1945-50 1 generation ago Mardin/Istanbul 10 years	Occupation	Craftsman storekeeper (Factory/workshop)	Self-Employed	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Public employed worker/Permanent Salary
M14	Arab	F	1931	Illiterate	Mardin/centre	N	1949 Diyarbakir/ 1968 Mardin	Marriage (SpouseKurd)	Housewife	NA	Y	N	Own	Widow	Worker	Passed away as she was 6/urban locals
M15	Arab	F	1969	Secondary School	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	NGO employer	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married		Craftsman (saddle maker)/Taxi and minibus owner
M16	Arab/Kurd	F	1989	University&student	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Student	NA	Y	N	Own	Single	NA	Civil servant
M17	Arab	F	1979	Masters	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	NGO Empl Administrator	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Single	NA	Truck&bus owner/trade/gr. grand father mayor/mater. grandfather.civil serv.
M18	Arab	F	1989	University	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Software Developer	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Single	NA	Private Secto employed worker/retired
M19	Arab	F	1985	University/Associate Degree	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Executive Assistance	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Single	NA	Trade/transporting/self-employed
M20	Arab	M	1985	Primary School dropout	Mardin/centre	N	1988 Istanbul/ 2002 Mardin	Economic	Waiter	Temporal/Waged	N	N	Rent	Married	Housewife	Mother passed away he was 6/father left
M21	Arab	M	1954	High Sch. MassEd.Diploma	Batman/Gercüş/village	N	1977 Mardin	Occupation	Civil servant/Retired	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	
M22	Arab	F	1984	Secondary School	Mardin/centre	N	1977 Mardin Family	Occupation	Temporarily works	Temporary	N	N	Own/Family	Single	NA	Civil servant/Retired

M23	Arab	M	late 70s	Univensity	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Teacher/Administrator/ shopkeeper	Permanent/Salaried Trade	Y	N	Own	Married		
M24	Arab	M	1957	Univensity	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Techr./Adminis./Retired/ Publisher	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married		Colonel (Militarystaff)/retired /grandfath sheikhmufti
M25	Turk	F	early 70s	Univensity	İzmir	N	Mardin	Marriage (Spouse Arab)	Lawyer	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married	CivilServant/ teacher	Teacher
M26	Syriac	M	1967	Primary School	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Jeweller	Self-Employed	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Craftsman (feltmaker) shopkeeper
M27	Syriac	M	1969	Primary School	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Jeweller	Self-Employed	Y	N	Own/Family	Married	Housewife	Antique dealer / mothertailor gr.g.mot. teacher,g.fat. painter/sculpter;g.moth.tailor/painter, fat sportsman
M28	Syriac	M	1978	Primary S.&Mass Ed.(Secondary)	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Jeweller	Self-Employed	Y	N	Own/Family	Married	Housewife	
M29	Syriac	M	1958	University/Associate Degree	Mardin/centre	N	mid-1970s Istanbul	Socialunrest/relatives left	Automobiletrade/ authorized dealer	Partnership/ management	Y	N	Own	Single	NA	Auto spareparts seller/storekeeper
M30	Syriac	F	1990	Univensity	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	StateInst./Uni./Contract personnel	Contract/Salaried	Y	N	Own/Family	Single	NA	Jeweller
M31	Syriac	F	1959	Univensity	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Teacher	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married	NGO administrator	g.fat. shoemaker/gfathertrade's storekeeper gr.g.father civ. servant/f.tailor
M32	Syriac	M	1939	High School	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Sportsman/Retired		Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Craftsmanstorekeeper
M33	Syriac	M	1960	Secondary School DropOut	Mardin/centre	N	1993 Istanbul/1998 back to Mardin	Soc.PersonalUnrest/E con.	Jeweller	Self-Employed	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Construction's tonemas on
M34	Syriac	M	1941	Primary School	Mardin/centre	N	NA	NA	Tailor	Self-Employed	N	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Craftsman
MM35	Syriac	M	1974	Primary School	Istanbul	N	1975 Midyat Village/1980 Midyat	Social-political unrest		Incharge of Church	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Petitionwriter/typewriter/temporal work
MM36	Syriac	M	1962	Primary School	Mardin/Midyat	N	1975 Istanbul/1979 Switzerland/2002 back to Midyat	Political unrest/Soc. repression	NGO administrator	Voluntary	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	
MM37	Syriac	M	1955	Univensity	Mardin/Darik	N	Midyat (Afterworking in different eastern cities)	Occupation	Teacher	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	
M38	Arab	F	1960	Primary School	Mardin/centre	N	1995 Izmir/ backto Mardin		Housewife/Catom Trainee/Handscraft ssales	Temporary/handscraft ssales	N	Y	Rent	Widow	Teacher (ex-husband)	



APPENDIX D: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN URFA

Part	Group	G.	B.of date	Education level	Place of birth	F. Mig	Date-Place of Mig./ whomig	Reason of migration	Occupation Work	Form of Employment	Soc. Sec.	Soc Help	House owner	Marit. status	SpouseOccp./ Work	Father's Occp.
U1	Arab	M	1991	University Student	Urfa/Harran/village	N	1999 Ceylanpinar/ 2008 Urfa self	Education	Student	NA	NA	N	Family	Single	NA	Public employed worker/Permanet Salaried
U2	Arab	F	1986	SecondarySc.dropout&M as Ed.(highSc.)	Urfa/centre	N	NA	NA	Helps husband /father ajiret leader		Y	N	Own	Married	Real Estate Agent	Ajiret leader Big Landowner
U3	Arab	M	1987	University	Diyarbakir/Silvan	N	1987-1993 Silvan/Father's work/1993 Urfa	Return migration	Topogr.Engineer	Self-Employed	Y	N	Family	Single	NA	Topographer
U4	Arab	F	1983	PhDeducation dropout	Urfa/centre	N	NA	NA	VoluntaryPart/WomenBranch leader	NA	N	N	Family	Single	NA	Agricultural Engineer
U5	Arab	M	1971	University	Urfa/centre	N	NA	NA	Teacher	Public/Permanent Salaried	Y	N	Family	Married	Housewife (Spouse Turk from Istanbul)	Sheikh
U6	Arab	F	1934	Uneducated	Urfa/Akpa kale/vil.	N	1979 Akpa kale/ 1994 Urfa	For comfortable life after children left	Big landowner (father ajiret leader)	NA		N	Own	Married	Landowner/ajiret leader/headman	Ajiret leader Big Landowner
U7	Arab	F	1979	Illiterate/social support centre trainee	Urfa/Çamlidere/vil.	N	From Harran 2 generations ago/1998 Urfa self	Marriage	Housewife	NA	N	N	Rent	Married	Repairman (self-employed No insurance)	Rural seasonal labourer/didn't work, daughters did
U8	Arab	F	1986	Illiterate/social support centre trainee	Urfa/Viranşehir/vil.	N	1992 Urfa	Marriage	Housewife	NA	Y	N	Rent	Married	Municipal Worker	Passed away as she was 2, lands to brother
U9	Arab	F	1986	University Associate Degree	Yozgat/Sorgun	N	Hatay, Ceylanpinar/1996 Urfa/2000 Harran/2006 Urfa	Occupational (Father Teacher)	Teacher	Public/Permanent Salaried	Y	N	Family	Single	NA	Teacher
U10	Arab	F	1984	University Associate Degree Primary School dropout/Çatom Waawing Course	Yozgat/Sorgun	N	Hatay, Ceylanpinar/1996 Urfa/2000 Harran/2006 Urfa	Occupational (Father Teacher)	Nurse	Public/Permanent Salaried	Y	N	Family	Single	NA	Teacher
U11	Arab/Kurd	F	1981	Primary School dropout/Çatom Waawing Course	Urfa/centre	N	NA	NA	Housewife	NA	Y	N	Rent	Married	Shoemaker/Factory worker/CasualEmp.	Small landowner, renting land
U12	Kurd	M	1941/1943(off)	Primary School	Urfa/centre	N	NA	NA	Constructor/Self-Employed		Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Trades- tent production/landowner
U13	Kurd	M	1975	University Drop Out	Urfa/centre	N	NA	NA	Technical Manager of a Private Firm	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Rent	Single	NA	Public employed worker/Permanet Salaried
U14	Kurd	M	1965	University Open Education Drop Out	Urfa/Hilvan	N	1978 self	High School Education	Motor Technician Public Employment	Permanent/Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Auto Spare Parts Sale/Farming Land
U15	Kurd/Turk	F	1948	Primary School	Urfa/ Centre	N	NA	NA	NGO administrator/ Quran Teacher		Y	N	Own	Widow	Storekeeper- Clothing Store (passed away)	Tradesman- Drapery/Big Landowner/Musician
U16	Kurd	F	1994	Çatom Çoffeur Training Course	Urfa/S uruç	N	1999 Urfa	Occupational (Father)	NA	NA				Single	NA	Shopkeeper (Restaurant)
U17	Kurd	F	1978	Primary School/ Çatom Çoffeur Training Course	Urfa/ Ceylanpinar	N	1980 Urfa	Occupational (Father)	NA	NA	G.C.		Rent	Married	Unemployed/Bankrupt- brother helps (Urfa)	Civil servant/ Lands in village
U18	Kurd	M	1955	Primary School	Urfa/centre	N	1 generation ago		Wotoman	Permanent / Salaried	Y	N		Married	Housewife	Husbandry/Leather Crafts border trade/smuggling
U19	Kurd	F	1980	Uneducated / Social Centre Trainee	Urfa/centre	N	NA	NA	Housewife/seasonal cotton lab. bef.marri.	NA	G.C	Y	Rent	Married	Unemployed	Didn't work
U20	Turk/Arab	M	1951	Primary School	Urfa/centre	N	NA	NA	Jeweller	Self-Employed	Y	N	Own	Widow	Housewife (passed away)	Big Landowner/animals
U21	Turkoman	F	1966	Primary School dropout	Urfa/centre	N	1973 Germany family, 1984 Urfa self	Work/Marriage	NGO employee/Certified Translator	Permanent / Salaried	Y	N	Rent	Married		Worker
U22	Urfali	M	1939	University	Urfa/centre	N	NA	NA	Retired librarian for a while	Permanent / Salaried	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Big Landowner/trade
U23	Urfali/Turkoman	M	1932	2 year Priv. Journalism School Istanbul	University	N	NA/ 1980s lands were sold	NA	Retired Journalist/Bookstore	Self-Employed	Y	N	Own	Married	Housewife	Silk trade-storekeeper/Big landowner
U24	Arab	M	1974	University	Urfa/Harran/village	N	Uneduc.Russia		Engineer/NGO leader		Y	N	Own	Divorced	NA	Headman/Husbandry Landowner/Ur ajiret leader
U25	Urfali	M	1948	University	University	N	NA	NA	Art Historian		Y	N	Own	Married		Craftsman Shoemaker

**APPENDIX E: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES  
OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN URFA**

<b>Diyarbakır</b>	<b>Part.</b>	<b>Gend.</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Date of Birth/Age</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>Origin of Migration</b>	<b>Date of Mig.</b>	<b>Reason of Migration</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Marital St.</b>
<b>F.Group 1</b>	<b>1</b>	F	Kurd	1993/18	Lice	A village of Lice	1993	Forced/villageburnt	High School	Single
	<b>2</b>	F	Kurd	1990/21	Hazro	Hazro		Forced/fatherlost	High School	Single
	<b>3</b>	F	Kurd	1992/19	Silvan	Adana	1994-5	Hizbullah violence	High School	Single
	<b>4</b>	F	Kurd	1993/18	Silvan	Mardin		Occupational/fatherciv.serv.	High School	Single
	<b>5</b>	F	Kurd	1991/20	Diyarbakır		1989	Blood feud	UniversityStd.	Single
	<b>6</b>	M	Kurd	1988/23	Lice	A village of Lice	1993	Forced	UniversityStd.	Single
	<b>7</b>	F	Kurd	1992/19					High School	Single
	<b>8</b>	M	Kurd	1993/18					High School	Single
<b>F. Group 2</b>	<b>1</b>	F	Kurd	1992/19	Mersin	Şırnak	1994(f.Mersin)	Politicalunrest/occupational	High School	Single
	<b>2</b>	M	Kurd	1992/19	Diyarbakır	Lice		Earthquake	High School	Single
	<b>3</b>	M	Kurd	1991/20 [offi.1994]	Diyarbakır	Mardin/Mazıdağ	1990	FamilyProblems	High School	Single
	<b>4</b>	M	Kurd	1992/19	Hazro	Family in Hazro	2002	Education	High School	Single
	<b>5</b>	M	Kurd	1992/19	Diyarbakır	Dicle		Forced	High School	Single
<b>Urfa</b>	<b>Part.</b>	<b>Gend.</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Date of Birth/Age</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>Origin of Migration</b>	<b>Date of Mig.</b>	<b>Reason of Migration</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Marital St.</b>
<b>F. Group 3</b>	A	F	Alevi	1974/37	Urfa/Sırrın	NA	NA		Uneducated	Married
	A1	F	Arab	1974/37	Urfa/centre	NA	NA			Married
	K2	F	Kurd	1989/22	Urfa/centre	Urfa/Hilvan-Urf/vill.	1 gener.bef	Education of children	Uni. Stud.OpenUni.	Married
	Z	F	Zaza	1981/30	Urfa/Siverek	Siverek	2004	occupational		Married
	K1	F	Kurd	1975/36	Muş	Muş	1993	Forced /villageevacuated	PrimarySch.dropout	Married

## APPENDIX F: CURRICULUM VITAE

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Bal, Özgür  
Nationality: Turkish (T.C.)  
Email: ozgurbal@akdeniz.edu.tr

### EDUCATION

- Jan-Dec. 2012 University of Oxford, Department of Sociology, Academic Visitor  
Supervisor Emeritus Prof. Dr. Anthony Heath, Nuffield College, University of Oxford (TUBITAK 2214 International Research Fellowship Programme for PhD Students)
- June 2011 Swedish Research Institute Istanbul/Turkey; InterGender Linköping University/Sweden. The Summer Course “Contextualizing Gendered Violence: Interconnections of Violence, Nation and Masculinity” (Full Scholarship)
- March-Aug. 2009 Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Faculty of Social Sciences. Berlin, Germany (Erasmus Exchange Program)
- Nov. 2008 Comprehensive Examination in Sociology  
Middle East Technical University. Ankara, Turkey.  
Major: (i) Sociological Theory (ii) Research Methods  
Minor: (i) Political Sociology (ii) Theories of Citizenship, Identity, Nationalism
- June 2007 Swedish Institute Summer University  
Theories of Gender and Diversity in Democratic Practices in Local Government, University of Gothenburg/Sweden (Full Scholarship)
- 2006-2003 M.S. METU, Sociology, Ankara, Turkey  
Thesis title: “Memory, Identity, Home: Self-Perception of Identity among the Armenian and Jewish Communities in Ankara”, METU, Graduate School of Social Sciences. Supervisor: Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç. (METU GSS Thesis of the Year Award, 2007)
- 2003-2002 Compulsory Scientific Preparation in Sociology (oneterm)  
Middle East Technical University. Ankara, Turkey.
- 2002-2001 M.A., Istanbul Bilgi University, Department of Cultural Studies (not graduated) (Full Education Bursary)
- 2001- 1996 BA Marmara University, Department of Political Science and International Relations (Eng.)

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Sociological Theory  
Qualitative Research Methods  
Economic Sociology  
Sociology of Migration  
Sociology of Violence  
Theories of Ethnicity, Nationalism, Citizenship, and Culture  
Gender Studies

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2019- Present	Akdeniz University Department of Economics	Research Assistant Dr.
2019-2016	Akdeniz University Department of Sociology	Research Assistant
2015-2002	METU Department of Sociology	Research Assistant

## FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English (Advanced), German (Upper Intermediate)

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Bal, Ö. (2018). Sözlü Tarih. In Arslan A. (Ed.). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Araştırma Yöntem ve Teknikleri* Ankara: Paradigma Akademi Yayınları. pp.229-259

Bal Ö. (2017). Be-long-ings versus Identities: A Reflection on the Theoretical and Methodological Prospects of the Two Concepts from a Sociological Point of View. *The 3rd International Language, Culture and Literature Symposium* (15-16 Haziran 2017) Antalya, Türkiye. pp. 191-204.

Bal Ö. (2011). *Memory, Identity, Home, Armenian and Jewish Communities in the Capital City of Turkey*, Saarbrücken, Germany: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.

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Bal Ö. (2007). Memory versus Nostalgia: A Battle ground for Identity Construction, Ege University Eleventh International Cultural Studies Symposium Memory and Nostalgia, Izmir, Turkey, 9-11 May 2007, pp.315-330

Bal Ö. (2007). Antalya’nın Modernleşme, Sanayileşme ve Kentleşme Sürecinde Bir Yapıtışı: Antalya Ferrokrom Fabrikası, 20.Yüzyılda Antalya Sempozyumu, Antalya, Turkey, 22-24 November 2007, vol.1, pp.243-258

## APPENDIX G: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

### TÜRKLÜĞÜN ÇOK YÖNLÜ DENEYİMLERİ: ARAP, KÜRT VE SÜRYANİLERİN AİDİYETLERİNE BİR TEMELLENDİRİLMİŞ KURAM YAKLAŞIMI

#### Araştırma Sorusu

Bu tez farklı etnik ve dini kökenlerden bireylerin deneyim ve pratikleri bağlamında Türkiye’de ulusal aidiyetin oluşum ve deformasyon süreçlerine odaklanmaktadır. Tarihsel olarak Türkiye’nin güneydoğusunda yaşayan üç toplumsal gruba odaklanarak, bireyler için aidiyetlerin nasıl biçimlendiği ve inşa edildiği özellikle ulus olma üzerine bir vurgu ile anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu bağlamda araştırma sorusu Diyarbakır, Mardin ve Urfa’da yaşayan Arap, Kürt ve Süryaniler gündelik pratik ve deneyimlerinde ‘ulus’ ile nasıl ilişkileniyorlar, bu ilişki tüm çoğulluğu içinde bütün aidiyetlerini ne yönde etkiliyor şeklinde özetlenebilir.

Tez, bir yönüyle yapı ve fail arasındaki iki yönlü ve karmaşık ilişkiyi araştırır. Soru bir tarafta bu çalışmada *şeylerin ulusal düzeni* olarak adlandırılan ve ulus tarafından belirlenen yapının bireysel aidiyetleri nasıl şekillendirdiği ve koşullandırdığı; diğer tarafta bireysel aktörler olarak katılımcıların şeylerin ulusal düzeni ile nasıl ilişkilendiğidir. Başka bir ifadeyle, Türklükle ne zaman, nasıl ve hangi sonuçlarla ilişkilendiklerini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Türklüğü “biz/”bizim” ya da “onlar”/“onların” yapan bağlamı açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışmada aidiyet sadece soyut bir hissi ifade etmemektedir. Pratikleri, ilişkileri, mülkiyeti ve içerilme/dışlanma süreçlerini de içeren çok yönlü ve materyal süreçleri de ifade etmektedir. Ortaya böyle konduğunda, mesele katılımcıların kendilerini ‘Türk’ ya da alternatif olarak Arap, Kürt, Süryani hissedip hissetmedikleri olmaktan çıkar. Amaç kimlikleri mukayese etmek ya da

ne kadar ait olduklarını ölçmek değildir. Soru daha ziyade çoklu aidiyet ve öznellikleri olan farklı etno-dinsel bağıntılara sahip bireylerin Türklükle nasıl karşılaştıkları ve o karşılaşmadan ortaya ne çıktığıdır. Katılımcıların aidiyet ve öznellikleri nasıl yeniden şekilleniyor ve araştırmanın zaman-mekân bağlamında nasıl kristalize oluyor. Bu çalışmada Türklük sabit, homojen ya da tekil bir olgu olarak ele alınmamaktadır. Fakat Türklüğün inşa ve ifade biçimlerindeki tarihsel ya da söylemsel çeşitlenmenin detaylarına girilmeden, Türklük burada basitçe katılımcıların deneyimlediği şekliyle resmi olarak önerilen/tasarlanan ulus aidiyeti biçimini ifade etmektedir. Esasında, bu tezin argümanları tam da deneyimdeki bu çeşitlenme üzerine temellenmektedir.

Araştırmanın alt soruları şöyle özetlenebilir: katılımcılar geniş toplumla hangi şartlarda ve hangi sonuçlarla karşılaşıyorlar; kendilerini geniş toplumun bir parçası olarak mı yoksa çeperinde mi görüyorlar, bunu ne zaman ve nasıl deneyimliyorlar; kendilerini hangi topluluklarla özdeşleştiriyorlar; hangi bağlamlarda “biz” kimliğini ifade ediyorlar; “biz” kime işaret ediyor; Türkiye’de bir gelecek tasavvurları var mı; yurttaşlık, etnik köken, göç tarihi, kuşak, toplumsal cinsiyet ve sosyo-ekonomik statülerinin deneyimleri üzerindeki etkisi nedir; mekânın aidiyetlerini şekillendirmekteki rolü nedir; resmi söylemlerin ve Türklüğün sembolik temsillerinin gündelik hayatlarındaki etkisi nedir. Bu sorulara cevap aramak için bu çalışma temellendirilmiş kuram yöntemini kullanmıştır.

### **Araştırma Yöntemi**

Nitel araştırma yöntemlerine dayanan bu çalışma yorumsamacı bir yaklaşımı benimsemekte ve veri üretme ve analiz etme yöntemi olarak temellendirilmiş kuramı kullanmaktadır. Amaç genel olarak Türkiye’de ulusal aidiyetin kavramsal bir açıklamasına ulaşmak, özel olarak ise bu kavramsallaştırmayı saha çalışmasının verili sınırları içinde yapmaktır. Araştırma, temel örüntüleri ortaya koymak ve kavramsallaştırmak için (Glaser, 2002) olduğu haliyle yaşamın doğal

teşekkülünün ortaya çıkmasını (Glaser and Holton, 2004) hedeflemektedir. Bu çalışmada anlaşılmaya ve açıklanmaya çalışılan yaşantı aidiyetlerdir ve aidiyet örüntülerini ortaya çıkarmak ve kavramsallaştırmak için katılımcıların hayatlarında temel sorun teşkil eden meselelere odaklanmak yolu seçilmiştir.

Temellendirilmiş kuramın kurucularından Barney G. Glaser ve Anselm Strauss arasındaki ayrımında bu çalışma Glaser'ın (2002) önerdiği kodlama yöntemini izlemiştir ve analiz için açık, seçici ve kuramsal kodlama yapılmıştır. Temellendirilmiş kuram, kavram geliştirmek için izlenen “kuramsal kodlama”, “sürekli karşılaştırma” ve “kodlama” gibi ayırt edici bir takım özellikleri olan ve belirli bir yöntemsel kılavuzu takip eden bir nitel araştırma biçimi olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Strauss, 1987). Bu çalışma temellendirilmiş kurama inşacı yaklaşımı izlemekte ve yöntemin gücünü anlamlar, eylemler ve toplumsal yapıların nasıl inşa edildiğini kuramsallaştırmadaki analitik güç olarak tanımlayan Katy Charmaz'ı (2006) izlemektedir. Araştırmacı ve katılımcılar arasındaki etkileşimin bu inşadaki rolü önemlidir. Bu çalışma, katılımcıların deneyimlerinde Türk ulus aidiyetine dair anlamlar, eylemler ve toplumsal yapıların nasıl inşa edildiğini incelemek ve açıklamak yönünde bir girişimdir. Etnik olarak Türk olmayan ve fakat ‘ulusal’ olmaları ve ulusa aidiyetleri beklenen sıradan bireylerin bir siyasi aidiyet biçimi olarak Türklüğü nasıl deneyimlediklerini kavramsallaştırmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu bağlamda katılımcıların Türk ulus aidiyeti ile ‘benimseme’, ‘ayak uydurma’, ‘ittifak yapma’, ‘müzakere etme’, ‘karşı çıkma’ ya da ‘reddetme’ ilişkilerinde izledikleri yolları tespit etmek ve açıklamak amaçlanmıştır. Bu yolla Türklük, katılımcıların gündelik yaşam deneyimlerindeki mekânsal, maddi, performatif ve temsili süreçlere temellendirilmektedir. Bu amaçla, aşağıdan yukarıya ve tüme varımcı bir yol izlenmektedir.

## **Araştırma Alanı ve Kapsamı**

Araştırma, 2011 yılında Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Urfa'da, kendileri ve/veya başkaları tarafından Arap, Kürt ve Süryani olarak tanımlanan bireylerle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın Arap ve Kürt katılımcıları Hanefi ve Şafi Sünni Müslüman, Süryani katılımcıları Ortodoks Hıristiyandır. Alan araştırması sırasında araştırma alanında farklı etnik ve mezhepsel aidiyetlerden bireylerle görüşme olanağı oluştuğunda onlar da araştırmaya dahil edilmiş, yapılan görüşmeler temellendirilmiş kuramın “kuramsal örnekleme” ilkesi uyarınca ulaşılan veriyi derinleştirmek ve “sürekli karşılaştırma” yapmak için kullanılmıştır. Bununla birlikte araştırmanın esas özneleri sözü edilen üç aidiyet grubu ile tanımlanan bireyler olarak korunmuştur.

Bu çerçevede 89 derinlemesine mülakat, 26 enformal görüşme, üç odak grup, dokuz enformal grup görüşmesi, 49 uzman görüşmesi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Uzman görüşmesinin gerekliliği alan araştırması sırasında ortaya çıkmış ve kuramsal örnekleme örneği olarak analize dahil edilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda araştırma alanlarında etkili pek çok sivil toplum örgütü, dernek, vakıf, çeşitli kurumlar ve üniversite bölümlerinden akademisyenler ile araştırma sorusunu aydınlatmaya dönük olarak görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Uzman görüşmeleri ayrıca yeni katılımcılara ulaşmak için de bir araç olarak kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın öznesi üç grup sözü edilen şehirlerde yerleşik en kalabalık gruplardır. Ayrıca, bu üç şehir Cumhuriyet döneminde Arap ve Kürt nüfusun en yüksek oranda yaşadığı şehirler arasındadır (Arslan vd., 2013). Süryaniler de tarihsel olarak en yoğun şekilde Mardin ve çevresinin büyük kısmını da içine alan Tur Abdin bölgesinde ikamet etmişlerdir (Özmen, 2006) Türkiye’de etnik grupların nüfus oranına dair kesin bilgiler olmamakla birlikte Kürt nüfusun toplam Türkiye nüfusuna oranı % 15-18, Arap nüfus % 1,15, toplam gayri-Müslim nüfus 0,06 civarında tahmin edilmektedir (Konda, 2011). Tur Abdin’de



yaşayan Süryanilerin nüfusu 2000 olarak belirtilmektedir (Özmen, 2006); bu bilgi alan araştırması sırasında ulaştığım bilgi ile örtüşmektedir.

Tek dilli olmak katılımcılar arasında az rastlanır bir durumdu ve daha çok Kürtçe ya da Arapça konuşan yaşlı kadınlar ile sınırlı idi. Yine de bu bütün yaşlı kadınların tek dilli olduğu anlamına gelmemekte. Diğer durumlarda, katılımcıların çoğu ya iki ya üç dilli idi ve Türkçe, Kürtçe, Arapça, Süryanice dillerinden iki ya da üç tanesini konuşabiliyorlardı. Dördünü de konuşan katılımcı sayısı oldukça azdı.

Söz konusu üç topluluk için ortak olan, tarihsel olarak mevcut devlet sınırlarını aşan ve her üçünün de kolektif hafızalarında sembolik ve kültürel anlamlar atfedilen aynı coğrafya üzerinde uzun bir birlikte yaşama geçmişine ve yerlilik iddiasına sahip olmalarıdır. Fakat bu üç grup tarihsel olarak devlet ile ya da kendi aralarındaki iktidar ilişkileri içinde farklı pozisyonlara sahip olmuşlardır.

Grupların bu şekilde isimlendirilmesi sabit ve homojen kategoriler olarak alındıkları ve aynı oranda sabit ve homojen bir Türklük karşısında konumlandırıldıkları çıkarımına neden olmamalıdır. Şüphesiz, bu kategorilerdeki en görünür ve yaygın örüntüler belirlenecek, gruplar farklılıkları ve benzerlikleri temelinde birbiriyle karşılaştırılacaktır. Bu farklılık ve benzerliklerin oluşumunda etkili tarihsel, siyasal, toplumsal ve ekonomik süreçlere işaret edilecektir. Fakat aynı zamanda, her bir grubun çeşitli üyeleri için aidiyetlerin birbirine benzediği ve farklılaştığı anlar ortaya konmak suretiyle yapılan grup içi analiz, bütüncül bir ‘Türklük’ karşısındaki biricik, homojen ve sabit Arap, Kürt ve Süryani ‘Kimliği’ varsayımına karşı koyacaktır.

Araştırmanın yapıldığı üç şehir birbirine komşu üç güney doğu şehridir ve üçü de zengin kültürel, sosyal ve ekonomik tarihe sahip antik şehirlerdir. Üçü de tarihlerinde Asuri, Arap ve Kürt idarelerini yaşamış ve tarihsel olarak çok kültürlü, çok dinli, çok etnili sosyo-demografik yapılara sahip olmuşlardır. Bu

yapı geç 19. yüzyıl ve erken 20. yüzyıl boyunca neredeyse tamamen yok olmuştur. Bugün Mardin bu çok kültürlü yapının kalıntılarının var olmaya devam ettiği aralarındaki tek şehirdir. Yine de söz konusu yapının izleri kısmen de olsa mimari ve kolektif hafızada her üç şehirde de devam etmektedir.

2011’de bu üç şehir de merkezlerine doğru çeşitli derece ve biçimlerde göç hareketlerine maruz kalmış, farklı derecelerde ve farklı kaynaklar temelinde olsa da hepsi şehirleşen ve gelişme eğilimlerine sahip şehirlerdi. Son on yıllarda Urfa bir entegre kalkınma ve sulama projesi olan GAP yoluyla ulusual ekonomik sisteme daha çok entegre olmuş; Diyarbakır Kürt siyasi hareketinin öncüsü ve daha yeni olarak yükselen Kürt orta sınıfının mekanı olarak marjinalleşmiş; Mardin çok kültürlü varlığının metalaşması yönünde bir basınçla karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Bu üç şehir bu araştırmaya, farklı ekonomik, siyasi, kültürel ve sosyal süreçleri deneyimleyen bireysel deneyimler yoluyla yerel, ulusal, ve ulus-ötesi düzeylerde aidiyetlerin oluşumundaki farklılaşmayı anlama imkanı vermiştir.

### **Temel Argüman**

Sonuç olarak, üç temel tarihsel-toplumsal sürecin katılımcıların aidiyetlerinin oluşumunda etkili olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlar, şiddet/ihlal’e maruz kalmak ya da kalmamak; sosyal ilişkilerin ve ağların mobilize edilmesi; ve ekonomik olarak içerilme/dışlanma süreçleridir. Yapılan analiz sonucunda başvuru ilgilili literatürden “şiddet”, “sosyal sermaye”, ve “ekonomik dışlanma” kavramları temellendirilmiş kuram uyarınca “kuramsal kodlama” (Glaser, 2002) olarak analiz ve yazma sürecine dâhil edilmiştir.

Demografik (etnisite, yaş, toplumsal cinsiyet, sosyo-ekonomik statü) ve coğrafi (yaşanılan yer) değişkenlerin bireylerin aidiyetlerini kurmadaki rolüne dair baştaki varsayım doğrulanmıştır. Bununla birlikte, araştırmanın bulguları göstermektedir ki bu değişkenler daha çok bahsi geçen üç süreçle ilişki içindedir ve kişinin bu süreçleri nasıl deneyimlediğini tanımlamakta ve etkilemektedir.

Dahası şiddet, sosyal sermaye ve ekonomik içerilme/dışlanmanın her zaman cinsiyetlenmiş bağlamlarda ortaya çıktığı; devlet politikalarının ve diğer sosyo-politik yapıların deęişiklik gösterdiği farklı tarihsel dönemlerle ilişkili olduğu için yaş/kuşağın pek çok deneyimde önemli olduğu; yaşanan yerin ise yerel iktidar ilişkileri ve fırsat yapıları açısından etkili olduğu görüldü.

### **Temel Kavramsal Çerçeve**

Aidiyet bizatihi toplumun, sınırların, içerilme ve dışlanma süreçlerinin, katılımın, sosyal ve ekonomik ilişkilerin, hiyerarşilerin ve temsilletin inşasıyla ilişkili olması dolayısıyla sosyoloji açısından önemli bir meseledir. Bu çalışmada aidiyet kavramına eleştirel bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir ve olguya normatif bir değer atfedilmemektedir. Alan araştırması sırasında ortaya çıkan toplumsal bir olgu olarak ele alınmakta ve olgunun araştırma sırasında karşılaşılan karmaşıklık, çokluk ve çok boyutluluğunu kavramak ve açıklamak için bir yeniden kavramsallaştırma önerilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, “be-long-ings” yapı-söküme uğratılmış analitik bir araç olarak önerilmekte ve bu yolla kelimenin ima ettiği çoklu anlamlardan faydalanılmaktadır. Aidiyet olgusuna eleştirel olarak yaklaşan ilgili literatürden faydalanarak burada yapılan, kelimeyi ‘be-ing’ [olmak], ‘long-ing’ [özlem duymak], ‘belonging(s)’ [mülkiyet] anlamlarını verecek şekilde bölmek ve bu çoklu anlamları ifade edebilmek için kelimeyi çoğullaştırmaktır; “ing” ekine yapılan vurgu ile olgunun süreç olmağı vurgulanmaktadır. Diğer bir ifade ile, söz konusu yapı-söküm yoluyla ‘olmak halleri’, ‘özlem duyguları’ ve ‘mülkiyetler’ işaret edilmekte, aidiyetin çoğul bir süreç olduğu gösterilmektedir. İddia edilen bu üçlü kurgu yoluyla aidiyet *halleri*, *yoksunlukları*, *ekonomilerinin süreçler* olarak belirlenebileceğidir. Bu yeniden kavramsallaştırılmış haliyle “be-long-ings”, bu çalışmanın hedeflediği kuramsallaştırma girişiminde “çekirdek kategori” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu yeniden kavramsallaştırma katılımcıların deneyim, algı ve dışa vurumlarına temellendirilmekte ve meseleyi tanımlanmış bir aidiyet politikası yerine bireyin bakış açısından ele almaktadır. Bu çalışma bu süreçlerin

bireylerin deneyimlerinde geniş toplumsal siyasal, tarihsel, ekonomik ve söylemsel bağlamlarla ilişki içinde nasıl inşa edildikleri sorusunun peşindedir.

Ulus, çalışmanın diğer bir temel kavramıdır ve bu çalışmada sınırları kesin, cisimleşmiş bir gerçeklik ya da dışsal olarak tanımlanan bir bütünlüğe değil, onu ortaya çıkaran pratikler toplamına işaret etmektedir (Campbell, 1998). Böyle bir perspektiften bu çalışma, Türklüğün deneyimlenme biçimleri, onunla karşılaşma halleri ve çalışmanın bağlamında nasıl vücut bulduğuna bakmakta; başka bir ifade ile ulusun neliği ile değil, ne zaman ve nasıllığı ile ilgilenmektedir. Bu çalışma, aşağıdan yukarıya bir bakış benimseyerek ulusal topluluk ve ulusal mekânın çeperinde konumlanmış bireylerin “kendilerine dayatılan kategorileri sahiplenme, içselleştirme, bozma, savuşturma, ya da dönüştürme” (Brubaker, 1996: 12) yollarına odaklanmaktadır. Bu çerçevede ulusun kültürel anlamları değil, katılımcıların deneyimlerini belirleyen sosyal, ekonomik ve siyasi süreçler tanımlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu çerçevede, bu tez bir toplumsal-tarihsel süreç olarak ulusal aidiyet kuramına ulaşma denemesidir ve sonuç olarak söz konusu aidiyetin temel olarak bireylerin şiddet, sosyal sermaye ve ekonomik içerilme/dışlanma deneyimleri ve bu deneyimlerin birbiri ile olan ilişkisi tarafından belirlendiği iddia edilmektedir.

### **“Ortaya Çıkan” Kavramlar**

Alan araştırması sırasında katılımcıların aidiyetlerini inşa eden ve ortadan kaldıran üç süreç ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlar şiddet ve ihlale maruz kalmak; toplumsal ilişkilerin fayda sağlanmak üzere mobilize edilmesi ve ekonomik süreçlere dâhil olma ya da dışlanma olarak isimlendirilebilir. Araştırma ve analiz sırasında ulaşılan bu kategorileri ilgili literatür ile ilişkilendirmek için mevcut literatürdeki şiddet, sosyal sermaye, ve ekonomik dışlanma kavramları kuramsal kodlar olarak analize dahil edilmiştir. Bu Glaser’ın (2002) kavramlarımızı temellendirme sürecinin bir parçası olarak önerdiği adımlardan biridir.

Bu çalışmada **şiddet**, L. Ray (2011) tarafından tanımlandığı şekliyle bütünlüklü bir kavrayışla ele alınmakta ve “insanın kendini gerçekleştirmesini engelleyecek, kişinin haklarını ve bütünlüğünü ihlal edecek ve sıklıkla niyetlerden bağımsız olarak sonuçlar açısından değerlendirilen önlenebilir her şey” (Ray, 2011: 9) olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu tanım Johan Galtung (1990: 292) tarafından yapılan “temel insan ihtiyaçlarına, daha genel olarak yaşama yönelik, ihtiyaçların karşılanmasını potansiyel olarak mümkün olanın altına düşüren önlenebilir saldırılar” tanımı ile de yakından ilişkilidir. Bu çalışmada şiddet çok boyutlu bir olgu olarak ortaya çıkmış ve katılımcıların deneyimlerinden yola çıkarak dört tip şiddet biçimi yine ilgili literatür ile ilişkilendirilerek tanımlanmıştır. Bunlar yapısal, siyasi, sembolik ve kolektif şiddet biçimleridir.

**Sosyal sermaye** 1980ler’de kavramın ilk sistematik çağdaş analizini ortaya koyan Pierre Bourdieu tarafından “üyelerinin her birine kolektif olarak sahip olunan sermayenin desteğini sağlayan bir grup üyeliği, az ya da çok kurumsallaşmış ilişkilerin ve sürdürülebilir bir ilişki ağına sahip olmaya bağlı mevcut potansiyel kaynakların toplamı” olarak tanımlanmıştır (Bourdieu, 1986: 51). Bourdieu’ya (1989) göre ayrıca sosyal sermaye ekonomik ve kültürel sermayeden azami ölçüde faydalanmak için gerekli bağlantılardır. Bu, sosyal sermayenin bireyin sosyal mobilitesi için kaynak oluşturacak şekilde çeşitli sınıf temelli biçimlerde ortaya çıktığı ve toplumsal eşitsizliklerin yeniden üretiminde diğer sermaye biçimleriyle ortak çalıştığı yönündeki iddia ile (Cheong et al, 2007) benzeşmektedir. Bu türden bir analiz eşitsizliklerin toplumsal ilişkiler yoluyla yeniden üretildiği süreçlere odaklanan mevcut çalışma bağlamında önemlidir.

Robert D. Putnam (1995) politika yönelimli olan analizinde sosyal sermayeyi katılımcıların ortak hedeflere ulaşmak için daha etkili biçimde birlikte hareket etmesini sağlayan bir toplumsal yaşam özelliği olarak tanımlar. Putnam’ın analizinde sosyal sermaye stokları olarak tanımlanan “güven”, “değerler” ve “ilişki ağları” kendi kendilerini güçlendiren ve kümülatif olma eğilimindedirler,

çünkü başarılı bir alandaki başarılı ortaklık güven ve bağlantılar inşa ederek başka, çoğunlukla ilgisiz, diğer gelecek ortaklıklarda birer sosyal girdi haline gelirler (Putnam, 1993). Putnam (1993) esas olarak sosyal sermayenin topluluk yaşamının devamını sağlamakta önemli olduğunu vurgulamakla birlikte, ‘fayda’ vurgusuna çekince koymakta ve bazı gruplara hizmet eden değer ve ilişki ağlarının, özellikle değerler dışlayıcı ve ilişki ağları toplumsal olarak tabakalaşmış ise, başkaları için engelleyici rol oynayarak eşitsizliklerin kaynağı olabileceğini de belirtmektedir. Bu nedenle bir toplumun nasıl tanımlandığı, kimin içeride olduğu ve sosyal sermayeden faydalandığı, kimin dışarıda olduğu ve faydalanmadığı soruları önemlidir ve cevabı tanımlamayla değil ampirik olarak verilmelidir (Putnam, 1993, 1995).

Grace-Edward Galabuzi (2006) için **ekonomik dışlanmanın** göstergeleri düşük gelir düzeyi, işsizlik, bazı insanları düşük düzeydeki meslekler ve işlerde tutsak eden ırk ayrımı üzerinden şekillenmiş emek piyasası, ya da kamu sektörü istihdamında temsil azlığıdır. Rehany ve diğerleri (2012) için ekonomik dışlanma maddi yoksunluk ve ekonomik zorluk ile ölçülür. Bir diğer ilgili kavram olan “etnik penaltılar” etnik azınlıkların istihdam edilme ya da yüksek profilli işler veya yüksek gelir elde etme olasılıklarındaki sürekli eşitsizlik haline işaret etmektedir (Heath ve Cheung, 2006). Kavramı belirginleştirme üzerine sistematik bir çaba gösteren Tim Dertwinkel (2008) ekonomik dışlamayı sosyal dışlanmanın üç temel boyutundan biri olarak tanımlar; diğerleri siyasi katılım ve kültürel etkileşimdir. Dertwinkel (2008) özellikle tarihsel azınlıklara vurgu yaparak ekonomik dışlanmanın iki boyutundan birinin “katılımsızlık” ya da “erişimin inkarı”, diğerinin “ayrımcılık” olduğu bir model geliştirir. Bu modelde ekonomik dışlanma ilişkisel, süreğen, ve zengin ya da yoksul olmaktan daha çok içeride ya da dışarıda olmak meselesidir ve bu bağlamda insan yaşamlarının gerçek kalitesi ve yapabilirlikler ile ilgilidir. Dahası, politik iktidarı elinde bulunduran gruba dahil olmamak, göreceli olarak küçük boyutta olmak ve coğrafi olarak ülkenin uzak bölgelerinde yaşıyor olmak ekonomik dışlanmayı daha mümkün kılan özelliklerdir (Dertwinkel, 2008).

Her bir ayrı durumda bu üç sürecin biri ya da ikisi öne çıksa da genel örüntü bu üçünün arasındaki ilişki ve etkileşim ile belirlenmektedir. Bunlar hedeflenen temellendirilmiş kuramın temel kategorileridir ve içerikleri sistematik olarak araştırma bulgularından geliştirilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, temellendirilmiş kuramın önerilerinden biri olan önermeler geliştirme yolu (Urquhart, 2018) seçilmiştir. Önermeler birbirleriyle ilişki içindedir ve analiz boyunca ortaya konan bulgulardan soyutlanmak yoluyla geliştirilmişlerdir.

## **Önermeler**

**Aidiyetler, toplumsal pozisyonlar ve ilişkiler, özlemler ve keşkeler ve mülkiyetle ilgilidir.** Bu bağlamda özdeşleşmeler ve katılımı olduğu kadar, duygular, umutlar, beklentiler ve hayal kırıklıklarıyla, bir o kadar da sahiplikler ve sahip olunamayan ya da yitirilenlerle ilişkilidir.

**Aidiyetler karmaşık, çoğul ve çok yönlü süreçlerdir.** Aidiyetler kurulmaları ve bozulmaları sürekli olarak devam eden süreçlerdir ve makro düzey sosyo-politik, ekonomik ve söylemsel pratikler yoluyla olduğu kadar gündelik yaşamın en küçük detaylarındaki ilişkiler yoluyla da gerçekleşmektedirler. Kolektif deneyimler ve kolektif hafıza kadar kişisel deneyim ve pratikler de aidiyetlerin dönüşümü sürecinde etkilidir. Bu çalışmada aidiyet sabit ve bir kereye mahsus olarak belirlenen bir pozisyon olarak değil, bağlamsal, olumsal, ilişkiyel ve görünüşte özelleştirildiğinde dahi sürekli olarak kurulan ve yeniden kurulan bir süreçtir. Sahip olunan ya da olunmayan bir şey değil, olan bir şeydir. Dinamiktir. Sürekli değişir ve mikro ve makro düzey süreçler tarafından koşullandırılır. Bu, araştırmanın önemli bir bulgusudur ve kuram oluşturma çabasında önemli bir pozisyonudur; çünkü, Türk ulusal aidiyetinin kişilerin etnisitelerine göre özsel olarak deneyimlenmediğini, daha ziyade aralarında etnisiteye resmi ve popüler olarak nasıl yaklaşıldığının da olduğu tarihsel-toplumsal süreçler tarafından koşullandığını göstermektedir. Ulusal aidiyetin en değişmez ifadelerinde bile sürecin kategorik bir deneyim oluşturmalarını sağlayacak kapanmayı engelleyen

**karmaşıklılaştırıcı** bir dinamik ortaya çıkmaktadır. Katılımcıların aidiyetleri **çoğuldur**. Araştırma bulgularında ortaya çıkan, ailesel, akrabalık/aşiret, yerel, etnik, dilsel, dinsel, bölgesel, ulusal, ulus-ötesi gibi çeşitli aidiyetlerin eşzamanlı olarak ve birbirini dışlamayacak şekilde bir arada deneyimlenmesi idi. Ulus aidiyeti, diğerleri ile eşit düzeyde olmamakla birlikte pek çok aidiyetten biri olarak ortaya çıktı. Ulus aidiyetinin diğer bütün aidiyet biçimlerini düzenlemesi beklenebilecekken, araştırma bulguları bunun her durumda böyle olmadığını ortaya koydu. Bazı durumlarda diğer aidiyet biçimlerine dayanarak onlarla müzakere içinde kendi varlığını ortaya koyduğu ortaya çıktı. Mevcut yerel iktidar ilişkileri, sosyo-kültürel yapılar, bölgesel üretim biçimleri ve uzun süreli toplumsal yarılımlar çoğu zaman ‘Ulusal’ olanın kendi varlığını kurma yollarını ve kapsamını belirlemekte etkili olmuştur. Aidiyetler **çok yönlüdür**. Araştırma bulgularında siyasi-yapısal, söylemsel-sembolik, mekânsal-bölgesel ilişkiler aidiyetler için önemli bağlamlar olarak ortaya çıkmıştır.

**Aidiyetler bedenlenmiş, toplumsal cinsiyet temelli performanslardır.** Bu çalışmada **bedensel** deneyimlerin aidiyetlerin kurulması ve bozulmasında önemli olduğu ortaya çıkmaktadır; pek çok anlatıda toplumsal sınırların kurulmasında ve aidiyetlerin inşasında beden kilit rol oynamaktadır. Beden, eylemleri, davranış biçimi, alışkanlıkları; ona atfedilen anlamlar ve semboller ve bizatihi varlığı ya da yokluğu ile aidiyetleri inşa eden ve bozan bir role sahiptir. Beden ayrıca iktidar ilişkilerinin sahnelendiği ve müzakere edildiği bir uzam olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Süreçte sadece kadınlıklar değil erkeklikler de yeniden inşa edilmektedir. Bedenlerin birbiriyle rekabet halindeki süreçlerin araçları, uzamları, hedefleri, ya da özneli olmalarından bağımsız olarak yeni öznellikler ortaya çıkmakta ve yeni aidiyet biçimleri meydana gelmektedir. Aidiyetler katılımcılar tarafından **cinsiyet temelli süreçler** olarak deneyimlenmektedir. Cinsiyetçi eylemler, normlar, ilişkiler ve söylemler aidiyetlerin hem gündelik hayat bağlamında hem de ulus aidiyeti düzleminde biçimlenmesinde kurucu role sahiptir. Aidiyetler performatif süreçler olarak deneyimlenmektedir. Pratik ve deneyim aidiyetlerin inşasında temel rol oynamaktadır. Şiddet deneyimi özellikle



bu türden bir deneyimdir. Örneğin, hem sosyal hem siyasi kolektif biraraya gelmeler aidiyetleri kuran performanslar olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Ayrıca, “onlar/Batılılar/Türkler”in buraya gelmesi ve “bizi/burayı/Doğu”yu görmesi gerekir yönünde çok sık dile gelmiş çağrı da, hem toplumsal ilişkiler hem de normlar, güven, karşılıklılık yönünden sosyal sermaye yaratımının sadece performans yoluyla, başka bir ifade ile bir araya gelme, tanık olma ve paylaşma ile gerçekleştiğine dair bir göstergedir. Performansın rolüne işaret etmek aidiyetin yalnızca zihinsel bir süreç olmadığına yaptığı vurgu açısından bu çalışmanın sonuçları itibari ile önemlidir.

**Şiddet ve ihlal aidiyetleri yapan ve bozan kurucu bir role sahiptir.** Araştırmanın bulgularında temellendirilerek ihlal aidiyetin toplumsal inşasının bir faili; katılımcıların yaşamlarında, zihinlerinde, bedenlerinde izler bırakan ve anlamlarla yüklü bir toplumsal güç olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışmada şiddet ihlal etmek anlamına vurgu ile ele alınmaktadır ve bir süreci ifade etmektedir. Şiddet deneyimleri toplumsal ve topluluklar arası ilişkiler; siyasi aktörler ve ilişkiler; ekonomik ilişkiler, altyapılar ve fırsatlar; yasal haklar ve ödevler; beden, psikoloji, hafıza ve duygular; ilişkilerin ve mülkiyetin mekansal organizasyonu; ve söylemler ile ilişki içinde dile getirilmiştir. Tezin katılımcıların deneyimlerine temellendirilerek ulaşılan temel sonuçlarından biri şudur ki bedenlerin, hafızanın, mülkiyetin, yerlerin, sembollerin, ilişkilerin ve özelemlerin ihlali, ihlal eden süreçlere karşı çıkma, tepsi verme, kabul etme, müzakere etme edimlerinde ortaya çıkan yeni öznellikler, mekanlar, toplumsal aktörler, sosyal sermaye, sosyal, siyasi ve ekonomik ilişkiler yaratmak yoluyla ulusal düzeyde aidiyetleri kuran ve bozan merkezi bir mekanizmadır.

***İhlal edilmiş aidiyetler***, katılımcılar için mevcut bağlar, bütünlükler ve sürekliliklerde kırılmalar yaratan çeşitli şiddet biçimleri tarafından mevcut aidiyetlerin ihlal edilmesi sürecine dair bir kavramsallaştırma olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bir başka ifade ile, *ihlal edilmiş aidiyetler*, oluşlar, özelemler, mülkiyetlerin ihlali yoluyla oluşmaktadır.

**İhlal farklı aktörler, araçlar, biçimler ve sonuçlarla gerçekleşmektedir.** Katılımcıların ihlal deneyimleri özellikleri, bağlamları ve sonuçları itibari ile birbirlerinden farklılaşmaktadır. Ancak hepsi modern bir bağlamda ve modern olgular olarak gerçekleşmektedir. Deneyimlerdeki farklılaşma farklı şiddet kategorileri tanımlamayı mümkün kılmıştır. Kodlama, sürekli karşılaştırma ve kategorileştirme yoluyla katılımcıların deneyimlerinde temellenen dört temel ihlal biçimine ulaşılmıştır: ihlal eden siyasi failler; ihlal eden yapılar; ihlal eden söylemler; ihlal eden topluluklar. Yine de söylemek gerekir ki, sadece bir kategori içinde tanımlanan ihlal biçiminin diğerinde de tanımlanabilme ihtimali nedeni ile değil, bir ihlal biçiminin ötekine neden olma ya da pratikte onu hızlandırma ihtimali nedeni ile de bu dördü birbiriyle karmaşık bir şekilde ilişkilidir.

**Sosyal sermaye, bir başka ifade ile sosyal ilişkilerin mobilizasyonu ve bu mobilizasyonun ne biçimde ve ne kapsamda olduğu aidiyetlerin oluşumunda belirleyicidir.** Katılımcıların deneyimlerinde temellendirilen ve kuramsal kodlama yoluyla sosyal sermaye olarak soyutlanan kategoriler şunlardır: aile bağları ve evlilik ilişkileri; etnik paydaşlık, arkadaşlık, topluluk ilişkileri; dinsel paydaşlık ve kurumlar; sınır-aşırı bağlar; aşiret ilişkileri; yerel ilişkiler; yerel kurumlar; siyasal katılım, partiler ve yurttaşlık. Çalışmada, sosyal sermaye mevcut literatürde yapılan ayrımı kuramsal kodlama olarak kullanıp “bağlayan”, “köprüleyen”, “birleştiren” sosyal sermaye biçimlerine ayrılmış ve her biri katılımcıların deneyimlerine temellendirilerek örneklenmiştir.

**Ekonomik dışlanma ve içerilme süreçleri aidiyetlerin kurulması ve bozulmasında belirleyicidir.** Başlarken, sosyoekonomik statünün önemi tezin bir varsayımı idi. Araştırma sırasında, özellikle düşük sosyoekonomik düzeydeki katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmelerde, o anda üzerinde durulan mevzu başka bir şey olduğunda dahi bazı meseleler ısrarlı bir biçimde ortaya çıktı. Bunlar işsizlik, düzenli gelir ihtiyacı, sosyal güvenlik hakkından yararlanamamak, mülksüzleşme, kirada yaşamının güvensizlikleri idi. Bu durumlarda, yoksulluk

çoğu zaman katılımcılar için yaşamın, beklentilerin ve gelecek planlarının temel vurgusu idi. Dahası ekonomik çıkarlar aynı etnik grup içinde siyasi ve sosyal gruplaşmaları tanımlamakta çeşitli biçimlerde etkili idi. Bununla birlikte, çalışmanın önemli bir bulgusu şu oldu ki mesele sadece yoksul ya da zengin olmak, ya da sosyoekonomik göstergelerin ‘düşük’ ya da ‘yüksek’ olarak tanımladığı olgu değil, egemen ekonomik ilişkiler bağlamında içeride olmak algısı ya da deneyimidir. Burada dışlanma/içerilme olarak tanımlanan bu sürecin failinin kim olduğu önemlidir. Araştırmanın bulgularına temellenerek, katılımcıların deneyimlerinde içeride olmak bireysel düzeyde, istikrarlı bir gelir elde etme alanına güvenli ve eşit olarak katılma olanağı olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çerçevede ekonomik dışlanma ve içerilme süreçlerini, bu süreçleri üreten ilişkilere bakmak suretiyle bireysel düzeyde analiz etmek ve söz konusu süreçlerde etnik, dinsel, bölgesel, cinsiyetçi, ideolojik/siyasi ayrılmaların etkili olup olmadığını görmek önemlidir. Yine araştırma bulgularında ekonomik dışlanma/ içerilme süreçlerinin yalnızca bireysel düzeyde oluşmadığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bir kategori olarak etno-dinsel grup; birbirlerine, bölgedeki ve Batı’daki diğer şehirlere kıyasla yaşanan yer; Türkiye’deki diğerlerine kıyasla bölge; ve uluslararası alanda Türkiyeekonomik dışlanma ve içerilme süreçleriyle ilgili katılımcıların deneyimlerinde ortaya çıkan diğer düzeylerdir. Dolayısıyla birey, toplumsal grup, şehir, bölge ve ülke ekonomik dışlanma/içerilme süreçlerinin yaşandığı beş önemli düzeydir. Yapısal şiddetten farklı olarak burada özellikle içerilme ve dışlanmayı meydana getiren ilişkilere odaklanılmaktadır, ve burada sürecin faili tanımlanabilir. Yapısal şiddet ekonomik dışlanma yaratabilir ya da yaratmayabilir. Ayrıca araştırmanın önemli bir bulgusu, aidiyetlerin kurulumunda içerilme süreçlerinin de ayrıca ele alınması gereken ve dışlanma kadar önemli süreçler olduğudur. Özetle, bireylerin hangi yollarla ve kimin tarafından dışlandığı ve içerildiği aidiyet örüntülerinin belirlenmesinde önemli etkiye sahiptir.

**Türklük üç kurucu ayağa sahiptir: devlet, Türkler ve ev/yurt.** Türklük katılımcıların deneyimlerinde tekil, özdeş, bütüncül bir olgu olarak ortaya

çıkılmamaktadır. Türklük deneyimlerindeki farklılaşma tek bir örnekte bile ortaya çıkabilmektedir. Ya da kurucu ayaklardan biri ile ilgili deneyimler aynı katılımcı için zaman içinde değişebilmektedir. Örneğin, Türk olmak geçmişte düzgün giyinmek, akıcı konuşmak, gereğince hareket etmekle tanımlanan ve özenilen bir şey iken, şu anda böyle bir algının ağırlığını, bazen bütünüyle varlığını, yitirdiği görülebilmektedir. Bu türden dönüşümler bireysel düzeyde olabildiği gibi grup düzeyinde de olabilmektedir. **Devlet**, katılımcıların deneyimlerinde Türklüğü kuran en önemli ayaktır. Ulus olmaklık çoğunlukla devlet ile ilişkilendirilmekte ve bu ilişki katılımcıların devletle nasıl karşılaştıkları ve ilişkilendiklerine bağlı olarak değişmektedir. Bu çerçevede, bu çalışmanın önemli argümanlarından biri siyasi/yapısal bağlamın Türkiye’de ulus aidiyetini kurmakta önemli olduğu ve burada temel aktörün pek çok diğer aktörle ilişkisi içinde devlet olduğudur. Bu diğer aktörler, bireyler, topluluklar, yerel elitler, dini örgütlenmeler, aşiretler, sivil toplum örgütleri, siyasi partiler ve diğer devletlerdir. Devlet, katılımcıların deneyimlerinde sadece yaptıklarıyla değil yapmadıklarıyla da somutlaşmaktadır. Bu çalışmada devlet tekil, homojen ve sabit bir bütünlük olarak ele alınmamaktadır. Daha ziyade çoğu zaman birbiriyle de çelişki içinde bir güçler ve teknikler, söylemler, kurallar ve eylemler bütünüdür (Aretxaga 2003). Devletle ilişkiye ve deneyime vurgu yapmak çalışmanın daha çok süreçlere, çelişiklere, farklılaşan eylemler ve söylemlere ve bahsi geçen ilişkiye dahil olan aktörlerin etkileşimine işaret etmesini sağlamaktadır. Çalışmanın iddialarından biri şudur ki ana hatlarıyla ‘karşı çıkmak’, ‘kabul etmek’, ‘müzakere etmek’, ya da ‘özlem duymak’ olarak tanımlanabilecek devletle farklı ilişkilene biçimleri, her bir grubun kategorik bir bütün olarak devlet tarafından eklemleme biçimi ile yakından ilişkilidir. Bu nedenle, grupların yerel ya da geniş toplumdaki iktidar ilişkileri içindeki farklı pozisyonları aidiyet inşa biçimlerinin farklılaşmasında önemli role sahiptir. Grupların devlet tarafından farklı tazyik edilme biçimleri açısından bir bakış, farklı aidiyet biçimlerini toplumsal-tarihsel, söylemsel, siyasi, mekansal ve ekonomik ilişkiler bağlamına yerleştirmek, böylece araştırma gruplarına dair özcü bir yaklaşıma hapsolmemek imkanını sağlamıştır.

Katılımcıların deneyimlerinde Türklüğün ikinci kurucu ayağı **Türkler** imajı ve onlarla karşılaşmalarıdır. Paylaşılan merkezi bir algı '*Modern Türkler*'dir. Türkler genelde şehirli, eğitilmiş, düzgün davranışlı, akıcı konuşan, nezih ve müreffeh yaşam standartlarına sahip olarak algılanmaktadır. Yine de bu algıdaki farklılaşma aidiyetlerin nasıl çeşitlendiğini anlamak bakımından önemlidir. Bu algının Araplar arasında hala yoğun olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Kendilerini Kürtler ve Araplardan bu açıdan farklılaştıran Süryaniler için bu algı, Türklerle aralarındaki benzerliği vurgulamak açısından önemlidir. Kürtler içinse modern Türk imajı geçmişte özenilen ve arzulan bir model sunarken, şimdiki zamanda bu her zaman geçerli bir durum değildir. Her üç gruptan da Batılı/Türk bireylerin deneyimlerinin de heterojen olduğuna işaret eden ve kent-kır, yerel/bölgesel, ya da sınıfsal farklılıkların bu heterojenlikteki etkisine vurgu yaparak Modern Türk imgesini tersine çeviren katılımcılar oldu. Örneğin, pek çok karşılaşmada "Türkler" tarafından Türkçenin aksanlı konuşulması ve bölgesel olarak başkalarının zor anlaşılacak kadar farklılaşması Kürtlerin Türkçeyi düzgün konuşmadıkları yönündeki söylemin altını oyan bir durum olarak ileri sürüldü. Yaşam standartları açısından kırsal ve kentsel Batı arasında yapılan ayırım ve ilkinin Doğu'ya benzerliği, Arap ve Kürt, genç ve yaşlı, daha ziyade erkek katılımcılar tarafından sıklıkla dile getirildi. Dahası, araştırmanın katılımcıları açısından her bir grubun birbirlerine ve modern Türk imgesine göre konumlanması ilişkisel idi. Bir diğer Türk imgesi, '*Kayıtsız Türkler*'dir; ve Türkler/Batıda yaşayanların Doğu'da yaşayanların zor hayat koşullarına, hak ihlallerine, bazen bizzat varlıklarına karşı ilgisiz ve tepkisiz tutumlarına işaret etmektedir. Bu algı yaşadıkları bütün ihlal biçimleri ile ilgili olarak Kürtler arasında çok görünürdür. Böyle bir algıyı genellikle gücenme, hayal kırıklığı, öfke ve yabancılaşma izlemektedir. Türklerle/geniş toplumla yetersiz sosyal temas algısı ortak olarak paylaşılmaktadır ve Türklerin/Batıdakilerin Doğu/Güneydoğu'ya 'gelmesi' burası/biz/bizim yaşamımızı 'görmesi' ve 'bilmesi' yönünde güçlü bir çağrı ortaya çıkmaktadır. '*Kayıtsız Türkler*' imgesinin bir başka ifadesi daha çok kadın ve erkek, Kürt ve Arap gençler tarafından dile getirilen ve büyük şehirlerdeki deneyimlerine dayanan ilgisiz

kalabalıklar algısıdır. Böyle bir algı zaman zaman modernite eleştirisi ile ilişkilendirilmiş ve azalan toplumsal bağlardan bahsedilmiştir. ‘*Olgun olmayan Türkler*’ geniş toplum ya da Batıdaki insularla ilgili bir başka algıdır. Genç ya da orta-yaşlı, erkek ya da kadın pek çok katılımcı zorlu yaşam koşullarının kendilerine yaşamın pratik gerçeklikleri ve ilişkileri açısından erken yaşta olgunluk sağladığına inanmaktadır. Buna göre, onların durumunda yaşamlarındaki pek çok ihlal biçimine karşı mücadele etmek gereği bireyin güçlenmesini beraberinde getirmektedir. Türklerin kendilerine olan özgüveni karşısında katılımcıların kendilerine uyguladıkları oto-sansür ya da kontrol de bu bağlamda dile getirilmiş başka bir kıyaslamadır.

Katılımcıların deneyimlerinde Türklüğü kuran üçüncü ayak **teritorya/coğrafya**dır. Yurt/ev olarak Türklük son zamanlarda ve artan biçimde çekişmeli bir aidiyet biçimi haline gelmiştir. Bu aidiyet, yerel ve bölgesel mekanın yeniden sahiplenilmesi ve vurgulanması, Türkiye’nin batısında hak iddia etmek; ve sürekli olarak sınır-ötesi mekana gönderme yapmak şeklinde ifade bulmaktadır. Bunların her birinin resmi coğrafi aidiyet siyasasına ve onun vatan imgesine meydan okuduğu söylenebilir. Kolektif hafıza, şiddet deneyimi, coğrafyaya yapılan yerlilik iddiası, iktidar ve ekonomik ilişkiler, sosyal sermaye topraksal aidiyet örüntülerini ortaya çıkarmakta önemlidir.

***Vionation, Cautionation, Modernation ve Localination katılımcıların deneyimlerinde ulusu oluşturan dört temel eklemlenme biçimidir.*** ***Vio(n)ation*** kavramsallaştırması, ulusun ihlal yoluyla kurulmasına işaret eder. İddia odur ki ulusal düzeydeki aidiyetler katılımcıların deneyimlerinde çok çeşitli ihlal süreçleri yoluyla kurulmaktadır. Böyle bir bakış açısından şiddet sadece negatif, yıkıcı değil pozitif, yapıcı bir etkiye sahiptir. Bireysel hayatlarda çeşitli ihlal biçimleri iç içe geçmiştir ve katılımcıların pozisyonlarını ve kimliklenme süreçlerini, arzularını ve özlemlerini, mülkiyetlerini ve mülksüzleştirilmelerini etkilemektedir. *İç içe geçmiş ihlaller* kategorik olarak bir

grup tarafından deneyimlendiği ölçüde kolektif bir mahiyet kazanır. Şiddetin aracılığıyla tepkisel, zıtlaşan, yabancılaşmış öznellikler ortaya çıkmaktadır.

**Cautio(n)ation** kavramsallaştırması, Süryani katılımcılar arasında en görünür olarak ortaya çıkan öznellik olan temkinli tavır ve itidalin ulusla eklemlenmenin temeli haline geldiğini iddia etmektedir. Sadece devletle ya da geniş toplumla ilişkilerinde değil yerelde birlikte yaşadıkları diğer gruplarla ilişkilerinde de itidalli yaklaşım yoluyla kurulan öznellikler öne çıkmaktadır. Söz konusu tavır çok talepkar, ısrarcı, doğrudan ya da görünür olmayan, fakat düşünce, söz ve eylemde kendini sınırlayan/çekimsen öznelliklere yol açmaktadır. Güçlü bir şekilde ifade ettikleri eşit yurttaşlık taleplerinden yola çıkarak söz konusu öznellik çalışmada *itidalli yurttaşlık* olarak kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Süryani katılımcılar için devlete ve iktidar sahiplerine sadakat göstermek, daha çok topluluğun kendi kaynaklarına dayanmak ve devleti ulaşılabilir ama mesafeli tutmak bizatihi varlıklarını devam ettirmenin önemli yolları olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Topluluk varlığını devam ettirmede, iç hiyerarşik yapısı ile iyi örgütlenmiş toplumsal ilişkiler, müesses dini kurumlar ve her üç yerel, ulusal ve ulus-ötesi düzlemde öncü ekonomik aktivite ve kaynaklar önemli rol sahibi olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Ancak, pek çok açıdan bireyler için destekleyici ve kolaylaştırıcı role sahip topluluk aidiyetlerinin aktif politikaya katılmak ya da yurtdışına göç kararı gibi bazı durumlarda sınırlayıcı rol oynayabildiği görülmektedir.

**Moder(n)ation** kavramsallaştırması yurttaşların gündelik yaşamlarında modernleşme süreçlerinden faydalanmak ve bu süreçlerle müzakere içinde olmak yoluyla ulusa eklemlenmeyi ifade etmektedir. Diğer bir ifade ile ulusun modernleşme yoluyla inşa edilmesine gönderme yapmaktadır. Buradaki temel iddia, neredeyse bütün katılımcıların Türklükle müzakere halinde oldukları esas temelin genellikle bir fırsat yapısı olarak benimsenen modernleşme olduğudur. Modernleşme ile anlaşılan temel olarak ekonomik anlamda gelişmişlik; kamu hizmetleri, kentleşme ve sosyo-mekansal planlama; refah ve daha iyi yaşam

standartlarıdır. Yurttaşlık, söz konusu fırsat yapısından yaralanmak için ana araç olarak ortaya çıkmakta ya da öyle olması beklenmektedir. Katılımcılar eleştirseler de övseler de taleplerinin zemini defaatle ve güçlü biçimde yurttaş statüleri olmuştur. Bununla ilişkili olarak, devletin söz konusu imkanların sağlayıcısı ve garantörü olması beklenmektedir. Modernleşme pratikleriyle ilişkilenenin başka bir yolu yerel iktidar yapısına entegre olmak yoluyla merkezi iktidar ile müzakere etmek olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Özellikle kentli yerel gruplar bu yolla yerelde rekabet halinde oldukları diğer gruplara karşı egemen pozisyonla donanmışlardır. Dolayısıyla, Türklükle ittifakları kendi hegemonik pozisyonları ile yakından ilişkilidir. Modern bir aidiyet biçimi olarak Türklüğün sağladığı fırsat yapısı bağlamında bir başka nokta bunun karşılaştırmalı olduğudur. Türkiye pek çok katılımcı için Orta Doğu ülkelerinden daha moderndir, ancak Batı/Avrupa ülkelerine kıyasla hala yeterince modern değildir. Modernleşme ayrıca davranışlar ve tutumlar, giyinme ve konuşma, sosyalleşme örüntüleri ve toplumsal cinsiyet normlarında medenilik olarak da anlaşılmaktadır. Bireyleşme de modernleşenin bir sonucu olarak dile getirilmiştir. Modern bir aidiyet biçimi olarak Türklük zaman boyutu ile ilgilidir ve katılımcılara çağdaş günümüz dünyası ile ilişkilenede temel bir çerçeve sunduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte katılımcılar tarafından modernleşmeye yöneltilen eleştiriler de önemlidir ve bu eleştiriler toplulukçu, geleneksel ve alışlagelmiş olanın öneminin vurgulanması etrafında örülmektedir. Belirtmek gerekir ki, her durumda katılımcıların bu araştırmaya konu edilen bütün deneyimleri modern bağlam ve şartlarda ortaya çıkmaktadır.

**Locali(n)ation** kavramsallaştırması ulusun yerelleşme yoluyla kurulmasını ifade etmektedir ve temel olarak yerele çekilmeye işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışmada coğrafi aidiyet, yerel mekan üzerinden bir yanda sınır-ötesine diğer yanda geniş ulusal coğrafyaya uzanan bir sürekliliği ifade eder. Temel iddia yerel mekanın coğrafi aidiyetlerin merkezinde olduğudur. Her üç grubun da yaşadıkları coğrafyaya dair yerlilik iddiası bunun en önemli dayanaklarından. Yerellik kolektif kimlik, kolektif hafıza ve temel toplumsal ve ekonomik örgütlenmenin



kaynağı olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Komşu ülkelerde Arap, Kürt ve Süryani toplulukların varlığı ve onlarla devam eden aile, evlilik, aşiret, ekonomi, din, kültür bağları sınır-ötesi mekanı önemli bir aidiyet kaynağı haline getirmektedir; ve bu durum ulusal coğrafi aidiyetin kategorik olarak kapanmasını engellemektedir. Öte yandan ulusal coğrafya deneyimi bireylerin eğitim ve mesleki nedenler; tarım ya da inşaat sektöründe mevsimlik iş göçü; turistik ziyaretler; ailevi ya da topluluksal bağlar; ya da erkekler için askerlik hizmeti yoluyla gerçekleşen hareketlerde ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu deneyimlerdeki karşılaşmalar, geniş toplum tarafından nasıl karşılandıkları, dışlanma ve içerilme deneyimleri ulusal düzeydeki aidiyetlerin oluşumunda belirleyici rol oynamaktadır. Bu karşılaşmalarda deneyimledikleri ön yargı, yanlış temsil, açık ya da gizli ayrımcılık ya da herhangi bir doğrudan ihlal deneyimi, gündelik yaşam ilişkilerini kurmak üzere yerele çekilmenin önemli bir kaynağı olmaktadır. Ulusal coğrafi bağlam aidiyetlerin eşit biçimde kurulması için sürekli, içerici ve destekleyici bir mekan sunmaktan uzaklaştıkça, kesintili olarak deneyimlenen, çoğunlukla dışlayıcı ve genel olarak evde olmak hissini yaratmaktan uzak bir mekan olarak deneyimlenmektedir. Evde olma hissi daha ziyade yerelde kurulmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, yerelin ulusalın bir parçası olması ve yerel sosyo-ekonomik çıkarların hala en iyi ulusal düzeyde karşılık bulması nedeniyle yerel ulusal düzey ile müzakere içindedir. Dolayısıyla, yerelin içinde hareket ettiği yasal, sosyal ve ekonomik çerçeve olarak Türklük, sınır-ötesi ile ilişki içinde, şartlı ve kesintili biçimde ev/yurt haline gelebilmektedir.

## APPENDIX H: TEZ İZİN FORMU / THESIS PERMISSION FORM

### ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü/ Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü/ Graduate School of Social Sciences

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü/ Graduate School of Applied Mathematics

Enformatik Enstitüsü/ Graduate School of Informatics

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü/ Graduate School of Marine Sciences

### YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı/ Surname: BAL

Adı / Name : ÖZGÜR

Bölümü / Department: SOCIOLOGY

TEZİN ADI/ TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English): MULTIFACETED EXPERIENCES OF TURKISHNESS: A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH TO BELONGINGS OF ARABS, KURDS, AND SYRIACS

TEZİN TÜRÜ/ DEGREE: Yüksek Lisans/ Master  Doktora / PhD

1. Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. /Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.

2. Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır./ Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of **two years**. \*

3. Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for period of **six months**. \*

*\*Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir.  
A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.*

Yazarın imzası / Signature.....Tarih/ Date.....