PUBLISHING THE “UNPUBLISHABLE”:

THE MAKING OF KURDISH PUBLISHING IN TURKEY

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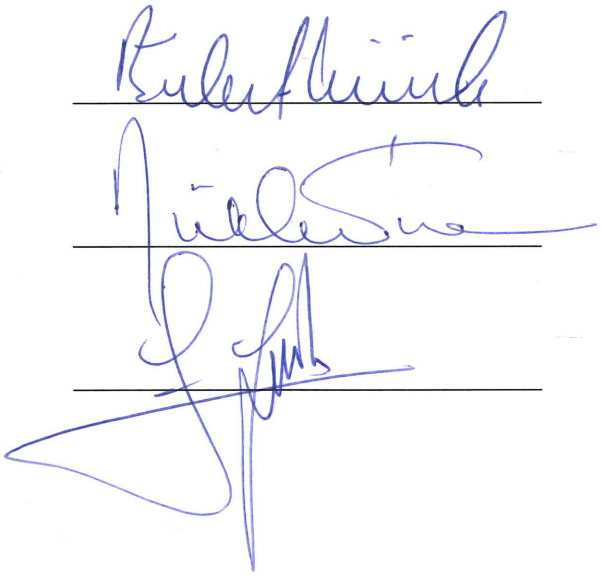
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Publishing the “Unpublishable”: The Making of Kurdish Publishing in Turkey

This thesis aims to explore the making of Kurdish publishing in Turkey by asking how that field emerged and has been developed under the conditions inimical to the use and reproduction of Kurdish literary language. My exploratory journey into that terrain focuses on both the diachronic development of the conditions of possibilities underlying its emergence and the synchronic dynamics characterizing its conditions of existence. Drawing on both the secondary data collected through archival research and the qualitative data collected through ethnographic one, I argue that Kurdish publishing is situated not simply at the intersection of culture and economy, but rather at the intersection of culture and politics as a form of cultural resistance. Rather than taking this form of resistance as a monolithic one, I use Bourdieu's conception of the field to frame the complexity of the dynamics constituting that form of resistance, and I define two moments characterizing the making of that field: struggle and competition. While the former moment denotes the relations of antagonism between the Kurdish publishers and the state, the market imperative and the predominant public perceptions, the latter one stands for the relations of agonism among the publishers making that field.

ÖZET

“Yayımlanamayanı” Yayımlamak: Türkiye’de Kürtçe Yayımcılığının Oluşumu

Bu tez, Türkiye’de Kürtçe yayımcılığın, yazınsal Kürtçenin kullanımı ve röprodüksiyonu için uygunsuz koşullar altında, ortaya çıkışını ve gelişimini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu inceleme hem söz konusu alanın mümkünat koşullarının artzamanlı oluşumuna hem de bu alanı şekillendiren eşsüremli dinamiklere odaklanmaktadır. Bir yandan arşiv araştırmasıyla derlenen ikincil kaynaklara, diğer yandan da derinlemesine görüşmeler yoluyla elde edilen niteliksel verilere dayanan bu tez bir kültürel direniş biçimi olarak Kürtçe yayımcılığın, diğer birçok kültürel üretim alanlarından farklı olarak, kültür ve iktisattan ziyade kültür ve siyasetin kesişiminde bulunduğunu savlamaktadır. Bu tez bir kültürel direniş biçimi olarak Kürtçe yayımcılığı yekpare bir hareket olarak almak yerine, Bourdieu’nün alan kavramsallaştırmasından yararlanarak söz konusu direniş biçimini tesis eden karmaşık dinamikleri çerçevelendirerek, alanın oluşumu şekillendiren iki temel moment tespit etmektedir: mücadele ve rekabet. Bu momentlerden ilki Kürtçe yayımcıları ile devlet, piyasa ve yaygın kamusal algılar arasındaki zıddiyet ilişkilerine işaret ederken, ikincisi söz konusu yayımcılar arasındaki çekişme ilişkilerini ifade etmektedir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to explore the making of Kurdish publishing in Turkey by asking how that field emerged and has been developed under the conditions inimical to the use and reproduction of Kurdish literary language. My exploratory journey into that terrain focuses on both the diachronic development of the conditions of possibilities underlying its emergence and the synchronic dynamics characterizing its conditions of existence. Drawing on both the secondary data collected through archival research and the qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews and on-site field observations, this thesis argues that Kurdish publishing is situated not simply at the intersection of culture and economy, as many other fields of cultural production are, but rather at the intersection of culture and politics as a form of cultural resistance. Rather than taking this form of resistance as a monolithic one, I use Bourdieu's conception of the field to frame the complexity of the dynamics constituting that form, and I define two moments characterizing the making of that field: struggle and competition. While the former moment denotes the relations of antagonism between the Kurdish publishers and the state, the market imperative and the public perceptions, the latter one stands for the relations of agonism among the publishers making that field.

1.1 Why Kurdish publishing?

Kurdish publishing is a relatively recent phenomenon in Turkey. While its roots go back to the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, its formal emergence as a field of cultural production goes only back to the early 1990s. Of course, the reasons behind the lateness of its emergence lie in the history of the Turkish nation-building process in general and the state`s peculiar relation to its ethnoculturally Kurdish citizens in particular. Since the inception of modern Turkey, the Kurdish language has been subjected to the state`s repressive and assimilationists policies aiming to silence the Kurdish speaking public by absorbing them into the Turkish national identity. Under these conditions, the literary activities in Kurdish were outlawed and almost exclusively limited to the clandestine and diasporic politico-intellectual circles for decades. Only after the ban on the use of the Kurdish language was partially lifted in 1991, these activities have gained some kind of juridical legitimacy at the margins of legality, and Kurdish publishing has emerged as a field of cultural production. The break that the year 1991 represents might be observed with a look at the statistical data collected by Kurdish bibliographer Mihemed Malmisanij (2006b, pp. 51-52) about the number of book titles published in Turkey from 1923 to 2005. According to that data, the total number of the book titles published in Kurdish from 1923 to 1990 was merely fifteen while eighteen book titles were published only in the year 1991. In other words, the space opened by the juridical change in 1991 was immediately occupied by the Kurdish politico-cultural entrepreneurs and accordingly facilitated the emergence of Kurdish publishing as a field of cultural production.

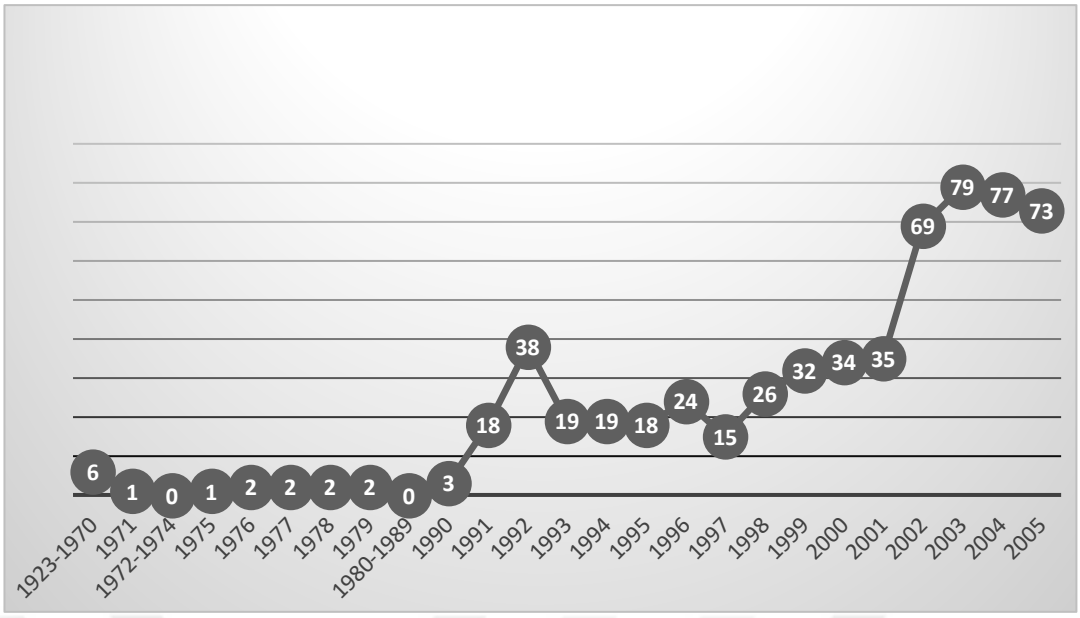


Figure 1. The Number of the Book Titles Published in Turkey from 1923 to 2005.[1]

Despite the fluctuation in the numbers of book titles published since then, it might certainly be said that the total volume of the books published after the year 1991 increased at a slow but constant pace throughout the 1990s. This process of intensification of the publishing activities in Kurdish took a new shape with the reformist political climate of the 2000s. As the figure partly illustrates, while the book titles published in Kurdish dramatically increased in number at that period, Kurdish publishing entered into a phase of visibility both in the public sphere and in the marketplace through the book fairs participated by the Kurdish publishers, the ethnoculturally selling books in Kurdish and the cultural events organized for the authors of Kurdish.

The emergence and the making of Kurdish publishing in Turkey leave us with a series of questions. First of all, how did Kurdish publishing as a field of

[1] The graph is drawn based on the data collected by Malmisanij (2006b, pp. 51-52). These figures exclude 33 book titles, the publishing dates of which could not be identified; 103 out of 628, the total number of books published in Turkey, had already been published abroad, mostly in Sweden (pp. 52-53).

cultural production emerge and has been made vis-à-vis the instituted political landscape in Turkey? Though it is the juridical opening of 1991 that facilitated the formal emergence of that field, I think it is a necessity to question the limits of the space drawn for the Kurdish publishers` practice with a close look at the transitions and transformations in the political landscape. Such an inquiry might be justified on two grounds. On the one hand, it is certainly hard to think that the juridical opening is sufficient to presume a profound change in the state`s long-lasting stance towards the Kurdish identity, culture and language – since the whole bunch of institutionalized constraints, either explicitly, or implicitly, has continued to dominate the Kurdish publishers` sphere of practice. On the other hand, the changing political climate – to a greater extent at the level of discursive maneuvers and to a lesser extent at the level of practical ambiguities – has not simply affected each and every Kurdish publisher in the same way, but rather given rise to differential perceptions among the publishers about whether there is a transformation in the state`s stance or not. Hence, both the conditions of possibilities and the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing deserve close attention with a focus on the relation between the state and Kurdish publishing.

Secondly, how have the publishers built their field upon the ruins of the silenced past? Despite its recency, Kurdish publishing surely did not emerge in a void. As it might be inferred from the figure above, Kurdish literary activities in general and the production of Kurdish books as cultural materials in particular could not be entirely obliterated in Turkey. There were mainly two reasons behind this. First, in spite of the comprehensiveness of the state`s repressive and assimilationist policies, the state was not omnipotent in preventing the Kurdish politico-cultural agents from engaging in literary activities – with the exception of the post-coup

period of the 1980s. Secondly, the politicization of the Kurdish identity both in line with other political movements and as a separate set of movement(s) on its own created the conditions for the translation of the political energy into the sphere of cultural production not only in Turkey but also in the diaspora. Considering these, that is for sure that the emergence of Kurdish publishing was, in one way, or another, related to those previous attempts. That is why, the terms of these relations, in the sense of both enabling and constraining the activities of the Kurdish publishers, deserve attention to get a grasp of Kurdish publishing.

Thirdly, how have the actors been engaged in publishing activities in the shadow of the enduring effects of the long history of repression and assimilation on the Kurdish culture and language? Even though the state`s repressive and assimilationist policies could not entirely eradicate Kurdish both as an oral and literary language, they nevertheless wounded it seriously. While its oral basis has been penetrated by the instituted hegemony of the Turkish language[2], the case of the Kurdish literary language has been even more problematic. The strict exclusion of Kurdish from the public sphere for decades severely hindered the production and reproduction of Kurdish orthography for decades. Since there was no Kurdish-medium schooling for Kurdish children, no Kurdish-medium-academic department for Kurdish youth and no freely-circulating Kurdish media for Kurdish speaking public in general, both the making of the Kurdish literary language and the audience of that semiotic universe were almost exclusively limited to the enthusiasm of a small number of literary activists. Although the political reforms made since the early 2000s have significantly eased those restrictions and have accordingly facilitated the growth in the vitality of Kurdish literary activities as well as in the

[2] For detailed sociolinguistic studies on how the Kurdish orality has been affected by those policies, see (Öpengin, 2010, 2012).

Kurdish-literate public in Turkey, it is nevertheless hard to claim that the Kurdish publishers have been free from both the enduring forms of constraints as well as the traces of the past on their language. That is why the Kurdish publishers` ways of dealing with those deserves attention to understand the conditions of existence of that field.

Fourthly, how has Kurdish publishing been made in relation to the field of economy, particularly to the instituted publishing market in Turkey? Without a doubt, the constraints that Kurdish publishing has been faced with on the grounds of politics, literary heritage and public audience have not rendered Kurdish publishing economically viable in the instituted publishing market in Turkey. Similar to other fields of cultural production, the publishing market has been shaped, to a great extent, by the market imperative, or the consumerist logic of what the German philosophers Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer call "the culture industry" (2002, pp. 94-136), which prioritizes the consumability of cultural products over their qualities (in terms of both their forms and contents) and which leads the cultural entrepreneurs to organize the production, distribution and consumption cycles of cultural pieces, accordingly. Therefore, while the market pressure is high on the off-stream publishing houses that produce culturally and/or politically marginal cultural products, it is even higher on the Kurdish publishers because the language itself is marginalized and stigmatized. From printing to distribution, marketing to consumption and to the very public visibility of Kurdish books, the political economy of Kurdish publishing is worth studying to get a grasp of both the conditions of possibilities and the conditions of existence of that field.

Lastly, what kind of relations, cooperative or conflictual, have been formed among the publishers making Kurdish publishing in Turkey? Having suffered from

almost the same constraints, the politico-cultural agents engaged in publishing in Kurdish might be presumed to be on the same boat. Nevertheless, there are mainly three reasons to suspect this presumption. First, publishers in general are not simply cultural agents; they are necessarily economic ones competing with each other in the marketplace, as well. Given the negligibility of the demand for their products, it might not be surprising to observe a bitter competition among the Kurdish publishers. Second, Kurdish publishing has been made not by ordinary cultural entrepreneurs, but by politico-cultural ones whose political socializations as well as ideological worldviews, imaginaries and sensitivities refer to the outside of their field of activity- which is, the field of Kurdish oppositional politics. Therefore, both the contentions and alignments within there might find their expressions in this field of cultural production. Third, just like any other field of cultural production, Kurdish publishing is a field of symbolic resources where actors take differential positions either through competing, or aligning with each other to accumulate symbolic capital. Thus, an analysis of the relationality among the publishers might give us significant insights into the power relations among the agents themselves and accordingly might enable us to uncover the discourses and practices through which this form cultural resistance have been carried out.

1.2 Fielding cultural resistance

Following the questions I outlined above, my research examines the emergence and development of Kurdish publishing in Turkey by relying mainly on two lines of theorizations in the social scientific literature on culture and politics: the theory of cultural resistance and the field theory.

The American sociologist Stephen Duncombe defines the concept of cultural resistance as "the practice of using meanings and symbols, that is, culture, to contest and combat a dominant power, often constructing a different vision of the world in the process" (2007, p. 911). Duncombe`s definition of cultural resistance rests on a specific conception of culture that might be summarized at three points. First, culture is not a total, or a thick concept, i.e., the total way of life, or the omni-potent and omni-present background variable, that shapes all in the same way and to the same extent. Unlike the classical sociological and anthropological approaches treating it as a thick concept[3], Duncombe`s conception of culture is a thin one, or a "tool-kit" in the sense that the American sociologist Ann Swidler (1986) uses the term. Second, culture is not a given concept that excludes the question of power, but rather a profoundly political construct. It is both an object/resource of power and a site of power relations. In this respect, the concept appears as a realm of contestations over symbols and meanings around the antagonisms that constitute not only the political in the sense that the German jurist Carl Schmitt (2008) defines the term, but also the conditions of what the French philosopher Jacques Ranciere (2015) calls politicization and subjectivation. Third, it is a dynamic concept which cannot simply be reduced to a realm of stability; it rather stands for the ongoing processes of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction through the power relations, or the politics in play.

The thin, political and dynamic vision culture derives mainly from the Marxist approaches to culture, centered around the theory of hegemony proposed by

[3] The examples of the thick conceptions of culture can be found in many accounts including Edward Shil`s (1981) theorization of tradition, Mary Douglas`s (1986) study of institutions, Roland Barthes`(1972) and Claude Levi Strauss`s (2008) analyses of semiotics, Liah Greenfeld`s (2013) study of self and mind, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann`s (1991) theorization of the social constructionism and before all else Emile Durkheim`s (1997) canonical analysis of religion.

the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. The original conception of the term that appears in Gramsci`s writings (1995) signifies the indirect rule of the dominant classes over the subordinate ones through the consent manufactured at the super-structural levels of the moral, intellectual and political. While this abstract term provides a useful counter-argument against the economic determinism that is prevalent in Marxist approaches, it shifts the focus from the economic base to the cultural superstructures in the analysis of the relations of domination.

Elaborating on Gramsci`s theory, the Welsh cultural theorist Raymond Williams suggests that the concept of hegemony embraces and transcends, at once, the concepts of culture as a "whole social process" and of ideology as a "system of meanings and values" expressing a particular class interests (1977, p. 108). For Williams, the concept denotes a wider and a contentious realm, which is the realm of a "realized complex of experiences, relationships and activities with specific and changing pressures and limits" (ibid, p. 113). In this sense, hegemony "does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own" (ibid). That is why, it cannot be considered on its own, but necessarily in relation to its outside, i.e., to counter-hegemony, or alternative-hegemony (ibid, p. 114). Looking through the macroscopic lens of this dialectical vision[4], the concept of cultural resistance might be unpacked as the practice of resisting against the cultural hegemony either through constructing a counter hegemonic cultural formation directly combatting the hegemonic one, or through

[4] The concept of dialectics drives from the Hegelian philosophy`s teleological vision of history. Although he draws heavily upon this philosophical approach in his reworking of Marxism, Gramsci`s use of the concept denotes the relationality among the parties negating each other without being necessarily situated in a teleological line of progress. My use of the concept refers to that relational aspect, rather than the grand philosophical justifications of the teleology in history.

erecting an alternative hegemonic formation indirectly competing with the hegemonic one.

This line of theorization of cultural resistance offers crucial insights to analyze the case of Kurdish publishing in Turkey as a counter-hegemonic, or alternative hegemonic formation on the basis of the wider symbolic ground of the antagonism between the state and the Kurds. Nevertheless, the macroscopic lens of that approach runs the risk of smoothing out the immense complexity of the dynamics in play in the making of that extra-hegemonic realm by reducing it to pure negativity. The empirical literature on forms of Kurdish cultural resistance is exemplary in this respect. Delal Aydın`s study of the construction of the myth of Newroz both as a mobilizing force of Kurdish nationalism and as a counter-hegemonic tool for Kurdish cultural unification bears heavily upon the dialectical nature of cultural resistance (2005). While Aydın quite convincingly demonstrates how Newroz serves both as the object and the site of contestation, the politico-cultural agents and their struggles to construct that myth are reduced to their antagonistic positioning vis-à-vis the hegemonic culture, as if they are homogeneous actors carrying out a monolithic struggle. On the other hand, Nesrin Uçarlar`s study of the Kurdish linguistic rights and the politicization of language relies on the concept of hegemony in stressing the emancipatory potential of cultural politics of the subordinated Kurdish minority (2009). Even though Uçarlar`s empirical data reveal the complex dynamics among the actors involved in the making of Kurdish linguistic realm, those dynamics seem to be reduced to the dialectics between the hegemonic and the extra-hegemonic. This is why Uçarlar frames her argument as "the resistance of Kurdish language" as if the resistance takes place exclusively at the symbolic level of ideology without pertaining to the relationalities among the

actors. An extreme example of this line of analysis might be found in Engin Sustam`s study of Kurdish culture and memory from the perspective of postcolonial studies (2014). Sustam departs himself from the subcultures scholarship in cultural studies and proposes the concept of "Kurdish area" to examine the Kurdish counter-cultural formations as diverse as popular culture and representation, music, cinema, literature and language. While his analysis is undeniably powerful in addressing the fundamental question of power which is at the heart of the self-other dialectics and which accordingly underlies these diverse counter-hegemonic formations, his conception of the Kurdish area totalizes a vast realm by reducing the complexity of the dynamics constituting it to pure negativity.

In order to deal with the smoothing-out-tendency of the cultural resistance theory and to delve into the complex relations among the actors carrying out cultural resistance, I employ the concept of the field from the field theory literature built on Pierre Bourdieu`s sociology. The concept of field is a spatial metaphor that Bourdieu uses to frame "the structure of the social setting" as an analytical object of investigation (Swartz, 1997, p. 117). Bourdieu`s conception of the term denotes "a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). While fields serve as "the arenas of production, circulation, and appropriation of goods, services, knowledge, or status, they are constituted through "the competitive positions held by actors in their struggles to accumulate and monopolize" different kinds of capital peculiar to those. (Swartz, 1997, p. 117) Although Bourdieu`s conception is a meta-theoretical one that leaves room to pragmatic use as an "open concept" (p.118), it rests mainly on four properties that make it a distinct analytical tool – first, fields "are spaces of struggle over valued resources"; second, these spaces include dominant and subordinate positions on the

basis of types and amounts of those resources; third, they "impose on actors specific forms of struggles"; and fourth, they are structured by "their own internal mechanisms of development" (p.122-129). In all those four properties, the concept of autonomy comes out as the core element of fields in terms of distinguishing their workings from each other - both externally and internally. While the adjective "relative" implies the necessary embeddedness of fields into the social space, the word autonomy stands for the irreducibility of the logics of practice in fields. At the elementary level, the American sociologist Larissa Buchholz unpacks this elusive conception by identifying three dimensions characterizing it: "a distinctive ideology, a particular type of specific symbolic capital, and a distinctive set of organizations."

1.3 Methodology

To explore the complex dynamics of the making of Kurdish publishing field in Turkey, I conducted a mixed method research one part of which is historical and the other is qualitative. Although my methodological choice at the initial steps of this research was exclusively qualitative, what I found out as I took these steps into the world of empirics compelled me to rethink and revise my methodological choice and to incorporate historical analysis for two reasons. First of all, although my exploratory journey was initially targeting the experiences of the Kurdish publishers, I found out that those experiences were not temporally specific to the present, but rather part of a long history of political and cultural resistance the traces of which are still visible in the narrated experiences. Secondly, despite the embeddedness of those experiences into this long history of resistance, I realized that it was hard to get a full grasp of this painful process by merely looking into the multiplicity of the

conceptions of history and the multiplicity of emphases in that history. Therefore, incorporating the analysis of the historical process appeared not as a choice, but as a necessity in the research process.

My research draws on two different, but complementary data sets: secondary data collected through archival research and qualitative data collected through the unstructured, single in-depth interviews with the publishers and field observation at the publishing houses, book fairs and book stores. In the archival research process, I have completely relied on the secondary sources. These sources were extremely important to get a full grasp of the role of language and culture in the Turkish nation-building project and the Kurdish omnipotent against it - which I outlined in the second chapter. Besides, especially the critical historiographies of the Kurdish culture and language, despite being limited in number and scope, were crucial to frame the historical process of the multiplicity of endeavors aiming to protect and develop Kurdish literary language in particular and the Kurdish culture in general.

The qualitative part of this research relies on (1) the single in-depth interviews conducted, in keeping with the guidelines of the in-depth interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), with sixteen people from thirteen different publishing houses and (2) my on-site observations from the book fairs in Istanbul, Diyarbakir and Izmir and from the offices of the publishing houses and bookstores. The interviews schedules I used were unstructured and included only a series of topics, rather than fully framed questions with a predefined order and flow. The topics I brought into the conversations to flare up discussion consist of the respondents` personal histories, their professional histories in the publishing sector, their memories about the Kurdish Question as well as their political attitudes and orientations. The reason behind my use of the unstructured interview schedules was

to get as much data as possible from the respondents. The interviewing process was successful in this respect – the total length of 860 minutes which is quite long for sixteen interviews. The empirical richness of the data collected through these procedures enabled me to take the picture of the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field, extensive in scope and profound in depth.

On the other hand, the on-site observations I made allowed me to go beyond the publishers` narrated experiences and to see how they are interacting with the audience of their products in concrete spaces, such as: book fairs and bookstores. These observations took roughly 38 hours – which was long enough to get a back-up from the field of interactions to triangulate the data I collected through interviews. I employed theoretical sampling procedures in the conduct of the qualitative part of this research. Although the population of my research was not big since the total number of Kurdish publishing houses were no more than thirty in 2014, theoretical sampling was a necessary methodological tool to frame the target respondents from different positions of the field. The first distinction in the framing of my sample was the distinction between Kurdish and non-Kurdish publishers publishing books in Kurdish. While I conducted fourteen interviews with the publishers from the former group, the number of interviews I conducted with the latter is only two. The asymmetry between the representation of these two groups was of course because of the weights these two groups in Kurdish publishing field. The second criterion in the framing of my sample was the distinction between the relatively old and the relatively new publishing companies. The sample that I collected data from represents both types equally.

I relied on the guidelines of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994) in the analysis of the qualitative data collected through those

sampling procedures. Rather than imposing an a-priori theoretical framework on the world of empirics, I chose to build an inductive account by employing open coding procedures – to see the regularities and irregularities in the narratives I collected. Although open coding was a quite painful way to analyze such an extensive dataset, it allowed me to prioritize the richness of the world of empirics as much as possible. Of course, this might lead me to build a purely descriptive account. Employing a series of concepts from the tool boxes of cultural and political sociologies, I attempted to present the data both in a conceptually framed fashion and in an analytically sound way.

1.4 Experiencing the field

The research process was challenging in many respects. First and foremost, it is no secret that studying an aspect of the Kurdish Question in Turkey was, and unfortunately still is, risky for social scientists because of the profoundly politicized nature of the topic in question. Driven either by the allure of the image of some kind of a public intellectual, or by the generic academic motive of intellectual curiosity, researchers wandering around such sensitive terrains might easily experience loss of their job prospects, jobs, or even freedoms. That is why I must say that my selection of the topic of this research as well as the research practice brought a great deal of psychological burden which was hard to handle time to time and often led me to stuck in unending cycles of procrastination in every phase of this research.

Secondly, studying an aspect of the Kurdish Question brings a practical hardship to the researcher`s business, which is the relative lack of an existing body of literature upon which a particular account might be built in its specificity in a well-

framed fashion. Needless to say, the reason behind this lack is historically driven by the riskiness of researching the broader terrain of Kurdish studies, which left many major questions untouched and many topics understudied. With the exception of the scholarly ground provided by the critical historiography, critical sociology and post-colonial anthropology in Turkey, researchers looking into the Kurdish Question are mostly on their own and are often obliged to construct their objects of research from scratch. Of course, such a lack might also be seen as an opportunity for a theoretically driven research that frames the empirical material as a case-study. Nevertheless, for an empirically driven research like this one, the lack of an elaborate literature to lean on compels the researcher to deal with both the empirical material as well as the theoretical possibilities at the same time. As a young researcher, I was certainly not exempt from this problem in the research process. While the topic in question was inevitably expanding in the fields of sociology, anthropology, history, politics, socio-linguistics and philosophy, there was only a negligible number of studies offering useful barriers to restrict this uncontrollable expansion and to stabilize the focus on analytically manageable part of the story. Partly because of this, the exploratory nature of my endeavor was constantly at risk of producing more heat than light, and I attempted to deal with this from the very beginning of this research.

The third challenge I experienced in this research was the problem of how to manage the data I collected in my exploratory journey to Kurdish publishing field in Turkey. Unlike quantitative research procedures prioritizing the design over the data, qualitative procedures offer a great deal of freedom to explore the world of empirics without reducing it to the a-priori model. This freedom, however, comes with a cost – which is the problem of dealing with an expansive data set. This problematic

peculiar to qualitative researches arose in this study with an amplified seriosity since I employed un-structured in-depth interviews as the method of data collection. While this method allowed me to go into the depths of the personal experiences of the respondents and enabled me to take a more holistic picture of the field, the scale and depth of the data collected caused serious hardships especially in framing this research.

Lastly, especially during the data collection process, I experienced the challenge of the question of how the researcher should be situated vis-à-vis the object investigation in general and the respondents in particular. While it is hard to claim that this problem is peculiar to my study since any qualitative undertaking come up with this question and the related attempts to deal with it, the politicized character of the topic in question here compelled me to face this problem in many respects. Especially, the question of identity was almost always on the ground since I went into the field of Kurdish publishing as an ethno-culturally Turkish researcher. The respondents` reactions at the first moments of our meetings were complex. Majority of my respondents were quite expressive in voicing their surprise to see someone from the outside looking into their field. While some of them were also encouraging me to pursue this research by complaining about the Turkish academia`s neglect about the Kurds, some others were subtly critical about the objectification of the Kurds as the now-popular object of academia. A small number of my respondents were quite reserved and were very careful in disclosing their experiences - they were diligently picking their words in a way that set boundaries between their experiences and me, which were hard to cross.

The challenge of the question of identity was apparent not only in the types of reactions I got, but also in the momentary transitions during the interviews.

Especially the respondents who were both surprised with my interest in Kurdish publishing field and critical about the objectification of the Kurds` experiences in an academic research narrated their stories in a turn-by-turn fashion. While in what I call informative turns they were sharing not only their personal experiences but also their conception of the whole history of the Kurdish Question in general and the Kurdish literary production in particular, in what I call resentful turns they were emphasizing the unintelligibility of their experiences not only for an outsider like me, but also for the Turks in general. In a couple of interviews, this turn-by-turn fashion appeared in a way that confused my silent identity as the audience of the narratives and made me feel not only like a researcher wishing to get as much as possible from the field, but also like the representative of the Turkish identity vis-à-vis that field. During the interviews, these moments of confusion was so often ended by the respondents` kind warnings, "Please, do not misunderstand me," "I do not mean you but the Turkish academics …" In order to go beyond the constantly changing boundaries, I attempted to show my knowledge about the history and the dynamics of the Kurdish literary production in particular and the Kurdish Question in general as the proof of my genuine interest in the respondents` experiences, and I struggled to create the impression that my presence in the field cannot be simply reduced to the presence of a prejudiced outsider.

1.5 Ethics of research

Besides the challenges I have outlined above, I also faced a series of ethical challenges in the data collection process which were partly peculiar to the topic in question in this research. First of all, the question of confidentiality was an important

problem not simply because of the problematic relation between the researcher and the researched in the context of a qualitative study, but because of the politicized nature of the topic in question, of the identities of my respondents and of the relation between the respondents and me. Both at the recruitment and the interview phases, I bluntly told my respondents the aim of my research project as well as the methods I employed. All of my respondents accepted to do audio-recorded interviews, and in some interviews, they demanded to keep some of their stories off-the-record. I did not include these parts in the transcription process as well as in the data analysis.

While keeping respondents` identifiable information, such as: names, publishing company brands and profiles and so on, a secret is not a big problem in an ordinary qualitative study conducted with ordinary people, I encountered some hardships in doing this. At the beginning of each interview, I asked my respondents whether I can use their real names and company brands or not, and I offered them the option of assigning research identities as substitutes for their real names and brands. All of the respondents expressed that there was no problem about the use of their names and brands in this research. Nevertheless, I decided to assign research identities to each respondent for the sake of conducting this research in line with the privacy concern of the common-sense research ethics.

1.6 Summary of chapters

In the second chapter, I present a historical overview of the formation and evolution of the antagonism between the state and the Kurds in Turkey with a focus on the constitutive role of the question of identity and language in that relation. Rather than being merely diagnostic in purpose, this chapter attempts to lay the ground for a

discussion of how the conditions of possibilities of the emergence of Kurdish publishing field was constituted. Drawing on the secondary data provided by the Republican and the critical historiographies of the Turkish nation-building process in general and the Kurdish Question in particular, I argue that the relations of domination subjecting Kurdish culture and language and constituting the conditions of possibility of the vitality of those have recently been undergoing a transformation from a predominantly repressive mode to a predominantly governmental one. While the former modality was based on the Turkish state's overt and, more or less, coherent exercise of the policies of linguicide aiming to eradicate the Kurdish culture and language by leaving no room for those in the public sphere in Turkey, the latter one is based on a more or less subtle and incoherent implementation of those policies providing Kurdish culture and language with ambiguous spaces at the margins of that realm.[5] Without regard to the historical constitution of those ambiguous spaces, I believe an analysis of Kurdish publishing field would be limited in explaining not only the conditions of possibilities but also the conditions existence of that field.

In the third chapter, I look into how the Kurdish language endured under the conditions inimical to its use and reproduction up until the partial-lift on the ban in 1991, by focusing on the becoming processes of the Kurdish publishers. Although Kurdish publishing field in Turkey formally emerged in the early 1990s, it did undoubtedly not spring from a void. Rather, it was built upon both the decades-long linear history of the confinement of the language which wounded it at a growing severity and the non-linear history of discontinuous and disorganized escapes from the confinement, in the pursuit of the emancipation as well as the construction of the

[5] This argument applies to the political context of 2014, the year when I completed the data-collection process of this research. In Turkey`s turbulent political climate, it is hard to claim that the state has completely taken a governmental stance given the series of events happened since then, which reveals the enduring significance of the sovereignty in the state`s relation to its Kurdish citizens.

future of that language. It is the encounters of the Kurdish publishers with both the confinement of their language and the products of the escapes from that confinement that created the conditions of possibilities for the substantive emergence of the field. Drawing on both the historical accounts and the interviews with the Kurdish publishers, the aim of this chapter is to present a brief overview of the "prehistory" of the making of Kurdish publishing field.

In the fourth and fifth chapters, I shift my focus from the conditions of possibilities to the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field. Drawing on the qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews and on-site observations, I define two different, but inextricably related moments of fielding Kurdish publishing in Turkey: (1) external struggle against the state and the market imperative and (2) internal competition among the Kurdish publishers over the symbolic resources and positions in that field.

In the fourth chapter, I shift my focus from the conditions of possibilities to the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field in Turkey by focusing on (1) the antagonism(s) to which the publishers have been subjected, and (2) the ways in which they have resisted in order to engage in publishing in Kurdish. In the first part, I show how the fundamental antagonism between the instituted hegemony and the counter-hegemonic practice of publishing Kurdish is a multifaceted relation and how it has taken differential forms. I present these forms as a series of negations to which the Kurdish publishers, their work and products have been subjected: the negation of the legal status, the negation of the economic status and the negation of the public legitimacy. While each of these forms has been manifested through different discourses and practices, all of them have been intertwined with each other in shaping the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field. In the second part, I

will look into how the Kurdish publishers have resisted against being negated legally, economically and publicly. Drawing on the experiences of the Kurdish publishers, the strategies of resistance through which Kurdish publishing field has been made vis-à-vis the external constraints can be categorized as: (re)defining the meaning of Kurdish publishing, relying on the moral economy, mobilizing political networks, financing the Kurdish through Turkish.

In the fifth chapter, I delve into the second moment that has shaped the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field in Turkey, which is the agonism(s) among the actors within this field of cultural production. Suffering from the negation of their work and products on the grounds of legality, economy and public perceptions, the Kurdish publishers have taken actions against the negation by following similar paths of resistance. Although this antagonistic modality has leveled the publishers vis-à-vis the external constraints, and have accordingly situated them in the common ground of cultural resistance against the negation of their identity, culture, and language, it is nevertheless hard to find them aligned with each other in that ground of commonalities. On the contrary, the Kurdish publishers carrying out that specific form of cultural resistance has always been in conflictual relations with each other within that field. In the first part of this chapter, I will define the question of autonomy in Kurdish publishing field to lay the ground for an analysis of how the involvement of the broader field of Kurdish oppositional politics in Kurdish publishing has given rise to the conflicts among the publishers. In the second part this chapter, I will scrutinize the manifestations of those conflictual relations among the publishers by focusing on (1) the politics of alignment and non-alignment, (2) the politics of visibility, and (3) the politics of dissociation.

CHAPTER 2

TURKEY'S KURDISH POLICY (1923-2013)

2.1 Introduction

"We always started from scratch. We had no opportunity to draw on the previous experiences because each and every piece in Kurdish had been burned and destroyed, because whoever wrote and read in Kurdish had been imprisoned, or exiled," (see Appendix, 1) states Nizamettin Seçkin, the owner and editor of a prominent Kurdish publishing house in Turkey, Tene Publications. As the pronoun "we" denotes very well, the hardships Seçkin faced are not unique to his biography, but integral to the collective history of the Kurds in Turkey, which has been made and unmade in the antagonistic relation between the state and the Kurds. In this chapter, my aim is to examine how this antagonism has been formed and evolved throughout the history of modern Turkey by focusing on the constitutive role of the question of identity and language in that relation. Despite being designed as a macro-historical narrative, this chapter's purpose is not to present a descriptive chronology of the Kurdish Question in Turkey, but to provide a conceptually grounded analysis of the relations of domination to which Kurdish identity and language have been subjected and through which the conditions of possibilities of the vitality of those have been constituted. For conducting such analysis, I will focus on the two inextricably related moments of those relations of domination: first, the Kemalist nation-building project as the agenda instituting an imaginary of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious homogeneity and second, the Kurdish political resistance(s) as the moment(s) of

destabilization leading to both the revelation of the limits of that imaginary and the reformulation of those limits.

Drawing on the analysis of the interplay of those two moments, I argue that the relations of domination subjecting Kurdish identity and language and constituting the conditions of possibility of the vitality of those have been undergoing a transformation from a predominantly repressive mode to a predominantly governmental one since 1991.[6] While the former modality was based on the Turkish state's overt and, more or less, coherent exercise of the policies of linguicide aiming to eradicate the Kurdish identity and language by leaving no room for those in the public sphere in Turkey, the latter one is based on a more or less subtle and incoherent implementation of those policies providing Kurdish identity and language with ambiguous spaces at the margins of that realm.[7]

2.2 Prehistory: The ancien régime and the Kurds

The roots of the antagonism between the state and the Kurds go back the dissolution of the Ottoman socio-political order in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Ottomans were standing on a complexity embracing the multitude of religions,

[6] My argument bears heavily on the French philosopher Michel Foucault's analysis of modernity centered around the transformation in the workings of power from the sovereign power over death to the governmental power over life (1978, 1984, 1991, 2003). While the former modality of power works directly through the constraints enforced via institutions, the latter works indirectly through enabling subjects by endowing them with freedoms which are indirectly constrained and regulated at the levels of both the individual and the society, as his governmentality thesis suggests (see Foucault, 1991). This transformation does by no means denote the complete replacement of sovereignty with governmentality, but the growing predominance of the latter modality as the paradigmatic rationality of power alongside the enduring forms of the former (see Foucault, 2003).

[7] Here, the concept of the public sphere denotes the Habermassian conceptualization of the abstract spatiality where discourses are in circulation; representations are in exposition and negotiation. For a detailed theorization of the concept, see *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas, 1989). In this respect, my use of the public sphere differs from the use of that concept as an ideal sphere that serves the ground for Habermas and his followers` theory of deliberative democracy (e.g. see Benhabib, 1996; Habermas, 1984).

ethnicities, cultures, and languages, and they ruled this multitude by instituting a very peculiar mode of socio-political organization, the “millet system." Based on a communitarian logic recognizing religious distinctions, that system provided the Muslims, the Orthodox Christians, the Jews and the Armenians with a great deal of autonomy in their religious, cultural and linguistic practices (Eryılmaz, 1992; Karpat, 1982; Kenanoğlu, 2004; Ortaylı, 1995). Although this system was reformed and even formally abolished in the course of modernization projects of the nineteenth century, it nevertheless prevailed as the fundamental principle of the Ottoman socio-political order up until the downfall of the Empire in the World War I (Yıldız, 2004, p. 57).

The notion of equal Ottoman citizenship, introduced by the Kanun-i Esasi (1876) to abolish the millet system, failed to create some sort of anonymity among the subjects of the empire (ibid). Even the religiously, ethnically, culturally and the linguistically heterogeneous coalition formed around Ottomanism dissolved after the re-declaration of the Kanun-i Esasi in 1908. While the secessionist nationalisms became increasingly influential especially among the non-Muslim communities, Turkism came to be seen by the military-bureaucratic elites as the only solution to compose the decomposing elements of the empire at the time. United under the banner of the Committee of Union and Progress[8] (İTC, hereafter), those elites instituted Turkism as the official ideology of the Empire after monopolizing the state-power in 1913 (for a detailed analysis see Ahmad, 1999; Zürcher, 2004, pp. 127-132). Nevertheless, Turkism not only failed to compose the decomposing elements but also alienated those (see Bozarslan, 2005, p. 93).

The Kurds were one of the groups alienated by the İTC's Turkism (see McDowall, 2004, pp. 95-100). Since the sixteenth century, they had lived under the

[8] İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti.

Ottoman suzerainty by enjoying a great deal of autonomy from the imperial center (ibid, pp. 27-29). Although some of the Kurdish tribe leaders had sought independence in the nineteenth century, the Ottomans had ruined those leaders and maintained their control by employing Islamist discourse and co-opting the Kurdish elites both against the Armenians and against each other (ibid, pp. 59-63; for a detailed analysis, see Klein, 2011). Yet, the Kurdish intelligentsia emerging at that time had been politicized and adopted Ottomanism alongside their Turkish, Armenian and Arab counterparts (see Akpınar, 2000). It was the dissolution of the coalition formed around Ottomanism that gave rise to the emergence of Kurdish nationalism as a reaction to both İTC's Turkism and the secessionist nationalisms (Bozarslan, 2005, p. 93). The early Kurdish nationalists had a predominantly cultural orientation aiming to assert their distinct ethnocultural identity and language in a way that was compatible with the ideal of Ottomanism (Özoğlu, 2005, p. 102; cited in Uçarlar 2009). The Kurdish Society for Mutual Aid and Progress[9], the Association for the Dissemination of the Kurdish Education[10], the Kurdish Student Hope Society[11] were the intellectual circles that made the initial attempts to revive the Kurdish culture and language as the proofs of the Kurdish nation, without voicing the idea of an independent Kurdish state (Uçarlar, 2009, pp. 105-107).

As the İTC's Turkism was crystallized, those intellectuals took a more radical stance by raising their voices to establish an independent Kurdish nation-state (see Bozarslan, 2005, pp. 93-94). The Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan[12], the Society for the Dissemination of Kurdish Education and Publication[13], the Society

[9] Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti.
[10] Kürd Neşr-i Maarif Derneği.
[11] Kürd Talebe Hevi Cemiyeti.
[12] Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti.
[13] Kürd Tamim-i Maarif ve Neşriyat Cemiyeti.

for the Advancement of Kurdish Women[14] and the Society for the Kurdish Social Organization[15] were the prominent organizations articulating the idea of political independence while engaging with cultural and linguistic activities (Uçarlar, 2009, pp. 108-110). Although those voices were initially limited with the small political and intellectual circles, the developments in the aftermath of the empire's demise would create the conditions of the mobilization of the masses in line with the Kurdish nationalist intellectuals.

2.3 The Closure: The rise of Kemalism and the Kurds

It might be said that the conditions of the politicization of Kurdish identity and language at the popular level emerged with the inception of modern Turkey. The founding fathers of Turkey, the military-bureaucratic elites led by Mustafa Kemal, were aware of the religiously, ethnically, culturally and linguistically heterogeneous nature of the population inherited from the empire (see Muller, 1996, p. 175). Thus, they pragmatically employed the symbolism of the old regime to forge an integral resistance movement from that heterogeneity, against the occupation of Anatolia. Devoid of any ethnic, cultural and linguistic reference, the symbolism of the old regime provided those elites with broad support, especially from the constituents of the Muslim millet (Yıldız, 2004, p. 98). Most of the Kurdish elites were among those who took part in the resistance (McDowall, 2004, p. 184). Besides that symbolism, those were also motivated by the military-bureaucratic elites' promise granting autonomy to the Kurds (ibid, pp. 187-191). After the victory in 1922, however, the military-bureaucratic elites gave up relying on that symbolism as well as breaking

[14] Kürd Kadınları Teali Cemiyeti.
[15] Kürd Teşkilat-ı İçtimaiye Cemiyeti.

that promise (ibid, pp. 191-192). They abolished the sultanate, established the Republican People's Party[16] (CHP, hereafter), displaced the pluralism of the resistance period and finally proclaimed the republic in 1923 (McDowall, 2004, pp. 184-192; Zürcher, 2004, pp. 166-168). Allowing no other party to be established, the CHP dominated Turkey's political landscape and launched a transformation project, Kemalism (see Zürcher, 2004, pp. 172-177).

Kemalism is the grand project that was formulated and implemented by the military-bureaucratic elites, united under the banner of the CHP, with the aim of constructing the Turkish nation-state, its identity, history, culture, and language (see Parla, 1995).[17] It draws on a philosophy of history, which resembles fascism with its rejection of the idea of continuity in history by claiming that history can be frozen and started from scratch (ibid; Zürcher, 2004, p. 186). Despite its claim of discontinuity, however, Kemalism was a continuation of the İTC's ideological standpoint (Zürcher, 2004, p. 173). Like their predecessors, the Kemalists perceived the heterogeneity of the Ottoman socio-political order as a source of chaos (see Cizre, 2001, p. 229). For them, it was the resistance of this multitude to order and rationality that had caused the failure of their predecessors and the demise of the empire (see Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008, pp. 4-6). Hence, they launched an extensive transformation project aiming to forge a homogeneous and integral body out of the chaotic diversity of that multitude (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, pp. 101-102).

Promoted as a "civilizational shift," this transformation was the negation of multiple others that were associated with any particularism contending the homogeneity and integrity of the society imaged by the Kemalists (Zeydanlıoğlu,

[16] Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi.
[17] According to Taha Parla (1995), Kemalism is a political ideology which was rooted in the 1920s and was promoted in 1930s as a practical guide for building the new state, society and individual.

2012, p. 102). Those who were negated were defined with reference to mainly three principles: radical secularism, ethnocentric nationalism and authoritarian centralism (Yeğen, 2001, pp. 61-62). First of all, the Kemalists considered Islam as the prime cause of "backwardness" by drawing on the orientalist discourses (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 102). Hence, they abolished the Caliphate, banned the Islamic educational institutions[18] and outlawed the Sharia Courts[19] right after the proclamation of the Republic (ibid; Zürcher, 2004, p. 187). In the following years, those reforms were extended to the prohibitions of the Islamic clothing and of the religious convents and dervish lodges[20] (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 187-188). They even revolutionized the orthography by imposing compulsory Romanization of the alphabet, "to heighten Turkish-Turkey's national consciousness at the expense of any wider Islamic identification"(Anderson, 2006, pp. 45-46).

Secondly, the Kemalists were preoccupied with asserting the authenticity of the Turkish national identity (Yeğen, 1996, p. 224; 2001, pp. 86-87). In fact, the 1924 Constitution defined Turkishness as an inclusive civic/political belonging defined solely by the citizenship status,[21] and this was in conformity with the Lausanne Peace Treaty where the Kemalists guaranteed the protection of the heterogeneity of the Ottoman legacy by both entitling the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews with the minority status and recognizing the linguistic heterogeneity of the society (Kirişçi & Winrow, 2000, p. 101; see Oran, 2005). Despite the textual universalism of that definition, however, the Kemalists declared Turkish as the

[18] Medreseler.
[19] Şeriye Mahkemeleri.
[20] Tekkeler ve zaviyeler.
[21] The Article No.88 of the 1924 Constitution states, "The people of Turkey regardless of their religion and race would, in terms of citizenship, be called Turkish," (Türkiye'de din ve ırk ayırdedilmeksizin vatandaşlık bakımından herkese "Türk" denir). The link between the Turkishness and the citizenship status has been maintained in the following constitutions.

official language of the republic and took an ethnocentric stance in the construction of the Turkish national identity and language (Ünlü, 2014, p. 69; for a detailed analysis see Yeğen, 1996). To that end, they established the Turkish Historical Foundation[22] and the Turkish Language Institution[23] in the 1930s (Ersanlı, 2009; Sadoğlu, 2003, p. 214). While the former systematized the national historiography by formulating the Turkish History Thesis[24] which claims that the Turks are the origin of the Western civilization, the latter institutionalized the language revolution by launching an extensive purification program and formulating the Sun Language Theory[25] which declares that Turkish is the origin of all languages in the world (Sadoğlu, 2003, p. 100).

Those endeavors were not merely epistemological; the Kemalists mobilized a bundle of state apparatuses to assimilate any particularism contending the homogeneous imaginary formulated on the basis of radical secularism and ethnocentric nationalism (Yeğen, 1996, pp. 221-226). They established a secular juridical system, a state-controlled religious authority and most importantly a secular national educational system (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 186-195). They instituted the compulsory Turkish medium education for children, and they launched a massive literacy campaign for the adults by establishing the Schools of the Nation[26] (ibid, p. 189; Üstel, 2004b, pp. 128-129). Together with those, the Kemalists also mobilized civil society organizations in order to amplify their voice; they reactivated the Turkish Heaths[27] under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and then

[22] Türk Tarih Kurumu.
[23] Türk Dil Kurumu.
[24] Türk Tarih Tezi.
[25] Güneş Dil Teorisi.
[26] Millet Mektepleri.
[27] Türk Ocakları.

transformed those into the People's Houses[28] under the strict control of the CHP (for a detailed analysis, see Şimşek, 2002; Üstel, 2004a). While those institutional and extra-institutional practices were gradually disseminated by putting a growing number of people under Kemalism's influence and by producing the ideal secular, Turkish, or at least Turkish speaking, subjects from them, the Kemalists employed repressive apparatuses to suppress those who resist being part of that imaginary.

The Kurds in Turkey have been the largest ethnocultural group contending the homogeneous imaginary formulated, implemented and imposed by the Kemalists (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 169-172). While the new regime's radical secularism removed the common denominator between the state and the Kurds, its ethnocentric nationalism denied the existence of the Kurds as a distinct ethnocultural identity (McDowall, 2004, pp. 191-192; Yeğen, 1996, pp. 221-222). Furthermore, the authoritarian centralism of the regime threatened the interests of the Kurdish elites who had enjoyed a great deal of autonomy for centuries (Yeğen, 1996, p. 222). Strictly excluded from the imaginary formulated and propagated by the Kemalists, the Kurds have been subjected to the division of labor between the ideological and repressive apparatuses of the state. While the regime began penetrating the everyday lives of the Kurds through compulsory education, mass media, market relations and civil society organizations, all of which served the ground for the dissemination of the discourses and practices of the Kemalist national imaginary, those who resisted being part of that imaginary was being subjected to various forms of the state violence.

The Sheikh Said Revolt of 1925 was the first serious challenge the regime faced after the proclamation of the Republic (McDowall, 2004, pp. 194-196;

[28] Halkevleri.

Zürcher, 2004, pp. 169-172). Although the popular support that Sheikh Said gained was based predominantly on the Kurds' discontent with the abolition of the caliphate, the revolt was planned and organized by the secular Kurdish nationalist intellectuals united under the banner of the Kurdish Independence Society[29] (Azadi, hereafter) (McDowall, 2004, pp. 192-193; Zürcher, 2004, pp. 170-171). The revolt was the Kurdish nationalists' first experience in collaborating with such a crowd, and it revealed the discursive limits of the Kemalist imaginary as well as the drawbacks of the state apparatuses employed for the imposition of that imaginary (Bozarslan, 2005, pp. 109-110; Bruinessen, 2002a, p. 123). The Kemalists dealt with that revolt by employing violence; while they militarized the region to put an end to the rebellion, they declared the state of exception by passing the Law for the Maintenance of the Public Order[30] and authorizing the Independence Tribunals[31] to enforce that extra-juridical state of governance (McDowall, 2004, pp. 195-196; Zürcher, 2004, pp. 171-172). Those measures not only aimed at suppressing the Kurdish rebels and erasing any manifestation of the Kurdishness, but also were oriented towards preventing each and every one of the oppositional groups against the Kemalists from visibility and movement in the public sphere by demonizing those (McDowall, 2004, pp. 196-202; Zürcher, 2004, pp. 172-175).

The Kemalists denied the ethnopolitical nature of the rebellion by considering the Kurds as the remnants of the old regime (Yeğen, 1999, p. 21). For them, the Kurds had forgotten their true ethnic identity, which, they claimed, to be rooted in Turkishness; that is why, they were manipulated by the imperialist powers seeking to destroy the Turkish nation-state (ibid, p. 129). In line with this mode of

[29] Ciwata Xweseria Kurd.
[30] Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu.
[31] İstiklal Mahkemeleri.

seeing, the regime deployed discourses representing the Kurdish resistance as "religious reactionism," "tribal resistance," "banditry" and "backwardness" (ibid). Furthermore, they devised extensive plans to eliminate that resistance once and for all and to incorporate the Kurds into the Kemalist national imaginary. The Eastern Reform Plan[32], proposed in 1925, was the first programmatic example of those endeavors. The plan was aiming to establish the state's ideological and infrastructural authority in the region by prohibiting the use of Kurdish, by evacuating those who supported the rebellion and by increasing the reach of the educational apparatuses deepening the hegemony of the Turkish national identity and language (Bayrak, 2009; Yeğen, 2009). Even though the regime was devoid of the means to realize its aims at that time, this plan delineated the fundamental principles for the regime to deal with the Kurdish population throughout the history of modern Turkey (ibid).

Despite being violently crushed, the Kurdish resistance was not over in 1925. There were many groups fighting against the Turkish army in a dispersed fashion. The organization Independence (Xoybun, hereafter) was established in Lebanon to unite those groups (Kutlay, 1997, p. 199). The Xoybun was comprised of the Kurdish intellectuals took part in the Sheikh Said Rebellion as well as of the Kurdish nationalist circles formed in the early twentieth century, such as the Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan, the Society for the Kurdish Social Organization and the Kurdish Nation Party[33] (ibid). By taking a separationist stance aiming to establish an independent Kurdish state, the organization directly involved in the armed struggle in Turkey by joining in the Kurdish tribes revolted in Ararat and assuming the leadership of the rebellion in 1927 (McDowall, 2004, pp. 202-204). Taking the

[32] Şark Islahat Planı.
[33] Kürd Millet Fırkası.

advantage of the regime's inability to control the region, they declared the independent Kurdish Republic in Ararat and fought against the regime till 1930 when the army suppressed the revolt (ibid).

The regime was steadily radicalized in the face of the tough resistance movements organized by the Kurds (ibid, p. 207). The Kemalists took an openly ethnocentric stance against the Kurds and began preoccupying with social engineering projects to eradicate any manifestation of Kurdishness; the Settlement Law[34], passed in 1934, was the product of this preoccupation and it divided the country into three zones: "(i) localities to be reserved for the habitation in compact form of persons possessing Turkish culture; (ii) regions to which populations of non-Turkish culture for assimilation into Turkish language and culture were to be moved; (iii) regions to be completely evacuated" (ibid). Since the regime did not have the means for such a massive settlement project, it concentrated on the unruly Kurdish tribes in Dersim that were seen as the prime source of trouble (ibid, pp. 207-210). In 1935, they passed the Tunceli Law which replaced the name of Dersim with Tunceli and delineated the administrative and militaristic measures to implement the Settlement Law in there (ibid). The Kurdish resistance against these policies continued until the Turkish army's major offensives that left thousands of deaths behind in 1937-38 (ibid).

Towards the 1940s, the Kurdish opposition against the regime was almost entirely suppressed (Bozarslan, 2005, p. 54). Most of the Kurdish political activists had been either killed in the battlefields or executed by the Independence Tribunals (ibid). Only a negligible number of those managed to escape by taking shelter in the countries where they could pursue their political aims. On the other hand, the regime

[34] İskan Kanunu.

systematically repressed any manifestation of Kurdishness by militarizing the daily life in the region and by expanding the scope of its ideological apparatuses to disseminate the regime's message (Bruinessen, 2002b, p. 340).

2.4 Progressions and regressions: The democratization of Turkey and the Kurds

The political landscape instituted by the Kemalists was destabilized with the end of the World War II. The masses marginalized by the regime's totalitarian policies began raising their voices especially in the countryside (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 206-208). On the other hand, the balance of power in the emerging Cold War context left no choice to the Kemalists other than approaching to the US against the USSR's aggressive demands on Turkey (for a detailed analysis see Yılmaz, 1997; Zürcher, 2004, pp. 207-208). Under those conditions, the Kemalists launched Turkey's transition process to democracy by permitting the foundation of the Democrat Party[35] (DP, hereafter) in 1946 (Zürcher, 2004, p. 211). Appealing successfully to the voices of the masses marginalized by the regime, the DP came to power in 1950, and it ruled the country with its right-wing populist reason for a decade (ibid).

The DP rule was a turning point not only for the Turks in the countryside but also for the Kurds. The party's liberal economic policies prioritizing large landowners were very much in line with the interests of the local Kurdish elites (McDowall, 2004, pp. 400-401). Furthermore, its critical stance on the Muğlalı Incident[36] was promising a change in the state's repressive stance against the Kurds (Aydın, 2005, p. 34). Thus those elites allied with the DP and, accordingly, gained a

[35] Demokrat Parti.
[36] In 1943, 33 villagers were executed by the General Mustafa Muğlalı with the accusation of cross-border smuggling and without being taken to court. For a detailed analysis see Sönmez (1992, p. 141).

secure place in the national economy as well as the possibility of representation in the parliament (McDowall, 2004, pp. 400-401). The DP rule opened a new phase for the Kurdish opposition after a decade-long silence (ibid, pp. 403-404). Despite the burgeoning state control in the region, a new generation of Kurdish intellectuals was emerging especially in the city centers which were the last destinations of the growing waves of immigration from the countryside (ibid, pp. 404-405). Those intellectuals began manifesting their distinct ethnic identity and language, and they were very sensitive to the developments in the Near East (ibid). The return of the Kurdish nationalist tribe leader Molla Mustafa Barzani to Iraq's Kurdistan and the declaration of the regional autonomy in 1958 caused excitement among those intellectuals (Ercan, 2010, p. 74). Worried about the spread of Kurdish nationalism, however, the DP was getting aggressive towards the Kurds. In 1959, the party added a juridical clause, to the Provincial Administration Law[37] stipulating that "village names that are not Turkish and give rise to confusion are to be changed in the shortest possible time by the Interior Ministry" (Yildiz & Fryer, 2004; quoted in Zedanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 107). Meanwhile, the publication of a Kurdish poem, "Qımıl", written by Musa Anter, in a newspaper, İleri Yurt, flared up discussions on how to deal with the reawakening of the Kurdish opposition (McDowall, 2004, pp. 405-406). At that time, the National Security Service[38] prepared a Kurdish Report recommending the execution of 2000 prominent Kurds; yet, the DP narrowed the list in order to refrain from the international pressure and arrested 50 people, including Musa Anter, Said Elçi, and Said Kırmızıtoprak, with the accusation of propagating separationist ideas (ibid). As this incident revealed, the regime was still determined

[37] İl İdaresi Kanunu.
[38] Milli Emniyet Hizmeti.

to deal with the Kurds through denying and repressing any manifestation of Kurdishness in the public sphere.

The Kemalist military officers who overthrew the DP on 27 May 1960 took a more bitter stance to prevent the reawakening Kurdish resistance (McDowall, 2004, pp. 406-407). The National Unity Committee[39] (MBK, hereafter), ruled the country during the coup period, decreed a general amnesty except the 50 Kurdish intellectuals held in custody. Moreover, the MBK detained 485 prominent Kurdish elites who had allied with the DP and sent them to a concentration camp in Sivas without giving them any reason (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008, p. 10). 55 of those elites were forced to migrate to the Western Turkey as per the Forced Settlement Law[40], legislated with the aim of implementing reforms to demolish "the order of the Middle Ages that exists in Turkey," and to "eliminate bodies such as aghas, sheikhdoms" (ibid). On the other hand, the MBK made changes in the Law Concerning Fundamental Provisions on Elections and Voter Register[41] to forbade "the use of any other language or script other than Turkish in propaganda disseminated in radio or television as well as in other election propaganda" (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 107).

Along with those instantaneous moves, the MBK revitalized the early republican policies negating the Kurdish ethnocultural identity and language (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008, pp. 10-11). For instance, they systematized the Turkification of the names of the Kurdish villages and expanded the reach of the national radio stations both to amplify the voice of the regime in the region and to counter the radio broadcasts in Kurdish from the surrounding countries (ibid). Moreover, they secretly

[39] Milli Birlik Komitesi.
[40] 105 No'lu Zorunlu İskan Kanunu.
[41] Seçimlerin Temel Hükümleri ve Seçmen Kütükleri Hakkında Kanun.

authorized the State Planning Organization[42] (DPT, hereafter) to prepare an extensive report on the Kurds in Turkey (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 108). The DPT's report was mostly a repetition of the plans and laws produced before, and it proposed: first, to mix ethnicities through voluntary or forced resettlement, second, to produce scientific knowledge denying the distinctness of the Kurdish identity and language, third, to disseminate Turkified images of the Kurds via mass media and, forth, to make propaganda at the international level against the Kurds' demands (ibid).

The repressive and assimilationist measures taken by the MBK were ineffective in hindering the reawakening of the Kurdish resistance both in the cities and in the countryside. This was largely due to the relatively liberal order established by the 1961 Constitution. Prepared under the MBK`s rule, this constitution was the product of the Kemalists' intention to police Turkey's political landscape. It declared the state's loyalty to the principles of Kemalism and attempted to ward off the monopolization of the state power by the majority`s rule (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 244-248). A series of control mechanisms, such as the Senate, the Constitutional Court and the National Security Council[43], were introduced to that end, and those served to guarantee the Kemalists' formative role in politics (ibid). At the same time, however, the constitution enlarged the boundaries of the public sphere both by recognizing the freedoms of expression, association, and publication and by granting social, economic and political rights through empowering trade unions (ibid). Enjoying those freedoms, the marginalized groups and the radical imaginaries addressed by those found the conditions of possibility of visibility in the public sphere in Turkey (ibid). In that period, it was especially the leftist political circles that gained ground

[42] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı.
[43] Milli Güvenlik Kurulu.

and even managed to enter into the parliament under the banner of the Turkish Workers' Party[44] (TİP, hereafter) (ibid).

The foundation of the TİP was a milestone for the Kurdish oppositional politics (ibid, pp. 407-408). As the first legal party recognizing the ethnopolitical character of the Kurdish Question, it provided the Kurdish intellectuals and activists with a space to raise their voices in collaboration with their Turkish leftist counterparts (ibid; Gündoğan, 2005, pp. 57-58). The Eastern Rallies[45], organized by the party from 1967 to 1969, were the products of this collaboration, and those rallies generated a great deal of publicity both in Turkey's political landscape and in the region (Ercan, 2010, pp. 89-93; Kirişçi & Winrow, 2000, p. 115). Relying on the popular support they attracted through those demonstrations, the Kurdish intellectuals and activists established the Revolutionary Cultural Hearts of the East[46] (DDKOs, hereafter) in 1969 in order to organize the Kurdish intellectuals, activists and university students with the aim of asserting and constructing their distinct ethnocultural identity (Ercan, 2010, p. 97; McDowall, 2004, pp. 410-411). Coming amid to the TİP's electoral failure and the deepening conflicts among the radical Turkish leftist, the foundation of the DDKOs created momentum for the Kurds to raise their voices autonomously from their Turkish leftist counterparts (Ercan, 2010, pp. 102-104). Drawing on socialism, nationalism, and modernism, the Kurdish intellectuals, activists, and students united under the banner of the DKKOs drew the initial framework to revolutionize the social structure of the region and revitalizing the Kurdish identity and language (ibid).

[44] Türkiye İşçi Partisi.
[45] Doğu Mitingleri.
[46] Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları.

While the most of the Kurdish intellectuals and activists were organized by using the socialist repertoire of the time, the developments in Iraq's Kurdistan gave rise to other waves of Kurdish resistance(s) throughout the 1960s. One of those was the one led by the right-wing conservative Kurdish nationalists who sought independence from Turkey without intending to revolutionize the existing tribal structure of the region; backed mostly by the Kurdish upper and middle classes, this wave was institutionalized under the banner of the first Kurdish political party in Turkey, the Democrat Party of Turkey's Kurdistan[47] (TKDP, hereafter), founded by Said Elçi in 1965. Nevertheless, the TDKP failed to broaden its support base since the masses were mostly politicized by the socialist and modernist ideas of the time (McDowall, 2004, pp. 418-419). The other wave was organized by the secular Kurdish nationalists led by Said Kırmızıtoprak (Dr. Şivan) who founded the Democrat Party in Turkey's Kurdistan[48] (T-KDP, hereafter) in 1970 (Ercan, 2010, pp. 106-109). Opposing the TKDP's political stance, the T-KDP mobilized significant support from the Kurds and provided the Kurdish intellectuals and activists standing by the Turkish left with the conditions of detachment from their Turkish counterparts in the DDKOs (ibid).

The military coup of 1971 interrupted the growing dynamism of both the Turkish leftist and the Kurdish resistance circles. With the coup, the borders of the public sphere were significantly narrowed, and the oppositional groups which had emerged and gained ground by enjoying the relatively liberal order of the 1960s were temporarily silenced (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 258-263). Accordingly, the TİP was banned with the accusation of making communist and separatist propaganda; the DDKOs were closed and its members were arrested (Ahmad, 1993, p. 148). The technocratic

[47] Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi.
[48] Türkiye'de Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi.

government backed by the military declared martial law in eleven cities, some of which in the Kurdish region, and forbade the youth associations, outlawed the activities of the trade unions, restricted the publishing activities and imprisoned thousands of activists who were perceived as threats against the regime (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 259-260). Moreover, the government made a constitutional amendment installing the State Security Courts[49] (DGMs, hereafter), which were the replications of the Independence Tribunals, to deal with the opposition in an extra-juridical way.

Those draconian measures could neither put an end to the mobilization of Turkish left-wing movements nor suppress the growing dynamism of the Kurdish intellectual and political circles. With the transition to democracy in 1973, the coalition of the CHP and the National Salvation Party[50] (MSP, hereafter) decreed general amnesty to political prisoners (Ercan, 2010, pp. 115-116). Accordingly, the Turkish leftist circles were revitalized, and the former DDKO members established the Revolutionary Democratic Cultural Associations[51] (DDKDs, hereafter) in 1974 (ibid). The DDKD aimed to form a unified resistance movement out of the multiplicity of the socialist, nationalist and conservative Kurdish circles (ibid, p. 117). Nevertheless, given the enduring influence of the Turkish left-wing politics on the one hand and the deepening contentions among the Kurdish circles on the other, the DKKDs failed to achieve their aims (ibid, pp. 117-121). In this chaotic environment, there were also newly emerging political groups, such as: Rizgari, Kawa, the Socialist Party of Turkey's Kurdistan[52] (PSK, hereafter), the National Liberationists of Kurdistan[53] (KUK, hereafter) and the Kurdistan Workers' Party[54]

[49] Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemeleri.
[50] Milli Selamet Partisi.
[51] Devrimci Doğu Kültür Dernekleri.
[52] Partiya Sosyalist a Kurdistana Tirkiye.
[53] Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları.
[54] Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan.

(PKK, here after), all of which was organized in a dispersed fashion both in the metropolises and in the countryside (Ercan, 2010, pp. 144-148).

Those groups were gradually institutionalized as resistance movements especially in the second half of the 1970s (ibid, p.148). At that time, the Nationalist Front Coalitions[55] declared war against the Turkish leftist circles and the Kurdish groups by employing paramilitary factions formed by the coalition partner Nationalist Action Party[56] (MHP, hereafter) (ibid, pp. 148-149). In the face of the state-backed nationalist violence, the leftist circles were radicalized by taking arms against the regime (ibid. pp. 149-156). While the tension was rising by leaving many deaths behind, the idea of armed struggle gained popularity among the Kurdish circles (ibid). With the exception of the DDKDs and the PSK, both of which were proposing the democratic way for the emancipation of the Kurds, Rizgari, Kawa, the KUK and the PKK began voicing "the thesis of colonialism"[57], the necessity and rightfulness of an armed struggle for decolonizing Kurdistan from Turkey's oppression (ibid). Among those groups, it was only the PKK that would launch an armed struggle against the regime and dominate the Kurdish political landscape by marginalizing the other resistance circles in the 1980s (see McDowall, 2004, pp. 420-425).

Towards the end of the 1970s, the Kurdish intellectuals, activists and university students organized under different banners managed to change the majority of the Kurds' self-perceptions (Bruinessen, 1989). As Bruinessen points out, "People who had long called themselves Turks started re-defining themselves as Kurds; youngsters in the cities, who knew only Turkish began to learn Kurdish

[55] Milliyetçi Cephe Koalisyonları.
[56] Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi,
[57] For detailed analyses of "the thesis of colonialism" and of how it was translated into the field of Kurdish politics see (Ercan, 2010, pp. 138-144).

again" (p. 621). These people not only passively became the support bases of the Kurdish political circles; they also actively took part in the activities of those against the regime's repressive and assimilationist policies (ibid). Nevertheless, the growing dynamism of that popular mobilization was confronted by more repression which would pave the way, in return, for a massive mobilization led by the armed struggle of the PKK (for a detailed analysis, see McDowall, 2004, pp. 420-439).

2.5 The 1980 coup: Re-institutionalization of Kemalism and the Kurds

The radicalization of the masses under the PKK's banner was crystallized in the 1980s. This was largely due to the military-led restoration of the regime in accordance with the principles of Kemalism.[58] On 12 September 1980, the military intervened in the politics to put an end to the political and economic crisis that Turkey had been facing in the second half of the 1970s. Unlike the previous ones, the 1980 coup aimed to restructure not only the politics but also each and every aspect of everyday life (Ahmad, 1993, pp. 181-188; Zürcher, 2004, pp. 278-283). The National Security Council[59] (MGK, hereafter), which ruled the county until 1983, was determined to annihilate all existing organizations and to prevent any oppositional circle from being organized and mobilized against the regime (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 278-279). Accordingly, the political parties, youth associations, trade unions were banned; the press was suspended for nearly a year (ibid, p. 279). During the MGK's rule, millions of people were blacklisted; thousands of political party

[58] For Yüksel Taşkın, the coup was an attempt to re-institutionalize Kemalizm (Taşkın, 2002). With the coup, the elimination of the educated, intellectual and democratic elements of the Kurdish opposition led to the violent radicalization of the field of resistance in the hands of the rural elements according to Doğu Ergil (2000, p. 126).

[59] Milli Güvenlik Konseyi,

members, activists and intellectuals were detained, imprisoned and tortured; forty-nine people were executed (ibid, p. 280). Perceiving them as the source of chaos, the MGK displaced hundreds of academics and students from the universities and put those institutions under the strict control of the Higher Education Authority[60] established in 1981 (ibid). With the new constitution, prepared under the guidance of the MGK in 1982, the relatively liberal order instituted by the 1961 Constitution was replaced with the 1982 Constitution which reiterated the state's loyalty to the principles of Kemalism once again and defined the raison d'être of the state as the protection of the indivisibility of the Turkish state and the nation (Ahmad, 1993, pp. 186-187; Zürcher, 2004, pp. 280-281). As a result, the public sphere was narrowed considerably, and the ideologies other than Kemalism, the religions other than the state-controlled Islam and the ethnicities other than Turkishness were announced as "perversions which require psychiatric treatment" (Bozarslan, 2004, pp. 99-100).

The cost of that treatment was high for all, but especially for the Kurds. The MGK revitalized the Kemalist radical secularism, ethnocentric nationalism and authoritarian centralism to suppress the growing dynamism of the Kurdish oppositional circles and to prevent wider mobilizations against the regime (see Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008, pp. 11-12). Accordingly, hundreds of Kurdish political activists were imprisoned, tortured and even killed; the notorious Diyarbakır Prison where the Kurdish prisoners were subjected to systematic torture and various forced assimilation techniques was exemplary in this respect.[61] The militarization of the everyday life in the region during that period was accompanied by an augmented symbolic violence exhibited by the decoration of the mountains of the region with

[60] Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu.
[61] For a detailed journalistic account, see Hasan Cemal, Kürtler (2003).

the phrases, ‘How happy is the one who says I am Turkish!’[62] and ‘Citizen Speak Turkish, Speak A Lot!’[63] (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008). The MGK`s tough approach also found its expressions in the juridical changes of the time. Thus the use of Kurdish was constitutionally outlawed with the Article No.26 of the 1982 Constitution which announced, “No language prohibited by the law shall be used in the expression and dissemination of thought.”[64] The category of “the banned languages” was very carefully specified in the Law Regarding Publications in Languages Other Than Turkish[65] which did not even openly acknowledge its sole target by saying "No language shall be used for the explication, dissemination, and publication of ideas other than the first official languages of countries, recognized by the Turkish state."[66] On the other hand, the MGK revived the atmosphere of the 1930s by reanimating the Turkish Historical Foundation and the Turkish Language Institution to produce and disseminate the “scientific” discourses proving the inauthenticity of the Kurdish identity and language (Aydın, 2013, p. 20).

With the systematic enactment of those measures, the regime annihilated the Kurdish oppositional circles in Turkey for a while. The Kurdish political activists who went into exile mostly remained politically active in the countries they took shelter, the PSK, Rizgari, Ala Rizgari and Kawa were among the groups that maintained their activities as small in Europe; nevertheless, they lost their capacity to mobilize the crowds in Turkey. On the other hand, the PKK managed to survive as an influential circle in Syria and Lebanon and gained ground in Turkey by

[62] “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene!”
[63] ‘Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş, Çok Konuş!’
[64] “Düşüncelerin açıklanması ve yayılmasında kanunla yasaklanmış olan herhangi bir dil kullanılamaz.”
[65] Türkçe Dışındaki Dillerde Yapılacak Yayınlar Hakkında Kanun, Law No.2932
[66] “Türk Devleti tarafından tanınmış bulunan devletlerin birinci resmî dilleri dışındaki herhangi bir dille düşüncelerin açıklanması, yayılması ve yayınlanması yasaktır” ("Türkçe’den Başka Dillerle Yapılacak Yayınlar Hakkında Kanun," 19.10.1983).

mobilizing the mostly rural, uneducated Kurdish youth for a violent secessionist struggle against the state.[67] Since the party launched its first attack in 1984, they gradually terrorized the region by attacking not only the state apparatuses but also anyone who did not take side with them.[68] While the party was attracting the support of a growing number of people suffering from the wounds of the state`s repression, it gradually instituted its hegemony in the field of Kurdish opposition by silencing and marginalizing other groups(Bozarslan, 2002, p. 860; Bruinessen, 2000, p. 98; McDowall, 2004, pp. 420-423).

The radicalization of the masses under the PKK`s banner was the proof of the failure of the state`s systematic implementation of repressive and assimilationist policies against its Kurdish citizens; nevertheless, the post-coup state was insistent on following the same old path to deal with the PKK`s violent radicalism (see Yavuz, 2001). That is why, the military buildup in the region was bolstered enormously, and some Kurdish groups were hired as the village guards against the PKK militants (McDowall, 2004, pp. 423-425). Furthermore, the regime declared a state of exception in the region by instituting the Governorate of the State of Exception[69] in 1987 and authorizing it to suspend the law in the region in case of need (see ibid, pp. 427-428). Those cases were neither limited to the administrative decisions, nor openly acknowledged in every instance; the regime secretly founded a special paramilitary unit under the name of the Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism[70] (JİTEM, hereafter) to enforce the extra-juridical mode of

[67] According to Doğu Ergil (2000), the main reason behind the rise of the PKK`s violent struggle was the elimination of the relatively more urban, intellectual, educated and democratic elements of the Kurdish oppositional circles, which left the ground for the ones who are more responsive to the repressive and assimilationist measures re-instituted with the coup (p.126).
[68] For a detailed analysis, see (Radu, 2017).
[69] Olağanüstü Hal Bölge Valiliği.
[70] Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele.

governance in the region (ibid, p. 441). By taking those measures, the state regained the control of the region towards the mid-1990s; nevertheless, the so-called low-intensity war between the army and the PKK left thousands of deaths and a considerable displaced Kurdish population behind (see Marcus, 2007, pp. 221-238).

2.6 A peculiar opening in the universe of closures

In the post-coup universe of closure, the MGK's enduring presence in the political landscape left little room for the political parties to act. Even though the Motherland Party[71] (ANAP, hereafter) managed to come to power in defiance of the military in 1983, it could not liberate the political landscape from the military tutelage. Yet the ANAP's success in the neoliberal restructuring of the national economy provided it with a relatively autonomous ground (Ahmad, 1993, pp. 189-195; Zürcher, 2004, p. 283). Thanks to this, the party began taking a different stance on the Kurdish Question towards the 1990s by voicing the need for a political, rather than a militaristic solution. The most important product of this discursive change was the repeal of the Law Regarding Publications in Languages Other Than Turkish in 1991, which had been the latest and the most carefully designed juridical measure against the Kurdish identity.

The repeal of the that law was a very peculiar opening in the universe that was strictly closed for any manifestation of Kurdishness. It was for the first time that the regime retreated from its uncompromising stance which had been characterized by denial, repression, and assimilation of the Kurdish identity and language, for decades. The need for such a change arose from mainly three reasons (Kubilay,

[71] Anavatan Partisi,

2004, pp. 73-75). The first and foremost reason was the PKK's inexorable rise in a way that politicized an increasing number of the Kurds against the regime (ibid). The second was the reluctance of the Kurds in Iraq to support Turkey's involvement in the US-led military intervention in Iraq (ibid). The last was the international pressure put by the rise of the human rights discourse with the end of the Cold War (ibid). Under these conditions, the ANAP aimed to marginalize the PKK from the Kurds, to gain the support of the Iraqi Kurds and to increase the credibility of the regime in the international arena, by making such a peculiar juridical opening.

Despite its peculiarity, however, it was hard to claim that the ANAP's move was a significant departure from the regime's traditional stance towards the Kurds. The repeal itself was part of the legislation of the Anti-Terror Law[72] which aimed to take every oppositional figure to the DGMs by suspending the law for them. Moreover, the formal liberty that was negatively provided for the use and visibility of Kurdish was in conflict with the whole architecture of the denialist, repressive and assimilationist mechanisms marking any manifestation of Kurdishness as a severe threat to the ontology of the Turkish nation-state (see Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, pp. 111-112).

The case of the translation attempts of the Kurdish mobilization into the field of formal politics is worth mentioning in this respect. The first legal Kurdish political party, the People`s Labor Party[73] (HEP, hereafter), won seats in the parliament by forming an electoral coalition with the Social Democratic People`s Party[74] (SHP, hereafter) in 1991; nevertheless, neither the SHP, nor the other parties in the parliament could accommodate the party after the Kurdish MPs` assertion of their

[72] Terörle Mücadele Kanunu.
[73] Halkın Emeği Partisi.
[74] Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti.

ethnocultural identity in that setting. Accused of making separatist propaganda, the MPs were ousted from the parliament and imprisoned for years, and the HEP was banned from politics. While this was only the beginning of a new struggle between the formal political field and the insistently emerging new Kurdish political parties since then, that event was indicative of that the ANAP's move provided Kurds with nothing, but an ambivalent space of visibility in which those of who attempted to become visible by manifesting their distinct ethnocultural identity and language were subjected to the unbridgeable gap between the formal freedom and the substantial persecution.

2.7 Destabilization of Kemalism: The rise of political Islamism and the Kurds

Throughout the 1990s, the regime was facing not only the PKK`s armed resistance in the region but also the rise of the political Islamism as a movement promising a structural transformation in the regime's political, economic and even cultural stands. Since the foundation of National Order Party[75] in 1970 and then the National Salvation Party[76] in 1972, the political Islamism had already been an important element of Turkey`s political landscape. While it had been standing side-by-side with the established center-right and radical-right wing politics during the 1970s (see Zürcher, 2004, p. 288), this movement returned to the post-coup politics in the early 1990s under the banner of the Welfare Party[77] (RP, hereafter) with a radical political agenda that was perceived as an ontological threat by the regime (see Zürcher, 2004, pp. 295-299). The RP promised a profound transformation in the bureaucracy which

[75] Milli Nizam Partisi.
[76] Milli Selamet Partisi.
[77] Refah Partisi.

was in the hand of the Kemalist few; a nationalist restructuring the economy which was centered around the Istanbul bourgeoisie; an Islamic redefinition of the national identity which was built upon the Kemalist secular ethnocentrism (see Yavuz, 1997). In the post-cold war context of globalization, the movement`s promise attracted considerable support and allowed the RP to come to power in 1995 (see Gulalp, 1999). In the face of the movement`s sudden rise, the regime quickly responded, first, by hardening its criticisms against the political Islamists; then, by criminalizing them as religious reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries; and finally, by ousting them from politics with the postmodern coup 1997 (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 300-305). Though the movement was presumably defeated at the time, it would make an unexpected come back in 2002 under the banner of the Justice and Development Party[78] (AKP, hereafter).

The AKP gave a new shape to the political Islamism by transforming it into a populist hub in the context of the political and economic instability of 2001. The party`s populist reason was quite successfully accommodating a very peculiar coalition embracing the political ideologies, imaginaries, and identities as diverse as liberalism and conservatism, nationalism and social democracy and even some segments of the Kurdish politics. After the landslide electoral victory in 2002, the party gradually made its way to the core of Turkey`s political landscape by successfully implementing both a massive neoliberal restructuring project and the European Union membership process. While the established economic stability enabled the party to secure its strong position in politics, the democratization promise of the EU process providing it with legitimacy both nationally and internationally. It is thanks to these that the party began confronting the long-lasting

[78] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi.

military tutelage and setting the boundaries of the military`s sphere of influence in politics for the first time in the history of the republic, towards the end of the 2000s.

The rise of the political Islamism brought a shift in the discursive repertoire on the Kurdish Question, in Turkey`s political landscape since the 1990s. The RP`s political agenda was promising the redefinition of the regime`s conception of national identity by replacing it with the imperial vision of the Islamic "millet," ümmet. Accordingly, the party was recognizing Kurds as their Muslim brothers and blaming the Kemalist secular ethnocentrism as the main reason behind their sufferings. On the other hand, the RP`s emphasis on social justice was offering a ground to address the oppression of the Kurds marginalized in the face of the armed conflict between the army and the PKK. Of course, these attempts could not wholly distance the party from the regime`s discourse because of both the party`s pragmatism which was necessary to secure a place in the political field and, more importantly, the regime`s pressure on the party.

Unlike their predecessors, however, the AKP found the opportunity, first, to test the limits of the regime`s stance towards Kurds and, then, to set the limits by itself thanks to their victory over the military tutelage towards the 2010s. Shortly after coming to power in 2002, the party lifted the State of Emergency that had ruled the populated Kurdish cities since 1987. Following the EU path by launching an extensive legal reform program that had been initiated by the post-coup coalition government in 2001, the AKP legalized the broadcasting and private language courses in the non-official languages in 2003 and began broadcasting in Kurdish on the public broadcasting service, TRT, in 2004. Although the broadcasting time was limited with only four hours a week, and any program targeting Kurdish kids were precluded, this was a significant opening was representing a departure from the

decades-long denialism towards the very existence of Kurdish identity and language. The aura of democratization was augmented with the prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan`s out loud recognition of the Kurdish Question and his call for reform as an urgent need to end the Kurdish citizens` sufferings.

Meanwhile, the EU was pushing the AKP forward at the time to realize its democratic discourse. That is why, the AKP launched the TRT 6 broadcasting full time in Kurdish as part of the state-run broad public broadcasting service in 2009 (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2013, p. 171). On the other hand, the democratization discourse reached to its peak in the same year with the party`s "Kurdish initiative" which might be considered as the first programmatic attempt to solve the Kurdish Question (see ibid, pp. 172-173). The party was promising to open the democratic channels for the Kurdish political representation; to end the armed struggle with the PKK; to construct an egalitarian ground recognizing the Kurdish ethnocultural identity; to remove discriminatory policies against the Kurdish citizens. As part of the initiative, the Kurdish language was introduced, with other minority languages, into the academic field with the founding of the Institute of the Living Languages at Mardin Artuklu University in 2011; and the Ministry of Culture accompanying this by publishing some Kurdish literary classics in the same year. These were followed by the introduction of Kurdish as an elective course in schools and by the legal change allowing prisoners to defend themselves in Kurdish in courts (see ibid). The party`s reformist policies reached to its new peak with the declaration of the democratization program in 2013, which brought a series of juridical openings - allowing the political parties to use Kurdish in their political campaigns; changing the Kurdish village names that had been Turkified by the state before 1980; and legalizing the official use of the letters Q, W, X.

Regarding Turkey`s long-lasting denialism towards its Kurdish citizens, the AKP`s reforms were representing a transformation in Turkey`s stance towards the Kurdish identity, culture and language. Given the long-lasting policy of denialism towards the Kurds, these reforms were undoubtedly revolutionary not only in opening the discursive horizon of the regime to the Kurdish citizens, but also engendering practical implications in the everyday lives of them. Accordingly, the reforms created an optimistic atmosphere among many groups demanding more democracy. This optimism found its expression in the growing electoral support for the party in the Kurdish-populated cities at the time. Nonetheless, the reformation was hardly a smooth process since it created discontent among the pro-establishment political parties, ideologies, and imaginaries on the one hand and among the pro-PKK Kurdish political circles on the other.

On the former front, the AKP`s reformism was denounced and harshly criticized as an act of betrayal to the nation and to the ones who lost their lives in the fight against the PKK. Although the party attempted to manage the discontent resulting from those reforms by renaming its "Kurdish Initiative"[79] as "the National Unity and Brotherhood Project,"[80] this was still far from convincing the pro-establishment groups. On the latter front, the party`s policies were considered as a purely pragmatic move that does not actually aim to solve the problem but to pacify the dynamism of the PKK`s decades-long armed struggle against the regime, by offering the Kurds less than they deserve. The state`s on-going militaristic measures in the region, the lawsuits taking thousands of Kurdish political activists to prisons and the banning of the political parties were considered as the proof of the disingenuousness of the party`s Kurdish policy by them. Having faced with the

[79] Kürt Açılımı.
[80] Milli Birlik ve Kardeşlik Projesi.

contentions on both fronts, the limits of the AKP`s Kurdish policy would crystallize towards the mid-2010 with a return to authoritarianism which runs counter to not only the democratic promise of the party`s populist discourse but also to the concrete changes it had already brought into Turkey`s political landscape.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a macro-historical account of the formation and transformation(s) of the antagonism between the state and Kurds from the late 19th century to the mid-2010s by focusing on the question of identity and language. Although it cannot exhaust each and every detail and cannot do justice to every moment of this long and complex history, Michel Foucault`s conception of the transformation in the workings of power might shed light on the changing place of the question of culture and language in that relation. With a look at the case of Turkey`s stance towards the cultural and linguistic rights of its Kurdish citizens, this transformation might be summarized as a complicated shift in the workings of the institutional and extra-institutional power mechanisms from the strictly constraining statement of "You cannot do because you do not exist at all," to the passively enabling statement "You can do if you can, but you should know that you are on your own." Given the complicated coexistence of the sovereign and governmental modalities, it is hard to claim that this transition has smoothly taken place from 1923 to 2013, the year when I completed the data collection process of this research. Rather, the governmental modality that began emerging in the early 1990s and came to the fore especially in the 2000s have produced an atmosphere of ambivalence where agents are endowed with freedom while still being subjected to the exercise of sovereign power through the enduring forms of constraints on their identity, culture

and language. Of course, in the turbulent climate of Turkey`s political landscape, it is hard to declare the predominance of that modality once and for all, as the regressions in the state`s stance in the mid-2010s have shown.

CHAPTER 3

ENCOUNTERING THE WOUNDED LANGUAGE, BECOMING A KURDISH PUBLISHER

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will look into how the Kurdish language endured under the conditions inimical to its use and reproduction up until the partial-lift on the ban in 1991, by focusing on the becoming processes of the Kurdish publishers. Although Kurdish publishing field in Turkey formally emerged in the early 1990s, it did undoubtedly not spring from a void. Rather, it was built upon both the decades-long linear history of the confinement of the language which wounded it at a growing severity and the non-linear history of discontinuous and disorganized escapes from the confinement, in the pursuit of the emancipation as well as the construction of the future of that language. It is the encounters of the Kurdish publishers with both the confinement of their language and the products of the escapes from that confinement that created the conditions of possibilities for the substantive emergence of the field. Drawing on both the historical accounts and the interviews with the Kurdish publishers, the aim of this chapter is to present a brief overview of the "prehistory" of the making of Kurdish publishing field. In the first part, I will delve into how the Kurdish language endured as a predominantly oral language under the constraints imposed on its use and reproduction, by looking at the publishers` experiences. In the second part, I will present how the making of the literary language was made possible through the attempts of a handful of Kurdish intellectuals both in the diaspora and in the underground/clandestine political networks. In the third part, I

will go into how the politico-intellectual entrepreneurs who would build Kurdish publishing field it the early 1990s became engaged in the literary production in Kurdish by focusing on their encounters with the literary language.

3.2 Confined orality

Since the declaration of Turkish as the official language in the 1924 Constitution, the Kurdish language was excluded from the public sphere, and it was confined into the private lives of the Republic`s Kurdish speaking citizens. While its public use and reproduction through education, media, public services and the national economy were strictly prohibited for decades, Kurdish could remain as a language resting on a more or less chaotic oral foundation which consists of not only vernaculars (Botan, Serhad and so on) but also dialects (Kurmanci and Kırmançki).[81] Even though there was a small number of religious education institutions (*medreses*) maintaining their activities in a clandestine fashion and propagating the literacy in Kurdish in the region, those institutions were, at best, partially effective in maintaining the vitality of the literary production in that language.[82] This was partly due to both the secondary role given to Kurdish in the education in those institutions and the negligibility of the number of students who could get in there. All in all, Kurds were generally devoid of the conditions to gain literacy in their mother tongue. On the other hand, Kurdish as an oral language was subjected to the ever-growing hegemony of the Turkish language which gradually penetrated the everyday lives of the Kurdish speaking citizens through a set of disciplinary and governmental

[81] For a detailed analysis of the oral culture of the Kurdish language, see (Parıltı, 2006); and for a sociolinguistic analysis of the linguistic variation in Kurmanci, see (Öpengin & Haig, 2014).
[82] For a brief analysis of the role of the Kurdish language in the *medrese* education, see. (Zinar, 2012).

measures. Notably, the expanding influence of the compulsory Turkish medium education and the media were the major apparatuses assimilating the Kurds into the Turkish national identity and language. Being subjected to those, the language was negated and left to die out slowly.[83]

The Kurdish publishers` experiences of the subjection of their mother tongue occupy a central place in their stories of becoming. All of the publishers interviewed in this research go back to their childhood experiences and narrate their first encounters with the agents negating their identity, culture, and language – such as teacher, police, gendarmerie and so on. While those encounters made them face with the unbridgeable gap between their subject positions in the eyes of the authorities and their actual conditions of existence, they were driven into a schizophrenic state of mind by being situated in two worlds at the same time.[84] The following story told by Şeyhmus Yüksel, the owner and editor of Behr Publications, cogently illustrates how those encounters were like,

> We had a teacher from Konya, Ömer Teacher, he forbade us to speak Kurdish. Our parents did not know Turkish. Our little brothers and sisters or our elders in the village did not know Turkish. You had to use Kurdish to communicate with them. We would sometimes talk through gestures; however, Kurdish words were also necessarily uttered. When we went to school in the morning, we would all be beaten up. The teacher would tell us to open our mouths, and we would do so. He would say, "It is obvious from your tongue that you spoke Kurdish," and then he would hit us. We would be amazed. We could not figure out how he understood. We thought that he understood that we talked in Turkish by looking at our tongues. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 2)

[83] For a sociolinguistic analysis, see (Öpengin, 2010, 2012).

[84] As Yüksel`s story reveals, the negation of the Kurdish identity and language contradicted the subjects` relations to their families and surroundings by creating what the American sociologist W.E.B Du Bois calls "double consciousness" – the experience of being forced to be both the ones desirable for the dominant and the one who they are in subordination (2015). A similar line of analysis can also be found in Frantz Fanon's analysis of the position of the colonized in relation to the colonizer (1963).

It is hard to claim that Yüksel`s story is specific to his biography since the same story is told by many Kurds to narrate their first experiences with the state and its repressive and assimilationist stance towards their identity and language in primary schools. Nevertheless, it can be said that this narrative frame offers a powerful medium to express similar sufferings experienced by many Kurds, in one way or another. Although Yüksel expresses how omnipotent the state looks like, the measures taken by the state for the eradication of the language could not entirely be effective in achieving their ends. Especially in the countryside, Kurdish remained as the language of everyday life, for a long time, in a way that deepened the gap between being the desired citizen and being who they are. This profound non-correspondence appears, for instance, in Nizamettin Seçkin`s, the owner and editor of Tene Publications, description of the dominance of Kurdish in everyday life in Nusaybin, the town he grew up,

> I was in Nusaybin until I was eighteen years old. In Nusaybin, Kurdish culture, especially the language, is still preserved, and the language of the daily life, the language of the street is Kurdish. Languages other than Kurdish were rarely talked. Some Arabic and Armenian were talked. There were some Yezidis and Assyrians… But they also knew Kurdish. The dominant language, the language of the street so to speak, was Kurdish. For example, when someone went to the city, and added some Turkish words to his/her vocabulary upon his/her return, s/he would be found odd. S/he would be considered as having lost his/her origin, and become degenerated. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 3)

The enduring hegemonic position of the Kurdish language in some parts of the region was partially based on the state`s incapacity to institute its cultural and linguistic hegemony in its entirety. Besides that, the Kurdish speaking community in some places was also resistant, either actively or passively, to the penetration of their everyday life by the assimilationist measures. As Seçkin suggests, the assertion of the authenticity of their culture and language was particularly significant in this respect to preserve the existing course of life in the region. More importantly,

Kurdish mothers, especially those who could not been brought under the scope of the Turkish-medium-schools were the driving force for the maintenance and reproduction of Kurdish as an oral language. Certainly, the role of the mothers in the endurance of Kurdish was gradually decreased as they were being incorporated into the hegemony of the Turkish language. By pointing out Kurdish mothers role in the endurance of their mother tongue, the editor, and author of Çem Publications, Şaban Duran expresses how the situation is changing,

> If we lose our language, then we lose our identity, existence. The state's assimilation policies were so successful that we are about to lose our mothers now who would do anything they could so as to ensure that we did not forget Kurdish. (Şaban Duran, see Appendix, 4)

3.3 Fugitive literacy

The confinement of the Kurdish language into either the private lives of Kurds or the extra-hegemonic publics formed in their everyday lives left almost no room for the construction and maintenance of the literary Kurdish language from the 1920s to the early 1990s. Even though the orality could be maintained even under the conditions inimical to the use and reproduction of the language, the case of the Kurdish literacy was grave during that time. This was not surprising given the fact that the construction of literary languages is historically undertaken by either the nation-states or the freely engaged civil society actors and organizations, as Benedict Anderson (2006) suggests with the concept of print capitalism. Since there was no Kurdish-medium schooling for Kurdish children, no Kurdish-medium-academic department for Kurdish youth and no freely-circulating Kurdish media for the Kurdish speaking public in general, the making of the literary language as a semiotic ground that could accommodate the speakers of that language was not possible for

decades. Nevertheless, despite the extensiveness of the state`s repressive and assimilationist policies, it is hard to say that the Kurdish literary activities could be entirely obliterated. Especially with the 1930 and 1940s, a small number of Kurdish politico-intellectuals began engaging in the literary construction of their language by de-territorializing the orality of their mother tongue from its confinement, through the power of letters – inscribed, copied, circulated and received thanks to the materiality of paper. Those engagements were mostly in the forms of escapes from the confinement of the Kurdish as an oral language. In this sense, rather than confronting the state`s repressive and assimilationist stance, the politico intellectual agents carried out their endeavors to construct the literary base of their language, either beyond the reach of the state`s repressive and ideological apparatuses or beyond the gaze of those. Those endeavors might be grouped into two: the diasporic attempts and the underground/clandestine ones.

After the bloody conflicts of the 1920s and 1930, some of the politico-intellectual activists who took shelter first in the neighboring countries (Syria, particularly) and then in Europe turned their attention into the cultural activism by engaging in the construction of the literary Kurdish language (McDowall, 2004, p. 455). Actually, they were not the first activists preoccupied with the translation of the Kurdish orality into the universe of literacy. The first newspaper in Kurdish had been published by Abdurrahman Bedirhan in Cairo in 1898; then the Kurdish nationalist Ekrem Cemilpaşa had published a Kurdish newspaper, *Gazi*, in Diyarbakır, 1918 (Malmisanij, 2006a, pp. 33-34). Moreover, despite being narrow in scope, there had been the production of books in Kurdish most of which written

through Arabic script.[85] Yet those attempts had been interrupted with the dissolution of the empire, and had not been maintained in the early periods of the republic. Accordingly, the literary activities of the activists organized around the Hawar magazine can be counted as the first programmatic efforts to construct the literary Kurdish language. In this circle, the Kurdish nationalist Celadet Bedirxan and his fellows standardized the Kurdish language (particularly, its Kurmanci dialect) by constructing its grammar, syntax, morphology and phonology, and by Romanizing its orthography.[86] Drawing on those efforts, the linguistic standards of Kurdish were formulated as a semiotic ground that could accommodate the literary endeavors in that language. However, the hegemony of those efforts could not be instituted for a long time since the literary activities in Kurdish were limited with the disorganized and discontinuous endeavors of the Kurdish intellectuals in Europe. It is only with the 1980s that those gained a hegemonic position through the literary activities of the political immigrants and asylum-seekers in Europe. Especially, the growing vitality of the Kurdish literary production in Sweden at that time was noteworthy in providing a ground to the Kurdish cultural production emerging after the partial-lift of the ban in Turkey.[87]

Meanwhile, a small number of politico-intellectual activists were carrying out literary activities in the Kurdish language in the shadow of the repressive and assimilationist measures in Turkey. On the one hand, a handful of intellectuals educated in the clandestine religious education institutions (*medreses*) were engaging

[85] According to Malmisanij (2006a), there were approximately thirty books published in Kurdish under the Ottoman rule; while twenty of those books were in Arabic script, the others were mostly in Armenian script (pp. 34-44).
[86] For a detailed analysis of the works of Hawar circle, see (Dilgeş, 2012).
[87] For a detailed analysis of the works of the Kurdish immigrants and refugees in Sweden, see (Yücel, 2012).

in literary activities in Kurdish and were producing pieces about Islam.[88] On the other hand, a small number of politico-intellectual activists, politicized after the 1940s, began producing literary pieces in their mother tongue.[89] Those endeavors sometimes even gained visibility with the publication of some stories and poems in the newspapers as well as the production of a small number of books. However, whenever those products were noticed by the state apparatuses, those intellectuals were subjected to the juridical and extra-juridical sanctions under separatism charges, and their products were banned and confiscated. Therefore, the literary activities in Turkey could only be possible in the underground/clandestine politico-intellectual circles where a negligible number of literary activists were engaged in cultural production in their mother tongue. While they were usually not even aware of each other, they were generally disconnected from the programmatic attempts made by the diasporic circles.

All in all, the exclusion of the Kurdish language from the instituted public sphere in Turkey and the systematic implementation of the repressive and assimilationist policies wounded the language severely. Let alone gaining literacy in their mother tongue through education, media, economy or public services, an overwhelming majority of the Kurdish-speaking community in Turkey could not even be aware of the existence of the Kurdish literary products for decades. While the national space of the Republic was inimical to the production, dissemination and reception of the cultural objects conveying contents in that stigmatized language, the availability of those were both extremely limited and fraught with risk for those who could reach out to them.

[88] The literary production in *medreses* was limited in number; according to Malmisanij (2006a), those pieces were not able to reach out to the Kurdish speakers in Turkey since they were mostly written in Arabic script. (p.47) That is why their role in the literary construction of Kurdish was negligible.
[89] For a brief analysis of the scope of those, see (Malmisanij, 2006a, pp. 44-48).

3.4 Becoming a Kurdish publisher

Suffering from the negation of their identity, culture and language, the politico-cultural entrepreneurs who would step into the field of Kurdish publishing in the early 1990s were already familiar with the literary Kurdish language. Even though their language was confined outside of the instituted public sphere in Turkey and the products of any attempt to escape from that confinement could hardly be reterritorialized by becoming available to the Kurdish speaking community in Turkey, those entrepreneurs had encounters with the literary products in their mother tongue even in the shadow of the state`s repressive and assimilationist presence. Under the constraints imposed on the use and reproduction of Kurdish, those encounters were undoubtedly risky for those entrepreneurs since those objects could lead them to face with the juridical and extra-juridical sanctions. In this respect, it is hard to say that those encounters were contingent. Rather, they were resulted from the politico-cultural entrepreneurs` endeavors to deal with the negation of their identity, culture and language – to which they had been subjected since their childhood. It is through those endeavors and the resulting encounters with the literary language that those politico-cultural entrepreneurs became the actors building Kurdish publishing field by starting almost from scratch in the early 1990s. In the publishers` narratives on how they became the carriers of the cultural resistance in Kurdish publishing field, their encounters with the literary pieces usually appear as the products of events resulted from their political engagements, whether individually, or collectively.

Many of the publishers, especially the ones older than fifty, point out the schools as the places where they did not only experienced the negation of their identity and language, but also began resisting against the negation by discovering,

or rather inventing their Kurdish identity and language. That is why, at a time when the production, dissemination and circulation of the literary Kurdish pieces were extremely dangerous and almost exclusively limited to the underground/clandestine political circles in Turkey, the boarding schools, which were the model engines of the assimilation of the Kurdish youth, ironically served the relatively smooth spaces for the circulation of the manuscripts in Kurdish. The owner and editor of Behr Publications, Şeyhmus Yüksel`s first encounter with those literary pieces is worth mentioning in this respect,

> When I was a student at Diyarbakır Teacher's Training School in 1968-69, we used to find reproduced Kurdish texts. Kurdish writing was very limited then. There was a journal called *Ronahi* published in Syria. And among these texts, there were also the photocopies of the Kurdish texts from the little booklets coming out of madrasahs. These would pass from hand to hand among us. We would try to write by looking at them; however, there was, of course, no particular order involved. We would try to write in Kurdish by thinking in Turkish. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 5)

The encounters with the Kurdish literary pieces in unexpected places were not specific to the boarding schools. The publishers who had experienced the negation of their identity and language and then had been politicized through the discourses of the Kurdish oppositional politics at the time developed an interest in the literary products in their language, especially during their university education. In their personal stories of becoming Kurdish publishers, that interest appears as the driving motive behind their search for the literary pieces at a time when those objects were strictly banned and excluded from visibility. This risky search for the literary language, however, did not always put them in danger since the Kurdish books, which were banned and confiscated for decades, were ironically available in some of the biggest libraries in Turkey. For instance, the owner and editor of Deri Publications, Veysel Demirci tells the story of how he reached out to the literary Kurdish language for the first time,

> We would go to Beyazıt Library when we were in the university. We would get Mem u Zin from there and read it. And even though Kurdish books were banned before the 1990s, there were some Kurdish writings published by journals. Especially in the journals published after 1988, there would be short anecdotes and stories. We would try to read whatever we could find. Our Kurdish improved by reading those texts. (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 6)

Similarly, the owner and editor of Tene Publications, Nizamettin Seçkin narrates his first encounter with the Kurdish books at the heart of the Republic, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey,

> The first time I saw a Kurdish text was in 1989 when I was 20-22 years old. At the time, the nephew of a Kurdish member of parliament from ANAP was my friend. Muhayyettin Mutlu was member of the parliament from Bitlis. We went to the Parliament's Library with his card, and found a couple of books published before 1980. They were in Turkish and Kurdish. This was, of course, a privilege offered exclusively to the members of the parliament. And the Kurdish members of the parliament were not quite interested in these matters. I did not leave the house for a week to read those books. I felt like I conquered the space. That's how I read those books. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 7)

Those encounters with the literary Kurdish were certainly ironic since the state was keeping the literary pieces in Kurdish in some of its libraries while it was tenaciously criminalizing any attempt to produce, disseminate and consume those especially up until the early 1990s. Nevertheless, for the politico-cultural entrepreneurs searching for their language, encountering those stigmatized objects were crucial in some respects. In the first place, those works were the proof of the existence of their language which had been negated through the decades-long repression and assimilation. Secondly, those works provided a motive to these politico-cultural entrepreneurs by empowering them to resist against the negation of their language first by gaining literacy in Kurdish and then by engaging in Kurdish literary production. That is for sure that neither those encounters nor the resulting engagements of the politico-cultural entrepreneurs in the literary Kurdish language were merely individual endeavors grounded in the personal interests of those

entrepreneurs. Especially with the 1970s, the growing dynamism of the Kurdish oppositional politics created a transformation in the self-perceptions of those politico-cultural entrepreneurs by making them concerned about their identity, culture and language. Therefore, their stories of becoming Kurdish publishers are in one way or another related to the broader political dynamics as well as the political actors that were shaping the conditions of existence of the Kurdish speaking community in Turkey. Specifically, the role of the Kurdish oppositional politics in the becoming processes of the Kurdish publishers can be observed even in the childhood experiences of some of the publishers. For instance, the owner and editor of Kiteb Publications, Muhammed Salih tells how he found himself engaged in the literary Kurdish by pointing out the political atmosphere of the 1980s,

> The political nature of the process made us politicized as well. I somehow found myself in this atmosphere when I was eleven years old. I learned to read Kurdish when I was twelve. My vocabulary was, of course, poor because the Kurdish spoken at our home was a Kurdish mixed with Turkish. So I learned Kurdish on my own through dictionaries and so on. If I had not been politicized at that age, I would have talked Turkish or a Kurdish mixed with Turkish as an ordinary Kurd did at the time. To know your language well, to lay claim for it is a political matter because you cannot learn Kurdish in such a structure. Even if you do, it will be a Kurdish mixed with Turkish. To attain a pure Kurdish, one needs to be politicized to a certain extent or one, at least, needs to attain a certain level of awareness. (Muhammed Salih, see Appendix, 8)

The formative role of politics in those entrepreneurs becoming processes was crucial for the construction of the ground for the literary activities in Kurdish even before the juridical change of 1991 that opened the space for those endeavors. Although it is hard to claim that the Kurdish oppositional politics were particularly concerned about the condition of the Kurdish language as well as the Kurdish language rights before the 1990s, the political circles organized around the wider political claims and demands made by the Kurdish political actors were nevertheless important for the politico-cultural entrepreneurs to get in touch with each other and began

experimenting with the literary production in their language. In this sense, Nizamettin Seçkin`s words are worth mentioning,

> I began publishing in 1989 through journalism. I made translations in Ankara, in *Toplumsal Kurtuluş*. And I did my first serious Kurdish exercises here as well. Kurdistan Press and certain publications from abroad would come here, and I learned Kurdish from those publications. At the time, we published an interview conducted with Aram Tigran and published in Kurdistan Press in *Toplumsal Kurtulus* by translating it into Turkish. Welat was being established then. The press agent came, and told me: "We are going to publish a Kurdish newspaper, we have been asking around and only you can do it. You are experienced in journalism and you know Kurdish." I was very hesitant at first; I did not accept it. Yes, my spoken Kurdish was fine; however, this was going to be a Kurdish newspaper. And the circumstances were harsh. The newspaper was going to be published, but there was not even a typesetter present. Upon the insistence of my friends, I came to İstanbul from Ankara in 1991 by leaving the school in my senior year. Then we gathered our old group: Musa Anter, Yaşar Kaya, Feqi Hüseyin Sagnıç, Abdurrahman Dürre. I remember that I was afraid after that first meeting. I did not know what we were going to do. There was a language there, but we saw the alphabet just a little while ago. We published the newspaper in two months with great difficulties. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 9)

As it might be inferred from Seçkin`s words, the role of the politics in the becoming processes of the Kurdish publishers was much beyond simply providing a ground of gathering. The oppositional political circles, especially before the lift of the ban, were also offering the main source of motivation to the entrepreneurs and accordingly were mobilizing them to engage in the literary production in their language. Without doubt, rather than being literary activities its common sense meaning, those were mostly in the form of newspaper and magazine publishing, both of which were useful mediums for the Kurdish political actors to spread their message and to generate counter-hegemonic publicities. While the role of the Kurdish politics in the making of the Kurdish media is beyond the scope of this research, it might be said that those outlets provided most of the politico-cultural entrepreneurs, who would become Kurdish publishers in the 1990s, with the opportunities to gain literacy in Kurdish and to improve their command on it.

Moreover, their links with those political circles would also enable their endeavors in Kurdish publishing if they maintain their relations with those networks. As I will discuss in the fifth chapter, the enabling role of those circles would also come with a cost for the development of Kurdish publishing field.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented an overview of how the Kurdish language endured under the conditions inimical to its use and reproduction. The state`s repressive and assimilationists stance towards Kurdish wounded the language seriously, by both confining it to the outside of the instituted public sphere in Turkey and prohibiting and criminalizing any attempt to produce literary pieces in that language. While the Kurdish language remained as predominantly oral language, its literary construction and development were dependent entirely on the disorganized and discontinuous attempts made by a handful of the politico-intellectual agents either in the diaspora or in the underground clandestine political circles. Even though, particularly in the diaspora, those attempts produced significant results for the making of the literary Kurdish language, the products of those were far away from the land of the language. On the other hand, the underground/clandestine endeavors were almost always faced with the juridical and extra-juridical sanctions annihilating their products. Under these conditions, the stories of becoming Kurdish publishers were mainly centered around the negation of the identity, culture and language. Suffering from the repressive and assimilationists measures taken by the state, the politico-cultural entrepreneurs who would build Kurdish publishing field after the early 1990s were driven by their encounters with the literary pieces in their language. From the

individual experiences of the negation to the collective political mobilizations to resist it, differential motives led those entrepreneurs to become aware of the prohibited existence of the literary products in particular and the literary language in general. They became part that prohibited existence in the end and became the founders of Kurdish publishing field in the 1990s.

CHAPTER 4

THE NEGATION AND RESISTANCE OF KURDISH PUBLISHING

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shift my focus from the conditions of possibilities to the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field in Turkey by focusing on (1) the antagonism(s) to which the publishers have been subjected, and (2) the ways in which they have resisted in order to engage in publishing in Kurdish. In the first part of this chapter, I will show how the fundamental antagonism between the instituted hegemony and the counter-hegemonic practice of publishing Kurdish is a multifaceted relation and how it has taken differential forms. I present these forms as a series of negations to which the Kurdish publishers, their work and products have been subjected: the negation of the legal status, the negation of the economic status and the negation of the public legitimacy. While each of these forms has been manifested through different discourses and practices, all of them have been intertwined with each other in shaping the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field. In the second part, I will look into how the Kurdish publishers have resisted against being negated legally, economically and publicly. Drawing on the experiences of the Kurdish publishers, the strategies of resistance through which Kurdish publishing field has been made vis-à-vis the external constraints can be categorized as: (re)defining the meaning of Kurdish publishing, relying on the moral economy of Kurdish publishing, mobilizing political networks, financing the Kurdish through Turkish.

4.2 The facets of the antagonism

Since the partial-lift of the ban on the use of their language in 1991, the Kurdish politico-cultural entrepreneurs have been provided with the formal freedom of publishing in that language. Despite the formal freedom they have, however, the substantive reflections of that have been far from providing these entrepreneurs with the conditions to freely engage in publishing in Kurdish and to build their field of practice as a field of cultural production. As I have pointed out in the second chapter, the juridical opening of 1991 was undeniably crucial for the formal emergence of Kurdish publishing field, but it was extremely limited in scope and depth for mainly two reasons. First, it was partial, at best, because it removed only one juridical constraint among many others that had been instituted for the suppression of any manifestation of the Kurdish identity, culture and language. Even though the limits of the freedom to publish in Kurdish and the visibility of the Kurdish identity, culture and language have been considerably expanded since then, it is nevertheless hard to claim that the freedom to publish in Kurdish could be exercised just as the freedom to publish in Turkish - because of the enduring forms of repressive and assimilationist measures against Kurdish language. Second, the armed conflict between the state and the PKK have created dire consequences for the civil society in Turkey, the reflections of which have been materialized through the juridical and extra-juridical measures of governance employed, sometimes, by suspending even the fundamental rights - let alone the freedom to publish, distribute or consume the Kurdish books.[90] Although the scope and depth of these juridical and extra-juridical measures have significantly changed since the early 1990s, they have nevertheless remained as a source of insecurity for those who take part in the making of Kurdish

[90] The notable examples of those measures are the State of Emergency Law, the Anti-Terror Law, the Spatial Security District Law and more recently the Executive Orders.

publishing field including publishers, writers, editors, translators, printers, distributers, bookstore owners and readers. In the shadow of these, the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing have been externally shaped through the differential constraints imposed on the publishers in particular and the production, distribution and consumption of the Kurdish books in general.

4.2.1 Negation through ambivalence: The legality of Kurdish books

The first and foremost constraint imposed upon the Kurdish publishers is the negation of the legal status of producing, distributing and consuming the Kurdish books. Although publishing in Kurdish has been legal since 1991, the experiences of the Kurdish publishers reveal the ambivalence inflicted upon the legal status of their work and products. Especially during the 1990s, the formal freedom of publishing in Kurdish was in conflict with the hegemonic perception of the cultural commodities in that language – since those were taken as subversive and divisive objects, the very existence of which could threaten the indivisibility of the state, nation and homeland. That is why, let alone producing, distributing and consuming these cultural commodities, having, carrying and even touching these stigmatized objects were fraught with risk for the Kurds and could result in encounters with the juridical and extra-juridical sanctions. Accordingly, the Kurdish publishers were standing on thin ice that might be broken at any moment depending on the discretion, or what the German jurist Carl Schmitt (2005) calls the decision, of the sovereign.[91] The owner

[91] Drawing our attention to the theological sources of political power, Schmitt (2005) defines the concept of the sovereign as the one "who decides on the exception" (p.5). The centrality of decisionism in that definition is significant in two respects. On the one hand, it denotes the externality of the sovereign to the rule of law since it is bounded not by the juridical norms but the arbitrariness of his decision. On the other hand, it refers to the sovereign`s superiority over the rule of law since he has the power to identify the exception by taking it away from the juridical rule. In the light of this

and the editor of Dar Publications, Musa Nizam`s experiences in the 1990s are illustrative of how the legal ambivalence inflicted upon the Kurdish publishers materialized through the negation of the Kurdish publishers` work, products and even their very freedoms at that time.

> It felt like we worked both legally and illegally in the 1990s. The printing houses were busted in that period. They would recall the books, harass us, and seize our computers and ongoing work. For instance, the first publishing house we established –Zinar Publications- was founded in 1992, and it was closed down within two years. They harassed us a lot because of the books we published. In addition to the ongoing investigations, we received threats in that period. The owners of the publishing house had to leave the country since they were on trial. When the Zinar was closed down, we were able to publish only six books. We founded Ragihandin Publications in 1994. After Ragihandin, we established Qap Publications. We got our hands in this business in 1992. By 1997, three of our publishing houses had been closed down. Each publishing house was able to last for two years. Eventually, we established Dar Publications in 1997, and fortunately we have been able to sustain it up until now. (Musa Nizam, see Appendix, 10)

In the 1990s, the ambivalent legal status of publishing in Kurdish was a source of anxiety and fear for the publishers. On the one hand, whether their investments of time, energy and money to find and publish the classical and contemporary pieces in Kurdish would materialize or not was ambiguous in the insecure climate of the time. There was no guarantee for them to preserve their books from being banned and confiscated as well as to protect themselves from being sued with the accusation of propagating the ideas against the indivisibility of the state, nation and the homeland. On the other hand, there was plenty of examples that might qualify the sources of anxiety as the sources of fear for the Kurdish publishers. The first reason behind their fears was the fate of the previous attempts made by the politico-cultural entrepreneurs since the late Ottoman era. The owner and editor of Tene Publications,

line of conceptualization, the sources of the ambivalence of the legal status of the Kurdish publisher`s work and products might be found in the juridically-unbounded and arbitrary nature of the sovereign`s stance towards Kurdish publishing.

Nizamettin Seçkin`s early publishing experiences are illustrative of that anxiety and fear,

> At the time, we always acted out of the following concern: It was better than nothing to record any part of it in writing, save whatever we could from the fire. Which epic, which word? These should be recorded in writing. At the beginning, I remember that we would not feel relieved even when our books came out. Both Kurdistan and Jin were published here, in İstanbul…A few Kurdish researchers in Europe, some foreign researchers, and people who conducted studies on Kurds in the 1980s and 1990s somehow brought together the old issues of these publications and published them together. It is very interesting that when twenty, thirty issues of a journal were found in the libraries of Turkey, they could not be located and obtained. All of these issues were somehow acquired from Geneva, Paris, Berlin, Cairo, Damascus, Tehran, and Moscow, and then re-published. This state of affairs created a very profound fear in us. Yes, I made such an effort, took the risk; however, could it really be protected? We were only relieved upon learning that the two, three packages that we sent abroad reached their destination. Then we could say that that text was also saved. Therefore, we would cherish the foreign countries then. We would send books no matter who wanted them, even if they did not pay for it so as to ensure that the book could be found somewhere. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 11)

Even though the idea of sending books to abroad to save those from the possibility of destruction was offering a relief to the publishers, the mobility of those books across the borders was by no means easy up until the mid-2000s. Since these legally ambivalent books were hegemonically perceived as subversive and divisive objects, sending, carrying and receiving those were risky in a way that could lead one to get into trouble at that time. Comparing these books with bombs, Nizamettin Seçkin expresses how hard the cross-border mobility of the Kurdish books was,

> For example, bringing a book from Iraqi Kurdistan was more difficult and dangerous than bringing a bomb up until 2005. I am from Nusaybin. The Qamishli city of Syria is adjacent to Nusaybin. When you look at these two cities especially at night, you may think there is only one city. After we established the publishing house in 1996, there was a writer called Kone Reş in Qamishli, he called us and said: "There are a few booklets of Celadet Bedirxan published in the 1930s. I want to send them to you." I said fine, but how would he send them to me? It was a small booklet, a book of forty-pages. He took the book to Damascus through clandestine ways, because if he were to be seen on the way to Damascus during a search or so on, it could really lead to a great trouble. He then sent the booklet to Beirut from Damascus again through clandestine ways. From there, he sent the book to an

> address in Germany provided by us. We gave another address in Germany, because they would definitely check whatever came to our address at the time, and confiscate many of the things that arrived. From there, we brought the book here. As soon as we brought it, we had two photocopies of it, translated it, and then published it. Could you believe it? We got blood out of a stone till we could bring this book in İstanbul. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 12)

The mobility of the Kurdish books within the borders of Turkey was no easier at the time. Like the production of the books, the movement of those in the networks of circulation was putting at risk whoever took part in these networks. By pointing out the dependence of the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing on the discretion of authorities, the owner and editor of Deri Publications, Veysel Demirci`s remarks demonstrate how risky it was to distribute those stigmatized cultural commodities for both the publishers and their networks,

> Our friends who distributed our journal in the region were continually taken into custody at the time. Even though our journal was of a literary nature, our publication house did not have any connection with any illegal organizations, and the officials in the region knew this very well, but some of the officials still acted this way. This was also valid for the books we published. I have been repeatedly called to give a statement for this reason. (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 13)

Besides the juridical measures, the movement of the cultural commodities in Kurdish was also subjected to the extra-juridical sanctions - which has nothing to do with legality, but with the discretion of the administrative authorities. In other words, the Kurdish publishers, their products and whoever associated with those products were at risk of not only encountering the visible face of the state apparatuses but also the invisible face of those. The owner and editor of Behr Publications, Şeyhmus Yüksel`s experiences are worth mentioning in this respect,

> Although the state did not officially prevent us, we encountered various threats for a long time. For example, the bookstores that sold at least 50-60 copies of our every issue stopped selling our journal. When we dug a little deeper, we learned that they were threatened for selling the journal. One of the bookstores did actually place an issue of our journal in the store's

> window; they came to the bookstore and made the bookstore remove it from there. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 14)

Since the mid-2000s, the negation of the Kurdish publishers` work and products through the legal ambivalence has taken a different shape. On the one hand, the legislation of the EU Harmonization Laws in the 2000s removed or changed many of the legal clauses that had enabled the public authorities to bypass the formal freedom of publishing in Kurdish, in the name of legality, and had accordingly cast doubt on the legality of the publishers` work and products. On the other, with the rise of the political Islamism, the destabilization of the regime`s long-lasting stance towards its Kurdish citizens led to the opening of a space for the manifestations of the Kurdish identity, culture and language. Thanks to these developments, the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field have become relatively free from the juridical and extra-juridical constraints from which the publishers suffered in the 1990s. The echoes of the change in the legal ambivalence of Kurdish publishing can be observed in the publishers` encounters with the state in courtrooms. Nizamettin Seçkin`s remarks are noteworthy in this respect,

> Going to the state security court in 1990s was a very important part of our lives. It was a serious source of trouble. We did not want to come to the forefront over freedom of thought and over our cases in the state security council, because these overshadowed what we were doing. Now we are a little bit relieved in that respect. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 15)

The changes brought by the reformist climate of the 2000s have not only freed the Kurdish publishers from the juridical and extra-juridical measures significantly, they have also transformed the ways in which the press and the publishing sectors in Turkey were monitored. While those sectors had long been under by the General Directorate of Security`s supervision, they were brought under the control of the Attorney of Press with those reforms. The effects of this development have been quite positive for whoever engaged in publishing and press in Turkey, but especially

for the Kurdish publishers, whose experiences with the security forces were particularly traumatic. Veysel Demirci suggests how important that development was for the Kurdish publishers,

> One of the greatest things that AKP government has carried out is its handing over the control of publication to the Press Attorney Generalship. Previously, it was the Counter Terrorism Office that dealt with us. Just think about it, three policemen come to the bookstore from Counter Terrorism Office, and there are five readers inside. (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 16)

Despite these developments, it is nevertheless hard to claim that Kurdish publishing has been entirely free from the negation of its legal status. While the enduring forms of the juridical constraints have been perpetuating the legal ambivalence from which the publishers suffer, their work and products have still mainly been dependent on the discretion of the apparatuses of the state as well as the good-will of the political authority. Complaining from the not-yet-bridged gap between the formal and substantive conditions to enjoy the freedom of expression, the owner and editor of Dar Publications, Musa Nizam points out the multiplicity of the juridical sanctions delimiting and criminalizing not only the books in Kurdish, but also any expression that might count subversive or dangerous in the eyes of the state,

> They still take a statement down for books, because there is still the article 159 and 301. There are almost three hundred articles in Turkish Penal Code that could pull the books from the market. There is the seventh article, the law 3713. Which one should I mention? You cannot even be critical. Then you say that the ideas should talk. One day I asked my lawyer how many hearings I had attended until then. He calculated the number. I attended 425 hearings. And I was not able to attend 150 hearings since I couldn't make it on time. How could the ideas speak out? (Musa Nizam, see Appendix, 17)

4.2.2 Negation through marginalization: The worth of Kurdish books

The second constraint that shapes the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field is the negation of the worth of books in the Kurdish language. As producers of

cultural commodities, the Kurdish publishers are necessarily positioned within the field of the economy as well as the field of culture. Thus, they are subjected to the instituted market relations characterizing the economic field in general and Turkey`s publishing market in particular. Since the formal emergence of Kurdish publishing in the early 1990s, the politico-cultural entrepreneurs stepped into that field of cultural production in Kurdish have suffered from the marginalization of their works and products in the market mainly due to four reasons.

First, the Kurdish publisher`s work and products have usually been regarded as economically meaningless by what might be called "the market imperative." Reducing the worth of those cultural commodities almost exclusively to their exchange value, the culture industry of publishing has been either reluctant or indifferent to marketize Kurdish books since the demand for those has been too little to invest time, energy and most importantly money. As a result, those publishers and their products have been pushed to the margins of the marketplace. Second, the venues left to the Kurdish publishers have themselves been marginalized by the market imperative. The alternative distribution networks centered around radical, underground or avant-garde cultural products and independent bookstores have generally been unable to offer opportunities for the Kurdish publishers to maintain their businesses economically. These venues have either been economically insecure or been entirely closed to the stigmatized products of the Kurdish publishers. Third, the state-sponsored support mechanisms - providing considerable economic resources through wholesale book purchases from the publishing field in Turkey - have systematically excluded the Kurdish publishers particularly because their products have been regarded as subversive and divisive objects in the eyes of the public authorities. Four, the negation of the legal status of the publishers` work and

products through bans and confiscation rulings have exacerbated the economic marginality of those publishers both by criminalizing their commodities and by imposing fines on publishers. By being subjected to that multifarious forms of marginalization, the worth of the Kurdish publishers` work and products have systematically been negated on the ground of economy.

The major difficulty that the Kurdish publishers have faced in the marketplace is the problem of distribution. While they have made significant economic investments to produce Kurdish books, which they could hardly finance, their products have not been welcomed by the established publishing market in Turkey. Those cultural commodities have generally considered as worthless to disseminate via the networks of distribution, to circulate in the marketplace and to exhibit at most of the bookstores` windows and shelves. According to all of the Kurdish publishers interviewed in this research, the main reason behind the market`s indifference to their products is the monopolization of the networks of distribution in the hands of a few large-scale companies - both the companies in the publishing sector and the ones backed by big corporations in the media and finance sectors. Especially, the older generation of Kurdish publishers who have a previous experience in the publishing sector before the 1980s underlines how the monopolization trend has given rise to the closure of the market for their products. Şeyhmus Yüksel, for instance, expresses,

> In the past, before the 1980s, we used to have the list of bookstores found in every city that sold socialist books. We would send them our books; the books would come back. There were no intermediaries; we would work directly. Your book would be sold in two to three months, and then your cheque would arrive. We were imprisoned, and then we got out. We saw that this was not happening anymore after the 1990s. Most of the bookstores got involved in capital relations. You could either be a part of it or stand opposed to it. If you are opposed to it, you cannot survive. Therefore, most of them were integrated into this system and became a part of the distribution

> networks established by the capitalist circles. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 18)

With the transformation of the market through the monopolization, most of the actors in the publishing field in Turkey have become dependent on the companies such as Final, Alfa, D&R - all of which stand as the power hubs governing the circulation of books in the market by setting the norms of what is worth being distributed and what is not. While some of the alternative publishing houses such as İletişim, Metis, Sel and the like could manage to come together and formed their own distribution company, Punto, the vast majority of the publishers who do not produce the books fitting into the standards of the market imperative have suffered from being marginalized in the market. Since the availability of their products have been significantly delimited in the marketplace, the marginalized publishers have been mostly deprived of the possibility of enjoying any economic return that their products might create. Zeki Kenar, the editor of a prominent radical publishing house, Buruk Publications, expresses how the problem of availability restricted them economically,

> The distributor delivers whatever book he wants. When we publish a new book, he could either send the advertising regarding the book to his client or not. In other words, your book is like a side dish. He can do without it. Now if you go to D&R, you cannot find a single book by us. If you specially ask for it, they could tell you to come back and buy it in three days; however, they will never keep it on their shelves. If they did so, a book by us would sell a thousand in a month. Since they do not, we can only sell a book within six months. (Zeki Kenar, see Appendix, 19)

That is for sure that the situation of the Kurdish publishers has even worse than their radical and avant-garde Turkish counterparts. Even before being considered in terms of whether they convey marketable contents oriented towards the so-called consumer tastes, the books in Kurdish have been set apart from the all others - since they are linguistically different from those. Since the audience of them has been pretty

narrow, the distributers have generally been prejudiced towards these books by perceiving them not as cultural commodities, but as burdens. Şeyhmus Yüksel points out the reluctance of the major distributers,

> The audience of Kurdish is generally very limited. Since people do not know how to read and write in Kurdish, this business offers no economic gain. Therefore, the distributors are unwilling; they consider this as a burden. You will take it, distribute it, and then the books will come back to you. They do not come near it either. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 20)

Underlining the incompatibility of the major distributers` reluctance towards the Kurdish books with the professional business ethics, Veysel Demirci criticizes the profit-driven logic of those actors,

> Brother, I am going sell three hundred books from Doğan Publishing, why would I burden myself with your five books? That's how the distributors think. If he feels close to you, he may make an effort for only one book. If he respects what he does, he can make an effort for one book. However, he does not do this since he sees this as a commercial issue. (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 21)

Whether such a concern for professional business ethics has ever existed among distributors or not is a moot point. Nevertheless, one thing is for sure that the monopolization trend in the market has not only delimited the visibility of the Kurdish publishers, but also compelled them to rely on small-scale distribution networks as well as independent bookstores – both of which also suffer from economic marginalization because of their comparative economic disadvantage vis-a-vis the highly competitive major distributors. Therefore, even though these alternative venues have provided the Kurdish publishers with some visibility in the marketplace, these venues themselves have often been a source of insecurity particularly since the fate of the economic returns have mostly been ambiguous. By drawing our attention to the economic vulnerability of these alternative distribution channels, Şeyhmus Yüksel expresses,

> Small-scale distributors are risky. You give them your books, but it is unknown whether you can get your money or not. You go to a small-scale distributor so as to get your money for the books, and you see that he is gone. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 22)

By voicing similar concerns over the security of those channels, Arif Karakaya from Zanebun Publications goes even further and praises the major distributers in terms of the payment guarantee that they offer to the publishers,

> To collect the money on time. The most important aspect of the big companies' engagement with a certain business is the comfort it provides in terms of money. OK, they do not favor our books, and they also demand more discount but at least you can get your money. (Arif Karakaya, see Appendix, 23)

Besides being a source of economic insecurity, those venues have often been closed to the products of the Kurdish publishers generally because of the ideological concerns. Most of the Kurdish publishers have an experience of the ideologically-driven prejudices of some agents and bookstores in these alternative distribution networks which have prevented the distribution of their products in those venues. Pointing out the prejudices stigmatizing the Kurdish identity and language even in some radical left-wing circles, Şeyhmus Yüksel suggests how these perceptual barriers precluded the dissemination of his products,

> Some small-scale distributors approach this with a certain ideology. When you say something about being a Kurd or Kurdish, they approach you, including the socialist circles as well, as if you are being discriminatory, racist or separatist. They reject distributing your books. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 24)

A similar anecdote appears in the Islamist Kurdish publisher Veysel Demirci's experiences with the radical networks of distribution, ranging from socialist to Islamist circles. He states, "Since we publish Islamic books in Kurdish, we encounter two types of prejudice. The Islamist circles regard us as Kurdish, and the leftists consider us as religious. Thus, neither of them is willing to distribute our publications." (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 25).

The economic marginalization of the publishers` work and products is not merely limited to the publishers` relations with the actors in the book market in Turkey. The marginality of Kurdish publishing bears also upon the publishers` exclusion from the resources and opportunities distributed by the state-sponsored agencies aiming to support the wider field of publishing in Turkey. The most notable one of those agencies is Turkey`s Ministry of Culture that offers the greatest economic support to publishing houses through wholesale book purchases for the public libraries it runs. Although the economic resources and the visibility opportunity have been enjoyed by publishers of all sorts including even some radical and avant-garde ones, the Kurdish publishers have been almost systematically excluded from those especially because their products have been considered subversive and divisive. Musa Nizam's remarks show how his products have been negated through the indifference of the Ministry,

> The Republic of Turkey makes arrangements in various issues ranging from supporting the publishers financially to buying books to the libraries; however, the Kurdish publishers are always excluded from these arrangements. When we apply to the Ministry of Culture, we always receive the same answer: "We cannot give an affirmative answer to your request since we do not have the funds." When you look at the other publishing houses, you see that the Ministry buys a thousand, two thousand books from them and distribute them to the libraries. There are a total of 1447 library that are subordinated to the Ministry of Culture; however, the Ministry does not even consider buying Kurdish books from independent Kurdish publishers and placing them in the libraries. (Musa Nizam, see Appendix, 26)

Similar examples can be found in the book fairs organized by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which bring the Islamic book publishers and their audience together. As an Islamic Kurdish book publisher, Veysel Demirci states how he has been excluded from those events for years,

> I have applied to the book fairs that the Directorate of Religious Affairs organizes in Sultanahmet, in Kocatepe for the last thirty years. They do not accept us. I take the documents, apply to them; but they tell me there is no place left. They lie to us. Do not I see that new publishing houses participate

> in the fair each year? We are an Islamist publishing house as well. Whatever they publish, I publish it in Kurdish. They cannot admit that they do not accept us because of our publications are in Kurdish. (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 27)

In addition to being marginalized both in the marketplace and in the state-sponsored distribution of economic resources and visibility opportunities, Kurdish publishing houses have frequently suffered from the economic costs of being subjected to the juridical constraints. Specifically, the bans and confiscation rulings enforced by the courts have not merely negated the legal status of Kurdish books under juridical scrutiny, but also the economic statuses of both those cultural commodities and their producers. One of the most striking examples of the economic cost of being legally negated comes out in Şeyhmus Yüksel`s experiences with the lawsuits against the periodicals he published, which were intentionally left inconclusive,

> Our lawsuits were generally left inconclusive since they ended up in European Court of Human Rights. In other words, they left those cases in abeyance. For example, they opened a case for every issue of our journal, *Serbesti*, but they never concluded any one of them. So, on the one hand, they were able to pull our journals from the market and destroy us economically and on the other hand, they prevented us from claiming our right in European Court of Human Rights. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 28)

4.2.3 Negation through exclusion and neglect: Kurdish books in the public perceptions

The third constraint that shapes the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field in Turkey is the negation of the publishers` work and products by the public perceptions. In this sense, there are mainly two types of negations to which the publishers are subjected: (1) the negation of the very existence of Kurdish publishing field by the hegemonic public perceptions, and (2) the negation of the need for the publishers` work and products by the Kurdish speaking public. In the former regard,

that is for sure that neither the state`s long-lasting denialist, repressive and assimilationist stance towards the Kurdish identity, culture and language, nor the armed clashes between the state and the PKK have left the hegemonic public perceptions unaffected. Long before the formal emergence of Kurdish publishing field in the early 1990s, the instituted public sphere in Turkey had already been built upon the negation of any manifestation of Kurdish-ness. Moreover, the emergence of Kurdish publishing field came amid to the radicalization of the Kurdish oppositional politics in the early 1990s which gave rise to the scapegoating of Kurds in the public sphere, at a level even beyond the sheer denial of their ethnocultural identity. Under these circumstances, the Kurdish publishers` work and products have been stigmatized as subversive and divisive activities and objects, not merely in the eyes of the state but also in the hegemonic public perceptions. Therefore, despite being granted with a formally legal status, Kurdish publishing has been excluded from the public sphere in Turkey either passively through indifference or actively through rage. In the experiences of the Kurdish publishers, this antagonistic dynamic can be observed in their encounters with the Turkish public in the book fairs, which sometimes put their security in danger. Niyazi Tekin, the owner and editor of Tav Publications, expresses how tense these encounters could be,

> For instance, we wanted to attend the fair in Bursa; however, the organizer told us that the fair included the more nationalistic, Islamist publishers of Bursa and the ones who generally published on education. Therefore, he told us that they could not guarantee our safety in this fair, and we should better not attend it. (Niyazi Tekin, see Appendix, 29)

When I met with Tekin at the Izmir Book Fair for an interview, the aforementioned threat to the Kurdish publishers` security had already been materialized with some of the visitors' verbal threats and their demonstrations of rage against the very presence

of Tekin`s exhibition stand as well as the representation of his ethno-cultural identity in the event. Tekin narrates those encounters in a pessimistic tone,

> Even in İzmir book fair, people may come by and harass us. This morning, someone came to the stand, and said: "All the Kurdish people know Turkish. So why Kurdish?" He looked at the book, and then threw it away upon seeing that it was in Kurdish. Another one told us that they would crack the skulls of the BBP members. For example, someone came yesterday morning and told me that he was a commando in Şırnak where the words failed. I told him that I did my military service in Gelibolu. I mean even if this state of affairs is to enter a process of resolution in political terms, half a century is needed so that it could be solved in the eyes of the people. (Niyazi Tekin, see Appendix, 30)

On the other hand, the Kurdish publishers have not only been subjected to the hegemonic perceptions in the instituted public sphere in Turkey. They have been faced with the indifference prevalent among the Kurdish speaking public, as well. Having suffered from the denial, repression and assimilation of their identity, culture and language, an overwhelming majority of the Kurdish speaking public has predominantly been indifferent to the work and products of the Kurdish publishers. First of all, the majority of the Kurdish speaking public is not even literate in this language. Hence, they are unable to accommodate themselves in the semiotic universe of the literary Kurdish, and accordingly they cannot take part in Kurdish publishing field as the audience of those cultural commodities. Secondly, the majority of the Kurds does not have any motive – except from identifying themselves politically or affectively with books in their mother tongue – in order to gain literacy in their mother tongue and become consumers of those products due to several reasons, including the devalued image of Kurdish, its exclusion from the public sphere and the economy. Thirdly, the use of Kurdish is still often considered subversive and divisive depending on the spatio-temporality of the contexts of the use, the discretion of the public authorities and the good-will of the bearers of the hegemonic perceptions. Lastly, the economic hardships and poverty from which

many Kurds in the region suffer prevent them from having any interest in cultural consumption in general, and books in their language in particular. All in all, the publishers` work and products have been negated by the widespread indifference of the audience that they target, or rather they aim to construct. The publishers have mixed feelings in expressing the effects of that dynamic on their activities and products. Nizamettin Seçkin, for instance, sounds a bit judgmental in stating,

> A general industrial fair was opened here in 1999. We were the only one who attended the fair as a publisher, but we also brought all the books that were popular in Turkey at the time. I never forget this, our entire turnover for the 10 days did not even equal to 1000 TL. When we brought authors to the festival organized here in 2000, they told us "What does the author do here? Factories should come here. What would the writer do?' For the factory to come, the author should come first. The authors will come, the journalists will come, a cultural normalization will be secured, and then when everything is complete the factory will arrive. Do not ever expect any factory now. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 31)

Nevertheless, Seçkin furthers his judgmental criticism against the juxtaposition of "the factory" with the cultural products and events in Kurdish by underscoring the reasons behind that indifference prevalent among the Kurds in an empathetic manner,

> If you think about the atmosphere in Diyarbakir ten years ago, it was a little awkward to be interested in literature, in cultural matters in an environment where unsolved murders took place in the streets, the people were taken under custody and tortured for unfounded reasons, people's rights and honor were trampled. It was a luxury in an environment where people's lives were at danger, and they were starving. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 32)

No matter how empathetic the publishers are, or can be, the indifference and neglect among the Kurdish speaking public towards their work and products have certainly decreased any possibility of economic and symbolic return that their cultural production in that language could generate. For many of the publishers, this situation has recently undergone a transformation. In this regard, the democratization reforms of the late 2000s have been crucial in terms of changes they brought into the

perceptions of both Turks and Kurds. For instance, according to the owner and editor of Zanebun Publications, Bayram Ercan, particularly the launch of the TRT 6, the first state-sponsored public television service broadcasting fulltime in Kurdish language, represents a symbolic break with the past when the use and visibility of Kurdish in the public sphere were systematically criminalized and considered as illegitimate,

> The opening of TRT Şeş eliminated certain barriers both for Turks and Kurds on a symbolic plane. Before this, there was a serious amount of antipathy. Business of publishing created antipathy in people just like talking Kurdish in the street made people glare at you. TRT Şeş provided a certain relief in this regard. However, this change is still on a symbolic plane. Kurdish publishing is still a site of struggle. I can say that people are more like missionaries. (Bayram Ercan, see Appendix, 33)

4.3 The paths of resistance

Subjected to these multiple forms of negation on the grounds of legality, economy and public perceptions, the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field have been largely limited in scope and depth. While being confined to a sphere of activity the parameters of which have been fundamentally set through the external constraints, the politico-cultural entrepreneurs who have stepped into that field of cultural production since the early 1990s have followed some paths, first, to occupy the space that is formally open to their cultural production activities in that language, and then to endure under the pressure of the constraints imposed on their work and products. Drawing on the publishers` accounts on how they have managed to start and keep publishing these books, I identify mainly four paths (or tactics and strategies) that they have followed to escape from subjection and to overcome the negation of their work and products. First, all of the Kurdish publishers have defined or redefined the meaning of their activities to cope with the multifaceted antagonism

rendering their endeavor meaningless. In this sense, framing the peculiarity and significance of their cultural production has been crucial in terms of allowing them to assert the peculiarity of their activities and to distinguish themselves from other cultural producers in terms of the motivations they have and the attachments they form. Second, all of the publishers have relied, albeit at differential extends, on some sort of a moral economy to be able to keep engaging in cultural production in that language. Suffering from the impacts of being negated on the grounds of legality, economy and public perceptions, the publishers` reliance on the relations of solidarity allowed them both to minimize the costs of maintaining their enterprises and financing the already-minimized costs through the economic investments of the actors in the relations of solidarity Third, all of the publishers have mobilized their networks to disseminate their products and to make them visible through the publicity generated by these networks. Since they have been almost systematically excluded from the marketplace, their reliance of those networks appears as both a necessity and a partial solution to escape from the antagonisms negating the economic and symbolic meanings of their work and products. Fourth, the vast majority of the publishers have employed Turkish to finance their cultural production in Kurdish which otherwise could not, or could hardly, be sustained as a necessarily economic enterprise. Although there is a small number of publishers who have refrained from relying on Turkish since they have seen it as a concession from the cultural resistance for their culture and language, most of the publishers are quite pragmatic in using Turkish not only to make money, but also to spread their word on the Kurdish Question in the public sphere in Turkey.

4.3.1 (Re)defining the meaning of the activity

The first resistance strategy that comes out in all of the publishers' accounts is the (re)definition of the meaning of the activity that they carry out. Against the negation of the legal status, economic worth and public legitimacy of their work and products, the Kurdish publishers have asserted the meaning of their activities by underscoring its peculiarity. What makes their work and products peculiar have found justifications on mainly two grounds: the relation with the so-called economic interest, and the relation with the temporality of returns. In the former regard, the publishers have not perceived themselves as economic agents seeking as much profit as possible in their investments. Rather they have defined themselves as idealist entrepreneurs, or servants, struggling to serve for their culture and language without caring the necessarily economic nature of their activities as much as they can. In the latter regard, the publishers have not consider their work and products as investments oriented towards any possible economic return in a foreseeable future. They rather suggest that their endeavors have been targeting a distant future that might last forever. While this is true regarding the economic returns given the negligibility of the demand for their products, it does not entirely apply to the symbolic returns that might be generated through their endeavors both within the field of Kurdish publishing in particular, and in the wider field of Kurdish oppositional politics in general. Nevertheless, that is fore sure that the (re)definition of the publishers` relations with both the economy and the temporality of their futures have been crucial for the making of Kurdish publishing field against the external constraints.

That is particularly visible in Kurdish publishing field`s relation to the instituted book market which has persistently forced the Kurdish publishers to rethink the meaning of their economically meaningless, or irrational, endeavors.

Because their work and products have generally been considered as worthless, subversive and divisive by the market imperative, the publishers have had to (re)define their identities not as profit-seeking cultural entrepreneurs, but either as the servants of Kurdish culture and language or as the bearers of the cultural resistance against the negation of those. For example, this line of (re)definition of the work and products of Kurdish publishing appears in Veysel Demirci's words,

> We should not look at our publishing commercially. If you look at it like that, you can go find something else and make more money. What we aim to do here is to be of service –it is a service that we have deemed as our duty. There is an immense emptiness in Kurdish publishing and no one fills this gap. We try to fill this gap. (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 34)

The necessity of such shift in the identity of the Kurdish publisher from the profit-seeking cultural entrepreneur to the servant of the wounded culture and language rests on first the diagnosis of the gap and then the idealization of the duty of filling that gap. In this sense, the Kurdish publishers seem to be driven by some sort of ethics of responsibility that has convinced them about the necessity of publishing books in Kurdish and have accordingly driven them to assume that duty. The significance of that duty has situated the Kurdish publishers to the vast temporality of the past and the future of Kurdish publishing. On the one hand, there has been a gap since it could not be filled for centuries; and on the other, the gap would have probably remained as a gap for the coming centuries if the publishers have not engaged in filling it right now. The ethics of responsibility that has driven the Kurdish publishers cultural production appear in Nizamettin Seçkin words as follows,

> We compiled all the works by Cigerxwin; it has not been done in a hundred years. We did the same for Ehmede Xani as well –it has not been done in a hundred years, and maybe it won't be done in the next three hundred years. If you don't do it, it does not happen on its own. We did it in gold, in silver, in new Kurdish, in old Kurdish, in Turkish-Kurdish, in English. I mean in every plausible way one can think of… In the end, the reader buys it even if it is

> only one or s/he buys one of them if there are ten books. There are only a few people who buy ten of them. Only the collector does that. And I don't know any collector other than me in Kurdish society. We really tried to do these things in a framework that only the states could and this effort found an answer –I mean considering the case of Kurds. However, if you ask me, is it really appealing commercially? No, it is not. If I were to show only the slightest of my efforts that I have dedicated to Kurdish to something else, I could earn two-three times more. In other words, I have never been in the habit of making calculations. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 35)

The responsibility that the Kurdish publishers have assumed can be observed in the discourse of self-sacrifice which appears in almost all of the publishers` conceptions of the meaning and significance of their work and products. In this sense, the self-sacrifice denotes not only the loss - of security, money, time and energy - which their work and products generate but also the struggle that is dependent on the loss at present, to establish and secure the future of the Kurdish culture and language. Although the future-oriented character of the publishers` self-sacrifices seem to rest on their optimism or rather cruel optimism, it is also accompanied by the second-thoughts about whether it is possible to establish and secure the future of Kurdish culture and language only through those self-sacrifices. In this sense, how hope and hopelessness have been intertwined in the publishers` idealism can be observed in Muhammet Salih's words,

> You cannot teach a nation its language through publishing. This is a problem of the system. Institutions should be formed. For example, if Kurdish people were able to learn their languages at school today, then we would have no problem left. Before I went into this business, I was a teacher of philosophy. I sold my house and car so that I could be a publisher. Then, maybe I would be able to buy a house and car thanks to publishing. We approached this issue in an idealistic manner. I hope that our idealism will not be needed in the near future, and our efforts will find an answer. (Muhammet Salih, see Appendix, 36)

4.3.2 The moral economy of Kurdish publishing

The second resistance strategy that the Kurdish publishers have employed to deal with the negation of their work and products is the reliance on the moral economy of Kurdish publishing. The publishers have not been alone in (re)defining the meaning and significance of their activities and in making self-sacrifices to establish and secure the future of their culture and language. Both the symbolic boundaries underlining the peculiarity of their struggle and the costs of carrying out the cultural production in Kurdish have also been assumed by the actors, other than the publishers, who have either taken part in Kurdish publishing field or have been in the relations of solidarity with the publishers. From the authors to the translators and to the editors, almost all of the actors within Kurdish publishing field have, at differential extends, shared the costs of producing books in that language either by expecting no economic return, or by being content with a negligible one. On the other hand, the relations of solidarity formed around the publishing houses either on the basis of the memories of the previous collective political activism experiences or on the basis of the current political allegiances have provided considerable material supports for the maintenance of the publishing houses economically. Frequently, those solidarity relations have also been extended to the families of the publishers by turning wives, brothers and sisters into secretaries at the offices and managers at the bookstores, if the publishers own any. Altogether, these relations of solidarity have been driven not by economic, but by extra-economic motives, which have provided the publishers with the ground to maintain at least the minimum material conditions of their businesses. The reliance on that moral economy has certainly not been a choice for the publishers. Şeyhmus Yüksel, example, expresses the necessity of his reliance on those relations by breaking down the economic cost of publishing a book,

> For example, if the price of a book is 10 TL, we give it to the distributor from 5 TL. The publication, typesetting, paper, and printing expenses of the book equal to 3 TL –if we were able to publish 100.000 instead of 500 or 1000, then these expanses would be much lower. Even though we do not engage in this job for accruing profit, we still need a continual money flow so as to keep the publishing house afloat. So, we imposed a tax upon our wealthy friends. 100 TL from one of them, 50 from the other one. In this way, we were able to survive. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 37)

While as a former member of the revolutionary Kurdish political organizations Kawa, Yüksel have managed to maintain his business thanks to the economic contributions made by his old revolutionary friends, he has also relied on the support of the authors to finance his cultural production in Kurdish. As he states, "Authors are paid royalties up to 8 to 10%; however, most of our writers –most of our Kurdish writers- could not get their royalties. Some of them even contributed to the publication of their book financially" (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 38). Similarly, Bayram Ercan also expresses the significance of the authors` contribution to the costs of publishing by pointing out its commonality,

> The author generally pays for the publication expenses of his/her book. This is the general state of affairs for Kurdish publishing houses. Most of them do not say this out loud, but this is what happens. Of course, we do not publish books by anyone who give us the money. (Bayram Ercan, see Appendix, 39

The Kurdish publishers` reliance on those contributions has certainly crucial in enabling them to maintain their cultural productions in Kurdish. Nevertheless, just like any other type of an economic relation formed on the grounds of morality, the relations of solidarity between the publishers and the authors in particular and anyone offering support has not merely made Kurdish publishing possible but also cast doubt on the professionalism and ethics of the book publishing by hindering the autonomization of that realm of activity. That is why, Ercan draws our attention to the commonality of the Kurdish publishers` dependence on the contributions made by their authors by emphasizing by emphasizing his distance from the

unprofessionalism of those. Similar to Ercan, a few of the Kurdish publishers, especially the independent ones, discursively distinguish themselves from those relations of solidarity by underscoring their publisher identities through the discourse of professionalism and business ethics. Nevertheless, given the constraints imposed upon their work and activity, the Kurdish publishers` conditions of existence have still been predominantly characterized by their dependence on that moral economy. By pointing out the Kurdish publishers` inability to accumulate economic capital through the cultural production, Şeyhmus Yüksel expresses states, "Now, things are gradually proceeding toward institutionalization, capitalization. Since we cannot increase our capital and build new relationships upon this sacrifice, we keep oscillating" (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 40).

4.3.3 Mobilization of networks

The third path that the Kurdish publishers have followed to build their field of cultural production is the mobilization of networks. Since their work and products have been marginalized in and generally excluded from the marketplace, the Kurdish publishers have almost no choice other than mobilizing their networks to spread their products and to make them visible. Given the politicized nature of their endeavors, these networks have been organized usually around oppositional political circles and organizations that rest either on the memories of the previous experiences of collective political activism or on the existing political ideologies, imaginaries or sensitivities. While the Kurdish books have been stigmatized either as worthless objects or as subversive and divisive ones in the marketplace, these cultural commodities have been subjected to different modalities of valuation and evaluation

in those networks. Generally speaking, it might be said that those modalities are no different from the ones that have motivated the Kurdish publishers to produce cultural commodities in Kurdish. Unlike the vast majority of the actors in the established book market in Turkey, the actors positioned in those networks valorize those cultural commodities not merely on the basis of their economic worth, but primarily on the basis of their wider political and affective meanings. These meanings can best be observed in the relations of distribution organized around Kurdish publishing houses which are either organically or pragmatically linked to the Kurdish political circles and organizations. In the former sense, some Kurdish publishing houses appear as the hubs of the cultural production in Kurdish by standing on the already constituted political networks. Veysel Demirci`s description of his milieu and how that milieu has facilitated the economic maintenance of the publishing house is worth mentioning in this respect,

> We have friends with whom we work, see each other, meet, discuss; we have a circle. We distribute the journal that we publish through this circle. Maybe only a few people work here; but we have many friends who act as our representative and we have a distribution network that we ourselves constituted in many cities. These friends are sincerely close to us. We directly send the books to places such as a bureau of a friend, another one's home… They give them to 15-20 people. (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 41)

What Demirci means by "sincerely close" can be regarded minimally as the closeness in proximity on the grounds of the shared meanings and beliefs attached to the Kurdish books, and maximally as the political imaginary commonly held among the Kurdish Islamist people who are either the audience of the religious education institutions, medreses, or as the participants of those. As a member of that milieu, Demirci`s company Deri Publications have secured the venues which are crucial for reaching out to the Kurdish Islamist audience and, accordingly, for maintaining its economic existence. Of course, not all of those network mobilization practices in

Kurdish publishing field have been carried out through organic linkages. Although the inherently politicized nature and meaning of the act of publishing in Kurdish usually positions the publishers organically in one political circle/organization, or another, it is also possible to observe pragmatic network mobilization practices in that field. Especially the Kurdish publishing houses that are relatively new in the field seem to be relatively independent of the already constituted political circles. While their relative independence have enabled them to mobilize multiple political networks at once which usually are not compatible with each other, it has also provided them with an access to resources and opportunities such as grants, wholesale book deals as well as a broader audience for their products. In this respect, the case of Tene Publications is noteworthy since it is the only publishing house that has been able to mobilize the networks of very different Kurdish political circles ranging from Islamists to socialists and the Kurdish nationalists. Moreover, it has also had close links with the transnational Kurdish cultural institutions such as the Kurdish Institute in Paris and the Cultural Ministry of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq – all of which have provided not only venues for distribution of book in Kurdish, but also the funding opportunities and economic resources through wholesale purchases made by those institutions.

Whether they are mobilized organically or pragmatically, the networks that Kurdish publishing houses have depended on are not entirely free from economic concerns. Although these networks offer venues that are similar to ones provided by the moral economy - in terms of the solidarities formed through political and affective attachments to the cultural products in Kurdish - the relations formed in those bear also on the economic interests of the actors who take part in the distribution of those cultural commodities. Of course, given the risks of distributing

those stigmatized commodities, the economic interests in the publishers` networks are undoubtedly different from the ones in the marketplace. Moreover, how they are defined and negotiated seem to depend on the specificity of the relationalities formed in and through those networks. Veysel Demirci's words are illustrative in this respect,

> We already send the books to our circle with a certain discount. They decide on the price. Some of them send us the earnings without making any profit. It is because some of them are teachers, officials… They don't need the money. And some of them sell them with the marked price and keep the difference. I mean when the books are out of our hands; it is left to their discretion. (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 42)

4.3.4 Financing Kurdish through Turkish

Another resistance strategy that has been employed by most of the Kurdish publishers is the strategy of financing of the cultural production in the Kurdish language through the one in Turkish. Whereas the books in Kurdish have almost categorically been excluded from the instituted market relations, the established networks of distribution and sale, the books in Turkish have made their ways in the market relatively easily, by being categorically oriented to the Turkish-literate public. Since the scope of that audience is way larger than the audience of the Kurdish books, they generally offer considerable economic returns and accordingly enable the Kurdish publishers to finance the economic-loss-generating cycle of their cultural production in Kurdish. Indeed, the strategy of financing one book with another is not peculiar to Kurdish publishing field; the analogous examples might be found in the publishing strategies of the Turkish avant-garde, underground and radical publishing houses which sustain their production cycles by financing their

off-stream cultural production with the ones oriented towards the so-called mainstream consumer taste.

Despite that resemblance, however, the case of the Kurdish publishers differs significantly from their non-Kurdish publishing counterparts since neither the books that are supposed to finance the Kurdish books have usually been oriented towards mass-consumption, nor have they generally been free from the prejudices of the market agents. This has been partly due to the stigmatized identities of the Kurdish publishers but has not been exclusively limited to that. The Kurdish publishers` cultural production in Turkish has usually been driven by the political motive of making the Kurdish Question visible in the public sphere. Hence, let alone targeting the so-called mass-audience, they have not even been reaching out a significant part of the public sphere in Turkey, but rather the politicized Kurdish speaking public. As a result, they have not been able to generate significant profits to grow the publishers` businesses. On the other hand, those books have quite often been a source trouble for the publishers since they have been considered as serious threats by the apparatuses of the state primarily because they target a wider audience by being written in Turkish.[92] In short, the Kurdish publishers` books in Turkish have often cost them more than they could provide.

On the other hand, no matter how economically necessary and politically meaningful it is, publishing books in the Turkish language often appears, in the Kurdish publishers` accounts, as an activity that has been accepted reluctantly. This reluctance has been expressed either as an anecdote from the times of the publishers` initial engagement in Kurdish publishing, or as a declaration of their stubborn

[92] For a detailed illustration of the scope of the juridical repression on the freedoms of expression and publishing in general, and the bans, confiscation rulings, criminal fines and lawsuits against the Kurdish publishers in particular, see The Turkish Publishers Association's report (2014).

resistance against making any concession from their cultural resistance for Kurdish culture and language. Bayram Ercan`s words illustrate the former line of expression by pointing out the necessary complementarity of Kurdish and Turkish for making his business economically possible,

> In the end, Kurdish books tags somehow behind Turkish books. Not just for us, it must be the same for the other publishers as well. We did not publish any Turkish books at first. We said that we would only publish in Zaza language and Kurmanci, and we would resist. And we were insistent on that. We could only resist for four years. We saw that it was not possible. Then we started to publish Turkish books on Kurdish issue. (Bayram Ercan, see Appendix, 43)

Unlike Bayram Ercan and the vast majority of the Kurdish publishers, the new generation of publishers who have stepped into that field in the early 2010s seems tenacious to not to make any concession to the hegemony of Turkish language. Defining his approach as a resistance against "reality," the owner and editor of Kiteb Publications Muhammed Salih seems firm in stating,

> The audience that you can reach is very large when you publish in Turkish; however, we decided at the very beginning that we would not include Turkish in our publishing practice as a principle. The reality forces you to publish in Turkish; but we were not going to publish in Turkish even if we had to close down the publishing house. And it seems that we won't have to close down since Kurdish publishing is developing. (Muhammed Salih, see Appendix, 44)

Even though Salih refrains from it in the name of being principled, that is for sure that publishing in Turkish has offered a lot to the Kurdish publishers first in financing their cultural production in Kurdish language and then in making their names, the brands of their companies and even their products in Kurdish visible especially among the Turkish-literate Kurdish-speaking public. Furthermore, these publishing activities have already been (re)defined in the discourses of the publishers with reference to their transformative political meaning to make the alternative bodies of knowledge on the Kurdish Question visible the public sphere in Turkey.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented an analysis of how Kurdish publishing field has been made against the external constraints imposed upon the work and products of publishers. Since the formal emergence of the field in the early 1990s, the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing have been externally shaped by publishers` antagonistic relation with their others. Although they have been formally granted with the freedom of publishing in Kurdish since 1991, Kurdish publishers` substantive conditions of existence have been negated on the grounds of legality, economy and public perceptions. While the ambivalent legal status of their work and products have negated their publishing activities, the market imperative has offered them space only at the margins of the established book market in Turkey. Moreover, they have also faced, on the one hand, with the hegemonic public perceptions that either denied, or excluded their endeavor through rage, and, on the other, with the indifference and neglect of the Kurdish-speaking public. This multifaceted antagonism has levelled the Kurdish publishers not only in their subjections to those forms of negations, but also in their resistance against those. To deal with the negation of their work and products, they have followed mainly four paths to be able to keep producing Kurdish books. They have (re)defined the meaning of their work and products to assert the peculiarity and significance of their endeavors beyond conceptions of both the economic rationality and the temporal boundaries of the present. To endure the multifaceted negation of their work and products and the marginality inflicted on them, they have relied on the moral economy and have mobilized their networks to disseminate their products and generate publicity. Since they have not been able finance their cultural production in Kurdish, they have generally relied on their cultural production in Turkish.

CHAPTER 5

THE CONTENTIOUS POLITICS OF KURDISH PUBLISHING

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I delve into the second moment that has shaped the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field in Turkey, which is the agonism(s) among the actors within this field of cultural production. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, the series of antagonisms that either overtly, or covertly delimit the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field have subjected whoever engaged in publishing Kurdish books, in more or less the same way. Suffering from the negation of their work and products on the grounds of legality, economy and public perceptions, the Kurdish publishers have taken actions against the negation by following similar paths of resistance. Although this antagonistic modality has leveled the publishers vis-à-vis their others, and have accordingly situated them in the common ground of cultural resistance against the negation of their identity, culture, and language, it is nevertheless hard to find them aligned with each other in that ground of commonalities. On the contrary, the Kurdish publishers carrying out that specific form of cultural resistance has always been in conflictual relations with each other within that field. Especially when the dynamics of the making of Kurdish publishing are observed microscopically, that field of cultural production looks not merely as a political field that has been constituted antagonistically against the external constraints, but also as a field of politics which has been characterized by the agonism(s) among the actors occupying differential positions within there.[93] In

[93] According to the German jurist Carl Schmitt (2008), the concept of the political denotes the antagonism in the friend and enemy relation where the existence of the enemy is negated not because

the first part of this chapter, I will define the question of autonomy in Kurdish publishing field to lay the ground for an analysis of how the involvement of the broader field of Kurdish oppositional politics in Kurdish publishing has given rise to the conflicts among the publishers. In the second part this chapter, I will scrutinize the manifestations of those conflictual relations among the publishers by focusing on (1) the politics of alignment and non-alignment, (2) the politics of visibility, and (3) the politics of dissociation.

5.2 The question of autonomy

The question of autonomy has always been at the core of Kurdish publishing field since its formal emergence in the early 1990s. What makes the autonomy of that field is a question can be defined in mainly two respects. Firstly, the question of autonomy is theoretically not specific to Kurdish publishing field, but common to all fields of relationalities. Structured around specific causes, rules, norms, and values, every field rests on a particular conception of autonomy that makes it irreducible to other fields of relationalities. Nevertheless, neither those conceptions of autonomy nor the irreducibility of a field to another are absolute. On the one hand, since all fields are embedded in the vast realm of the practical world, their principles of autonomy are necessarily relative in distinguishing sphere of relationalities from the others. On the other hand, the very structure of the relationalities organized around certain autonomy principles is not merely characterized through the conformity of all actors to those principles which are set by the dominant actors, but also by the

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of his/her innate characteristics, but because of the very relationality formed antagonistically. Different from the political, the concept of politics refers to the agonistic competition among actors in line with their respective interests over resources and positions.

competition among the actors in the pursuit of instituting their autonomy principle. All in all, the autonomy principle is a question itself both as the ground and as the object of politics among actors in all fields of relationalities. Indeed, Kurdish publishing as a field of cultural production is not free from that question.

Secondly, the question of autonomy that is theoretically common to all fields of relationalities has taken a specific shape in Kurdish publishing field - due to the necessarily political character of the publishing activities in that language. As I have mentioned in the previous chapters, the Kurdish publishers produce and disseminate books in a language that has long been denied, repressed and assimilated. Hence, the subject matter of their cultural production is profoundly political. Moreover, it is not the publishers themselves who have for the first time politicized the language in and through which they produce cultural commodities. When Kurdish publishing field formally emerged in the early 1990s, not only the literary activities in Kurdish but also any manifestation of Kurdish identity, culture, and language had already been politicized in the hands of a multiplicity of Kurdish political circles and organizations centered around diverse ideologies, imaginaries, and sensitivities. In this sense, it might be said that Kurdish publishing field was born into the field of Kurdish oppositional politics. It is the actors within that field of politics that have enabled many of the politico-cultural entrepreneurs to engage in cultural production in Kurdish. By underlining the political nature of publishing in Kurdish, the owner, and editor of Tene Publications, Nizamettin Seçkin expresses the constitutive role of politics with these words,

> One of the most important characteristics of Kurdish publishing sector is its political nature. I do not say this as a criticism; it is necessarily like this. It is because it is not just about your capital, you also put your life at risk, and only a political movement can do that. The entire history of Kurdish publishing is like that. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 45)

It is not a contingency, but a necessity that has made Kurdish publishing activities historically dependent on the Kurdish politics. As Seçkin suggests, the actors within the field of Kurdish oppositional politics have enabled many Kurdish politico-cultural agents to take the risks of engaging in publishing activities in that language. That enabling role might be observed in two ways. First, those political actors have provided the publishers with the economic resources, organizational opportunities and production and distribution networks – all of which have generally been beyond the reach of individual politico-cultural entrepreneurs. Second, those actors have certainly been a source of motivation for many publishers to take the risks associated with that activity, by identifying their work and products with the broader political causes of those political actors.

Despite its enabling role for the making of the publishing field, the Kurdish oppositional politics has also set the limits of that field of cultural production by casting doubt on its autonomy. Of course, the autonomy of the field does not have any value intrinsic to itself. However, it bears significance for the institutionalization of the publishing activities through the formulation of the rules, norms, and values - specific to the production and dissemination of books in Kurdish. Since they have been historically dependent on the Kurdish political actors, the publishers have usually not been able to distance themselves from both those actors and their spheres of influence. Accordingly, they have not been able to articulate the autonomy principle in their field of activity. The publishers` inability to assert their autonomy from the broader field of the Kurdish oppositional politics have been particularly problematic regarding the contentions within the political field – where each of the actors articulates the Kurdish identity with different ideologies, imaginaries, and sensitivities that are generally in opposition to one another. As a result, from the

struggles for hegemony to the deep-seated animosities among the political actors, the conflicts within the Kurdish oppositional politics have been translated into the field of Kurdish publish field by turning that realm into a site of contentions.

5.3 The contentious politics within the field

In the shadow in the Kurdish oppositional politics, the publishing field has been made not merely as a field of cultural production built through the resistance against the external constraints imposed upon the publishers` work and products, but also as a field of contentions among the publishers carrying out that resistance together. In the publishers` experiences, the contentions within the field can be tracked down on mainly three different but intertwined grounds: the politics of (non-) alignment, the politics of visibility and the politics of dissociation.

5.3.1 The politics of (non-)alignment

The first and the most important dimension of the contentions within Kurdish publishing field is the politics of (non-)alignment which has profoundly shaped the distribution of the positions among the publishers. Rather than being distributed with regard to the specificities of the publishing as a form of cultural production, the positions within that field have generally been defined by the publishers` alignments and non-alignments with the actors in the Kurdish political field. This has certainly been due to the question of autonomy that lies at the core of Kurdish publishing field. The dependence of Kurdish publishing field on the Kurdish politics has given rise to the occupation of the power positions within there by the publishers who are

either organically linked to or indirectly affiliated with the political actors. While these publishers have enjoyed the opportunities offered by those actors, they have generally been disconnected from each other because of the cleavages among the actors with whom they have been aligned. Accordingly, from the networks of production and distribution of Kurdish books to the publicities generated by them, the venues of Kurdish publishing have remained discrete in a way that has set barriers against the development of the publishing field beyond particular political groupings.

Furthermore, the occupation of the power positions within the field by the politically aligned publishers have not merely created a fragmented field, but also produced asymmetric power relations among the politically aligned and non-aligned publishers. Even though the politically aligned publishers have been situated at the core positions, they have not exhausted the field alone. Especially since the mid-1990s, a small number of politico-cultural agents have also entered in the field without relying on any organic links to, or explicit affiliations with, the major political actors in the Kurdish oppositional politics. Though they have been devoid of the economic resources and organizational opportunities provided by those actors, these non-aligned publishers have made their ways into the field either through pragmatically mobilizing the networks available to them or through the solidarity relations that they have had in their personal and political circles. These circles have been quite different from the venues of the political organizations since they have been loosely assembled either through the memories of the previous collective political activism or the primarily cultural practices carried out beyond politics. Despite being much narrower in scope than the ones available to the politically aligned publishers, those venues allowed the individual publishers to make

considerable advancements within the field by becoming the focus of attention with their books and authors. Those advancements, however, have not been free from the contentions within the field. The owner and editor of Dar Publications, Musa Nizam points out those contentions with these words,

> In the past, the publishing was based on the organizations. After 95-96, this sort of publishing has lost ground. Individual publishers came to the fore: Tene, Behr, our publishing house. These publishers took precedence over the organization-based publishers in terms of dominating the market, becoming the focus of attention, and with regard to their interests and authors. This, not being tied to an organization so to speak, was a very important step for people to think freely. This has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it improves independent thinking and encourages discussion, because the organizations have imposed a sort of monolithic thinking on people. The organizations have dulled the people's own talents, their skills in improving their own capacity; they taught them to think inside the box. However, being organized could pave the way for the distribution of books, but this did not happen. On the contrary, one of them tried to prevent the other from distributing its books. It was saying love me instead of them. (Musa Nizam, see Appendix, 46)

The fragmentation in the publishing field by the political alignments has delimited the development of the field in two ways. First, those alignments have prevented the actors from transcending their particular political groupings by getting organized in the field of cultural resistance they occupy. Second, those alignments have ward off the establishment of a smooth space within the field, which could make available the already-scarce economic resources, organizational opportunities, and production and distribution networks, to all actors carrying out the cultural resistance. All in all, these drawbacks have negatively affected all of the Kurdish publishers, but especially the individual publishers who have found themselves marginalized in the webs of power relations in the field.

To deal with their marginalization in Kurdish publishing field, the individual publishers have drawn symbolic boundaries to distinguish their positions from the other publishers and to affirm the meaning and virtues of the positions that they have

taken in the field. Just like the (re)definition of the meaning of their work and products vis-à-vis the constraints upon the publishing in Kurdish, those boundaries have enabled the non-aligned publishers to assert their presence at the margins of the field. In the accounts of these publishers, the symbolic boundaries are almost always expressed through the discourse of independence. Despite the commonality of the emphasis on being an independent publisher, what it means and why it is crucial for them are justified on mainly three different grounds: (1) the independence as a value, (2) the independence as a professional need and (3) the independence as a matter of fact.

Some of the individual publishers distance themselves from the rest of the actors within the field by emphasizing the virtue of being independent. While the whole field has been centered around the politically-aligned publishers and their politically-driven interests, being independent has been defined as a moral ground through which they distinguish their positions with a genuine concern for the freedom of expression. The owner and editor of Behr Publications, Şeyhmus Yüksel`s words exemplary in this respect,

> For example, Trav Publishing House belongs to PSK, Kurdistan Socialist Workers' Party of Kemal Burkay. There was Tekoşin; it then became Biranın. These are the publishing houses controlled by PKK. These have nothing to do with us. Our publishing house did not have any relations with these groups and people, because our publishing house does not promote these political activities. As a publishing house, we try to contribute to the Kurdish language, culture, and literature by adopting an independent manner. We think that the coming together of independent, individual publishers is valuable. However, these groups did not want to do that because they did not want to approach anyone that they could not take under their control. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 47)

What lies beneath Şeyhmus Yüksel`s moral universalism attributing intrinsic value to being independent is of course nothing other than the exclusion he has faced within the field. Even though he runs one of the oldest Kurdish publishing house, as

a former member of the once-powerful political organization Kawa, Yüksel has been strictly excluded by the now-powerful political actors, particularly the ones aligned with the PKK. He expresses the price he has paid as an independent publisher by underlining the significance of pluralism,

> It is also difficult to remain independent in this sector. Everyone descends upon whoever is independent. Pluralism is very important. Whatever we lost, we lost because of narrow-mindedness. People say that, "I am right, everyone else is wrong, and they should be destroyed." Our community has come from such a mentality. Therefore, its intellectual life has been paralyzed. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 48)

Different from the moral universalism of this line of distinction, some of the individual publishers distinguish themselves from not only from other actors but also from the politics at all. Although they have acknowledged the necessarily political nature of their work and products, they have nevertheless underscored the need for being independence from politics for the professional ethics of publishing. In this sense, the involvement of politics in the publishing field has been considered as a threat against the professionalization of the publishing activities in Kurdish – since the politically aligned publishing bears the risk of either reducing the publishing house to a political propaganda outlet, or decreasing the quality of the products through organizational control and favoritism. Nizamettin Seçkin expresses how significant being independent was,

> We did not establish this publishing house for politics. This was one of our fundamental principles at the beginning. We founded this publishing house to be publishers, not for being a ladder for politics or something else. We are the first private publishing house in this sector; the other ones are more organization-oriented. This is a decision we have taken at the very beginning. We are not going to be a state economic enterprise. There were discussions regarding state economic enterprises at the time. When I decided to found the publishing house, a very close friend of mine was sardonic. He was wondering how we would do it without the support of a political movement. However, this is not something that an immense political movement would do. What you refer to, as an immense political movement is not more intellectual than the French Communist Party. They could not do it either because it is not something that the parties could do. It is something that the

> individuals, people can do. It is the same in the entire world. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 49)

Shifting the focus from the moral and professional conceptions of independence, some of the individual publishers justify their independent positions as a matter of fact. Rather than identifying themselves simply as Kurdish publishers, they have distinguished their independent positions as either religious or dialect-based Kurdish publishers. By targeting specific audiences, they have not only been distant from the contentious politics within the field but also enjoyed some sort of autonomy since they have not been considered as threats against the political alignments in the field. For instance, the owner and editor of the Kurdish Islamist Deri Publications, Veysel Demirci states how different his position is by distancing himself from the others on the basis of the religious character of his cultural production,

> Our publishing is different from the other publishing practices. It is different in terms of its worldview, and the audience that it appeals to. It is different in terms of our thoughts, our view of the world. While emphasizing our difference, I do not mean that the others are wrong, and our doors are closed to them. Our relationships with all Kurdish publishing houses are much better than their relationships among each other. For example, some publishing houses cannot establish relations with anyone; however, we have ongoing relations with all of them. And since our publishing house is also a bookstore, we also have relations with other publishing houses in that regard. But our publications are Islamic. Our publishing practice, I mean being a Kurdish publisher with an Islamic identity is unrivalled in the history of the Republic. (Veysel Demirci, see Appendix, 50)

Similar to Demirci, the owner and editor of Zanebun Publications, Bayram Ercan justifies his position with reference to the dialect-based publishing he carries out. Ercan`s cultural production has been centered around books in the Kırmançki-dialect[94], and he has accordingly occupied an independent position in Kurdish

[94] By naming Kırmançki as a dialect of Kurdish, I do not mean to take a side in the deeply political controversy over whether Kırmaçki is a dialect, or a separate language. The reason behind my use of the word "dialect" is the respondents` own conceptions about Zaza identity and language. While these conceptions are rejected by some circles claiming the existence of Zaza identity as a distinct ethnic group and Zazaca as a language on its own, the literary production of my respondents are based on the grammatical rules centered around the Kurmanci grammar formulated by Celadet Bedirhan.

publishing field. Rather than taking side with the political groupings in there, Ercan distinguishes himself by being identified with the supra-political intellectual working group organized for instituting the literary standards of that dialect. Nevertheless, although the group has been organized simply around the cause of revitalizing the dialect, their activities have not been entirely free from the contentions both in the publishing field and in the broader field of Kurdish oppositional politics. Bayram Ercan`s words are worth mentioning in this respect,

> Our publishing house is the outcome of a working group. The publishing house was established when people with different political views gathered and worked together. In this group, there is an ex-communist and also an Islamist. This is not something that Kurdish people encounter a lot and accept because you have to have a political idea. Our only common ground is language, and since Kurds are a very politicized community, even keeping this ground becomes difficult. Publishing in Kırmançki is an entirely different problem… For example, one of our writers goes to Bingöl to give a talk. He expresses his own ideas. Then the hell breaks lose. I tell that he is not our friend, but our writer; but they do not get it. Then I thought that they might do something to him so I told them that he was our guy. We deal with these sorts of things. (Bayram Ercan, see Appendix, 51)

All in all, the individual publishers have dealt with the contentious politics of alignment within the publishing field by asserting their independence on the grounds of moral universalism, professional ethics and the distinctiveness of the nature of their publishing activities. Even though these assertions have enabled them to maintain their presence in that deeply fragmented field of cultural production, it is hard to claim that those boundaries have helped them to align among each other on the common ground of independence. While the boundaries they have drawn postulates different meanings attached to their positions, the circles and networks available to them have allowed them to maintain their individual presences without forming alliances not only with the political actors, but also among themselves. This has, of course, contributed to the reproduction of the fragmented state of relations in Kurdish publishing field.

5.3.2 The contentious politics of visibility

The contentious politics of (non-)alignment in Kurdish publishing field has not merely characterized the position-takings and symbolic distinctions among the actors. It has also shaped the conditions of visibility in the field, profoundly. Even though Kurdish publishing field has been established through the publishers` cultural resistance against the negation of their identity, culture, and language, the field has not been exempt from contentions over visibility among the actors carrying out the resistance. While this conflictual dynamic has affected all actors in the field by deepening the fragmentation among them, it is especially the independent publishers who have been suffered from it. Since those publishers have been devoid of the economic resources, organizational opportunities, production and dissemination networks that are available to the politically aligned publishers, the politics of visibility in the field has subjected them by taking an antagonistic form. In the experiences of the independent publishers, the manifestations of that conflictual dynamic ranges from exclusion to devaluation, censorship to even lawsuits against their work and products. Having experienced some of those, the owner and editor of Behr Publications, Şeyhmus Yüksel states,

> The pressure did not only come from Turks, it came from Kurds as well. For example, we started publishing books regarding PKK. This time, PKK threatened us. Our books were not sold in bookstores that were close to PKK Regarding certain issues, for example the ones concerning the improvement of Kurdish language, culture, and rights, PKK may give the same reflex as the state. Behr Publication is one of the first and most important publication houses of Kurdish publishing; however, it was not allowed to be a part of the book fair organized by Diyarbakır municipality. They would not give us a stand, and the people working there prevented the sale of our books. Why did they do so? It is because they saw our publishing activities as a threat. In their eyes, we were probably more dangerous than the state itself. For this reason, they never hesitated to align with the state against us. (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 52)

Though he is one of the oldest publisher who has invested in Kurdish publishing since the early 1990s, Yüksel has been almost systematically excluded from visibility in the field since his work and products have been considered as a threat against the hegemonic political actor in the Kurdish politics, the PKK. In this respect, he has not been alone in experiencing the repercussions of the political actors` involvement in Kurdish publishing field. The owner and editor of one of the most prosperous independent publishing house, Tene Publications, Nizamettin Seçkin tells a similar story by pointing out how his work and products in the field have been invisibilized in the field. Emphasizing the pioneering role he played in introducing the cultural events in Kurdish to the region, he complains about being excluded from the festivals organized by the Peace and Democracy Party[95] (BDP, hereafter) - governing the Municipality of Diyarbakır at the time – with these words,

> The idea of a festival in this city [Diyarbakır] emerged through the writers we brought here. However, when the festival began, we were the first publishing house that they censured and eliminated. The Diyarbakır Municipality Festival has been organized for ten years now, but they have not included us. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 53)

The negation of Seçkin`s work and products have not been limited to those events. After the Kurdish publishers began showing up in the book fairs organized by the TÜYAP in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana and more recently in Diyarbakır, Seçkin and some other independent publishers have found the opportunity to gain some visibility in the field. Since they have been strictly excluded from the venues controlled by the political actors, these publishers have made significant investments in those fairs to assert their presence in the field. Yet, despite the scope of their investments, their work and products have been largely neglected, devalued and even censored by the political actors. Complaining about how his contributions to Kurdish

[95] Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi.

publishing were disregarded and censored by the media outlets aligned with the PKK, Seçkin says,

> I brought Fatma Savcı, one of the most original voices of Kurdish, who spent 12 years in jail to İstanbul from Sweden. I arranged a conference with her in Diyarbakır. I brought for example a Syrian Kurd to Istanbul through Paris. He is the most popular writer here for the time being alongside Fawaz Husen, Jan Dost… S/he is read a lot and his/her books are published decently. Many publishing houses such as Doğan Publishing wants to publish his/her Turkish translations. ANF, Roj TV, and certain other media organs provide the entire programme for the fair excluding ours. They don't make any special news about us; this is their problem. It may not be newsworthy for them, and I cannot say anything against this. It is at their discretion. However, they provide the programme of the fair and there are only two guests from abroad. Yapı Kredi brought one of the guests from France. Yapı Kredi is the biggest bank of Turkey. Moreover, it was probably not Yapı Kredi itself who sponsored the expenses of this author. The French consulate must have supported them financially. However, I was able to bring a Syrian Kurd to a place like Diyarbakır for a week, and they did not include this in their programme. Roj TV, Gün TV, Dicle News, Özgür Gündem… None of them talked about this. An outsider would think badly of this man that we brought or s/he would think what Tene did to be treated like this. I really want to know why. All they care about is to be the sole ruler of this dumpster. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 54)

While being faced with the negation of their work and products both on the grounds of legality, economy, public perceptions and in the field of Kurdish publishing, the independent Kurdish publishers have suffered from the feelings of anxiety and fear since their investments were at the risk of failing to reach out to the audience. Seçkin expresses those feelings in narrating his experiences in the book fair in Diyarbakır,

> In this atmosphere, we were going to organize a conference in Kurdish. Before the conference, I was thinking that in case this event was sabotaged, how could I look at this man in the eye? Let's forget about the expenses, stress, and everything else that we had to go through… We worked so hard, and if we were not able to fill this hall for 300 people, then shame on me. We came to the conference, and we were all surprised. All the chairs were taken, and lots of people were standing. A lot of things were written about this event. All in all, it was the most crowded event of the fair. There, I thought to myself that the photograph of this event meant that they had no force upon us, that they invalidated themselves. What difference would it make if *Özgür Gündem* wrote about it or if Roj TV made news about it? Doğan Hızlan wrote about our event for Diyarbakır fair before the event took place. A man like Doğan Hızlan… We have never sent him any information regarding our books, or any of our books. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 55)

Seçkin`s anxiety and insecurity are not simply driven by the exclusion and censorship he was faced with in that event. His tense relations with the politically aligned actors in particular and with the actors, in general, have led him to get into trouble even with the state several times. Even though both those actors and Seçkin have been in the same site of cultural resistance against the constraints imposed upon their identity, culture and language, they have not refrained from employing the very apparatuses that have subjected their field of activity, against each other. In this respect, among many other incidents, the following story told by Seçkin is worth mentioning to demonstrate the scope and depth of the contentions within the field,

> In PKK's important circles, in *Özgür Gündem*, *Özgür Politika*, they made news stating "Tene printed illegal copies." What they were talking about was Amir Hassanpour's book. Amir Hassanpour sent us a part of this book in 1997, and we published it like that; however, the book was not finished. This was very current, important for us. It was a book about state policies and language rights with regard to Kurds, so we decided to publish it. The book was published, and then pulled from the market by state security court. In other words, it was banned. When the book was finished, it was a huge problem to translate it since it was a very long book. We found good translators, but the money they demanded was not something I could afford. So we had to deal with the translation by dividing it among postgraduate students around us and so on. I gave them the photocopied version of the book. Then I had to go through things that I have never experienced before. They made a complaint about us; they busted our storehouse for keeping illegally printed copies. A lot of things were written in *Özgür Gündem* from their own point of view. I was threatened. Eventually, we had to make a call to *Özgür Gündem*. Amir Hassanpour warned them several times through e-mail and telephone. He told them that it was his fault, and the publishing house had the permits. Still they continued with the cross fire, and at last I called them to say that it was enough. In the end, this was a bureaucratic issue between two publishing houses. It was very ugly for a newspaper such as *Özgür Gündem* to have acted like this. Two publishing houses could not share a book named *Kurdistan*. In the end, I sent a disavowal through court; that's how I got the explanation published. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 56)

The conflicts that have sometimes taken an antagonistic form in the field are certainly not specific to the case of a couple of independent publishers. Rather, these have been at the core of the field constituting the conditions of existence of Kurdish

publishing, which have already been constrained by that field`s antagonistic relations with legality, economy and public perceptions. While the publishers have been necessarily situated on the same plane, their commonality has hardly gone beyond their resistance against the negation of their identity, culture, and language. Accordingly, for what they have resisted seems to remain as a moot point in the shadow of the contentions driven by the involvement of the Kurdish oppositional politics.

5.3.3 Politics of dissociation

The fragmentation of the field has significantly delimited the development of Kurdish publishing by warding off the formation of the field-specific institutions, particularly associations. The question of association among the publishers comes to the fore especially with regard to the maintenance, propagation, and professionalization of the field in the face the negation of the publishers` work and products. In fact, all of the publishers interviewed in this research voice the pressing need for establishing a Kurdish publishers` association that might set the rules, norms and ethics of publishing in that language, regulate the distribution networks of those cultural commodities, propagate the Kurdish culture and language and, before all else represent and advocate their collective interests. Nonetheless, the attempts to form such organization have not been able to reach any conclusion since the emergence of the field in the early 1990s. The main reason behind the failure is undoubtedly the conditions of existence of the field in the shadow of the external constraints imposed upon it. Since most of the Kurdish publishers have run their companies under economic hardships, it has not been possible to finance the

foundation and maintenance of such organizations. On the other hand, even before those hardships, the publishers have been too divided to come together under the umbrella of an association. Şeyhmus Yüksel points out those reasons behind the question of association in the field with these words,

> Since establishing a publishers' union is a serious economic burden, we have not tried to do it. We cannot even rent a bureau and pay for its expenses, which amount to 3-5 thousand liras. More importantly, the Kurdish publishers are divided within themselves; they are divided into two, even three camps. There is an intense ideological struggle among Kurds, and this struggle constrains you as well. For example, people affiliated with PKK do not want to be in the same room with you. Other than that, PSK people are like that too. These are the publishing houses of organizations. And what else is there? (Şeyhmus Yüksel, see Appendix, 57)

While it has not been possible to go beyond the boundaries fragmenting the field by the publishers, the formation of association has been seen as something that could only be done either by a messianic actor yet-to-come or by an external actor that is respected by all in the field. Given the contentions within the wider field of Kurdish oppositional politics, it seems the possibility of forming an association depends on the coming of the messianic actor. As an independent publisher who has tried to initiate the founding of an organization that would bring the publishers together, Musa Nizam expresses his frustration,

> Publishers' Union is a great necessity. I think we are not the only one who starve for this, all the Kurdish publishers do. Everyone is on one's own; there is no unity. There is a Ministry of Culture in Kurdistan. I personally went to visit them so that they could be leaders in this issue. I told them that we should have meetings. We also organized meetings among ourselves; however, nothing worked. For example, when a few of the publishers stay back, then all of them stay back. Some of them say that their job is to produce books. We should have established this union long ago. Actually, we should have established something worldwide because knowledge is universal and national. On the national level, it would be a great help for the institutionalization of this business if the Kurdish publishers had an organizational network, a structure in which the near eastern people would be in solidarity with each other, and an ethics of book production would be formed. This could have even contributed to finding authors, revealing documents and so on. Everyone could have been each other's light; but it did not happen. (Musa Nizam, see Appendix 58)

The series of failures in uniting the actors resisting against the negation of their identity, culture, and language has led some publishers in the field to take a cynical stance towards organizing the field. For instance, though he acknowledges the pressing need for an association among publishers, Bayram Ercan takes a cynical stance towards those attempts,

> What would Kurdish publishers do even if they came together? Everyone is involved with his/her own publishing practices, has their own distribution network. There have been some attempts to establish a representative body, a common distribution network and so on; however, these attempts failed. Whenever these attempts have taken place, they have always failed. Since we are Zaza, we have retreated to our corner. (Bayram Ercan, see Appendix, 59)

In the light of all those, it might be said that the question of autonomy of Kurdish publishing field from the Kurdish oppositional politics has significantly restricted the already-limited conditions of existence of that realm of activity. While the publishers have been confined into their conflictually defined and distributed positions, networks, circles and organizations, the field of cultural production that they have built by struggling against the negation of the Kurdish identity, culture and language have not been institutionalized - beyond the particular political ideologies, imaginaries and sensitivities.

5.4 The need of organizing culture

Being subjected to both the external constraints negating their work and products and the internal conflicts limiting the conditions of existence of their activities, the Kurdish publishers have been significantly incapacitated to revitalize their culture and language through their literary production. On the one hand, their investments in Kurdish publishing have not been able to build the Kurdish-literate audience; the high-quality authorship, editorship and literary criticism; the cultural events oriented

towards the Kurdish audience, and before all else a common language policy. Certainly, this has not been surprising under the circumstances their work and products. On the other hand, the contentious politics in Kurdish publishing field has not allowed them to bracket their ideologies, imaginaries, and sensitivities to get organized in order to deal with the pressing problems of their field. Specifically, they have not even been able to institutionalize their field of activity even though they have carried out these activities as a form of resistance in a universe hostile to the use and reproduction of Kurdish. While suffering from the impacts of those drawback on their activities, the publishers expressed their thoughts about the question, what is to be done? Appearing in the accounts of all publishers interviewed in this research, the question itself implies the acknowledgment of the fact that something must be done. Nonetheless, the formulations of answers to that common question vary across the publishers situated at different positions in the field. In other words, the differences among their conceptions about the past and the future of Kurdish publishing as well as the measures that should be taken in their field of activity reflect their positions in relation to the field of the Kurdish oppositional politics. In this sense, the main distinction in the publishers` conceptions and formulations can be tracked down with a look at their alignments and non-alignments with the political actors.

In their conceptions of the problems of the field as well as their solutions to those, the politically aligned publishers adopt the discourse of the Kurdish political actors by jumping into the macro-political issues, from which the Kurdish culture and language have suffered for decades. Without referring to any of the issues specific to his immediate field of publishing activity, the editor-in-chief of the pro-PKK publishing house Biranın Publications, Metin Erol expresses,

> This question can only be resolved in one way or another with the state`s recognition of the Kurds` right to education in mother tongue. And this is inevitable. They cannot deceive that people with elective courses. They cannot stand against the dynamism of this people, the resistance of this people, anymore. When they accept this reality, they will be obliged to give us our rights, they will be obliged to recognize Kurdish as an official language in the constitution. (Metin Erol, see Appendix, 60)

In fact, the political demand for the right to education in mother tongue and the constitutional recognition of Kurdish as an official language are not specific to Metin Erol's conceptions and formulations. All of the publishers within the field voice those demands out loud in one way or another. Nevertheless, most of the publishers, especially the non-aligned ones, go much beyond those demands in terms of the specificities of their conceptions about what should and should not be done in Kurdish publishing field. For instance, the owner and editor of Peyiv Publications, Nurettin Adem states his concerns about why the Kurdish politics refrained from using the opportunity of the elective-classes in the Kurdish language,

> It is ludicrous to put elective courses so that one can learn his/her own language in his/her own country. What is required is education in one's mother tongue. Even the discussion of this subject is grave. However, I think the Kurds should have definitely used the elective course opportunity. They could have done that. Everyone could have started like that. Unfortunately, they did not take this chance. (Nurettin Adem, see Appendix, 61)

Some other non-aligned publishers further this critical tone by questioning whether the Kurdish political actors have any concrete policy for the Kurdish language. For example, by emphasizing how wounded the Kurdish language is, Nizamettin Seçkin complains about the non-correspondence between the demands made by the Kurdish political actors and their actual mode of engagement in developing policies to build the cultural infrastructure of the future that they demand,

> We are talking about a language that has been banned for decades even in daily life. This has created destruction on our language. We have been experiencing its results, and we will have to deal with these problems for a while. However, this is not the job of a few publishing houses. There is a serious problem here. When we look at the things that those people who seem

> to be the owner of this language, who always appear in the forefront when it comes to laying claim to this language, you do not see anything serious. They are not even aware of the framework we are talking about. It is of course very important to organize a meeting for one's right to his/her mother tongue; however, what are you going to do if your demand is acknowledged? That is the difficult part… No one thinks about that; no one works for this end. You have such a large social base, organize a meeting for education in the mother tongue, include tens of thousands of people in it; however, you can't even sell a thousand books. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 62)

As an independent publisher marginalized by those political actors, Seçkin voices his criticisms by leaving us with the question of whether the Kurdish political actors should be involved in the field of cultural production or not. While he implies that the powerful political actors could initiate the long-term policies for revitalizing the Kurdish language, he also underlines how indifferent they were to the pressing need for those policies. Seçkin`s critical voice gets even harsher in his comments on the activities of those actors in Kurdish publishing field. By drawing our attention to support provided by those actors to Kurdish publishing field, he claims,

> Some publishers attempt to do certain things by being guided by municipalities; but you can't do anything through their guidance. Even though I have also voted for them, the BDP Municipalities, to be honest, proved to be harmful for the Kurdish culture rather than beneficial. They are definitely not inclusive, and they make serious discriminations. First of all, they are not transparent at all. How they operate, according to which criteria they support certain publishers and publish books are a riddle. Their perspective regarding this field is sketchy, not serious. It involves favoritism. It is based on corrupting the Kurdish writers and intellectuals, running things with a few pennies. (Nizamettin Seçkin, see Appendix, 63)

These harsh criticisms definitely reflect Seçkin's conflictual relation with those actors. In this respect, he is not alone in the field where many independent publishers voice their resentfulness and cynicism towards the doings and non-doings of the Kurdish political actors - both in the publishing field and in the broader realm of culture. Taking a slightly different stance from those critical approaches, the owner and editor of Kevan Publications, Selahattin Erdal distances himself from the

contentions by acknowledging the constitutive role the Kurdish oppositional politics in the publishing field and demonstrating its limits in that field, at the same time,

> The political motivation is quite high, but the politics already did what it could. Political mobility and support is one thing; this is reel politics. However, literature is something else; it appeals to the entire world. What is called politics provides you with an environment; however, it is the duty of the people of culture, people and institutions who develop the cultural policies to change and transform the cultural texture of that environment. Kurdish movement organizes the readers, and by doing so fulfills a great gap. Given the existing political environment, and within the limits outlined by the law and so on, the Kurdish movement tries to do the best it could; however, it is not enough. They must know that this is not enough. I mean when you tell an event that took place in Kurdistan geography, and do not imagine how this event will be connected with a peasant in Mexico, then there is a problem there. Otherwise, it is definitely possible to build a huge literature on these political dynamics; however, we suffer from constipation in turning these dynamics into literature. This bothers me a lot. (Selahattin Erdal, see Appendix, 64)

Though Erdal declares the limits of the Kurdish politics in developing cultural policies, he nevertheless argues that the problem could only be solved by the massive mobilization led by the political actors addressing the urgency of developing cultural policies. Erdal express that urgency and how comprehensive those policies should be in a very detailed way,

> There are things that need to be carried out immediately. For example, as I have told, a Kurdish-Kurdish dictionary and a spelling book should be prepared. Then there should be institutions, structures, and organizations so as to introduce world literature to Kurdish, and Kurdish to world literature. This is not an issue that could be handled only with cultural centers and semi-professional conservatoires. One should designate a plan by way of congresses and conferences. The fundamental issue is the organization of culture. The culture should be organized, institutionalized. Only in this way can we create something lasting. For this end, we should take into consideration the cultural policies, and the changes in the world. Certain plans that are appropriate for this geography should be prepared by coming together with the people and institutions working in this field in the world, by talking to them, drawing advantage from their experience. This is the essence of the matter. If you ask me, the universities will resolve this issue. A university in which the language of education is Kurdish should be established as soon as possible. We need academics to work in this field. Majority of people, including me, have tried to do something by learning our own language through our own means; however, we need an academia. The issue is about taking the urgent steps forward. If you do not take these steps,

> you cannot proceed. Naturally, it is not possible for you to take these steps without acquiring the support of the existing Kurdish power. The role of politics naturally manifests itself here. Therefore, certain steps should be taken for the institutionalization of this arena by mobilizing a particular political mechanism. In other words, plans such as five-year immediate action plans should be designated, and implemented accordingly. (Selahattin Erdal, see Appendix, 65)

Without a doubt, given the contentious dynamics within Kurdish publishing field, whether such a comprehensive cultural policy can be formulated and implemented or not is questionable. Nevertheless, one thing is sure, especially for the independent publishers, the question of autonomy that lies at the core of Kurdish publishing field ward significantly off even the possibility of voicing the need for developing those by getting organized beyond the particular political alignments and non-alignments. Accordingly, not only the existing state of relations among the actors but also the hopes for prospective plans for the future of those cultural production activities seem to be stuck into the conflictual economy of position-takings, symbolic distinctions and the question of dissociation in that field of cultural resistance.

5.5 Conclusion

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, Kurdish publishing field has been necessarily close to the broader field of Kurdish oppositional politics. Given the long-lasting denial, repression and assimilation of the Kurdish identity, culture, and language, the necessity that has made the Kurdish political actors part of the publishing field does not come as a surprise. Moreover, it is the enabling role of those actors that has made the emergence of Kurdish publishing field possible. Nonetheless, this has not been without a cost. Since the publishing field has been built in the shadow of the Kurdish oppositional politics, the publishers aligned with the political actors have dominated

the field by occupying the core positions thanks to the economic resources, organizational opportunities, production and distribution networks. What is more, the field of Kurdish politics has itself been divided by the particular ideologies, imaginaries, and sensitivities – each of which is articulated with the Kurdish ethnopolitical identity in differential ways. Accordingly, Kurdish publishing field has been formed not only against its others negating the publishing activities in Kurdish but also been shaped by the contentious politics among the actors. While the contentions have given rise to the exclusion and marginalization in the field, the field has been fragmented through the politics of (non-)alignments, visibility, and dissociation among the publishers. All in all, the conditions of existence of that field of cultural production have been significantly limited in a way that has prevented the institutionalization of those activities.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The question of language has always been at the heart of the antagonism between the Republic and its ethnoculturally Kurdish citizens. Since the Turkish nation-state was built through an ethnocentric national imaginary, the linguistic difference of the Kurdish community has both been the object of the state`s repressive and assimilationist policies and a resource for the politicization of the ethnocultural identity of the Kurds. Despite its centrality in that antagonistic relation, however, the question of language has either been neglected or treated as a secondary dimension of the Kurdish Question for a long time. It is relatively recently that the language dimension of that issue has been brought under the sociological scrutiny from multiple angles. This research is the product of an attempt to contribute to that emerging body of social scientific literature by shedding light on how Kurdish publishing field emerged and has been made under the conditions inimical to the use and reproduction of the Kurdish language.

In the shadow of the denialist, repressive and assimilationist policies negating the very existence of the Kurdish language, neither Kurdish publishing nor the literary activities in that language could found the conditions of possibility to emerge as fields of cultural production for decades. While even the oral use and reproduction of the language were subjected to both the juridical and extra-juridical constraints and the growing hegemony of the Turkish language, the construction of the literary Kurdish and the cultural production in that that were limited to the discontinuous and disorganized endeavors of the politico-intellectual activists either in the diaspora or

in the underground/clandestine politico-intellectual circles. Accordingly, let alone producing, disseminating and consuming literary products in Kurdish, even the literary basis of the language could not be instituted as a hegemonic semiotic ground that could accommodate the Kurdish-speaking public in Turkey for a long time.

Kurdish publishing field has formally found the conditions possibilities of emergence and development with the transformation in the state`s long-lasting denialist, repressive and assimilationist stance towards the Kurdish identity, culture and language. Rather than being a break in the state`s policies, that transformation refers to the gradual, painful and complex change in the state`s policies, from a predominantly repressive mode into a predominantly governmental one. While the former modality was based on the state's overt and, more or less, coherent exercise of the policies of linguicide aiming to eradicate the Kurdish identity and language by leaving no room for those in the public sphere in Turkey, the latter one is based on a more or less subtle and incoherent implementation of those policies providing Kurdish identity and language with ambiguous spaces at the margins of that realm. Although it is hard to claim, in Turkey`s turbulent political climate, that the repressive modality has been set aside in the state`s approach to its ethnoculturally Kurdish citizens, it can nevertheless be argued that the restrictions on the Kurdish language have been considerably eased – especially in the 2000s and early 2010s. It is thanks to the juridical changes that Kurdish publishing formally emerged as a field of cultural production and has expanded at a slow, but an unprecedented pace in the history of modern Turkey.

Despite the formal freedom that the Kurdish publishers have enjoyed since the partial-lift of the ban in 1991, however, the substantive conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing field have been negated on the grounds of legality, economy and

public perceptions. First of all, their work and products have been in a legally ambivalent status, given both the enduring juridical constraints employed to bypass the freedom of publishing in Kurdish and the extra-juridical measures leaving the publishers to the discretion of the administrative authorities. Secondly, the publishers have been subjected to the negation and marginalization of the economic worth of their work and products in the marketplace, by being both excluded from the distribution networks and compelled to lean on the precarious distributers at the margins of the economy. Thirdly, they have been faced with the negation of the legitimacy of their work and products not only in the hegemonic public perceptions, in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the Kurdish speaking public. Under these circumstances, the making of Kurdish publishing field has been dependent on a set of discourses and practices of resistance that has enabled the publishers to maintain their activities. From (re)defining the meaning of their work and products to relying on the moral economy of their circles, mobilizing political and personal networks to financing their Kurdish books with the Turkish ones, the Kurdish publishers have followed multiple paths of resistance to make their field, against the multifarious constraints imposed on their activities. All in all, even though they have not usually been confronted by the state`s out loud "No!", they have been subjected to a multiplicity of negations that has turned their field of cultural production into a site of cultural resistance.

Although the multifarious negations have leveled the publishers vis-à-vis their others, and have accordingly situated them in the common ground of cultural resistance against the negation of their identity, culture, and language, it is nevertheless hard to find them aligned with each other in that ground of commonalities. On the contrary, the Kurdish publishers carrying out that specific

form of cultural resistance have been in conflictual relations within the field that they have struggled to build. The main reason behind the contentions lies on the question of autonomy of Kurdish publishing field. As I have pointed out, Kurdish publishing field has been necessarily close to the broader field of Kurdish oppositional politics. Given the long-lasting denial, repression and assimilation of the Kurdish identity, culture, and language, the necessity that has made the Kurdish political actors part of the publishing field does not come as a surprise. Moreover, it is the enabling role of those actors that has made the emergence of Kurdish publishing field possible. Nonetheless, this has not been without a cost. Since the publishing field has been built in the shadow of the Kurdish oppositional politics, the publishers aligned with the political actors have dominated the field by occupying the core positions thanks to the economic resources, organizational opportunities, production and distribution networks. What is more, the field of Kurdish politics has itself been divided by the particular ideologies, imaginaries, and sensitivities – each of which is articulated with the Kurdish ethnopolitical identity in differential ways. Accordingly, Kurdish publishing field has been formed not only against its others negating the publishing activities in Kurdish but also been shaped by the contentious politics among the actors. While the contentions have given rise to the exclusion and marginalization in the field, the field has been fragmented through the politics of (non)alignments, visibility, and dissociation among the publishers. All in all, the conditions of existence of that field of cultural production have been significantly limited in a way that has prevented the institutionalization of those activities.

There are mainly two theoretical conclusions that might be inferred from the findings of this research. Firstly, the dialectical simplicity of the cultural resistance theory explains only one among many dimensions characterizing both the conditions

of possibilities and the conditions of existence of the Kurdish publishers` cultural resistance against the negation of their identity, culture and language. Since it reduces the complex dynamics shaping that form of resistance to the simple relationality between the dominant and the subordinate, it prevents us from seeing the dynamics intersecting that simple relationality. Secondly, the concept of the field offers a useful analytical frame to address the dynamics overlooked by the dialectical vision of the cultural resistance theory, by bringing those into the analysis. Accordingly, it provides both an empirically rich and a theoretically sound explanatory framework for the study of the conditions, limits and the politics of cultural resistance.

Besides these theoretical conclusions, the findings of this research might serve the ground for mainly three questions for further empirical inquiries in the field of Kurdish literary production. First, what is the relation between Kurdish identity formations and Kurdish publishers` cultural resistance? Even though my exploratory endeavor in Kurdish publishing field does not start with the question of Kurdish identity formations that are available both in Kurdish publishing and in the broader realm of Kurdish politics, the publishers` experiences of antagonism and agonism reveal the constitutive significance of that question. While the long-history of denial, repression and assimilation of the Kurdish identity, culture and language provides the ground for the politicization of Kurdishness in a way that drives the cultural resistance of Kurdish publishers, it does not simply give rise to a monolithic identity formation encompassing each and every conception of Kurdishness. Rather, those conceptions are intersected by the field of Kurdish oppositional politics where a multiplicity of ideologies, imaginaries and sensitivities is in play in the construction of multiple Kurdish identity formations. In this sense, how that multiplicity affects

the cultural resistance centered around the Kurdish language might be a good starting point for further inquiries in the field of Kurdish cultural production. Second, what is the role affectivity in the making of Kurdish publishing field? Although my inquiry into Kurdish publishing is not specifically driven by the question of affect, the findings of that inquiry bring that question into the analysis in many instances. From the production of Kurdish books as cultural materials to their dissemination and consumption, the peculiarity of Kurdish publishing as a form of cultural resistance seems to be imbued with the question of affect. Therefore, how the affective qualities of the work and products of Kurdish publishing augment and/or diminish the ontological status of Kurdish books might be a good starting point for further micro-level empirical investigations in that field. Third, what is the role of public formations in the making of Kurdish publishing as a field of cultural production? Though my research focuses exclusively on Kurdish publishing without attending to the role of public formations around the contents produced by Kurdish publishers, the data reveals the constitutive significance of the content-side of Kurdish literary production in the formation of multiplicity of publics and publicities. Hence, how that multiplicity of publics and publicities affect the conditions of existence of Kurdish publishing as a form of cultural resistance might be a good starting point for further empirical inquiries in that field.

APPENDIX

ORIGINAL INTERVIEW QUOTES

1. (Nizamettin Seçkin): Biz hep sıfırdan başladık. Bizden önceki deneyimlerden yararlanma fırsatımız olmadı çünkü Kürtçede yazılı ne varsa yakılmış, ortadan kaldırılmıştı, kim Kürtçe okuyup yazdıysa ya içeri atılmış ya da sürgün edilmişti.

2. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Konyalı bir öğretmenimiz vardı, Ömer Hoca, bize Kürtçe konuşmayı yasaklamıştı. Annemiz, babamız Türkçe bilmiyor; küçük kardeşlerimiz ya da köydeki büyüklerimiz Türkçe bilmiyor. Onlarla ilişkilerinde mecburen kullanıyorsun. Bazen işaretlerle falan konuşuyorduk, ama zorunlu olarak Kürtçe kelimeler de çıkıyordu ağzımızdan. Sabah gittiğimizde hepimiz sıra dayağına çekilirdik. Öğretmen, "Aç ağzını," derdi, açardık. "Senin dilinden belli, Kürtçe konuşmuşsun," derdi, vururdu. Biz de hayret ederdik, "Yaa bu nasıl anladı," diye. Dilimize bakarak Kürtçe konuştuğumuzu anladı sanırdık.

3. (Nizamettin Seçkin): On sekiz yaşıma kadar Nusaybin'deydim. Nusaybin hala, Kürt kültürünün, dil açısından özellikle, korunduğu ve hayat dilinin, sokaktaki dilin, Kürtçe olduğu yerlerden birisidir. Kürtçe dışındaki diller de çok az konuşulurdu. Arapça vardı biraz, Ermenice vardı, Yezidiler, Süryaniler… Ama onlar da Kürtçeyi biliyorlardı. Egemen dil, sokağın, pazarın dili, Kürtçeydi. Mesela birisi şehre gidip döndüğünde, konuşmasına birkaç Türkçe kelime kattığında yadırganırdı. Aslını kaybetmiş, soysuzlaşmış diye bakılırdı.

4. (Şaban Duran): Biz eğer dilimizi kaybedersek, kimliğimizi kaybederiz, varlığımızı kaybederiz. Devletin asimilasyon politikaları o kadar başarılı oldu ki, biz artık eskiden bize Kürtçeyi unutturmamak için her şeyi yapan annelerimizi kaybetmek üzereyiz.

5. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): 1968-69'da Diyarbakır Öğretmen Okulu'nda öğrenciyken Kürtçe teksir metinler geçiyordu elimize. O zaman Kürtçenin yazımı çok kısmiydi. Ronahi dergisi vardı eskiden Suriye'de yayınlanan bir de medreselerden çıkan küçük kitapçıklardaki Kürtçe metinlerin fotokopileriydi bunlar. Bunlar elden ele dolaşıyordu aramızda. Bunlara bakarak yazmaya çalışıyorduk, ama belli bir düzen yoktu tabii. Türkçe düşünüp, Kürtçe yazmaya çalışıyorduk.

6. (Veysel Demirci): Üniversitedeyken Beyazıt Kütüphanesi'ne giderdik; oradan Mem u Zin'i arada bir alıp okurduk. Bununla birlikte, 90'dan önce Kürtçe kitaplar her ne kadar yasak idiyse de, bazı dergilerin yayınladığı Kürtçe yazılar vardı. Özellikle 88'den sonra çıkmaya başlayan dergilerde küçük küçük fıkralar, hikayeler

olurdu. Bunlardan elimize geçenleri okumaya çalışırdık. Bunları okuya okuya Kürtçemiz gelişti.

7. (Nizamettin Seçkin): Ben ilk Kürtçe metni 1989'da 20-22 yaşındayken gördüm. O zaman, ANAP'lı bir Kürt milletvekilinin yeğeni benim arkadaşımdı. Muhayyettin Mutlu, Bitlis milletvekiliydi, onun kartıyla Meclis Kütüphanesi'ne girdik ve oradan 80 öncesinde basılmış bir iki kitap bulduk: Türkçe ve Kürtçe. Bu tabii, milletvekillerine özel bir ayrıcalıktı. Kürt milletvekilleri de bu tip şeylerle pek ilgili değillerdi. Bir hafta evden çıkmadım, o kitapları okumak için. Uzayı fethetmiş gibi hissetmiştim, öyle bir duyguyla okumuştum o kitapları.

8. (Muhammed Salih): Sürecin politik olması bizi de politikleştirdi. Ben 11 yaşımda bir şekilde kendimi bunun içerisinde buldum. 12 yaşımda Kürtçe okumayı öğrendim. Tabii, kelime bilmiyordum, çünkü evimizde konuşulan Kürtçe Türkçeyle karışık bir Kürtçeydi. Dolayısıyla sözlüklerle vesaire kendim öğrendim. Eğer o yaşlarda politikleşmeseydim, Diyarbakır'da herhangi bir Kürt gibi Türkçe konuşurdum ya da Türkçeyle karışık bir Kürtçe konuşurdum. Dilini iyi bilmek, diline sahip çıkmak politik bir meseledir; çünkü böyle bir yapı içerisinde Kürtçe öğrenemezsiniz, öğrenseniz bile bu Kürtçe Türkçeyle karışık bir Kürtçedir. Arınmış bir Kürtçe olmak için birazcık politik olmak gerekiyor ya da en azından birazcık bir bilinç düzeyi yakalamış olmak gerekiyor

9. (Nizamettin Seçkin): 89'da yayın işlerine gazetecilikle başladım. Ankara'da Toplumsal Kurtuluş'ta çeviriler yapıyordum. Ben ilk ciddi Kürtçe pratiklerimi de burada yaptım. Mesela buraya Kürdistan Press geliyordu, yurtdışından yayınlar geliyordu onlardan Kürtçe öğrendim. O zaman Aram Tigran'la Kürdistan Press'te yayınlanan bir söyleşiyi Türkçe 'ye çevirip, Toplumsal Kurtuluş'ta yayınladık. O sıralar, Welat kuruluyordu. Basın sözcüsü geldi, "Biz Kürtçe gazete çıkaracağız, soruşturduk bir tek sen yapabilirsin; hem gazetecilik deneyimin var hem de Kürtçe biliyorsun," dedi. Ben başta çok tereddüt ettim, kabul etmedim. Tamam, benim Kürtçe konuşmam iyi; ama bu bir gazete sonuçta bir Kürtçe gazete olacak. Bir de zor şartlardaydı, gazete çıkarılacak ama dizgicisi bile yoktu henüz. Arkadaşlar ısrar edince 91'de üniversite son sınıfı bırakıp Ankara'dan İstanbul'a geldim. O zaman bizim yaşlı grubu topladık, Musa Anter, Yaşar Kaya, Feqi Hüseyin Sagnıç, Abdurrahman Dürre. Hatırlıyorum, o ilk toplantıdan sonra ürkmüştüm, biz ne yapacağız, ne edeceğiz, diye. Tamam, bir dil var, bir şey var; ama alfabesini bile yeni görüyoruz. Çok ciddi zorluklarla iki ay içinde çıkardık Kürtçe gazeteyi.

10. (Musa Nizam): 1990'larda sanki yarı legal, yarı illegal çalışıyorduk. O dönemde matbaalar basılıyordu, kitapları topluyorlardı; rahatsız ediyorlardı, kompüterlerimize, çalışmalarımıza el koyuyorlardı. Mesela, ilk kurduğumuz yayınevi, Zinar Yayınları, 1992'de kuruldu iki yılda kapatıldı. Yayınladığımız kitaplardan dolayı bizi çok taciz ettiler; açılan soruşturmaların da ötesinde tehditler aldık o dönem. Yayınevi sahipleri yargılandıkları için yurt dışına çıkmak zorunda kaldılar. 1994'de yayınevi kapatıldığında sadece altı kitap yayınlayabilmiştik. 1994'te Ragihandin Yayınları'nı kurduk, Ragihandin'den sonra da Qap'ı kurduk. Yani bu işe 92'de başladık, 97'ye

geldiğimizde üç tane yayınevimiz kapatılmıştı. Her yayınevi ikişer sene dayanabildi. 1997'de en son Dar Yayınlarını kurduk, neyse ki onu bugünlere kadar getirebildik.

11. (Nizamettin Seçkin): O zaman hep şu kaygıyla hareket ediyorduk: ne kadarını yazıya geçirsek, yangından ne kadar kaçırsak neyi kurtarsak kardır. Hangi destanı, hangi kelimeyi? Bunların, çünkü, yazıya geçirilmesi lazım. İlk zamanlarda, hatırlıyorum, kitaplarımız çıksa da içimiz rahat etmezdi. Kürdistan da burada çıkmıştı, Jin de burada, İstanbul'da çıkmıştı…80'li, 90'lı yıllarda, Avrupa'da bir takım Kürt araştırmacılar, yabancı araştırmacılar, Kürtlerle ilgili çalışma yapanlar, bunların eski sayılarını bulup buluşturup bir arada yeniden yayınladılar. Ne ilginçtir ki, diyelim yirmi, otuz sayısı bir derginin, Türkiye'deki kütüphanelerden bulunup alınamadı. Hepsi, Cenevre'den, Paris'ten, Berlin'den, Kahire'den, Şam'dan, Bağdat'tan, Tahran'dan, Moskova'dan, bir şekilde elde edilip yeniden yayınlandı. Şimdi, bu bizde çok ciddi bir korku yaratıyordu. Tamam ben bu kadar çabaladım, tehlikeyi göze aldım; ama acaba bu gerçekten korunabilecek mi? Biz ancak, iki üç paketi yurtdışına gönderip, ulaştığını öğrendiğimizde rahatlıyorduk. Ancak o zaman tamam bu metin de kurtuldu diyebiliyorduk. Bu yüzden o zamanlar yurt dışına çok önem veriyorduk, kim kitap istese, parasını göndermese bile, kitap gönderiyorduk. Yeter ki bir yerde bulunsun diye.

12. (Nizamettin Seçkin): 2005'e kadar, mesela Irak Kürdistanı'ndan bir kitap getirmek, bomba getirmekten daha zordu, daha tehlikeliydi. Ben Nusaybinliyim. Suriye'nin Kamışlı kenti Nusaybin'le bitişik; özellikle gece baktığınızda tek şehir zannedersiniz. 1996'da, yayınevini kurduktan sonra, Kamışlı'da Kone Reş diye bir yazar var, aradı dedi ki, "Celadet Bedirhan'ın 30'lu yıllarda yayınlanmış birkaç tane kitapçığı var, size göndermek istiyorum." "Tamam, ama nasıl göndereceksin," dedim. Küçücük bir broşür, kırk sayfalık bir kitap yani. Onu gizli yollardan Şam'a götürdü; çünkü Şam'a götürünceye kadar görülse, bir şekilde bir aramada, başına büyük dert açar. Şam'dan yine gizli yollarla, Beyrut'a gönderdi. Beyrut'tan postayla Almanya'da verdiğimiz bir adrese gönderdi. Almanya'ya başka bir adres verdik; çünkü o zamanlar bizim adreslerimize gelen şeyleri mutlaka kontrol ediyorlardı, gelen bir sürü şeye el konuluyordu. Oradan buraya getirdik, getirir getirmez de hemen bir iki fotokopi çektik, çevirdik ve yayınladık. Düşünebiliyor musun? Bir kitabı İstanbul'a getirtinceye kadar deveye hendek atlatmaktan beter şeyler yaptık.

13. (Veysel Demirci): O dönem dergimizi bölgede dağıtan arkadaşlarımız defalarca gözaltına alındı. Dergimiz edebi olmasına rağmen, yayınevinin hiçbir illegal örgütle bağlantısı olmamasına rağmen ve bölgedeki yetkililerin de bunu bilmesine rağmen, orada bazı görevliler böyle yapıyordu. Bu, yayınladığımız kitaplar için de oluyordu. Defalarca ifade vermeye çağrıldım bu yüzden.

14. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Devlet resmi olarak engellemese bile çeşitli tehditlerle karşılaştık uzun bir süre. Örneğin, dergimizin her sayısından en az 50-60 tane satan Taksim'deki kitapçılar dergimizi satmayı bıraktılar. Biraz eşelediğimizde dergiyi sattıkları için tehditler aldıklarını söylediler. Hatta bir tanesi bize vitrin yapmıştı, kitapçıya gelip onu kaldırtmışlar.

15. (Nizamettin Seçkin): 1990'larda DGM'ye gidip gelmek çok önemli bir mesaiydi bizim için. Çok ciddi bir sıkıntı kaynağıydı. Biz düşünce özgürlüğü üzerinden, DGM'deki davalarımız üzerinden çok fazla gündeme gelmek istemedik; çünkü bu yaptığımız işi gölgeliyordu. Şimdi bu konuda biraz rahatladık.

16. (Veysel Demirci): AKP'nin yaptığı en güzel işlerden birisi yayıncılığın denetimini Basın Savcılığı'na devretmesi oldu. Önceden, Terörle Mücadele polisleri bakıyordu bize. Düşünsene kitabevine üç tane polis geliyor TEM'den, içerde beş tane okuyucu var.

17. (Musa Nizam): Şimdi, hala, kitaplara tutanak tutuyorlar; çünkü, hala, 159 var, 301 var. Türk Ceza Yasası'nda kitapları toplatabilecek üç yüze yakın madde var. 7. Madde var, 3713 sayılı yasa var. Yani hangisini sayayım… Eleştiri bile yapamıyorsun. Sonra da fikirler konuşsun, diyorsun. Bir gün avukatıma şimdiye kadar kaç duruşmaya katıldığımı sordum. Hesapladı; 425 gün duruşmaya gitmişim, 150'ye yakın da yetişemediğim için katılamamışım. Nasıl konuşsun fikirler?

18. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Eskiden, 1980 öncesinde, her ilde sosyalist kitaplar satan kitabevlerinin listeleri vardı bizde. Bunlara kitapları gönderirdik, geri gelirdi. Aracı yoktu, direkt de çalışırdık. İki ay sonra, üç ay sonra kitabın satılırdı, çekin gelirdi. Cezaevine girdik, çıktık, 90'dan sonra bunun olmadığını gördük. Kitabevlerinin çoğu sermaye ilişkileri içine girmişti. Ya entegre olursun ya da aykırı olursun. Aykırı olursan, yaşayamazsın. Onun için de çoğu entegre olup sermaye çevreleri tarafından kurulan dağıtım ağlarına dahil olmuşlardı.

19. (Zeki Kenar): Dağıtımcı istediği kitabı dağıtır, istediği kitabı dağıtmaz. Yeni kitap çıkardığımızda, o kitabın tanıtımını müşterisine ya yollar ya da yollamaz. Yani senin kitabın garnitür gibi. Olsa da olur, olmasa da. Şimdi D&R'lara gitsen, bizden bir tane kitap bulamazsın. Eğer özellikle istesen, üç gün sonra gel, al derler, ama asla raflarında bulundurmazlar. Bulundursalardı, bizim bir kitabımız ayda bin satardı. Bulundurmadıkları için altı ayda bir satıyor.

20. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Kürtçenin genel olarak okuyucusu az. İnsanlar Kürtçe okuma yazma bilinmediği için bunun bir ekonomik getirisi yok. Onun için dağıtımcılar isteksizler, bunu bir külfet olarak görüyorlar. Alacaksın, dağıtacaksın, sonra kitap sana geri gelecek. Onlar da bu işe yanaşmıyor.

21. (Veysel Demirci): Kardeşim ben Doğan Kitap'ın çıkardığı kitaptan üç yüz tane satacağım, ben senin beş tane kitabını neden yük edeyim kendime, diye düşünüyor dağıtımcılar. Seni kendisine yakın bulsa, bir tane kitap için de yapabilir. Yaptığı işe biraz saygı duysa, bir tane kitap için de çaba gösterebilir; ama yapmıyor meseleye ticari olarak baktığı için.

22. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Büyük dağıtımcıların dışındaki küçük dağıtımcılar, riskli dağıtıcılardır. Kitabını verirsin ama tahsilatını yapar mısın, yapmaz mısın, orası meçhul. Kitapların parasını almak için küçük dağıtıcıya bir gidiyorsun, adam terk etmiş gitmiş.

23. (Arif Karakaya): Parayı zamanında tahsil edebilmek. Büyük şirketlerin bir işin içine karışmasının en önemli yanı parasal kolaylıktır. Tamam kitaplarımıza rağbet etmiyorlar, ettiklerinden de çok fazla indirim istiyorlar, ama en azından paranı alabiliyorsun.

24. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Bazı küçük dağıtımcılar belli bir ideolojiyle yaklaşıyorlar. Kürtlük ve Kürtçeyle ilgili bir şey söylediğin zaman, sosyalist kesimde dahi, sanki ayrımcılık yapıyormuşsun, ırkçılık ya da bölücülük yapıyormuşsun gibi yaklaşıyorlar, kitaplarını dağıtmayı reddediyorlar.

25. (Veysel Demirci): Biz Kürtçede İslami bir yayıncılık yaptığımız için iki tür ön yargıyla karşı karşıyayız. İslami çevre bize Kürtçü olarak bakıyor, solcular da dinci olarak görüyor. Bu yüzden iki taraf da yayınlarımızı dağıtmaya pek yanaşmıyor.

26. (Musa Nizam): Türkiye Cumhuriyeti yayıncıların mali açıdan desteklenmesi, kütüphanelere kitap alınması gibi birçok konuda düzenlemeler yapıyor; ama Kürt yayıncıları bunların hep dışında bırakılıyor. Kültür Bakanlığı'na müracaat ettiğimizde gelen cevap hep aynıdır, "Ödenek olmadığından, talebinize olumlu cevap veremiyoruz." Diğer yayınevlerine bakıyorsun, onlardan bin tane, iki bin tane kitap alıyor, kütüphanelere dağıtıyor. 1447 tane kütüphane var, Kültür Bakanlığı'na bağlı; ama bağımsız Kürt yayıncılardan Kürtçe kitap alıp, kütüphanelere koymayı düşünmüyor.

27. (Veysel Demirci): Yaklaşık otuz senedir Diyanet'in Sultanahmet'te, Kocatepe'de düzenlediği kitap fuarlarına on senedir müracaat ediyorum, ama henüz katılabilmek nasip olmadı. Bizi kabul etmiyorlar. Evrakları götürüyorum, başvuru yapıyorum, ama yer olmadığını söylüyorlar. Yalan söylüyorlar. Görmüyor muyum ben her sene yeni yayınevlerinin fuara katıldığını. Biz de İslami bir yayıneviyiz. Onlar ne yayınlıyorsa, ben Kürtçelerini yayınlıyorum. Diyemiyorlar, Kürtçe olduğundan kabul etmediklerini.

28. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Bize açılan davalar AİHM'e gidiyor diye genellikle sonuçlandırılmıyordu. Sürüncemede bırakıyorlardı yani. Mesela bizim derginin her sayısına dava açtılar, ama hiçbirisini sonuçlandırmadılar. Böyle olunca hem dergileri toplatıp, bizi ekonomik olarak bitirdiler, hem de AİHM'de hakkımızı aramamıza engel oldular.

29. (Niyazi Tekin): Örneğin, Bursa'daki fuara katılmak istedik, ama organizatör biz Bursa'nın daha çok milliyetçi, İslami ve okul üzerine yayın yapan yayıncıların katıldığı bir yer olduğunu, burada güvenliğimizi garanti edemediklerinden, katılmamamızın daha iyi olacağını söylediler.

30. (Niyazi Tekin): İzmir fuarında bile insanlar gelip rahatsız edebiliyorlar. Bu sabah biri standa gelip, Kürtlerin tümü Türkçe biliyor, neden Kürtçe diyor? Kitaba bakıyor, Türkçe olmadığını görünce fırlatıp gidiyor. Bir başkası, şu BDP'lileri gördüğünüzde söyleyin kafalarını kıracağız, diyor. Dün sabah birisi geldi mesela, ben sözün bittiği yerde, Şırnak'ta komandoydum, diyor. Ben de Gelibolu'da askerlik yaptım dedim. Bu iş, şimdi siyaseten çözüm yoluna girse de bunun toplum nezdinde çözülmesi için bir elli yıla daha ihtiyaç var.

31. (Nizamettin Seçkin): 1999'da burada genel bir sanayi fuarı açılmıştı. Oraya yayıncı olarak sadece biz katıldık, ama Türkiye'de popüler olan bütün kitapları da götürdük. Hiç unutmuyorum, 10 gün boyunca bütün ciromuz 1000 lira bile değildi. 2000 yılında burada düzenlenen festivale yazar getirdiğimizde de, o zaman bize, "Yahu buraya yazar mı gelir, buraya fabrika gelsin, yazar gelip ne yapacak," diyorlardı. Önce yazar gelecek ki, fabrika da gelsin. Yazarlar gelecek, gazeteciler gelecek, kültürel normalleşme sağlanacak, her şey tamamlandıktan sonra fabrika gelecek. Sen şimdi hiç fabrika falan bekleme.

32. (Nizamettin Seçkin): Diyarbakır'da on yıl öncesinin atmosferini düşünürseniz; sokaklarda faili meçhullerin işlendiği, insanların sudan bahanelerle gözaltına alınıp, işkence gördüğü, envai çeşit insan hak ve onurunun çiğnendiği bir ortamda, edebiyatla ilgilenmek, kültürel meselelerle ilgilenmek biraz garip kaçıyordu. İnsanların hayati tehlike içinde olduğu, açlık çektiği bir ortamda bu biraz lükstü.

33. (Bayram Ercan): TRT Şeş'in açılması sembolik olarak bazı şeyleri kırdı, hem Türkler için, hem de Kürtler için. Bundan önce çok ciddi bir antipati vardı. Nasıl sokakta Kürtçe konuştuğunuzda insanlar size ters ters bakıyorduysa, yayıncılık da antipatikti insanlar için. TRT Şeş bu konuda biraz rahatlama yarattı. Ama bu değişim hala sembolik düzeyde. Kürtçe yayıncılık hala bir mücadele alanı. İnsanlar daha ziyade misyonerlik yapıyor diyebilirim.

34. (Veysel Demirci): Bizim yayıncılığa ticari açıdan bakmamak gerekiyor. Eğer o açıdan bakarsan, gider başka bir iş yapar, daha iyi para kazanırsın. Bizim buradaki amacımız hizmettir - kendimize görev edindiğimiz bir hizmettir. Kürtçe yayıncılıkta çok büyük bir boşluk var ve burayı kimse doldurmuyor. Biz burayı doldurmaya çalışıyoruz.

35. (Nizamettin Seçkin): Biz Cigerxwin'in bütün eserlerini bir araya getirdik: yüz yıldır yapılmayan bir şey. Ehmede Xani'yi - yüz yıldır yapılmayan bir şey, üç yüz yıl sonra da yapılmayacak belki. Sen yapmazsan; kendiliğinden olmuyor – altın şeklinde

yaptık, gümüş şeklinde yaptık, yeni Kürtçeyle yaptık, eski Kürtçeyle yaptık, Kürtçe-Türkçe bir arada yaptık, İngilizce yaptık. Yani akla gelebilecek her şeyi… Sonuçta, okur, bir tane de olsa onu alır, on tane de olsa gelir birini alır. Çok az kişidir, on tane alan. Koleksiyoner alır alırsa; Kürt toplumunda da kendim dışında bir koleksiyoner tanımıyorum. Biz gerçekten ancak devletlerin yapabileceği çerçevede yapmaya çalıştık ve bu okurda çok – yani Kürtlerin durumuna göre çok - karşılık buldu ; ama bana sorarsan, ticari olarak bu çok cazip bir şey mi? Hayır. Ben Kürtçede sarf ettiğim çabanın yüzde onunu başka herhangi bir şeye harcasam bunun onun iki üç katı karşılığını alırım. Yani benim hiçbir zaman hesap yapma gibi bir durumum olmadı.

36. (Muhammet Salih): Yayıncılıkla bir halka kendi dilini öğretmezsiniz. Bu bir sistem sorunudur. Kurumların oluşması gereklidir. Örneğin, bugün bütün Kürtler okullarında kendi dillerini öğrenebilseydi bizim de hiçbir sorunumuz kalmazdı. Ben bu işe girmeden önce felsefe öğretmeniydim, yayıncılık yapmak için evimi ve arabamı sattım. O zaman belki yayıncılık sayesinde ev ve araba alabiliyor olacaktım. Biz bu işe idealistçe yaklaştık. Umarım yakın gelecekte bu idealistliğimize gerek kalmayacak, bu bir karşılık bulacaktır.

37. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Örneğin, bir kitabın fiyatı 10 liraysa, biz dağıtıcıya 5 liradan veririz. Kitabın baskısı, dizgisi, kağıt parası ve matbaa parası yaklaşık 3 liraya denk gelir - tabii biz 500, 1000 değil de 100000 basabilseydik bu maliyet çok düşük olurdu. Bir de büro masraflarını, elektriği, suyu vesaireyi de koyarsak, durum ortada. Biz bu işi kar amaçlı yapmasak da, yayınevinin yürüyebilmesi için sürekli bir paranın girmesi gerekiyor. Bu yüzden hali vakti yerinde olan arkadaşlarımızı vergiye bağladık, 100 lira ondan, 50 ondan… Bu sayede ayakta kalabildik.

38. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Piyasada yazarlara yaklaşık %8 ile %10 arasında telif ücreti ödenir, ama bizim yazarlarımızın çoğu, Kürtçe yazarlarımızın çoğu, telifini almadılar. Hatta, bazıları kitabın baskısına kendi çaplarında katkıda bile bulundular.

39. (Bayram Ercan): Baskı ücretini, genellikle yazarın kendisi karşılıyor. Kürt yayınevlerinin geneli bu durumdadır. Çoğu bunu söylemez; ama bu iş böyle oluyor yani. Biz tabii her parasını verenin kitabını basmıyoruz.

40. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Artık ilişkiler yavaş yavaş kurumlaşmaya, sermayeleşmeye doğru gidiyor. Biz de bu sermaye artırımına gidemediğimiz, fedakarlığın üzerinde yeni ilişkiler kurmadığımız için böyle bocalayıp duruyoruz.

41. (Veysel Demirci): Bizim beraber iş yaptığımız, görüştüğümüz, tanıştığımız, tartıştığımız arkadaşlarımız var, çevremiz var. Yayınladığımız dergiyi de bu çevreyle dağıtıyoruz. Burada belki bir, iki kişi çalışıyoruz; ama bizim temsilciliğimizi yapan birçok arkadaşımız, kendi oluşturduğumuz bir dağıtım ağımız var birçok şehirde. Bize gönül bağıyla bağlı olan arkadaşlar bunlar. Bir arkadaşın bürosu, bir diğerinin evi gibi yerlere direkt gönderiyoruz; onlar 15-20 kişiye veriyor.

42. (Veysel Demirci): Biz çevremize zaten belli bir indirim yaparak gönderiyoruz. Onlar karar veriyor ne kadara satacağına. Gönderdiğimizin üzerine kar koymadan kazancı bize gönderenler oluyor. Örneğin; çünkü bunların bir kısmı öğretmendir, memurdur, ihtiyacı yoktur yani. Kimileri de etiket fiyatıyla satıp, aradaki farkı alırlar. Yani kitap bizden çıktıktan sonra dağıtan arkadaşların takdirine kalıyor.

43. (Bayram Ercan): Sonuçta, biraz Türkçe kitabın arkasına takılıyor Kürtçe kitap. Sadece bizim için değil, diğer yayıncılar için de öyledir. Biz ilk başta Türkçe basmıyorduk, sadece Kırmançki ve Kurmanci basacağız, direneceğiz, diyorduk. Kararlıydık da bu konuda. Dört yıl direnebildik. Gördük ki mümkün değil, böyle bir şey. Sonra Kürt meselesiyle ilgili Türkçe kitaplar da yayınlamaya başladık.

44. (Muhammed Salih): Türkçe yayın yaptığınızda ulaşabileceğiniz kitle çok geniştir, ama biz prensip olarak egemen olan Türkçeyi yayıncılığımıza katmama kararını en başta verdik. Gerçeklik sizi Türkçe yayın yapmaya götürüyor, ama biz yayınevini kapatmak zorunda kalsak bile Türkçe yayın yapmayacağız. Öyle görünüyor ki, kapatmak zorunda da kalmayacağız, çünkü Kürtçe yayıncılık gelişiyor.

45. (Nizamettin Seçkin) Kürt yayıncılığının en önemli özelliklerinden birisi siyasi olması. Bunu bir eleştiri olarak söylemiyorum, mecburiyetten böyle bu. Çünkü sadece sermaye koymuyorsunuz ortaya, canınızı da koyuyorsunuz ve bunu ancak siyasi bir hareket yapabilir. Bütün Kürt yayıncılık tarihi böyledir.

46. (Musa Nizam): Geçmişte örgütlere dayanan yayıncılıktı esas olan, 95-96'dan sonra bu örgüt yayıncılığı çok geriledi. Birey yayıncılığı öne çıktı: Tene, Behr, bizim yayınevi. Organizasyonlara dayalı olan yayıncılığın önüne geçti bu yayıncılar: hem piyasayı tutma bakımından, hem odak olma bakımından, hem ilgi alanları bakımından, hem yazarlar bakımından ön plana çıktılar. Bu da insanların özgür düşünmesi için çok önemli bir adımdı, örgütsüzlük yani. Bunun yararları da var, olumsuz yanları da. Yararları, bağımsız düşünme ve tartışmayı geliştiriyor olmaları; çünkü örgütler biraz yekpare düşünmeyi dayattılar insanlar. İnsanların kendi yeteneklerini, kendi kapasitelerini geliştirme yeteneklerini köreltti örgütler, dar düşünmeyi öğrettiler. Fakat, örgütlenme de kitap dağıtımına ön ayak olabilirdi; ama böyle olmadı. Tam tersine, biri diğerinin yayınlarını dağıttırmamaya başladı. Onu sevme, beni sev misali.

47. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Örneğin, Trav Yayınevi PSK'nin, yani Kemal Burkay'ların Kürdistan Sosyalist İşçi Partisi'nin yayınevi. Tekoşin vardı, sonra Biranın oldu; mesela bunlar PKK'nin denetimindeki yayınevleri. Bunların bizimle hiçbir ilişkisi yok. Bizim yayınevimizin bu gruplarla, bu ilişkilerle hiçbir alakası olmadı, çünkü biz bu tür siyasi faaliyetlerin yayınevi değiliz. Biz Kürt diline, Kürt kültürüne, Kürt edebiyatına katkı yapmaya çalışan, ama bunu bağımsız olarak yapmaya çalışan bir yayıneviyiz. Bağımsız olan, birey olan yayıncıların bir araya gelmesinin değerli olduğunu düşünüyoruz. Ama bu gruplar böyle bir şeye yanaşmadılar, çünkü denetimleri altına alamadıkları kişilere yanaşmadılar.

48. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Bizim cenahta da bağımsız kalmak zordur. Kim bağımsızsa herkes onun üzerine çullanır. Çoğulculuk çok önemlidir biliyor musun? Biz ne kaybettiysek, tekçi zihniyetlerden kaybettik. Sen diyorsun ki, "Ben doğruyum, benim dışımdaki herkes yanlış ve yok olsun." Bizim cenah böyle bir zihniyetten geldi. Bu yüzden düşünsel hayatı felç oldu.

49. (Nizamettin Seçkin): Bu yayınevini asla siyaset için kurmadık; başlarda en temel prensiplerimizden birisi de buydu. Biz yayıncılık yapmak için bu yayınevini kurduk; siyasete ya da başka bir şeye basamak olsun diye değil. Biz böyle bir alandaki ilk özel yayıneviyiz; diğerleri daha çok örgütsel. Daha kurulurken verdiğimiz bir karar bu. Biz KİT olmayacağız. O zamanlarda Kamu İktisadi Teşekkülü tartışmaları vardı. Ben yayınevini kurmaya karar verdiğimde, çok yakın bir arkadaşımın bıyık altından güldüğünü hatırlıyorum mesela; Siz bunu nasıl yapacaksınız, koskoca bir siyasi hareket olmadan, diye. Ama bu koskoca bir siyasi hareketin yapacağı iş değil bu. Koskoca bir siyasi hareket dediğin, Fransız Komünist Partisi'nden daha entelektüel bir hareket de değil ki. Onlar da yapamadı bu işi. Çünkü bu iş partilerin yapabileceği bir iş değil. Bireylerin, kişilerin yapacağı bir iştir. Bütün dünyada bu böyledir.

50. (Veysel Demirci): Bizim yayıncılığımız diğer yayıncılıklardan farklıdır. Görüş olarak farklıdır, hitap ettiğimiz kitle açısından farklıdır. Düşüncelerimiz, dünyaya bakışımız açısından farklıdır. Farklıdır derken, diğerleri yanlıştır, bizim de onlara kapımız kapalıdır anlamı çıkmasın. Bizim Kürt yayınevlerinin hepsiyle ilişkilerimiz, onların kendi aralarındaki ilişkilerden çok daha iyidir. Mesela bazı yayınevleri, kimseyle ilişki kuramıyorlar; ama bizim hepsiyle ilişkilerimiz var. Bir de yayınevimizin bir kitabevi olduğu için kitap alışverişi anlamında da diğer yayınevleriyle ilişkilerimiz var. Ama biz İslami kimlikle yayıncılık yapıyoruz. Bizim yaptığımız yayıncılığın, yani İslami bir yerden Kürtçe yayıncılığın, Cumhuriyet tarihinde bir örneği daha yoktur.

51. (Bayram Ercan): Bizim yayınevimiz bir çalışma grubunun ürünü. Değişik siyasi görüşlerden gelen insanların bir araya gelip yaptıkları çalışmalarla kuruldu. Bu grubun içinde eski komünisti de var, İslamcısı da. Bu bizim Kürtlerin görüp de çok kabul ettikleri bir şey değil. Çünkü onlara göre illa bir siyasi fikrin olacak. Bizim tek ortak duruşumuz dil ve Kürtler çok siyasallaşmış bir topluluk olduğundan bu duruşumuz bile problem oluyor. Zaten Kırmançki yayın yapmak ayrı bir sorun… Mesela, bizim yazarlardan birisi gidiyor Bingöl'de konuşma yapıyor. Kendi siyasi fikirlerini ifade ediyor. Sonra, vay efendim sizin arkadaşınız söyle dedi, böyle dedi. Yahu, bizim arkadaşımız değil, bizim yazarımız, diyorum, ama anlatamıyorum. Sonra da düşündüm, böyle söylersem de adama bir kötülük filan yaparlar, diye; tamam bizim adamımız dedim. Böyle şeylerle uğraşıyoruz yani.

52. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Baskı sadece Türklerden gelmedi, Kürtlerden de geldi. Mesela, PKK ile ilgili yayınlara başladık, bu sefer de PKK tehdit etti. PKK'ye yakın olan kitabevlerinde bizim kitaplarımız satılmadı. Bazı konularda bakıyorsun, Kürt dilinin, Kürt kültürünün, Kürt haklarının gelişmesiyle ilgili konularda, PKK'yle devlet aynı refleksi alabiliyorlar. Kürt yayıncılığında, en önemli yayınevlerinden, ilk

yayınevlerindendir Behr Yayınevi; ama Diyarbakır Belediyesi'nin yaptığı kitap fuarına sokmadılar. Stant vermiyorlardı, kitaplarımızın satılmasını oradaki görevliler engelliyorlardı. Neden? Çünkü bizim yayıncılık faaliyetlerimizi bir tehdit olarak görüyorlar. Onların için belki de devletten daha tehlikeliydi. Bu yüzden bize karşı devletle aynı saflarda buluşmaktan hiç çekinmediler.

53. (Nizamettin Seçkin): Bu şehirde [Diyarbakır'da] festival fikri bizim bu şehre getirdiğimiz yazarlarla oluştu; ama festivaller başlayınca da ilk sansür ettikleri, ilk eledikleri yayınevi biz olduk. Diyarbakır Belediye Festivali, 10 yıldır yapılıyor, ama bizi katmıyorlardı.

54. (Nizamettin Seçkin): İki sene önce Kürtçenin en orijinal seslerinden birisi olan ve 12 yılını cezaevinde geçirmiş olan Fatma Savcı'yı İsveç'ten İstanbul'a getiriyorum, Diyarbakır'da konferans verdirttim. Suriye Kürt'ünü Paris üzerinden İstanbul'a getiriyorum. Burada en popüler yazar şu anda; o, Fawaz Husen, Jan Dost… Hem çok okunuyor, hem kitapları düzgün çıkıyor; şu an Türkçesine Doğan'dan bilmem kime kadar bir sürü yer talip oluyor. Ama ANF'den tut da Roj TV, bilmem neye kadar, bunlar bütün fuar programını veriyorlar, bizimkini vermiyorlar. Tamam, bizimle ilgili özel haber yapmıyorlar, bu onların sorunu; haber değeri görmeyebilir, buna bir şey diyemem, takdir yetkisi onların; ama fuar programını veriyorsun ve dışarıdan sadece iki konuk var. Birisini Yapı Kredi Yayınları getirmiş Fransa'dan. Yapı Kredi Türkiye'nin en büyük bankası, üstelik getirdikleri yazarı Yapı Kredi bile finanse etmemiştir; o adamın masraflarına mutlaka Fransız Konsolosluğu yardımcı olmuştur. Ama ben tek başıma Suriyeli bir Kürt'ü getiriyorum bir haftalığına Diyarbakır gibi bir yere, ama bunlar bütün programı veriyorlar, benimkini vermiyorlar. Roj TV vermiyor, Gün TV vermiyor, Dicle Haber vermiyor, Özgür Gündem vermiyor. Şimdi, dışarıdan bakan birisi, yahu bu nasıl bir adam, diyecek ya da Tene'ye, bunlar ne yapmış da böyle oluyor, diyecek. Ben bilmek istiyorum, gerçekten, neden? Tek dertleri şu, yani burası bir çöplük ve bu çöplükte bir tek benim düdüğüm ötmeli, böyle görüyorlar.

55. (Nizamettin Seçkin) Şimdi bu ortamda, fuarda dili tamamen Kürtçe olan bir konferans düzenleyeceğiz. Ben orada, öncesinde yani, şöyle düşünüyordum: bu şey gerçekten tahrip edilirse – sonuçta tamam, bir hafta çağıracağım adamı, hadi masrafı, stresi, şunu, bunu bir tarafa, ama – bu adamın yüzüne nasıl bakacağım? Bu kadar is yaptık, eğer şu 300 kişilik salonu dolduramıyorsam lanet olsun bana. Konferansa girdik; hepimiz şaşırdık. Tek bir sandalye boş kalmadığı gibi ayakta bir sürü insan kaldı ve bunun üzerine yazılar yazıldı. Sonuçta, fuarın en kalabalık etkinliği oldu. Orada ben dedim ki, bu etkinliğin fotoğrafı, sizin hiçbir hükmünüzün olmadığı anlamına geliyor, kendi kendinizi geçersiz kıldınız yani. Yani Özgür Gündem yazsa ne olur yazmasa ne olur, Roj TV yapsa ne olur yapmasa ne olur? Yani Doğan Hızlan, Diyarbakır Fuar'ında bizim etkinliği yazdı, yapılmadan önce. Doğan Hızlan gibi bir adam. Hayatta ona ne açıklamamızı göndeririz, ne bir kitap göndermişizdir.

56. (Nizamettin Seçkin): PKK'nin çok önemli mecralarında, Özgür Gündem'de, Özgür Politika'da, "Tene korsan kitap bastı," diye haberler yaptılar zamanında.

Sözünü ettikleri de Amir Hassanpour'un kitabı. 1997'de bu kitabın bir bölümünü Amir Hassanpour kendisi gönderdi, biz de bir bölüm olarak yayınladık; ama daha kitap bitmemişti. Bu çok güncel, önemlidir bizim için; Kürtlerle ilgili devlet politikaları ve dil hakları üzerine bir kitap ve biz bunu yayınlayalım dedik. Kitap yayınlandı ve DGM tarafından toplatıldı, yasaklandı yani. Kitap bittiğinde çok kalın bir kitap olduğu için çevirmek büyük sorun oldu. İyi çevirmenler bulduk, ama öyle rakamlar istediler ki imkanı yok ödeyemezdim. Mecburen kendi çevremizden doktora öğrencilerinden, bilmem kimden çevirttik. Fotokopisini de ben verdim onlara. Sonra ben ömrümde yaşamadığım şeyler yaşadım. Bizi şikayet ettiler, depomuzu bastılar korsan kitap var, diye. Özgür Gündem'de bir sürü yazı yazıldı tek taraflı. Tehdit edildim. Artık sonunda Özgür Gündem'e çağrı yaptık, Amir Hassanpour, bunları defalarca uyardı, e-mail ile, telefonla; "Benim yanlışımdır, yayınevi izin aldı," diye. Buna rağmen, bunlar yaylım ateşine devam ettiler ve ben en son çağırdım gazeteden, dedim ki, "Yeter yaa." Sonuçta bu iki yayınevi arasındaki bürokratik bir mesele. Özgür Gündem gibi bir gazetenin bu kadar tarafgir davranması çok çirkin bir şey. Sonuçta Kürdistan isimli bir kitabı iki yayınevi paylaşamıyor. En sonunda mahkeme yoluyla tekzip gönderdim, ancak öyle yayınlatabildim açıklamamı.

57. (Şeyhmus Yüksel): Yayıncılar birliği kurmak ciddi bir ekonomik külfet olduğu için buna girişemedik. Düşün, mesela bir büro tutup 3-5 bin liralık masrafını bile karşılayamıyoruz. Daha da önemlisi Kürt yayıncılar ikiye, hatta üçe bölünmüş durumdalar. Kürtlerde yoğun ideolojik mücadele var, bu mücadele seni de sınırlıyor. Mesela, PKK'liler seninle bir arada bulunmak istemiyorlar. Onun dışında PSK'liler de öyle yani. Bunlar örgüt yayınevleri. Zaten onun dışında kim kalıyor ki.

58. (Musa Nizam): Yayıncılar Birliği çok büyük bir ihtiyaç. Bunun eksikliğini sadece biz değil, bence bütün Kürt yayıncıları çekiyorlar. Herkes kendi başına gidiyor, bir birlik olma durumu yok. Kürdistan'da Kültür Bakanlığı var, onların buna önderlik yapması için bizzat gittim, görüştüm. Toplantılar yapalım, bir şeyler yapalım, dedim. Biz kendi içimizde de toplantılar yaptık, ama hiçbiri olmadı. Mesela, bir iki yayıncı geri durunca, hepsi geri duruyor. Benim işim sadece kitap üretmek, diyor bazıları; bizim bunu şimdiye kadar çoktan kurmamız gerekiyordu. Hatta dünya çapında bir şey kurmalıydık; çünkü bilgi evrenseldir, bilgi ulusaldır. Ulus boyutunda, Kürt yayınevlerinin örgütlenme ağı olması, yakın doğu halklarının dayanışacağı; bir de kitap üretim etiğinin oluşturulacağı bir yapı olması yaptığımız işin kurumsallaşmasına çok yardımcı olacaktı. Hatta yazar bulunmasıdır, belgelerin ortaya çıkarılmasıdır, bu konularda bile çok önemli olabilirdi. Herkes birbirine ışık olabilirdi, ama olmadı.

59. (Bayram Ercan): Kürt yayıncılar bir araya gelip ne yapacaklar ki. Zaten herkes kendi çapında bir yayıncılık yapıyor; kendi dağıtım ağları var. Zamanında temsili bir şeyler kurmak, ortak dağıtım kurmak gibi girişimler oldu; ama başarısız oldu. Ne zaman bu tür girişimler olduysa; hep dağıldı. Biz zaten Zaza olduğumuz için bir de, biraz kendi köşemizdeyiz.

60. (Metin Erol): Bu sorun, devletin, şu ya da bu şekilde, Kürtlerin anadilde hakkını tanımasıyla çözülebilir ancak. Ve bu kaçınılmaz. Bu halkı seçmeli derslerle kandıramazlar. Bu halkın dinamizmine, bu halkın direnişine daha fazla karşı duramazlar. Bu gerçeği kabullendiklerinde, bize haklarımızı vermek zorunda kalacaklar, anayasada Kürtçeyi resmi dil olarak kabul etmek zorunda kalacaklar.

61. (Nurettin Adem): İnsanın kendi ülkesinde, kendi dilini öğrenebilmesi için seçmeli ders konması tek kelimeyle gülünçtür. Olması gereken anadilde eğitimdir. Bunun tartışılması bile vahimdir. Ama bence Kürtlerin seçmeli ders fırsatını kesinlikle kullanması lazımdı. Bunu yapabilirlerdi. Herkes böyle de başlayabilirdi. Ne yazık ki kullanamadılar.

62. (Nizamettin Seçkin): Gündelik hayatta bile on yıllarca yasaklanmış bir dilden bahsediyoruz. Bunun dilimiz üzerinde yarattığı bir tahribat var. Bunun sonuçlarını yaşıyoruz ve bir süre bunlarla cebelleşmek durumda kalacağız. Ama bu bir iki yayınevinin işi değil, yani. Bu konuda ciddi bir sıkıntı var. Bu dilin sahibi diye görünen, bu kültürü sahiplenmek söz konusu olduğunda hep ortalıkta görünenlerin yaptıklarına baktığımızda ciddi anlamda bir şey görmüyorsunuz. Şu an konuştuğumuz çerçevenin farkında bile değiller. Anadil hakkı için bir miting örgütlemek tabii ki çok önemli bir şeydir, ama isteklerin kabulü durumunda, buyurun ne yapacaksın? Zor olanı bu… Kimse bunu düşünmüyor, kimse bunun için çalışmıyor. Sen bu kadar büyük bir toplumsal taban yayılıyorsun, anadilde eğitim mitingi düzenliyorsun, on binlerce insanı katıyorsun; ama bin tane kitap satamıyorsun.

63. (Nizamettin Seçkin): Bir kısım yayıncı belediyelerin güdümünde bir takım şeylere girişiyorlar, ama bunların güdümünde de hiçbir şey yapılamaz. Çünkü BDP'li belediyelerin, ben de onlara oy vermeme rağmen çok açık söyleyeyim, Kürt kültürüne yarardan çok zararı olmuştur. Kesinlikle kapsayıcı olmadıkları gibi, ciddi ayrımcılıklar yapıyorlar. Öncelikle hiç şeffaf değiller, neyi nasıl yaptıkları, hangi yayıncıyı, hangi kitabı nasıl kıstaslara göre destekledikleri, bastıkları tamamen muamma. Bu alana bakışları baştan savma, gayri ciddi, adam kayırma üzerine, Kürt yazarlarını, entelektüellerini ucuzlaştırma, böyle üç beş kuruşla şey yapma mantığı üzerine kurulu.

64. (Selahattin Erdal): Siyasi motivasyon oldukça yüksektir, fakat siyaset yapacağını yapmıştır. Siyasi hareketlilik ve destek başka bir şeydir, bu reel politik bir meseledir; ama edebiyat başka bir şeydir, bütün dünyaya hitap eden bir şeydir. Siyaset dediğin şey sana ortam oluşturur; ama o ortamın kültürel dokusunu değiştirmek, dönüştürmek, kültür insanlarının, kültür politikalarını yapan, geliştiren kurumların işidir. Kürt hareketi, okurları örgütleyip bu alanda büyük bir boşluğu dolduruyor. Mevcut olan siyasal ortam, hak-hukuk vesairenin izin verdiği ölçülerde Kürt hareketi yapabileceğinin en iyisini yapmaya çalışıyor ve yapıyor da; fakat bu yetmez. Bunun yetmediğini kendileri de mutlaka biliyorlardır. Yani Kürdistan coğrafyasında olan bir hadiseyi anlattığınız zaman ve bunun Meksika'daki bir köylüyle nasıl buluşacağını hesaplamadığınız zaman, ortada güdük bir durum var demektir. Yoksa kuşkusuz bu

siyasi dinamikler üzerinden büyük bir edebiyat inşa etmek mümkün; ama bu mümkünken bu dinamikleri edebiyata dönüştürememenin kabızlığı gibi bir durum karşımızda. Bu beni çok rahatsız ediyor.

65. (Selahattin Erdal): Şimdi acilen yapılması gereken şeyler var. Mesela dediğim gibi acilen bir Kürtçe-Kürtçe sözlük ve Kürtçe imla kılavuzu yapılmalıdır. Sonra dünya edebiyatının Kürtçeye, Kürtçenin de dünya edebiyatına kazandırılması için kurumlar, yapılar, örgütlenmeler geçekleştirilmelidir. Bu mesele sadece kültür merkezleriyle, yarı-profesyonel konservatuvarlarla halledilecek bir mesele değildir. Kongrelerle, konferanslarla bir plan belirlenmelidir. Esas mesele, kültürün örgütlenmesi meselesidir. Kültür örgütlenmelidir, kurumsallaşmalıdır. Ancak bu şekilde kalıcı bir şeyler yaratabiliriz. Bunun için dünyadaki kültür politikalarını, dünyadaki değişimleri göz önünde bulundurmalıyız. Dünyada bu alanda çalışan bütün kişilerle, bütün kurumlarla bir araya gelerek, onlarla konuşarak, onların tecrübelerinden istifade ederek, bu coğrafyaya uygun bir takım planlar hazırlanmalıdır. Esas mesele budur. Bana kalırsa bu işi çözecek olan üniversitelerdir. En kısa sürede İngilizcenin de içinde olduğu Türkçenin de içinde olduğu Kürtçe eğitim yapılan bir üniversite. Bu alanda çalışan bilim insanlarına ihtiyacımız var. İnsanların büyük bir bölümü, ben dahil, kendi dilimizi kendi imkanlarımızla öğrenip bir şeyler yapmaya çalıştık; ama bir akademiye ihtiyacımız var. Bütün mesele ileriye dönük acil atılması gereken adımların atılmasıyla ilgili bir mesele. Bunlar atılmadan sizin ilerleme şansınız yoktur. Doğal olarak bu adımları şu an mevcut olan Kürt iktidarının desteğini almadan atma şansınız yoktur. Burada siyasetin rolü doğal olarak ortaya çıkıyor. Bu yüzden kültür insanlarıyla siyasetin belli bir siyaset mekanizmalarını işleterek kurumsallaşma anlamında belli adımları atması gerekmektedir. Deyim yerindeyse, beş yıllık acil eylem planı gibi planların oluşturulup uygulanması lazım.

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