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THE 'KURDISH QUESTION' IN TURKEY FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF KURDISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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ABSTRACT

THE 'KURDISH QUESTION' IN TURKEY FROM
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This thesis is concerned with extrapolating some central issues of the so-called "Kurdish Question" in the Republic of Turkey by applying political anthropological theory and methodologies. It attempts to guage the political identities of five Kurdish University students and understand their perspectives on what constitutes and propogates Kurdish political discontents in the Republic. The following research questions have been addressed: How is Turkey's "Kurdish question" *(Kürt Meselesi)* perceived and defined by Kurdish, post-graduate university students from a university in Ankara? How have individual experiences shaped the participants' political identities? What are the relevant macro-level factors informing their political identities and their perceptions of the "Kurdish question"? For the sample group studied, the Kurdish identity has been found to be a highly political and socially stigmatized identity in Turkey. According to the respondents, the Kurdish identity (both group and personal) and its political overtures have developed in an ongoing dialect with an everchanging official Turkish nationalist doctrine that is executed through a state outfit whose legitimacy is anchored largely in the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The Kurdish Question itself represents a broad range of issues. According to these university students, these issues are beginning to be addressed in line with attempts at political liberalisation and democratisation in the country that are a part of the EU-accession process as well as a product of developing education and an ever-"enlightened" population. Despite this, the respondents are

hesitant to believe in positive political change for the Kurds in Turkey as much discussion of the 'Kurdish Question' remains focused on the outlawed PKK and ongiing conflict in the South East of the country. Kurdish discontents may also be seen to present and call for the recognition of a historical narrative which is divergent from the official line of state, a narrative which remains highly taboo at state and society levels.

Keywords: Kurdish Question, Turkey, Political Identity, Kurdish University Students.

ÖZ

KÜRT ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN BAKIŞ AÇISINDAN TÜRKİYE'DE 'KÜRT MESELESİ'

EFFENEY, Elizabeth

Yüksek Lisans, Orta Doğu Araştırmaları

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Bu tez, siyaset antropolojisi kuramı ve yöntemlerini kullanarak Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde 'Kürt Meselesi' olarak tanımlanan konunun bazı ana meselelerini anlamlandırma ile ilgilidir. Bu tez, beş üniversite öğrencisinin siyasi kimliklerini ölçmeye ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ndeki Kürtlerin siyasi hoşnutsuzluklarını nelerin oluşturduğu ve ürettiği hakkında bu öğrencilerin bakış açılarını anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu tezde ele alınan araştırma soruları şunlardır: Türkiye'nin *"Kürt Meselesi*" Ankara'daki bir üniversitenin Kürt lisansüstü öğrencileri tarafından nasıl algılanmakta ve tanımlanmaktadır? Kişisel tecrübeler araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin siyasi kimliklerini nasıl şekillendirmektedir? Onların siyasi kimliklerini ve "Kürt meselesi" hakkındaki algılarını şekillendiren ilgili makro-düzey etkenler nelerdir? Çalışılan örneklem grubu için Kürt kimliği Türkiye'de oldukça siyasi ve toplum tarafından etiketlenmiş bir kimlik olarak görülmektedir. Görüşmecilere göre, Kürt kimliği (hem grup hem kişisel Kürt kimliği) ve siyasi önermeleri, meşruiyeti büyük ölçüde Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün mirasına sıkıca bağlı olan bir devlet donanımı yoluyla uygulanmış, daima değişen resmi Türk milliyetçi doktrini ile süregelen bir etkileşim içinde gelişmiştir. Kürt meselesinin kendisi geniş bir sorun yelpazesini temsil eder. Görüşülen üniversite öğrencilerine göre bu sorunlar, Avrupa Birliği'ne giriş sürecinin bir parçası ve gelişen eğitimin ve sürekli "aydınlanan" nüfusun bir ürünü olan ülkedeki siyasi liberalleşme ve demokratikleşme çabaları ile paralel olarak işaret edilmeye başlamaktadır. Buna rağmen görüşmeciler, Türkiye'deki Kürtler için olumlu bir siyasi değişime inanmada kuşkuludurlar çünkü

“Kürt Meselesi”nin çoğu tartışması yasadışı PKK üzerinde ve ülkenin Güney Doğu’sunda süregelen çatışma üzerinde yoğunlaşmaya devam etmektedir. Kürt hoşnutsuzlukları, devletin resmi çizgisinden farklı olan, devlet ve toplum düzleminde büyük ölçüde tabu olarak kalan tarihi bir anlatımın tanınmasının sunumu ve bu tanınma için bir çağrı olarak görülebilir

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kürt Meselesi, Türkiye, Siyasi Kimlik, Kürt Üniversite Öğrencileri.

To My Parents

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

How is Turkey's "Kurdish question" *(Kürt Meselesi)* perceived and defined by Kurdish, post-graduate university students from a university in Ankara? How have individual experiences shaped the participants' political identities? What are the relevant macro-level factors informing their political identities and their perceptions of the "Kurdish question"?

This thesis is concerned with extrapolating some central issues of the so-called "Kurdish Question" in Turkey by applying political anthropological theory and methodologies. Referred to frequently by political commentators and actors in Turkey, the "Kurdish Question", as a turn of phrase, belies little of what constitutes this complex socio-political issue. Broad-stroke, highly standardised analyses as appear in the contemporary Turkish and international media rarely succeed in defining the "Kurdish Question". Instead they usually reflect a view contingent on very current perspectives and, implicitly or explicitly, a certain socio-political imperative. Despite this, ongoing discussion serves to reify the "question" and cement its place in the domestic political scene of the Republic of Turkey. It must be noted that the "Kurdish question" is seldom discussed in a genuinely open forum due to historically entrenched taboos, legal issues and a lack of general knowledge outside of state-propagated information.

This thesis does not aim to define the "Kurdish question" outright and has absolutely no political aims or contentions (the researcher is highly conscious of pervading value judgements). It does propose, however, to add to some of the ways the "question" may be understood and indeed how it is understood by this sample group of Kurdish post-graduate university students/young intellectuals. The sample group will be introduced by a recount of their personal histories so as to have an enriched understanding of some important transformations and experiences they have

encountered throughout their lives. Tracing their paths over space and time up until their current positions at university will act as a useful gauge in trying to then understand their personal, ethnic and political identities and what they view as central to Kurdish concerns. Anthropology's focus on *emic* perspectives is aimed at enriching our understanding of social phenomena. It is in this spirit that this thesis has been undertaken.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Identity – In Theory and Practice

In order to understand the meaning of an explicit 'identity,' whether it is a national identity, an ethnic identity or a personal identity, one must tackle the sociological problem of providing an exposition of the social structure within which that identity is embedded (Turner 1996). The explication of such social structures is inseparable from an analysis of their contingent identities. In other words, "the relation of social structures to identities influences the process of self-verification, while the process of self-verification creates and sustains social structures" (Burke et al 2000). This renders 'identity,' in its numerous manifestations, both productive AND constitutive of social form and interaction. As such, the term is richly ambiguous as an analytical concept.

The notion of identity, a belief in belonging to a collective, may be formed and justified by a plethora of means and is thus highly flexible. In recent decades there has been an unprecedented boom in communication technologies and subsequent globalization of culture which has engendered and is mutually reinforced by trends towards pluralism. Turner argues that "pluralism means that individuals experience societies rather like supermarkets within which they are offered a multiplicity of lifestyles and values" (Turner 1996: 174). If 'identity' is a notion that highlights or rejects claims of fundamental or abiding sameness over time and across persons then it is indeed highly problematic in the context of contemporary society. It remains strangely indispensable however. Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in processes of external identification carried out by powerful and authoritative institutions such as the modern state (Robbins 2000). Many social thinkers such as Bourdieu and Foucault view the "formalized, codified, objectified systems of categorization"

produced by modern state elites as attempts at monopolizing legitimate symbolic force (Bourdieu 1994). In effect an endeavour to harness the power to categorize, name and essentially identify all that makes up society through both mythical and material constructs. While 'identity' is undeniably employed as a political tool by state elites, the varying successes and failures of calls for 'national' solidarity by the upper echelons further deepens the elusive nature of notions of identity. Eikelman has noted that "ideas of loyalty and leadership based on 'informal' understandings and affinities having nothing to do with state authority have often provided a significant measure of order" (Eikelman, 2002: 20).

In his discussion about shared intellectual phenomena of identity theory and social identity theory, Burke has written figuratively of identities and social structure as being two sides of the same coin (Burke, 2004) He expands on this in more simplistic terms by stating,

> Identities are tied to positions in the social structure; these positions in turn are defined by our culture. Culture makes available the categories that name the various roles and groups which, from one point of view, make up the social structure (Burke 2004: 27).

Individuals are born into a basic group identity which "consists of the ready-made set of endowments and identifications which every individual shares with others from the moment of birth by the chance of the family into which he is born at that given time at that given place" (Isaacs HR 1975: 31). Furthermore, individuals may be seen to derive meaning from observation, shared experience and instruction. These processes lead to an awareness of categories that are perceived according to the dimensions of meaning that have been made available in a surrounding culture; meanings of the roles, positions and groups that exist within it. Firth has defined culture as a process that may be distinct from social structure stating that it is "…the component of accumulated resources, immaterial as well as material, which a people inherit, employ, transmute, add to and transmit; it is all learned behaviour which has been socially acquired" (Firth R 1971: 27). Implications of the identity-social structure link are numerous. In the case of its implementation as an analytical category, it is tantamount that the temporal aspects of identity are recognised so as to avoid slipping into simplified notions of 'identity,' usages which Robert Coles

remarks as having become "the purest of clichés" (Brubaker et al 2000: 4). Common usage of the language of identity, used in an implicitly or explicitly reifying manner, generally belies the vast variability in its theoretical role and its conceptual meanings. For example, identity as a seemingly crucial term/notion in the vernacular idiom of contemporary nation-oriented politics must be noted and dually accounted for by social analysts as being simultaneously used by 'lay' actors as well as by political entrepreneurs as a means of persuasion and self-legitimation. Glazer and Moynihan, reflecting upon a highly active portion of said 'social analysts,' have in turn argued that "any … categorization taken up and given currency by sociologists suffers from a certain presumption of disutility" (Glazer et al 1975: 1).

It may be seen that 'identity' is a concept that is deployed to do TOO much analytical work. Problematically, as identities themselves proliferate in a globalizing world the term tends to lose its analytical purchase. Claude Levis-Strauss commented on identity as "a sort of virtual centre (*foyer virtuel*) to which we must refer to explain certain things, but without it ever having a real existence" (Robbins 2000). In much contemporary academic writing there is a clear constructivist stance on identity which stipulates identities as being constructed, fluid and multiple (Brubaker et al 2000). While effectively trying to rid 'identity' of many of its essentialist charges, this approach leaves little room to account for the concrete identity claims of, for example, identity politics or of nation-state politics in general. Herein lies the much pondered paradox that has perplexed droves of theorists and lies at the heart of national identity claims - "the objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye versus their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists" (Anderson 1991). The most industrious theorists of 'nationalism', such as Smith, Gellner and Nairn have contributed to the 'perennialist' versus 'modernist' debate directly (Halliday 2000).

In a search for conceptual clarity, Pierre Bourdieu addresses the "tension between the constructivist language that is required by academic correctness and the foundationalist or essentialist message that is required if appeals to identity are to be effective in practice" (Brubaker et al 2000) by expounding a somewhat unorthodox structuralist approach. Imbued with the legacy of Kant, Bourdieu fosters an

understanding of "symbolic systems as 'structuring structures'" AND 'structured structures' (Robbins 2000). He has encouraged the analysis of the social origins of structures, thus acknowledging that world views are the products of active construction "which are differentiated by virtue of differences of provenance, both socially in the present and in history" (Robbins 2000). This concept is complemented with an understanding of these structures of meaning as formally coherent and autonomous of social forces. Such an approach, which appreciates both the social origins and the essential characteristics of concepts of identity, is a step forward in expelling the constructivist-essentialist dichotomy implicit in this term. It does so by marrying the two concepts thus giving credence to both. By formulating such a paradigm, Bourdieu has enriched the difficult task of socio-political analysis by allowing for a clearer understanding of perceptions of sameness among members of a group or category and the emotional significance attached to that membership. "...identities are neither ascribed nor achieved; they are both... as Marx wrote, people make history, but not under circumstances of their own choosing" (Hylland Eriksen 1993: 136). It is pertinent at this juncture to remark upon these intellectuals' musings as commentary on the playing-out of a European-derived and European-centred international order as experienced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

2.2 Political Identity

Concepts of identity are particularly pervasive in literature related to the analysis of 'modern' politics. Keeping the aforementioned relationship between formal structure and contingent genesis in mind, Bourdieu has applied a politically functionalist version of the 'structuring of structures' to argue that "consensus of symbolic meaning is the product of a struggle for domination based on the relative power of competing socio-economic groups rather than an idealist 'conscience collective'" (Robbins, 2000). In line with his fundamental rationale and his Neo-Marxist tendencies, he has complemented this argument with the assertion that 'structured structures' behold power in a struggle for dominance which may not be reduced to their socioeconomic bases (Robbins, 2000). Furthermore is the idea that

the securing of consensus over predominant symbolic forms is the end result of a power struggle between dominant and dominated groups, showing that contact is a precondition of group identity formation (Bourdieu, 1994). In the context of the modern nation-state the dominant structure acts to elevate a certain cultural attitude in the midst of a continuous push and pull between competing cultures. Indeed this dominant structure is in most cases represented by the government of state which shape and reshape institutions of the bureaucratised modern polity in the name of maintaining dominance within a dynamic social environment differentiated along cleavages based on 'identity.' The very nature of this competition serves both to verify the objective and subjective existence of social identities while reinforcing group-non-group distinctions thus maintaining these dynamic differentiations and splits in the social framework. These cleavages, based on inevitable variations of experience and disposition across time and place, and the institutional structure in which they exist, lead to a self-perpetuated cycle whereby counter-identities are sustained in order to verify and sustain ones own identity. In relation to the nation-state, Habermas has argued that the 'fragile networks' of identity formation and the dissidence embedded in new social movements are vulnerable to ideological volatility (Habermas, 1987). It follows that, in an age of unprecedented cultural pluralism and militaristic power where the stakes of the competition between dominant and dominated groups manifests far beyond Bourdieu's symbolic representation, this 'ideological volatility' may be rife (especially in authoritarian and/or consolidating nation-states).

In contemporary contexts, where the struggle over identity consolidation plays a central role in nationally- and internationally-framed society, the flexibility and indeed the arbitrariness of 'identity' renders it ripe for exploitation by institutionally-able political elites. In line with the reciprocal nature of relations between purported identities of state and society, an important aspect is the tendency to assert a particular identity in the face of social, economic and political upheaval and change (Thin, 1989). "Categories, classificatory schemes, and modes of social counting and accounting with which bureaucrats, judges, teachers and doctors must work and to which non-state actors must refer" (Burke, 2004) are incumbent in any political

context. The State is an enormously powerful body that has a sound advantage over all other groups in society in regards to its assertive power. State elites may "...move all the policy levers of official nationalism; compulsory state-controlled primary education, state organized propaganda, official rewriting of militarism and endless affirmations of the identity of nation" (Anderson, 1991). It must be noted that while the state is not the only identifier that matters, as categorization is carried out in a range of social settings (for example, international/trans-national networks, families, tribes, schools, firms, sporting teams), leaders efforts to influence potential constituencies to adhere to a particular identification are indeed highly efface. As Burke has said,

> To persuade people that they are one; that they comprise a bounded, distinctive solidary group; that their internal differences do not matter, at least for the purpose at hand – this is a normal and necessary part of politics, and not only of what is ordinarily characterized as 'identity politics' (Burke, 2004).

In a global society where international networks are pervasive, every aspect of social-life is coloured by political connotations. Political identities have flourished in a post-Cold War age of 'liberal' rationale as persisting power imbalances manifest in reflexivity, self- and outwardly-directed criticisms, heightened awareness via culturally partial media channels and heightened sub- and trans-national contact, cooperation and at times, hostilities. The role of state governments in questions of 'identity' is increasingly examined and thus reinforced.

2.3 The Modern State

In very general terms, a state is a political system or association, representing a population, with effective sovereignty over a geographic area. Owen has pointed to a two-fold meaning of the word state; "One use refers to sovereign political entities, that is, those states with international recognition, their own boundaries, their own seat at the United Nations and their own flag. The other refers to that set of institutions and practices which combines administrative, judicial, rule-making and coercive powers" (Owen R, 2004: 3). 'Modern' state amalgams were borne of a precise transformative period in the intellectual, economic, social, spiritual,

emotional and political life of Western Europe (tracing back to Machiavelli in the fourteenth century) from where and whence it spread globally, in line with colonial and imperial imperatives (Gellner 1983). The original blue print of the modern state, developed in the 'rational' social contracts of Hobbes and Locke, the musings of other eighteenth century enlightenment thinkers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau and their utopian predecessors and romantic successors, has necessarily been adopted and imitated by societies world-wide. The rise of the modern state system may be closely related to changes in political thought, especially concerning an ever-changing understanding of legitimate state power.

Central to conventional social scientific theories of the modern state are Weberian and utilitarian analyses of legitimacy and political power, which tend to "objectify and endow the state with institutions with law-making and enforcing capabilities that may be more or less democratic, more or less brutal, more or less violent" (Nagengast C 1994: 116). Weberian theory of state has emphasized the modern state's monopoly of the legitimate use of violence and means of taxation within a defined territory (McCormick JP 2007). This monopoly is purported as endowed with 'rational-legal' legitimacy which, ideally, acts to constrain the power of state elites and represent the interests of populations within a state's sovereign territory (it must be noted that this assumption is highly idealistic, and indeed may be seen as an anomaly in the international context).

Insofar as anthropology has dealt with the modern state, "it has taken it as an unanalysed given or a stage, implicitly the final one, in the evolution of political and cultural organization" (Nagengast C, 1994; Service E, 1975: 116). Such a view places the state in a position of political management over a specified geographic territory and its inhabitants. It affects this management through the "mechanism of centralized government institutions that are staffed and controlled by a small number of specialists" (Nagengast C, 1994: 116). Although anthropology has conventionally shied away from dealing with such a large entity as the modern state as its ethnographic subject, research directives are changing in line with the nature of society and politics in a globalising world (Cohen R, Service E, 1978). The modern

state is more than a set of institutions staffed by literate bureaucrats purported to serve a 'public interest.' It also incorporates cultural and political forms, representations, discourse, practices and activities, and specific technologies and organisations of power that, when considered together, act to define public interests, establish meaning, and shape and naturalize available social identities (Anderson 1992, Kearney M, Nagengast C 1990). Anthropology has found new outlets into the study of the state by utilising its paradigms concerning power and knowledge.

Bourdieu has asserted that modern states promote and enforce agreed upon identities in society (the result of a push and pull between popular resistance/thought and official hegemony as discussed above) in a dialectical relationship with the intelligentsia (Bourdieu 1984). In this vain, Stuart Hall has noted that,

> The circle of dominant ideas does accumulate the symbolic power to map or classify the world for others; its classifications do acquire not only the constraining power of dominance over other modes of thought but also the inertial authority of habit and instinct... Ruling ideas may dominate other conceptions of the social world by setting the limit to what will appear as rational, reasonable, credible, indeed sayable or thinkable, within the given vocabularies of motive and action available to us..(Hall S, 1988: 44).

This idea of state as ideological project must not digress into a mere mechanical device to explain all limitations to human freedom. It should instead be taken as a uniquely structured and powerful entity in society, indeed one with its own integrative imperatives as espoused by nationalist ideology, which plays a highly significant role in a dialogue between destruction and preservation, prohibition and enabling. While analysis of state and its institutions may be helpful in illuminating how people challenge, negotiate, learn, and internalize identities, the idea that in most states the struggle for consensus is not ordinarily contested in the realm of politics but rather in that of social life where consensus is built must not be forgotten.

2.4 The Nation and Nationalism

Discussion of the modern state cannot de disentangled from a discussion of nations and nationalism. Borrowing heavily from the works of Hugh Seton-Watson and Eric Hobsbawm, Anderson has adopted an anthropological approach, defining the nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 1991: 6). Anderson has offered interpretations of the origins and evident popularity of the concept of nation-ness in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe having linked it to certain language-related factors. He has claimed that the concept of 'nation' was ripe for propagation as an established socio-cultural 'model' available for piracy by groups over a wide range of social contexts. Sitting at the helm of this political community is the modern state. Indeed the nation, 'nation-ness' and the modern state are mutually dependent concepts which may be viewed as cultural artefacts borne of a distinct historical melting pot in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nation-states boast a bureaucratic administration and a written legislation which encompasses all citizens, and it has – at least as an ideal – a uniform educational system and a shared labour market for all its citizens. There is always a national language used in all official communications.

Nationalism is that ideology which connects nation to state – "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner E, 1983). Kedourie holds that the doctrine of nationalism proposes that "humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government" (Kedourie E, 1960). While many in 2009 may easily find issue with Gellner's and Kedourie's definitions of nationalism, it must be seen that nationalism and its associated ideas have been naturalized in the political rhetoric of the West and the inter-NATIONAL system. Through nationalism and ideas of sovereignty which abstractly empower 'citizens' within a defined territory – "the principle of sovereignty resides essentially in the nation; no body of men, no individual can exercise authority that does not emanate expressly from it" (Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen) - the nation

developed a political meaning, and a new style of politics was born. This nation-based style of politics has taken a number of paths from its home in the enlightened absolutism of Revolutionary France, 1789. Nation and nationalism have undergone constant redefinition in a number of contexts, yet modern international politics remains a "style of extremes" (Kedourie 1960).

According to both liberal and Marxist social theories of modernisation, nationalism should not have been viable in an individualist post-Enlightenment world, referring as it does to 'primordial loyalties' and solidarity based on common origins and culture. However, the nation-state powerhouse and nationalisms continue to be relevant in 2009 exhibiting aspects of the instrumental and the emotional for a majority of citizens globally. There are two well-established views of nation in social scientific discourse; perennial and modernist. The perennial view argues that nations are unique and distinguishable units that exist and have existed naturally, pre-dating the existence of states and indeed the nation-state's prized nationalist ideology (resonated by Kedourie). "In this Herderian view, nationalism is the spiritual, ideological and political expression of objective reality and must coincide with a political state and a specific territory" (Nagengast 1994: 118). A modernist approach holds that states produce nations through "the artefact invention, and social engineering of nations" (Hobsbawm E, 1990). Such a view traces the existence of nations to the integrative needs of the modern state and its elites. In line with the modern state's claims to legitimate sovereignty over a defined area and population, nationalist ideology was produced, which created the nation, "sometimes taking pre-existing cultures and turning them into nations, sometimes inventing them, and often obliterating pre-existing cultures" (Gellner E, 1983:). Elites, national leaders and educators tend not to apologize for this cultural repackaging but rather celebrate what they see as rational development.

Many issues have arisen as a result of nationalist doctrines, national organizations and an international order which seems to champion parallel statements of inclusion and policies of exclusion. These statements are legitimated in 2009 very generally under the auspices of liberal thought and organization. They also find shelter in the

discourses of power which have grown in dialogue with colonialism and have the ability to revise and reject classical liberal imperatives such as capitalism, rationalist states and the morally persuasive elite-intelligentsia dialectic. In an anthropological spirit, both the perennial and modernist views of nation and nationalism must be considered to fully understand the significance of such large-scale territorialized concepts of identity (Malkki L, 1992). Implicit in Benedict Anderson's definition of nation is the idea that "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined," (Anderson 1991: 6). It must be stressed that nations are ideological constructions seeking to forge a link between (self-defined) cultural group and state, and that they create abstract communities of a different order to those dynastic states or kinship-based communities which pre-dated them. The global context and the meanings of concepts that are central to the nation-state and nationalist ideology have changed dramatically over centuries yet "nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" (Anderson 1992).

2.5 Ethnicity - a Kindred Concept of Nationalism

'Ethnicity' made its first dictionary appearance in a *Supplement* to the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1972 where it is recorded as having been used first by David Reisman in 1953 (Glazer et al 1975). This first official usage came long after the establishment of nation-state structures and the international system. The term comes from the Greek, '*ethnos',* meaning heathen or pagan and generally has something to do with the classification of people and group relationships. In a discussion of the meaning of ethnicity in the twentieth century, Glazer and Moynihan have noted, "there has been a pronounced and sudden increase in tendencies by people in many countries and in many circumstances to insist on the significance of their group distinctiveness and identity and on new rights that derive from this group character" (Glazer et al 1975: 3) While the discourse of ethnicity more than often concerns itself with sub-national groups or 'minorities', it must be noted that 'majorities' are no less ethnic in character. Gellner has pointed to a peculiar link between ethnicity and nation-state, "…nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that

ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones" (Gellner E). Anthropology's focus on social relations and social organisation has helped in shedding light on the origins, meanings and trajectory of ethnically-framed phenomena and movements. Furthermore, by studying changes in the semantics of ethnicity, anthropologists have found great complement to studies of more general processes of social and cultural change. Despite having developed independently, theories of nationalism and ethnicity show much congruence. It remains worthwhile to distinguish nations from ethnic categories because of their relationship to a modern state

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In anthropology 'ethnicity' refers to relationships between groups whose members consider themselves distinctive. These groups are generally ranked hierarchically within a society. John and Jean Comaroff have stated that "…ethnicity has its origins in the asymmetrical incorporation of structurally dissimilar groupings into a single political economy" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992). Ethnic movements have in nearly all cases developed in a colonial situation or a nation-state. This actuality of ethnogenesis has aided anthropologists in their efforts to "depict flux and process, ambiguity and complexity in their analyses of social worlds" (Hylland Eriksen, 1993: xii) by highlighting a dynamic situation of variable contact and mutual accommodation between groups. This has effectively established contact as an absolute condition of the creation and promulgation of a group and its purported identity. "Ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group," (Hylland Eriksen 1993) referring to both gain and loss in interaction, as well as aspects of meaning in the creation of identity. Only in so far as cultural differences are perceived as being important, and are made socially relevant, do social relationships have an ethnic element.

As is the case for all identity-based claims for group solidarity or collective action, ethnic relations are fluid and negotiable, their importance is variable across different contexts and, despite all their primordial and culturally-rooted claims, ethnic identities may be consciously manipulated and invested in economic competition in modern societies. Ethnicity, like nationalism, is not created entirely by individual agents – but it can simultaneously provide agents with meaning and with

organisational channels for pursuing their culturally defined socio-political interests (Hylland-Eriksen, 1993). As has been noted, identity in a modern political context is consistently used as a vehicle for the acquisition of certain rights – "ideologists always select and reinterpret aspects of culture and history which fit into the legitimation of a particular power constellation" (Hylland Eriksen 1993). The categorisation and classification of large groups of people has the effect of conceptually and socially reifying said groups. Classificatory attempts become official names for groups whose members start using the standardised vernacular in their self-identification. Accordingly, group distinctions have a political, organisational aspect as well as a symbolic one. Glazer and Moynihan have commented on the "strategic efficacy of ethnicity as an organizing principle" asserting that,

> Different groups *do* have different norms. In the most natural way the unsuccessful group has the best chance of changing the system if it behaves *as a group.* It is *as a group* that its struggles become not merely negative, but positive also, not merely against the norms of some other group, but in favour of the already established norms of its own (Glazer et al 1975: 19)

Ethnic and national identities alike have become relevant as abstract 'umbrella' identities. It has become imperative to group survival to find clear criteria for distinguishing between members and non-members. For example, symbolism referring to ancient and/or shared language, religion, notions of kinship, music or way of life is crucial for the maintenance of ethnic identity through periods of change and external threat.

It is a feature of the contemporary world that groups and individuals become more similar and more different at the same time – "modern society is *both* more homogeneous *and* more diversified than those which preceded it" (Gellner 1978). Two or several groups who regard themselves as being distinctive may tend to become more similar and simultaneously increasingly concerned with their distinctiveness if their mutual contact increases. Given that notions of ethnicity are constituted through social contact, it may be seen that boundaries between particular groups defy neat definition and are ambiguous and situational. It is clear that group histories are generally fashioned so as to serve present needs (with obvious

limitations to how obtuse claims of cultural continuity can be stretched). The inter-group contacts that constitute and have confirmed ethnicity may be caused by a variety of factors, among them population growth, the establishment of new communication technologies facilitating trade of material and cultural commodities, the inclusion of new groups in a capitalist system of production and exchange, political change incorporating new groups in a single political system and migration. Ethnicity has generally arisen in the wake of socio-political upheaval, and in turn has entailed the establishment of both Us-Them contrasts (dichotomisation) and a shared field for interethnic discourse and interaction (complementarisation) (Hylland Eriksen 1993). As regards the general nature of contact between groups, ethnic movements are usually borne of a particular asymmetry emanating from ruling socio-political structures and objectives. Many interethnic relations persist in an 'asymmetrical' fashion, often but not necessarily characterized by unequal access to political power and economic resources (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992). Such hierarchical aspects of ethnic relations often serve to stigmatize ethnically framed movements and ethnic-ascriptions. Bourdieu has contributed to this line of thought with his term 'doxa' which refers to the unquestionable, taken for granted aspects of culture. "Doxic" stereotyping is that inscriptive process carried out by dominant groups which may become part of a group's view of itself. Such stereotyping is very powerful and usually thrives upon differences in the respective positions of ethnic groups in the political system and the economy.

While many theoretical parallels exist, discussion of ethnicity and nationalism in the political arena tends to centre on conflict, manifest violently, legally and/or symbolically. Such discussion reifies group-non-group distinctions. As has been noted, politically relevant groups are used by ascribing members to appeal for and acquire certain rights and protect group interests. Pertinent political debate is in most cases played out between a dominating and a dominated ethnic group within the framework of a modern nation-state (a generalisation given that not all nationalisms are based on ethnicity, notably 'plural' and 'multicultural' nation-states and the existence of other anomalies). In the contemporary world, where "states tend to be dominated politically by one of the constituent ethnic groups or, more accurately by

its elites", the nationalist ideology of the hegemonic group may potentially be perceived by other constituent groups as a particularist ideology rather than a universalistic, egalitarian one, where the mechanisms of exclusion and discrimination (along ethnic or other lines) are more obvious than the mechanisms of inclusion and formal justice. Indeed, this kind of duality, or ambiguity, is fundamental to both nationalist and ethnic ideologies (Hylland Eriksen 1993). The cultural egalitarianism preached by nationalism in most of its manifestations can inspire counter-reactions in situations where a segment of the population does not consider itself to be part of the nation. It is relevant to note at this juncture that the often implicit assumption that identity processes and the maintenance of identity are unproblematic in dominant groups is misleading. "Majority identities … appear as they are seen from without, seeming… to be strong and secure, if not outright aggressive" (Forsythe D 1998). There is never a precise fit between an ideology and the social reality it is about. An ideology is a type of theory – like a map – which by necessity, simplifies the concrete.

When and how ethnic identities become the most relevant ones is an empirical question. Indeed, ethnicity is for the individual in that it is up to each person to decide just how important it is. Although this importance may ostensibly be based upon cultural factors, it is very difficult to decouple such notions of ethnic significance from the political arena. Politics is thoroughly 'ethnified'. As such, ethnic identities are neither ascribed nor achieved but oscillate between situational selection and imperatives imposed from without. In 2009 the boundaries between ethnic groups are particularly blurred as the existence of more and more 'betwixt and between' individuals exist, messing up any neat system of ethnic classification. The work of Barth and Gluckman has shown that many individuals in the contemporary world are structurally placed so as to have multiple loyalties in ethnic terms (and others, eg gender, social class). As Hylland Eriksen has noted, even members of the "young intelligentsia who defy political and economic encroachments nevertheless strive to exploit the economic opportunities" (Hylland Eriksen 1993). In terms of ethnicity, multiple loyalties may be a problem for minorities, whose members may often be loyal to - and indeed members of - two ethnic groups or nations, or one

ethnic group and one nation. As such, Comaroff and Comaroff's definition may be highly useful to anthropologists. They have stated that, ethnicity "describes both a set of relations and a mode of consciousness. As a mode of consciousness, however, it is one among many … each of which is produced as particular historical structures impinge themselves on human experience and condition social action" (Comaroff et al….).

Globalisation and a trend towards deepening democratisation of political and education systems are causing a number of shifts in research into ethnicity. Most research on ethnicity implicitly presupposes that the nation-state is the 'pre-eminent power-container in our era' (Giddens, 1985). However, social identities may be seen as increasingly negotiable. This may be seen as old nation-states transfer some of their power to a new supranational unit such as the European Union - Discussion and reference to a certain "European identity" has followed. Furthermore, new regionalist and ethnic movements continue to emerge globally. All of these developments deeply affect the way anthropologists view 'ethnicity'. Further to its application as a conceptual tool it must not be forgotten that "Ethnicity does not necessarily arise from modernity, and it is not necessarily an end product" (Hylland Eriksen 1993), ethnicity must be looked at empirically if its analytical purchase is to be maintained.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introducing the Sample group

The sample group being studied is made up of five post-graduate students of Kurdish origin attending a university in Ankara, 2009. Four males and one female have been interviewed (no attention has been payed to the sex of the respondents). The respondents belong to a network of individuals that existed within the university in which they study at the time of interviewing. The respondents were approached directly by the researcher seeking their involvement. Each agreed to participate in the interview happily and all were very helpful and generous with their time and thoughtful articulation

3.2 Justification of Sample

Mindful of anthropological and other social-scientific nomenclatures used to explicate and legitimate individual and group identities, especially those related to 'ethnic identity', this sample is treated as distinctively Kurdish due to the subjects' self-ascription to this title. Debates over issues pertaining to the history, language, culture and socio-economic development of this group identity will not be broached in legitimating the subjects' Kurdishness; self-ascription is treated as wholly sufficient. Central to accepting the self-ascription of the respondents is the acceptance of a Kurdish identity as exists in mainstream lexicons such as academia, media, government and everyday social discourse and discussion in Turkey, in the region of the Middle East and on the international political stage.

3.3 Research Techniques

Three to six hour interviews have been conducted with the respondents. The interview has addressed the personal histories of participants, paying special attention to aspects of their Kurdish political identity. The interview has then focused upon gauging the participants' political ideas, opinions and 'identity' on a

macro level. That is, a look at how they view the Kurdish question under the larger scale auspices of state/domestic and international political systems and developments.

Three of the interviews have been conducted at the respondents' university. Two interviews have been carried out at the home of the respondents. Each of the interviews was conducted in a quiet setting. The respondents were extremely open and friendly and conversation flowed with little need for interjection or questioning on behalf of the researcher. A good rapport and trust was established between the researcher and each of the participants. The mood of each interview was very casual and positive. The researcher had prior acquaintance with one of the respondents; an acquaintance that involved the teaching of Kurmanji to the researcher yet limited socialization. The other four respondents were strangers to the researcher before the time of interviewing. The interviewer had prior experience with Kurdish students from her time spent living in Turkey and socializing extensively with youth as well as travelling.

In order to anonymae the respondents, pseudonyms have been used.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The Kurds

The epicentre of the Kurdish-dominated regions is the Zagros mountain chain which lies in the border area between Iraq, Iran and Turkey. The Kurdish region also extends into the eastern extension of the Taurus mountain chain in south-east Turkey and across the Mesopotamian plain and includes the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (Yıldız 2004). A number of Kurds today live in the urban centres of Turkey, Iraq and Iran, notably Diyarbakır, Istanbul and Ankara. Many Kurds are émigrés to, or are in refuge in countries of Western Europe, forming a sizeable and influential diaspora in Germany, France, Sweden, Belgium and the United Kingdom. The mapping of Kurdish-dominated regions or "Kurdistan" is highly contentious. Adding to this complexity is some regimes outright denial of the existence of Kurdish populations within their borders. As Yıldız has noted, Syria has denied Kurdistan stretches across its boundaries. Yıldız has said, "There exists a large, contiguous area of predominantly Kurdish-inhabited lands that has meaning to the population as well as to exiled Kurds around the world" (Yıldız, 2004 p.6).

Ascertaining reliable population figures for Kurds is a particularly difficult task. States have often understated population figures thus marring the reliability of official census data (Yıldız, 2004). According to Yıldız, there are approximately 15 million Kurds in Turkey, making up some 23% of Turkey's population of 69 million (Yıldız 2004). Sömer has claimed that "some 10% of the population in Turkey expressly embraces Kurdish ethnicity. But people who have various degrees of Kurdish background reach approximately 15-16% of the total population or some 11.5 million people" (Somer M, 2008 p.233). Despite major flux in census figures, what may be said with certainty is that Turkey's Kurdish population is concentrated in the south east, "forming majorities in the provinces of Mardin, Siirt, Hakkari, Diyarbakır, Bitlis, Muş, Van and Ağri. Urfa, Adiyaman, Malatya, Elaziğ, Tunceli,

Erzincan, Bingol and Kars have also traditionally been dominated by Kurdish populations" (Yıldız, 2004). Most of the Kurdish population in Turkey speak the *Kurmanji* language. In the north-west of Turkey's Kurdish-dominated area a majority of Kurds speak *Zaza* (Yıldız, 2004). Rough estimates on the religion of Kurds in Turkey claim 85% to be Sunni Muslim and the remaining 15% to be Alevi Muslims (Yıldız, 2004). There are minor communities of Kurdish Yezidis, Jews, Christians and Baha'is. All of the figures given above are rough and must be treated as such.

Historical texts written about the Kurds vary immensely. Attempts at creating valid texts on this subject too frequently "involves interpolation and extrapolation among a variety of sources written neither for nor about Kurds" (Izady MR, 1992 p.23), rendering the reconstruction of a Kurdish history a near impossible task. Attempts to trace the origins of the Kurds tend to have a territorial point of departure. Kurdistan itself is an area that cannot be neatly demarcated and represents a huge variance in physical geography. Jwaideh has noted that "the area [the Kurds] occupy today has from the earliest times been the scene of a ceaseless ebb and flow of various peoples. Successive waves of conquerors, imperial armies, and savage hordes swept across these lands, and each left behind a trace, however faint, on the racial, linguistic, and cultural character of the inhabitants" (Jwaideh W, 2006 p.11). In line with this territorial focus, some historical accounts of, ostensibly the Kurds, go as far back as 10 000 BC. Izady has pointed to the period between 10 000 BC and 3 000 BC as being "by far the most noteworthy in the history of Kurdistan" (Izady MR, 1992 p.23). Such claims are epistemologically and semantically misleading (given that the term Kurdistan refers to more than merely a geographical area but "also denotes the culture of the people who inhabit the lands" Yıldız, 2004 p.5), yet are entrenched in writings on the history of the Kurds. Nevertheless, the task of historical reconstruction has been taken up and continues to be so by a number of scholars and the resulting texts, no matter how meticulous the research, continue to raise questions and controversy. As Levis Strauss has noted, "interpretations of the past are important to every ethnic identity, and the relationship between such interpretations and 'objective history' is necessarily contestable" (Levis Strauss (cited in Eriksen)).

The term “Kurdistan” was first recorded in the twelfth century “when the Turkish Seljuk prince Saandjar created a province of that name in modern-day Iran” (Yıldız, 2004 p.5). The province’s capital was the town of Bahar, near the ancient Ecbatana (now Hamadan), the capital of the ‘ancestral’ Medes (Allison et al, 1996). Prior to the rule of the Seljuk Turks which began from the eleventh century, the area around the Zagros mountain chain is said to have been divided among three ‘Kurdish’ principalities; the Shaddadids, with their capital at Ganja (951-1174), the Hassanwahids in the south (959-1015), and the Merwanids in the west, with their capital at Diyarbakır (990-1096) (Allison et al, 1996). Later in the twelfth century, the existence of the Islamic ‘dynasty of Kurdish prince Saladin’ has been recorded before it deteriorated under pressure from the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century (Allison et al, 1996).

Following the rise of the Ottoman and Safavid empires from the fifteenth century, the land of the Kurds became a bone of contention between these two powerful states due to its geographical location between them. The battle of Chaldiran, between Ottoman and Safavid forces in 1514 saw ‘northern Kurdistan’ being transferred into Ottoman hands (Izady MR, 1992). Subsequent to this, the dynamics of the relations between notable Kurds and Safavid Shah Isma’il deteriorated while a relationship of greater cooperation was promised to the Kurds by Ottoman Sultan Selim the Grim. To Idris Bitlisi (an Ottoman dignitary of Kurdish origin), the Sultan “entrusted the organization of Kurdistan and the integration of the Kurdish autonomous principalities into the Ottoman imperial system… the very wide powers given to Bitlisi are evident from a *farman* (royal decree) issued by the sultan in the year A.H 921/A.D 1515” (Jwaideh 2006 p.17). In affect this agreement led to Ottoman recognition of Kurdish autonomy in return for a military alliance against the Shi’ite Persian Empire. According to Izady, the Turk-Kurd alliance, “soon deteriorated” as the Ottomans grew to no longer fear Persia. It is claimed by such historians that from “1650-1730, the Ottomans suppressed most of the autonomous Kurdish principalities in the Diyarbakr-Van area.” (Jwaideh 2006 p. 17).

Literacy among Kurds began, and predominantly remains to this day, in foreign languages. Hassanpour has asserted that, "native tongue literacy in the Kurmanji dialect began in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the rise of Kurdish political power in the form of independent and autonomous principalities which ruled over much of Kurdistan until the mid-nineteenth century" (Hassanpour 1996 p.49). Throughout these formative centuries two poets of particular note are Ehmede Khani (1651-1706) and Haji Qadiri Koyi (1817?-97). (Hassanpour 1992) who have been coined "the two apostles of Kurdish nationalism. Koyi often expressed the idea that a literate tradition and statehood were the hallmarks of a civilised and sovereign people, something to which the Kurds should aspire.

Despite an increasing volume of literary works, especially in the nineteenth century, the culture of the Kurds remained predominantly oral. "Throughout their history, the greater part of the Kurds' perceptions of themselves, their past and their everyday lives has been transmitted orally; any serious study of Kurdish culture cannot afford to ignore the oral traditions" (Allison et al 1996 p.30). Oral tradition may be seen as those "verbal messages passed on without the use of writing and consciously performed" (Allison et al 1996 p.30). Both Khani and Koyi showed great respect to the oral traditions of the Kurds, a largely illiterate people. Khani's Mem u Zin is said to be based upon an orally composed poem, 'Meme Alan' yet written in a poetic form taken from Persian literature and given significant Islamic impress. Koyi, broaching the dialectics of oral and written traditions and acknowledging a highly restricted social base of literacy among Kurds, encouraged the writing down of traditional oral ballads (such as Beyti Dimdim, the Ballad of Dimdim) (Hassanpour, A 1992).

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Following the minor literary boom of the nineteenth century, when the ideas of nationalism had penetrated the Ottoman Empire, some Kurdish princes attempted to setup an independent Kurdistan. Notable attempts were led by Prince Muhammed of Rewanduz (1839) and Bedir Khan Pasha of Botan (1847). Such movements failed at the hands of the Ottomans with the support of the British and the Germans (Izady MR 1996). Despite failing to achieve independence, a number of events acted to develop the Kurdish identity in an official and modernist capacity. Nezan Kendal and

Martin Van Bruinessen have contended that the incapacitation of the Ottoman Empire intensified a Kurdish desire for independence, especially in the wake of a number of other independence movements, notably Turkish and Armenian (Kendal 1980, Van Bruinessen, 1992). An example of this is the first Kurdish newspaper, *Kurdistan*, which started publication in Istanbul, 1898 (Allison et al 1996).

4.2 WWI, the Creation of the Modern Middle East and the Kurds

Throughout WWI (1914 – 1918), the Istanbul-based government of the Ottoman Empire allied itself with Germany and Austria, hoping to win back its lost territory in the Balkans (from the wars of 1912-13). The war was labelled a 'holy war' and "the Kurds, being Muslims, considered participation in the war as a religious duty" (Manafy A, 2005 p. 28). The events and power struggles of WWI are of pivotal importance to the map of the modern Middle East and the position of the Kurds today, however it lies outside the scope of this text. As such, only the most superficial points, as relates to discussion of the Kurds will be raised.

Scholars tend to point to two factors that acted to prevent the creation of a Kurdish nation-state in the settlements and events following WWI and the break up of the Ottoman Empire. One was internal, resulting from the absence of credible, worldly statesmen among the Kurds following the demise of the princely houses some three generations earlier (Izady MR, 1992). Izady has asserted, "At this historic moment when independent states were being created thanks to the professionalism, wit and political prowess of other local ethnic leaders, Kurdish politicians could hardly have been any less professional and convincing to the European powers" (Izady 1992 p.58). The other factor militating against Kurdish independence, a reason that is given far more attention in historical narratives, is external. In line with Woodrow Wilson's ideal-type 'self-determination' and colonial strategic interests, the Treaty of Sevres, signed by the Allied Powers and the Constantinople Government on August 10 1920, "provided for the establishment of an Armenian State and an independent Kurdistan" (Manafy a, 2005 p.29). The terms of the treaty were never enacted due to a number of reasons. Notable amongst these is the military victory of Turkish

nationalist leader Mustafa Kemal Pasha in what is today coined the Turkish War of Independence. Also relevant was the success of the Bolshevik revolution in the Soviet Union, which had exposed the designs of the imperialist Sykes-Picot agreement, and in turn tweaked British and French fears. As such, imperial strategy developed a two-fold objective, "It was to prevent Kemal from aligning with Soviet forces, and to use Turkey as a buffer zone between the Soviet Union and the Western colonies in the Middle East. It was this consideration that led to the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne" (Manafy, 2005 p.31).

The Treaty of Lausanne ceded all of Anatolia, including the northern and western regions of the Kurdish-populated areas to Turkey. Indeed, an independent Kurdistan in Anatolia would almost certainly have destabilized the British hold on central Kurdistan and its vital oil deposits (Nash 1976). Some face-saving clauses to show that Europe hadn't completely abandoned Wilson's idealist principle of self-determination for ethnic nationalities can be seen in the treaty. Certain guarantees of minority rights were included in Articles 37-44 of the Treaty, although none of these groups were mentioned by name. Article 39 stated that, "No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publication of any kind or at public meetings. Notwithstanding the existence of the official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Turkish nationals of non-Turkish speech for the oral use of their own languages before the Courts" (Izady MR 1992 p. p.61). The Allied powers never pressed for observation of Articles 38 and 39 however and a Turkish official decree on March 3, 1924, less than a year after the signing of the Treaty, banned all Kurdish schools, organisations, and publications along with their religious fraternities and seminaries (Izady MR 1992). Such a move came on the back of empty promises by Mustafa Kemal to those Kurds who had supported his military push for national independence when he "immediately broke his promises of Kurdish autonomy and dissolved the National Assembly which had included seventy-five Kurdish representatives" (Nezan K 1996 p.11). In February 1925 a number of Anatolian Kurds staged the first of a series of general uprisings against the infant Turkish republic (Yıldız 2004). This first Kurdish revolt was led by Shaykh Sa'id, a

chief of the Sunni Naqshbandi Sufi order and was quickly quelled by the Turkish Republican army. It must be noted that "this revolt was as much, if not more, a religious reaction to the secularizing programs of Atatürk as it was a Kurdish patriotic uprising" (Izady MR, 1992 p. 61-62).

Following WWI, the Kurdish territories were split between the largely colonially-constructed Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria (Chaliand, 1980). The allied powers' drawing up of new national boundaries had given more heed to allocating oil resources and rewarding friendly Arab leaders, than to the ethnic distribution of the Kurds and their right to 'self-determination'. These borders exist to this day and have acted to impose highly differential conditions upon this nominally unified community. Kurdish issues have manifested differentially across these externally-imposed frontiers. In Turkey it has bred fluctuating yet ongoing conflict and the "Kurdish Question" as exists in political rhetoric on the domestic scene in 2009.

4.3 The Turkish Nation-State and Politics

Turkey is a complex country that stands between Europe and Asia both geographically and historically. It has a majority Sunni Muslim population and is currently a candidate for European Union Accession. Turkey became an early member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and has forged a close alliance with the United States of America since World War Two. It is a parliamentary multi-party democracy that tends to encourage a nationalist ideology that envisions a commitment to Kemal Atatürk nationalism (symbolised by six arrows: nationalism, laicism, republicanism, populism, statism and reformism), westernisation, the rule of law, the welfare state, human rights and democracy (Esin O, 2008). The Turkish nation-state is imbued with the legacy of the Ottoman Empire which "held that the social order was of divine origin and hence immutable… Political power did not derive from the society, but was imposed on it by the will of God" (Sorenson D, 2008 p.262). As such, many scholars have contended that the laicism of Atatürk and his dismantling of formal religious structures after WWI created a power void which facilitated a strong military presence in Turkey's politics. "Secular Kemalism continues to trump the currents of Islam in Turkish political life" (Sorenson 2008,

p.262). Indeed the army's purported role as the ultimate guardian of Ataturk's constitutionally-entrenched legacy must be given credence so as to understand civil-military tensions as have played out in the country over its history. Turkey in 2009 is a vibrant, if imperfect, democracy that is currently governed by the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi,* or AKP), a party with moderate Islamic roots and a commitment to EU Accession.

The Republic of Turkey emerged from a defeated Ottoman Empire which throughout the nineteenth century had gained the reputation of the "sick man of Europe" (Anderson et al 1998). Having allied with the losing Central Powers in WWI (1914-1918) much of the empire was dismembered in the wake of the war – "the Allied forces divided the empire among themselves and imposed a particularly harsh rule on Turkey" (Anderson et al 1998). From 1920 onwards, however, a group of Ankara-based nationalist elites defied the Ottoman Sultan's authority and gained international recognition in 1923 as the leaders of a new Turkish Republic. The nationalist movement had been led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who was later given the title *Atatürk* (Father of the Turks) by the Grand National Assembly in 1934 (Sorenson D, 2008).

The Republic of Turkey was proclaimed in 1923 after the landmark Treaty of Lausanne. The Constitution announced in 1924 was based upon the ideals of Atatürk and amounted to a legal revolution that was to send Turkey down a unique path in the Muslim world as the elite sought to completely secularize its legal system and impose cultural and economic change from above, through the force of law (Arat 1998). "The abolition of the *shari'a* courts as the final secularization of the court system was accomplished in 1924" (Yilmaz I, 2003, p26). The new constitution effectively set out the ideological premises upon which Turkey would be governed. It was underlined by a distinctly 'Kemalist' Turkish nationalism that had been based around the overarching idea of the nation-state - ideals that maintain much legal and social resonance today (Yıldız 2004). The new Republican government is often noted as having sought to create a unified, centralized and ethnically homogeneous state with a single Turkish identity. The ideology underlying the republic drew on "some

of the more ‘extreme’ concepts of modern nationalism which were current in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe. Homogeneity – one language, one religion, one Volk – was considered to be the prerequisite of a strong and independent state” (Ascherson, 1996)(Esin O, 2008).

Hope and Lewis have asserted that under Ataturk a number of dramatic reforms were introduced that aimed to displace the importance of Islam in society, place the military at the core of the state and looked to the secular, industrial West for inspiration (Hope N & H, 2000; Lewis B, 2001). “Between 1926 and 1930, by the adoption and adaptation of Codes of foreign origin from Switzerland, Italy, Germany and France, the elite created the legal framework and passed a series of social reform laws (Inkilap kanunlar)” (Esin O, 2008). These social reform laws represent a monolithic, centralised, territorial and top-down model of law (Esin O, 2008). Many of the tenets of Kemalism were very essentially aimed at ‘changing the people’ and forging a new identity to fulfil the requirements of the Turkish nation-state as envisioned by a non-collaborating, modernising elite. The elite may be seen as effectively having acted as “both opinion-maker and decision-maker”. From the early 1930s more positive steps were made to turn the Republican People’s Party of Ataturk into a national organization with an elite membership and an ideology; dominating the two-stage election system and providing the six principles of Kemalism (noted above) in May 1931 (Owen R, 2000, p.21).

Turkey moved from a one-party system to a multi-party system in 1950. Heper accounts for the beginnings of the growing challenge to RPPs monopoly of power, represented by the creation of the Democratic Party (DP) in 1946, as manifest in an intra-elite rivalry borne of a growing Turkish entrepreneurial class’ critique of statist policy (Heper M, 1990). This became especially pertinent after the Turkish state’s “heavy handed economic management in WWII” (Owen R, 2000 p. 21). Also, a growing challenge from rural areas of Turkey regarding Islamic religious practice became apparent. After WWII, Turkey joined the United Nations as one of the original members in 1945. Furthermore the country became dependent on the military and economic assistance of the United States of America who in turn applied

pressure for political change in Turkey. The newly formed Democratic Party won a huge majority in the elections of May 1950, demonstrating the broad base of appeal of the DP (Sorenson D, 2008) and marking the beginning of multi-party politics in Turkey and three decades of unstable governments. Owen has noted however that, "as elsewhere in the non-European world, the long period of single party rule had created structures that made life difficult for its successors, notably the close association between RPP and its supporters in both the army and the bureaucracy" (Owen R, 2000 p. 21).

On 27 May 1960, the military staged an undemocratic coup, ousting the DP government. The coup was in response to perceptions of the civilian government's wish to set up a virtual single-party rule and its return to openly statist policies from 1954. An interesting aspect of the May 27 Coup was its legalistic tendency (Aybay R, 1977). The Second Constitution, adopted by referendum on 9 July 1961 through a 63% vote of the total cast, is yet another clear case of social engineering as it attempted to further entrench plural democracy, introduced the new concept of the 'social State' as well as establishing a Constitutional Court (Elver H, 2005). The new and more qualified definitions set out in the 1961 constitution refined the constitutional rights of many groups and individuals, resulting in the "creation of new social strata (including an increasingly militant working class), new relationships between interest groups and the government and, at a national level, a new political and electoral geography" (Owen R, 2000 p.97). The sixties in Turkish politics was dominated by a highly politicised program of planned economic development (Ahmad F, 1993).

In 1971, the military intervened again in an atmosphere of heightened administrative disorganisation. It then affected minor amendments to the constitution of 1961 which were aimed at rescinding some of the freedoms it had originally granted. The 1970s saw Turkey enter a time of great instability and violence both in the political and social realm. An important factor was an economic crisis from 1973, following a loss of American aid post Turkey's invasion of Northern Cyprus, high oil prices and a decline in remittances from Turks working in Europe which caused a foreign exchange shortage (Owen R, 2000). This eventually led to another military takeover

on September 12, 1980. In 1982, the military promulgated the present Constitution. Throughout the eighties in Turkey the economic situation was salvaged acutely under Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party (ANAP) by the introduction of an IMF economic stabilisation plan and the return of American aid on the back of the great power's own political strategic considerations (notably, defence against the Iranian revolution). A switch to competitive, export-led economic growth policies was also affected. Throughout this time, there was a "de-facto division of responsibilities between the Ozal government and the army, in which the former was allowed to manage the economy while the latter retained most of its control over domestic security" (Owen R, 2000 p.99). The Motherland Party applied for membership of the European Community in April 1987 marking another shift in achieving a greater political balance between a dominating military and civilian governance. From 1984 violence in the South-East of Turkey, typified by an insurrection led by the Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK/*Partiye Karkaran Kurdistan)* led to state security operations which lasted some fifteen years in Turkey's Kurdish-dominated region.

From the 1990s Turkish politics saw a "succession of relatively weak coalition governments with slim parliamentary majorities ... subject to the strong pull of regional and sectional *interests*" (Owen R p.115). Violence and security operations in the East persisted, the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi),*the most prominent Islamic party, gained unprecedented popular support which culminated in their gaining a parliamentary majority in 1995 under Necmettin Erbeken, and the secular military kept up its age-old pressure on civilian politicians. For a number of reasons, including Erbeken's stilted accession to the position of Prime-Minister in 1996 and his subsequent conflicts with the National Security Council on issues of secularity and seeking to negotiate with Kurdish rebels on the basis of Muslim solidarity, the Welfare Party leader was forced to resign in June 1997. Hhis party was later closed down and he was banned from politics by the courts for five years. Michael Gunter has coined this the "silent coup" of 1997 (Gunter MM, 1998 p.1). After the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, was captured in Kenya in 1999, a ceasefire was acheived in the South-East and a nationalist euphoria swept Turkey.

April 1999 elections saw the National Action Party (*Millyetci Hareket Partisi,* MHP) claim some 18.2 per cent of votes and a relatively stable coalition government was formed with Bulent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Partisi,* DSP) at the helm, along with the MHP and the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi, ANAP).* In 2002, an outright majority was one in elections by Recep Tayyip Erdogan's (former Refah Party member and mayor of Istanbul) AKP. The moderate Islamist AKP has led the civilian government since this time and has based its widespread popular support ostensibly on its commitment to EU-accession and notions of democracy. On the 17th of December 2004, Turkey became a full candidate for accession to the European Union (Yıldız 2004). Along with the European Union's economic criteria, many commentators contend that "the EU accession process will bring Turkey within the civilizing influence of European democratic values and strict human rights standards, imposing important checks and balances on state behaviour and pressing forward the reform process" (Yıldız, 2004 p???). Support in Turkey for this process waxes and wanes as the rhetoric of the EU and its unilateral calls for reforms on politically contentious issues are thrown into the balance. Issues in the South East persist with sporadic violence between the PKK and Turkish security forces. Furthermore, the secularist-Islamist debate continues, as well as civilian-military tensions as typified by the current investigation into Ergenekon, an illegal group alleged to be made up primarily of nationalist and military elements. Ergenekon has been accused of plotting to take-over the civilian government. The Ergenekon investigation dominates has dominated the headlines of every Turkish media outlet in the earliest months of 2009. Exactly what it means for the country politically remains unclear. Meanwhile, Ataturk's image is ubiquitous across all official institutions of the Turkish nation-state.

4.4 The Kurdish Question in Turkey

Political commentators and actors who concern themselves with Turkey's affairs are undoubtedly aware of the so-coined, "Kurdish Question". The "Kurdish Question", as it is discussed in the domestic milieu in Turkey, is an overarching label for a range of political discontents that have been voiced primarily by Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin. Depending upon who one speaks to, which newspaper one reads or one's own personal political leanings, the central issues that lie within the nominal umbrella of the "Kurdish Question" vary greatly; from notions of separatist ethno-nationalism often associated with the PKK to economic development to freedom of speech and association to calls for compensation for torture or extra-judicial killings.

Given the research aims of this thesis and its political anthropological methodolgy, an in depth background of the Kurdish Question in Turkey will not be explored here so as not to channel the macro-level perspectives of commentators with distinct political contentions and intentions. The emic perspective of the Sample group studied will suffice in defining what they believe the "Kurdish Question" is on a macro-level. This will also lend to this thesis' concern with the present and distance the realities of 2009 from previous paradigms in which the Kurdish Question has played out and been percieved throughout the history of Turkey. As such, it is sufficient to borrow from Mesut Yegen's broad classification of the Kurdish Question as referring to "a set of [disparate] events which have indicated that a considerable part of Kurds in Turkey have been discontented with facets of the Turkish nation-state" (Yegen M, 2007 p.143).

CHAPTER 5

MICRO LEVEL ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

5.1 Introduction

'Micro-level analysis' is aimed at extrapolating commonalities and relevant differences between each of the five participants' individual Kurdish and political identities. This analysis draws from the information each of the participants has provided about their childhood and their life path toward their current position at university, aiming ultimately to reach general conclusions about how each of the individuals' indentities has formed throughout their lives in Turkey. 'Micro' suggests that the data being analysed represents the lived experiences of the participants observed. This data represents individual experiences and perceptions and as such lends agency to each of these actors as both constituting and being produced by larger societal frameworks and organisation (in line with Bourdieu's unorthodox structuralist approach toward the study of identity). Micro-level analysis facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' personal, ethnic and political identifications. In turn, our understanding of 'macro-level' political processes as perceived and voiced by the participants is greatly enriched (to be broached in the following section).

In addressing the research question, "How have individual experiences shaped the participants' political identities?" a brief account of each of the respondents' upbringing has been recorded. Each of the respondents may be seen as having been born into a basic group identity, Kurdish, which "consists of the ready-made set of endowments and identifications which every individual shares with others from the moment of birth by the chance of the family into which s/he is born at that given time at that given place" (Isaacs HR 1975: 31). Such endowments and identifications include place of origin, language, traditions and social conditions throughout their formative years. As each of the respondents came to derive meaning from

observation, shared experience and instruction their identities were developed and each has come to have personal understandings of what it means to be Kurdish in Turkey. It is important to note that each of the respondents' conception of their Kurdishness is heavily linked to domestic politics and has developed in line with increasing contact with state institutions and society in Turkey. As such each of the respondents' ethnic identifications may be seen as a corner stone of their political identities, even if they are relatively inactive in domestic and ethnically-framed political organisations. While their ethnicity may be seen to inform their political identity, and politics to have informed their understanding of what being Kurdish means in Turkey, each of the respondents displays nuances in their political contentions generally. That is to say that each respondent has disparate ways of comprehending and expressing their Kurdishness and while being Kurdish holds great political significance for each, it is not the only factor informing their political identities. Factors such as the leftist movement in Turkey and a certain apoliticism that may be associated with education, intellectualism, material well-being and a shying away from conflictual aspects of thte Kurdish political movement may be seen as having affected each of the respondents in some way. This finding gives credence to the theoretical assertion that the temporal aspects of identity must be recognised, while simplified, clichéd notions of the Kurdish identity must be avoided.

It may be seen that for this sample group of Kurds in Turkey, politics is thoroughly "ethnified". In order to highlight this assertion a look at how each of the respondents' have navigated their social worlds growing up, especially their experiences as adolescents in the nineties in Turkey may be useful. In doing so it may be shown that increased mutual contact between this sample group and their surrounding environs has reified their perceptions of Turk-Kurd distinctions while engendering multiple loyalties that each respondent has shown they can change situationally. It will also be shown that ethnicity for this sample group accrued heightened political and personal importance in the wake of socio-political upheaval typified by conflict in the nineties. Each of the respondents has given the impression that there is a clear hierarchical relationship between Turkey's state structure and its Kurdish citizenry. It

may be seen that hierarchical aspects of ethnic relations in Turkey often serve to stigmatize Kurdish individuals, movements and ethnic-ascriptions and elevate a highly nuanced and ever-changing Turkish nationalism as the dominant ideology of the country's state and citizenry. It will be shown that each of the respondents perceives certain cultural differences as being important and thus socially relevant in Turkey, differences which maintain cleaveages in the social framework of the country and effectively legitamise the dominant powers. They have all clearly displayed that their sense of Kurdishness is an aspect of a relationship, a relationship with the nation-state of Turkey as well as intra-group relations. They have all shown that their sense of Kurdishness derives from certain gains and losses in interaction with individuals and societal structures and has played a significant role in the creation of their political identities.

5.2 Negotiating Identity – Personal, Ethnic and Political.

Theoretical assertions that identities are negotiated in an ongoing process of interaction between social structures and agents are clearly demonstrated by this sample group. Each of the respondents has illustrated that their identities are both determined in their relations to social structures and production and that "they are elements of a structure which exists in and through signifying practices" (Bourdieu, 1994). The respondents have demonstrated that their identities are numerous, notably displaying loyalty to Kurdish political ethnic ascriptions (to varying degrees) as well as acting as citizens of Turkey. Their identities may be seen as aspects of certain relationships that remain dynamic over time and space, open to change and manipulation. Each of the respondents may be seen to attach emotional and political importance to their ethnic identity. They have clearly demonstrated that being a Kurd in Turkey has provided them with meaning and with organisational channels for pursuing their culturally defined socio-political interests. The respondents have in particular illuminated their personal, ethnic and political identities as they stood at the time of interviewing in 2008/2009 in Ankara, Turkey. By taking a look at the respondents' family and origins, language, migration and/or displacement, social interactions and changing self-conceptions, we may see very clearly that each of

these individuals has developed and come to perceive their personal, ethnic and political identities in unique yet comparable processes. It may be seen that each of the respondents has negotiated aspects of their identity in order to successfully navigate the social world of relationships and power structures in Turkey. They have shown that the personal is very much the social and in this case, the ethnic is inextricably linked to the political. That is, the fact of being a Kurd in Turkey harbours a certain political affiliation.

Family and Origins

Each of the respondents was born in the South-east of Turkey to Kurdish parents. Family relationships may be seen to have played an important role in each of the respondents' lives. All of the respondents' mothers are native Kurdish speakers and house wives. Only two out the five respondents' mothers have a sound grasp of the Turkish language and are literate. All of the respondents' fathers are/were native Kurdish speakers and have acted as the bread-winners for their families. All of the respondents' parents are practicing Muslims. With the exception of Jala's parents each respondent has claimed that religion plays a large part in their parents' lives. None of the respondents has felt forced by their parents to practice religion and only Ali has identified himself as religious. Each of the respondents' families has strong links to their geographical origins in the South East of Turkey. Four of the five respondents' families live in the South-East full time while Jala's parents divide their time between Izmir and Muş.

Each of the respondents has lent great importance to their origins in the South East of Turkey, an area which is associated with its majority Kurdish population and is the strong hold of the Kurds' political constituency and power. Güneş, who grew up in Izmir and has little memory of his place of birth, has said that the town always remained vivid in his imagination as his family retained strong communication links between friends and family still living there. Güneş has said that he grew up in a Kurdish suburb in Izmir and that he was surrounded mostly by other Kurdish and

Gypsy children both on the street and at school. Güneş has said that he is close to his family and also that he has relatives living in Syria.

Muhammed grew up in Diyarbakır where he was exposed to "war" throughout his childhood, an experience which has greatly impacted his personal, ethnic and political identities. Speaking of his family Muhammed has said, "We all lived together and we had very close relations." Muhammed recalls that he always hung out with his cousins growing up – "We were very affected by the violence in the city. Maybe we were not aware of the political violence but it was always there. In our street we always had fights with other guys. It was like playing football. My cousins would call me and say, 'Ok, we will fight them, [at this place and time].' It could get very violent, we would use glasses, throw stones at each other. Of course I got hurt many times." Growing up under such conditions may be seen to have engendered a heightened ethnic awareness in Muhammed due to his consistent exposure to conflict between the Kurdish movement led by the PKK and Turkey's military and the associated socio-political upheaval in Diyarbakir. Muhammed's contact with this social environment has undoubtedly cemented his sense of being a Kurd.

Growing up in Diyarbakır Muhammed has vivid memories of Newroz. It can be seen that Muhammed was immersed in a situation where the celebration of this politically significant day was an obligation. He has commented, "We always celebrated. In fact, I remember I was at middle school and the principle came into our class and said, 'OK children, today is Newroz and we want you to all join us. First of all we will celebrate here at school and then we will join the other guys.' All the people got up and started folk dancing, and then we had a big fire in the middle of our dance." Such experiences may be seen to have reified aspects of Muhammed's ethnic and political identity. Newroz is a celebration that was outlawed in Turkey until 2002 and holds great political significance to Kurds who use the celebration to protest state policies. It may be seen that Muhammed had no choice but to join this celebration thus encouraging and reifying his own sense of being Kurdish as well as immersing him in a political stance based on leftist and ethnic identifications from a young age.

Ali was born in 1983 in a village outside the city of Şırnak. He has seven sisters and three brothers. He has said that his family is religious adding that "because [my parents] are illiterate they don't practice [Islam] 'traditionally'". Ali has said his parents advised but never forced him to pray. Ali has been an "observant" Muslim since he was in the eighth grade at a time when he was becoming friends with various politically-framed ideological groups at his high school in Malatya. Ali's affiliation with religious, Kurdish and leftist groups (by virtue of his being Kurdish according to Ali) have affected his current political understandings and contentions. Ali has contended that most Kurds are religious people and that strict secularity is not an effective policy to bring together the Kurds of Turkey politically. In light of his own religiosity Ali has a strong belief in freedom of religion in Turkey's state and society.

Ali has spoken of his childhood in his village in Mardin saying that he would sit by the highway with his friends and watch the trucks, which according to them were coming from Turkey. This shows that before Ali attended school he was not even aware that he lived in Turkey – such a fact exposes a hierarchical aspect of relations between Turkey and parts of its citizenry, notably those in the South-east. Ali has gone on to mention some cultural habits of his family which he has characterised as 'Kurdish'. He has said, "I don't remember three consecutive nights I spent in our house." He has gone on to explain, "In Kurdish culture we call it '*Serguheb*.' [It is when] families get together at a house at night and chat, eat and drink. We spent every night doing this." He has elaborated by saying, "There was no electricity, it was dark and romantic and they would tell stories about old times. Sometimes they would tell myths - there was one about a 'fish-man'…. And some stories about bears to scare kids. The stories were often mythical or supernatural… There were also stories of what my great-great grandfathers did, what problems they had and how they solved these problems." Ali has framed the habits of his family in ethnic terms showing that from birth Ali has felt explicitly Kurdish.

Like Muhammed, Ali has vivid memories of Newroz celebrations in his village. His recollections of these celebrations show how increased contact between nominally

distinct groups within a nation-state may reify distinctions between groups while bringing those groups closer together under the same political-economic umbrella. Ali's experiences of Newroz may be seen as intense and to have consolidated his understanding of the political connotations and stigmas associated with being Kurdish in Turkey. He has said, "[Newroz] was very bitter… every Newroz celebration was like a war to me. Every celebration ten or fifteen people would get killed including some of my neighbours and other people I didn't know." Ali has elaborated, "Every Newroz a curfew was imposed, we couldn't go out, but people still attempted to celebrate it, to burn tyres, to organise protest marches. They were protesting government policies against Kurds and Kurdish culture. In the morning just before Newroz celebrations, all the houses in town were searched by soldiers. That is the army, not just the police. It happened three times in my home. [Soldiers] came to our house and searched through everything in the house for guns or symbols that could be associated with the PKK. The house was like a mess after their searching, they walked into the house in their boots. They could search everywhere, we couldn't interfere." Ali has displayed a certain disdain for the actions of the security forces at this time. The actions of the security forces may be seen to have brought a heightened awareness in Ali of his being Kurdish. He has said, "I remember I visited the bridge where the parties were organised. [There was] blood everywhere, you could see. The neighbours told us [about those who had died] and we also saw it on Kurdish television [broadcast] from Europe." Although he cannot recall the year, his sister was arrested for attending a Newroz celebration in Mardin and sentenced to six months in prison. Expanding on this Ali has said, "My family was a pro-Kurdish family of course, we were supporting, but not in practice… My father and my mother didn't attend protest marches, they weren't activists. Just once my sister tried to be." Ali's experiences in his hometown may be seen to have shaped his understanding of his ethnic and political identity. While his sense of being Kurdish was present all his life, his understanding of the political implications of this developed significantly as conflict between Kurdish protestors, PKK-members and Turkey's security forces heightened in his close vicinity. The experiences which Ali has conveyed highlight a clear socio-political imbalance between the Turkey's state and those citizens of Kurdish origin (manifest in ongoing conflict) around Ali

throughout this time. He has shown a clear case of a relationship between a dominant and a dominated group, the practices of which have informed Ali's understanding of being Kurdish in the nation-state of Turkey.

Like Ali, Dilhar was born and initially raised in a village in the South East of Turkey. Dilhar is one of ten children, six girls and four boys. His father has always and continues to work as a farmer and his mother is a house wife. His parents live in Diyarbakır in the winter and their village in the summer months. He stayed in his village until he was twelve or thirteen. Dilhar has spoken of his relationship with his father and brothers framing it in cultural habitual terms. He has said. "My father, for example, would hardly ever touch us and would avoid showing us love. My brothers treated me much the same… It is because in Kurdish culture things are explained by allusions and hints. People don't tell you things directly. Instead they tell somebody else who will then come and tell you. You learn in this way." Dilhar has gone on to say that this is how he was raised and so after a while it affected even his language. Effectively, Dilhar has accounted for this aspect of his personal identity as having derived from his family and their being Kurdish. Like Ali, Dilhar has spoken of the traditional celebrations on January thirteen and of Serghueb which he says happened every night in his village.

Jala was born in 1983 in Muş. Her father is a pharmacist and her mother works at home. Jala has two siblings. Jala does not remember much of her time in *Muş* although her family has maintained strong connections with their place of origin. She has said, "My mother's relatives are over there, my father has a chemist there… my mother and father have moved back there. When I was in the fourth grade, due to our economic circumstances we moved back there and my father opened a pharmacy. And now, they spend half there time in Izmir and the other half in Muş." Speaking of her family's expectations of her as a Kurdish woman**,** Jala has said that her parents wish for her to marry a Kurdish man. She has noted, "It is not a nationalist thing. But, they worry about cultural differences. So they wouldn't prefer even an Alevi. I had an Alevi boyfriend and they didn't say anything really. But they did say, "Oh, we wish he was Sunni". They think it is a given that I will marry a Kurd." Jala has

said however that even if she married a Turkish man, her parents would not refuse it. Speaking personally, she has said she has no set criteria claiming nonetheless, “I will marry a Kurd”. It may be seen that Jala’s family explicitly encourage her to embrace a Kurdish identity and she empathizes heavily with their expectations.

Language

Bourdieu has argued that all forms of language presuppose or create fundamental categories of difference and sameness. The application of these categories is an exercise of power by which one social group excludes another. As such language is more than communication but a mechanism of politics and power (Bourdieu P, 1994). Each of the respondents’ has placed great importance upon language in ascribing their personal, political and ethnic identities. They have demonstrated that Turkey’s institutions codify, impose and sustain ‘official’ Turkish. In turn the polity is preserved and the ongoing practicality and relevance of Kurdish is endangered (indeed, was and continues to be illegal in some facets of life) and given political relevance as a right-acquiring bargain chip at the same time. Such an imposition of linguistic excellence which acts as a de facto monopoly of politics and distinguishes citizens from one another may be seen to invite opposition from a linguistically marginalised group. In this case, the suppression of Kurdish languages has invited major opposition from Kurds of the country who frame much of their political rhetoric on claims of linguistic domination.

Four of the five respondents’ first language was Kurdish. Ali was not exposed to the Turkish language until he was seven years old and starting primary school placing him at a clear disadvantage in educational terms compared to children who were native Turkish speakers. Dilhar, having been exposed to a minimal amount of Turkish on television and from newspapers, did not learn Turkish until the age of seven as well. Both Muhammed and Güneş have said that they spoke Turkish before they started primary school as they learnt it on the street. Güneş has pointed to his idea that because he didn’t grow up in Mardin he has no accent and thus it is not clear to people where he is coming from. He has claimed that this helped him during

school and in doing so has exposed a hierarchical aspect of relations between members of society in Turkey where perceived standards of linguistic excellence betray certain certain socio-politically discriminatory practice. Jala's mother spoke to her in Turkish as a child so that she would be competent in the language for education purposes and in order to be "modern". Jala has mentioned that her Turkish was not perfect and did not resemble that of her peers when she first began primary school in Izmir.

Güneş has demonstrated that the Kurdish language is somewhat endangered in line with assimilation practices or phenomena in Turkey. He has explained briefly about the linguistic situation of one of his older brother's household - "my brother and sister-in-law speak Kurdish to one another and both speak Turkish to the three kids." He sees his nephews as a "second generation" of Kurds following his family's move to Izmir. He has remarked upon pertinent changes such as the children only understanding limited Kurdish and being unable to express themselves in the language. "The children's lives are very different from when we moved [from Mardin to Izmir]. There is less of a Kurdish impress. They live in an apartment. The kids are in primary school yet they have computers. They have grown up in a more modern time and because of that, their sense of 'kurdishness' has been lost, I think." Güneş perceives knowledge of the Kurdish language as being an integral aspect of his personal and ethnic identity yet has conceded that discussion of certain topics such as politics necessitates the use of Turkish due to shortcomings in a modern and developed Kurdish vocabulary. Language dictates many of the limitations to an individual's potential political and economic power and must remain socially relevant in order to survive. Gune's concern over the loss of Kurdish language proficiency amongst people of Kurdish origin in Turkey may be seen as a reaction to the language's suppression by Turkey's state.

Jala may be seen to belong to Güneş' so-called "second generation" of Kurds as she grew up speaking Turkish and does not have a sound grasp of Kurdish. She has agreed with Güneş's contention that Kurdish is underdeveloped and that some discussions call for the use of Turkish. She has mentioned that she is familiar with

"Kurdish" expression and humour and can communicate with Kurds much easier than with Turks even though they do so in the Turkish language. She has said, "I always spoke Turkish. My mother is from Erzurum. They have a perception like this - Turkish is an indicator of modernity, so forget Kurdish. The more Turkish you speak the better it is for you. And so my mother and the others always spoke Kurdish amongst themselves (but always mixed with Turkish) and Turkish to me." Jala's father learnt Turkish as his second language. She has said, "In order for our education to improve, they always spoke to us in Turkish, because of that I don't know Kurdish." Jala's experience of language shows clearly the dominating capacity of the modern state and its education system which acts to propagate an official, standardised language. Jala may be seen to have been assimilated into Turkey's state system through language – a fact that holds emotional significance for her in her ascription to a Kurdish ethnic and political identity.

Ali started to attend school "one year late" at the age of seven in 1990. He has said "I hadn't learnt Turkish yet. My first encounter with the Turkish language was when I first watched television a few months before I started school. All the kids at school were speaking Kurdish, they didn't know Turkish." He has gone on to say, "I couldn't speak Turkish with my teachers. So my education started with them teaching us Turkish, not subjects like mathematics… By the end of the second grade, I can say we were fluent [in Turkish]." This experience may be seen as a clear display of social structures acting to manipulate aspects of Ali's personal and ethnic identity. He has had to accept and incorporate institutional and political impositions into his determined social world that inarguably boasted a heavy Kurdish impress. He has explained the situation at his primary school saying, "The teachers were of Kurdish origin but had to teach in Turkish, never a word of Kurdish. If [a teacher] attempted to use a Kurdish word they were fined or fired." Speaking of his personal reaction Ali has said, "I was shocked, I mean we didn't understand anything." He has noted that it would feel very strange to speak to his family in Turkish and has never done so. Esoteric knowledge may be seen as highly controlled through language. The institutionalization of Turkish through the state education system may be seen to have brought significant change to Ali's personal and social life. It facilitated his

being brought closer to society in Turkey and an understanding of what it meant to be Kurdish in relation to other groups in the country given that difference is sustained by mutual contact.

Dilhar has said, “My mother doesn’t know Turkish. Well, she speaks a little Turkish. Because of this my relationship with my mum developed only in Kurdish. In our family, about ninety percent of our conversation is in Kurdish. Depending on the surroundings we are in, the topic we are talking about or whatever the moment brings, the language we speak can vary. Generally, when we speak about serious topics and especially when we speak about people, we speak in Turkish. Apart from my mum, we can all express ourselves in Turkish.” Dilhar, like Ali, learnt Turkish when he began to attend primary school at the age of seven. He has said, “Before that I only spoke Kurdish because that is the language we spoke at home.” He has said that the situation was the same for all his friends at school. Dilhar has elaborated on the experience of learning Turkish at primary school by saying, “It was forbidden to speak Kurdish in class in order that we would learn Turkish. I remember my primary school teacher really well. I think he was a good person. Because the majority of the population [around Diyarbakır] are Kurdish, the relationships formed in the village schools were not cold; at least they never were for me. The teachers were very scholarly, especially in regards to language. They always taught us of the importance of education. They would emphasise that we were learning Turkish for a purpose. They didn’t emphasise the fact that Kurdish was forbidden. That is how we were taught. For example, my older brothers’ primary school teacher was my uncle. He was the teacher in the village. According to what my brothers have told me, he would get angry at them when they spoke Kurdish, but as I have said, he did so because he wanted them to learn Turkish.” Dilhar may be seen to have embarked upon a path of greater contact with wider society in Turkey once he started school and to learn the Turkish language.

Dilhar has mentioned a certain decline in his proficiency in Kurdish and the language’s practical value over his lifetime. He has said that he continued to speak Kurdish “most of the time” throughout high school but has noted, “We were

speaking less Kurdish than when we were in primary and middle schools… From this period in my life my Kurdish started to dwindle. When I was in the village it was my base language and then my level started to decrease in middle school and more so in high school. My Turkish began to improve." He has commented further, "I was always reading in Turkish. In the end, the dangerous thing is that I think the way I express myself in the village is not the same as in the city. Also, the Kurdish language that we developed was suited to village life. For example, I cannot talk about literature or I can't talk about and explain political issues in Kurdish. As a result of this, when we would speak of such issues, due to the fact that we couldn't express ourselves in Kurdish we had no choice but to speak in Turkish." It may be seen that the linguistic conditions imposed upon Dilhar by Turkey's education system have acted to assimilate him into the nation-state. Language facilitates access to knowledge and power. Dilhar has shown that the Kurdish language is an embattled and underdeveloped language that is in danger of losing practical relevance. He has had to navigate the power constellation in Turkey and as a result has lost proficiency in his native tongue and in effect has come to resemble larger Turkish society. At the same time, his knowledge of Kurdish and political contention that the language should be further developed indicates that this increased mutual contact has also inspired him to focus on fundamental linguistic differences between himself and other citizens in Turkey. Notably, he associates Kurdish with his village life and Turkish with life in the cities and also with written texts.

All of the respondents' believe that Kurdish language tuition should be available in State institutions in Turkey. Jala has pointed to the fact that "the current available resources [for learning Kurdish] are not so strong. The courses that are available are merely symbolic - they represent a reaction… so I don't know how I can learn it." Both Ali and Güneş have pointed to the fact that at their university there are tens of languages available to the students to learn with the obvious exception of Kurdish. Güneş has described this as "shameful". Each of the respondents believes that a language which is spoken by such a vast portion of a national population should be taught in that state's schools. This assertion betrays a certain political identification in Turkey where language is more than communication but stands as an important

element of state policy. Institutions have been geared to codify, impose and sustain 'legitimate' language thus aiding the preservation of the Turkish polity and giving no official status to other languages. Each of the respondents has voiced an opinion which calls for the opening up of language restrictions legislated by the Turkish state and propagated by the state education system. They all believe that the Kurdish language should be allowed to be developed in a "modern" capacity. Jala has commented however that this is a near impossible feat given that most Kurdish-speakers live in villages and have no need for such words as "freezer" nor do they have a disposition to embrace a new, standardised form of Kurdish. Language may be seen to be an important element of Kurdish political discontents – this group has protested the suppression of Kurdish yet none have explicitly protested the imposition of official Turkish.

Migration and/or Displacement

Each of the respondents has moved several times throughout their lives. Two respondents' families have been displaced from their homes. All of the respondents have migrated for economic and education purposes to cities such as Bursa, Izmir, Malatya and Batman. Migration has necessarily imposed varied conditions upon each of the respondents. Significantly, it brought each of the respondents into contact with what they perceived as non-Kurdish elements of society in Turkey which has acted to assimilate them into wider society in Turkey and hone in upon the differences between themselves as Kurds and others, signiciantly Turks (dichotomisation and complementarisation). Each was forced to adapt to their new living environments thus affecting each of their personal, ethnic and political identifications.

Güneş's family moved to Izmir from Mardin in 1981 as his father was transferred to work there by the Turkish state. At first his family lived in a rented house in a Turkish neighbourhood until his father bought a house and they moved to a Kurdish neighbourhood. He has said that Izmir is a relatively "relaxed" and "democratic" place in Turkey. During his family's time there he has said that they never felt like they had become Izmirites per se. He has mentioned that his family retained strong

ties to their friends and family in Mardin, adding that his mother and sister have recently moved back there following the death of his father. Güneş moved away from his family home for the first time to attend university in Konya. He has described the atmosphere in Konya (a western Anatolian town) as more "fascist" than Izmir, claiming that no Kurdish political demonstration could possibly be organised and held there. It was during his time in Konya that Güneş has said he became "involved" in the Kurdish movement in an intellectual capacity, discussing Kurdish and leftist issues privately with friends. Güneş's move away from his family to a very "Turkish" town may be seen to have influenced his ethnic and political ascriptions markedly. It may be seen that he consolidated his understanding of the established political notions of Kurdishness at a time when he was in greatest contact with non-Kurd individuals and groups.

Muhammed had lived in Diyarbakır all his life until he moved to Bursa in order to attend high school. He has spoken of his general perceptions of patterns of migration amongst Kurds saying, "There are many people that have migrated to [Diyarbakır] especially from villages around the area. Actually there are no villages now because they were burned as a result of war between the guerrillas and the soldiers." He has said that many migrants from rural areas moved to big cities such as Diyarbakır, which he has said is the biggest city in the South East of Turkey citing its population as approximately one and half million, "because it is safer and they have to earn money." He has said that rural migrants preferred to move to Diyarbakır but has noted that there are many other cities in Turkey where people have migrated to. "For example, Mersin is one of the biggest Kurdish cities. It is also a Turkish city, but many Kurds live in Mersin. There is also Adana and of course Istanbul which is the biggest Kurdish city in the world." Muhammed has pointed to rural-urban migration as being prevalent amongst Kurds in the South East as war persisted and integration into the national labour market became an absolute necessity.

Ali has said that his parents' families had been evacuated from their home village in the Batman district in 1973. His family moved to a village in Şırnak where Ali was born. Ali left his village for the first time at the age of six when they moved to a

village of Mardin for his father's job. He has said that at that stage in his life "I hadn't had any contact with non-Kurdish speakers yet." Ali was accepted into a boarding high school in Malatya. He has said that this is the first time he saw other cities in Turkey, such as Diyarbakır and Elazığ. The experience of moving was a "big change" for Ali as it was the first time he was exposed to such a wide range of people in terms of ethnicity and political ideology. He has commented that he felt that he had to prove that even though he was a Kurd he was not stupid and could achieve his goal of going to university. He has said that he always got along best with the other Kurdish students at his high school and established healthy rapport with the religious students. In order to fulfil his dream of attending university, Ali has said that he felt that he had to leave Mardin in order to go to a good quality high school. He has said that the high school in Mardin was overcrowded and of a relatively low quality. Moving from his village brought many changes to Ali as his contact with other individuals, ethnic and political groups increased and his understandings of self developed. The educational opportunities were poor in his town and as such Ali was in effect obliged to migrate to receive a quality education. Ali's desire to prove he was not stupid because he was a Kurd has resonated Bourdieu's concept of doxic stereotyping. Ali clearly felt that he belonged to a socio-politically dominated group, Kurds, even before he began high school. This may be seen to have informed his political identity as he seeks to harness the egalitarianism and freedoms preached but not practiced by the state of Turkey.

When Jala turned seven her family migrated to Izmir in order for her to start primary school. They moved there after her father's brothers had migrated – "My dad has four older brothers who all moved to Izmir. 3 still live there." She has said, "At that point we lived in Erzurum and my older sister had completed one year of primary school over there. My parents realised that the education there was bad quality so they wanted to move somewhere with higher quality education. So we moved to Izmir. I lived in Izmir until I finished high school." Jala has recalled her vivied memories of moving to Izmir saying, "When I first went to school I felt oppressed. My Turkish wasn't that good. I didn't speak Kurdish but my Turkish was different [from the other children]. I understood that I was different. So it was really difficult

for me to adapt… Also, my friends were a little bit more 'high society' and 'modern' than I was used to." Jala's move to Izmir may be seen to have affected her personal, ethnic and political identity markedly. She has said that her parents did not want them to forget their Kurdishness yet told them not to express it openly in public. This experience alone has weighed heavily upon Jala's conception of her own ethnic and political identity and how she expresses herself in social life. It stands as yet another example of doxa, as Jala suppressed her Kurdish identity in an atmosphere of political antagonaism towards Kurds in Turkey, notably in the west of the country.

Dilhar has moved a lot throughout his life. Like Ali, his initial move from his village to Batman came as a big shock to him, having described the experience as his "first social slap in the face." Dilhar has said that he moved from his middle school in Batman to live with his older brother who was studying in Urfa because his family home in his village was demolished "due to all the events [in the South East] at the time." He has elaborated on the effects of his home being demolished by saying, "[Our family] couldn't go back to the village. The only means we had to get by was agriculture. From 1993, my father couldn't go back to the village for two years due to the intense conditions in the area at the time. In those times, the political activity of the PKK was very intense. They were organising in the villages. They would come and go from our village. The army at this time was trying to intervene in this activity. Most of the villages in that area were given the ultimatum that either their villages would be burned or they were to become "protectors" ("*Korucu*") [for the Turkish military]. We were given such an offer but my family refused to become "*Korucu*". And so, [the Turkish army] came one day and scattered everything. They came to the houses of some head people in the village and dispersed their belongings every where. They burnt some peoples' homes. And in the end, we couldn't go back to the village because the army was looking for my father. At that time my older brother was a student in Urfa and so all the kids in my family who were attending school at the time moved in with him. I studied in Urfa for two years." Dilhar moved back to Batman to attend high school. The very reasons for Dilhar's movements are based on ethnic and political ascriptions thus reifying the relevance of being a Kurd in his life. Given that the social upheaval his family went through may be blamed

upon both Turkey's security forces and PKK activities, it may be seen that Dilhar came to question what it meant to be Kurdish and how Kurdishness should be asserted politically. This event may be seen as a catalyst to Dilhar's desire to understand his own ethnic and political identitifications.

Social Interaction and Self-Conception

"Social identities, in the form of such categories as nationality, religion, gender, profession, ethnicity or political orientation, are internalized and constitute a potentially important part of the individual's self-concept. They provide meaningful and significant self-references through which individuals perceive themselves and the world around" (Bar-Tal et al, 1998). All of the respondents' have demonstrated that their self-conceptions inform their social interactions and social life. In turn social interactions have acted to shape the respondents' self-conceptions. As such, they have clearly demonstrated that their personal, ethnic and political are created and changed in an ongoing, relational process.

Jala has spoken much of her own self-conception and how this effected and was affected by her social interactions while she was growing up. Mentioning that she was dually encouraged to embrace her Kurdishness in the home and internalize it in public she has said, "At that time we felt Kurdish but knew that we weren't able to say 'we are Kurds' in public… But my mum and family have some patriotic beliefs and they didn't want us to forget that we were Kurdish in the home… My father is in the DTP, he was working at party meetings. Despite this, they would always tell us, when you're outside don't show off [who you are]." She has recalled, "I have a memory from primary school, something that I still find quite traumatic. I said to my best friend at the time… I didn't know how I understood this but I knew she didn't like Kurds… So I asked her, "If I was a Kurd, you know I am not, but if I was, what would you have felt?" She replied, "I would have strangled you". It was really bad, I still remember it well." Speaking of her relations with other Kurdish students at her primary school briefly Jala has said, "It was a kind of situation where we would come together and whisper, "Hey! Do you know this song?" It was something else.

We all had other friends apart from each other. But the conversations I would have with Kurdish kids were always more genuine. It felt as though we were siblings, it appeared like that. Even if you didn't get along too well [with the other Kurdish child], you were able to make this kind of connection." Jala's own self-conception of being Kurdish may be seen to shape her interactions with others. In turn, her experiences as a Kurdish person have acted to entrench her personal and ethnic identity and to inform her political leanings. She has commented further, "From my experiences I have come to understand that I get along better with Kurds. As soon as you say something, they understand what is to follow. Perhaps it is due to how we were brought up or because of language. Even though I don't speak Kurdish I know the tones, the word games that are related to Kurdish. There is a joke about being Kurdish. I find I can share these things better with Kurds." Jala has said she has found it difficult to find a place where she belongs ever since her childhood – "I always felt caught in the middle". This statement has resonated Barth and Gluckman's notion that individuals have multiple loyalties in ethnic terms – Jala's ethnic identity is neither entirely ascribed nor achieved but may be seen to osciallate between situational selection and imperatives imposed from without. Jala may be seen as one of those 'betwixt and between' individuals whose very existence renders impossible the clean demarcation of ethnic groups.

Güneş's self-conceptions and social interactions may also be seen to have informed his social identity. He has said he was honestly not aware during primary school of being 'Kurdish'. He added to this by recalling a very distinct memory of his teacher once asking him, "Are you Kurdish? You don't seem Kurdish. How is it that you come from Mardin?" Güneş has said that he remembers these comments making him very happy. This may be seen as another example of doxic stereotyping as carried out by the agents of Turkey's state policy (in this instance, a teacher). As Güneş has grown older his self-conceptions and thus social identity have, by necessity, changed. A sound example of this is his social choices after having graduated from University. He has asserted that after completing his undergraduate degree he had a working life and thus lost his ability to be inside any political movement. "When I came to Ankara I still had a relationship with my Kurdish friends. We would celebrate eighth

of March, Newroz, May first. I was still attending these events, and do so today. But I came to Ankara not as a student but because I had to work. So, I was not inside any movement per se. By that time my identity was clear, I knew who I was, I was interested in reading more intellectual things, conducting research. My life of political activity was no longer there." While retaining his ethnic identity and awareness, Güneş may be seen to have navigated away from his formerly intense political identity in line with social requirements and restrictions, such as a need for employment, as well as his implicit assertion that political activity is the realm of students. This echoes precisely the assertion of Hylland Eriksen; even members of the "young intelligentsia who defy political… encroachments nevertheless strive to exploit the economic opportunities" (Hylland Eriksen 1993).

Dilhar's social interactions and experiences have informed his self-conception and his social actions markedly. His self-conception in turn informs the social world in which he involves himself and identifies with. After high school Dilhar was accepted into University in Adana on his second attempt. He has spoken of his experience at university, "My years at university represent a time in my life where I matured and was moulded into the person I am. I view it as the time when I defined my social identity and was able to grow. I can say that they were the best years of my life." Dilhar has said that he does not involve himself in activities at his current university explicitly as a Kurdish person. He has gone on to say, "I discuss Kurdish issues as a Kurd depending upon who I am speaking with and what kind of situation I find myself in. I would not talk about [Kurdish issues] in a fascist situation. In order for me to talk about it, it must be a situation where there are people will listen. My involvement must contribute in some way. If the situation is not like this, my reflex is to not become involved." This is an effective demonstration of a socially-prescribed identity informing social action, or in this case, inaction.

Ali has expressed sentiments similar to Dilhar's. He has shown that there is a vast gap between his own self-perception and his being a social agent of his political and ethnic identity. He has said, "I no longer engage in discussion over Kurdish issues in general. If I start discussing these issues and how I really think, what I believe, my

views, what I think about Kurdish developments, I have to distance myself from the people around me. I have friends from Turkish regions … [it is] hard to find common ground on this issue so I prefer not to discuss it. If you do discuss it and your differences are exposed it becomes hard to live, work or study with them. For example, my room mate - I know we don't agree on the Kurdish issue - I would never discuss it with him. He is a good guy, we share religion and we are classmates. I prefer to keep this." Ali has qualified his feelings at this point saying, "I am always aware of being Kurdish. You can't forget it [as] it's on the television, in the newspapers, in everyday discussion. I can feel the fact of being different."

Muhammed has commented on the social and institutional environment at his university and how open it is to Kurdish cultural and political identifications. More specifically, he has commented on extracurricular opportunities for Kurds to express themselves as Kurdish on his university campus. He has said, "You cannot create a Kurdish society. You know, soldiers conducted an operation on Kurdish students in universities in Ankara the other day. More than 20 people were arrested under suspicion of being members of the PKK." He has spoken more personally at this juncture pointing to a disparity between certain personal, political and ethnic identifications and his actual social actions – "Due to my own family relations, I always keep a distance. It means that I never express my feelings, 'I am a Kurd' or 'I am a Kurdish nationalist'. Usually I will only go so far as to join protests organised by the Kurds because I feel that I have to be part of this because it is a suppressed identity. I am also part of other protests, women's marches for example. I just do this because they are suppressed identities. I have many friends, because we speak the same language and we have some cultural habits, it is easy to understand each other, and I really love them."

5.3 Growing up in Turkey in the 90s – Effects on Political Identity.

The nineties in Turkey may be seen as a time of heightened conflict between the PKK and the Turkish military. A concomitant rise in nationalisms and politically and economically pertinent ideological ascriptions and tensions may also be seen. The assertion of identity to unite groups facing economic and political threats by other groups is clearly demonstrated by each member of this sample group as their sense of Kurdishness was cemented throughout this time of upheaval. Turkish nationalism, Kurdish nationalist movements and their first hand experiences of politics have influenced this groups' representation of their ethnic identity, especially in their youthful years in Turkey in the nineties. All five respondents have spoken of their experiences throughout the 1990s in Turkey as having shaped a large part of their political identities as they navigated their social worlds at home and at school. These political identities are mostly geared towards their being Kurdish and as such have a major ethno-political element. It must be noted that none of the respondents are actively involved in any Kurdish political movements yet all express empathy with the cause thanks to their personal ascription to Kurdishness.

Güneş has described his experience at high school in Izmir in the nineties as having affected his political outlook markedly. Güneş attended a school where most of the pupils were Gypsies and Kurdish. From 1992 Güneş observed an increasing segregation among groups and "races" in the student body. He recalls this segregation among some of his peers as having started around 1992 and becoming especially obvious in 1995, with people dividing between Kurdish and "Nationalist" camps. He remembers many fights between these groups in front of his school. He has added that the fights were provoked by members of both "sides". Güneş has commented on what he recalls as a rising Turkish nationalist movement in the mid-1990s. He has recalled the *Ülkü Ocağı* (a place where old *Ülkücus* (Turkish nationalists) hang out and talk) near his school and how the men there would give male students from his school suits, overcoats and relatively expensive Marlboro Red cigarettes. Furthermore they would teach the kids aspects of Turkish history. He may be seen to perceive this as gross classificatory attempts by the state of Turkey. Güneş

has highlighted such an occurrence by recalling, “I was speaking with one of my *Ülkücü* friends one day and, really, he didn’t know what had happened… he had just been given this identity, he didn’t know what being an *Ülkücü* was… But wearing overcoats, and smoking cigarettes was something else, he was excited by it.” Having shared this Güneş has gone on to reflect on the increasingly obvious Kurdish ‘camp’ at his school, placing himself implicitly inside this group (and highlighting his objectivity towards his own Kurdish identity and his subjectivity when talking of young Turkish nationalists at his school) he has said, “Our Kurdish identity didn’t come to us like that [like the nationalists], we spoke Kurdish at home, we spoke Turkish outside, we had the feeling of existing between two things.” While obviously relating closely with the Kurdish students Güneş has reiterated that he was in no way political during high school. “I would never enter a fight… Nobody ever attacked me. It is because I didn’t express my ‘Kurdishness’, instead of that I was always doing something else.” Gunes, while remaining outside of conflict, may be seen to have developed a closer tie with his Kurdish identity throughout the nineties. Furthermore, it was at this time that his Kurdishness took on a political colour in line with developments around him and increased conflict between Turkish nationalists and Kurdish groups.

Güneş’s home life throughout the early and mid-1990s, like his school life, was accompanied by some changes. He has said that in general his household became more politicised as they received news from friends and family in the south-east and began to consume the increasing amounts of literature and writings on the subject of the Kurdish ‘struggle’ in Turkey. The outcome was that Güneş’ ethnic identity became inextricably linked to his political contentions at the time, an effect which may be seen to have remained with him until this day and holds a strong left-leaning impress anchored in the work of such writers as Ismael Besikci. He has concluded that during the nineties most Kurdish households became more political. During this same time Güneş has said that “I felt my Kurdish identity very intensely, but this feeling wasn’t converted into any sort of activity.” Güneş has said, “Once I came to university, from that time on I was inside the Kurdish movement.” He has qualified what he meant by this by adding, “I would attend Newroz celebrations, I moved into

a house with Kurdish friends, we were always discussing politics, reading the newspaper…we did so in Turkish, never in Kurdish." Güneş has gone on to say that "University was a different experience, I perceived myself as Kurdish, and put it into practice." In trying to explain why this was the case he has said that he believes it is something to do with greater freedom. "I couldn't have done this during high school because my family was there. At university you are surrounded by students, we were eighteen, nineteen, twenty, so when we did something we thought we could do anything. A lot of times we thought that in a few months we could save the situation. 'Not long to go', we would say often. We were children."

Güneş has spoken of his undergraduate university years further saying that throughout this time he read "like everybody" Abdullah Öcalan's writings, continued to read a lot of Ismail Beşikçi as well as "memoires and commentaries written from inside the Kurdish movement." Güneş, referring to his final year of university, has commented on his clear memory of Öcalan's capture in 1998. Together with his Kurdish friends, Güneş had always followed Öcalan's movements since he was exiled from Syria. "We followed it and sometimes there was a sense of fear… we continuously thought of it. Is he going to get caught or not?" Güneş has said he remembers hearing the announcement by Bülent Ecevit saying Öcalan was being brought back to Turkish soil. He has reflected, "It was strange, I was scared… I felt bad things, lots of work was going to start and from now on the different camps are going to be very clear...I thought at that time, if Öcalan said 'I have been caught, I am a captive now. Kurds, rally against this,' Turkey could have gone down a very bad path. But he didn't say anything like that… it became calmer." Güneş has noted that he had a number of friends to whom Öcalan was very important, who "loved him" for being the "vanguard of the movement." While Güneş has played down Öcalan's importance to him personally, he has contended that a comprehensive solution to the Kurdish question may be reached with the help of Öcalan. Güneş' experiences throughout the nineties in Turkey have clearly informed his political identity, having geared it towards notions of Kurdish ethnicity and the leftist movement in Turkey.

Muhammed, who grew up in a hub of the PKK-military conflict, Diyarbakır, has made it very clear that his current political identifications are based heavily upon his experiences as a youth in the nineties. He has expounded his memories of Diyarbakır in the nineties at great length demonstrating that the experience has left a considerable impress upon his current political contentions. He recalls actively trying to gauge an understanding of the events around him in 1991. He has said, "In my childhood… they were very problematic days. We always heard the sound of guns." Muhammed has gone on to say, "I witnessed many deaths in the street" Speaking of his family he has said, "Interestingly, they support the Kurdish movement, but my father is a very well-educated person. He was one of the heads of a Workers Union in Diyarbakır. My father always said, 'They have the right to use guns but, it is nonsense, it will not help to solve the problems. What will solve this problem are demonstrations and massive movements. He supports peaceful movements. In those days though, you couldn't talk about such things." Muhammed has said that when he was growing up, "We weren't allowed to go out because it wasn't safe to walk around. We would just stay in the home. We could go out in the daytime… We were very affected by the violence in the city. Maybe we were not aware of the political violence but it was always there."

Elaborating further on some of his memories growing up in Diyarbakır in the nineties, Muhammed has said that his brother had a "conflict" with some members of Hizbullah. "Hizbullah killed one of my brother's friends, and they [my brother and his friends] attacked Hizbullah in 1994 or 1995. I remember it. After that people started to act legally in the cities, they made such a decision because they realised that the state knew all their members and supporters. So they thought it was a useless war. They said 'we can't win a war against the official soldiers...it is impossible to win this.' Also, families started to divide. For example imagine there are some cousins. One of them supports the PKK, and some of them Hizbullah. {Because of things like this] they said they had to stop this war. They knew that if they continued the war they would lose. This was a fact. It was not a matter of who supports who. They [the PKK] had a majority, when you compare it with Hizbullah. However, Hizbullah had the guns, the maps and all of these [kinds of] things. So it was very

difficult for the PKK to continue this war in the cities." Muhammed has stated at the end of his spiel that, "These are all my personal points of view. This is my general view of Diyarbakır in the 1990s." Muhammed has had direct contact with major upheaval as played out in Diyarbakir in the nineties. As such he was chronically exposed to a major cleavage in society in Turkey; that typified by the Turkish military/state-PKK conflict. Muhammed may be seen to have great sympathy to the cause of the Kurdish movement although not actively embracing its politics. At the same time Muhammed has exploited the institutions of Turkey's state, notably education, showing that both the umbrella identity of Kurdishness and being an active citizen in Turkey acts to blur fine distinction between a particular ethnic allegiance and in turn, complicates political ascriptions. It is no wonder that Muhammed calls himself an anarchist

Ali's experiences throughout the nineties have affected his political identity considerably. His recollections of Newroz celebrations as well as his going off to high school may be seen to have played a major role in developing his current contentions as both a Kurd and a Muslim. Ali moved to a public boarding school and all expenses were met by the [Turkish] government. He has elaborated saying, "I was aware by the end of middle school that if I didn't get out of this town, I was not going to study at university… I had to get out of town to Turkish cities in order to attend a quality school, study hard and get into university." Ali has said, "I changed a lot at school. I started to realize what was going on in Turkey, a consciousness started to form at that time. I met political figures at school, started to read books and never stopped after that." He has gone on to say that at his high school "there were some Kurdish, some nationalist and some religious groups. I was aware of different groups. I was closer to Kurds and had good relations with religious groups…I was able to be close with leftists because I was Kurdish…I was an observant Muslim and there were mosques in our school – [the mosque was] always a centre of political activity. Each religious group had its own quarters, for preaching, ceremonies and gathering. I could understand differences and had no problem with anyone. I even spoke and had friends from nationalist groups." It was during high school that Ali has said, "I began to understand what Kurdish nationalism meant because I had

started reading." Furthermore Ali spent his weekends in Malatya where he came into contact with university students, "mostly religious [people]." He has said, "They influenced my understanding of religion and nationalism. They were sociology students… They gave us all kinds of books." Ali has shown that although ethinicity may ostensibly be based upon cultural factors, it is very difficult to decouple such notions of ethnic significance from the political arena. Ali certainly coiuldn't when he moved to Malatya for highschool in the nineties. Ali's ethnic identity may be seen as highly politicized. As such his ethnic identity may be seen as neither ascribed nor achieved but as oscillating between situational selection and imperatives imposed from without.

Jala has shared a number of stories from her experiences in the nineties which point to this time being a very important stage in her life especially regarding her ethnic and political understandings. Happenings inside her family and her time at school were particularly pertinent in shaping her political identity which is geared toward a sense of Kurdishness and sympathy with the leftist movement in Turkey (similar to Güneş who also grew up in Izmir). Experiences both in the home and at school may be seen to have conferred upon Jala a heightened sensitivity when it comes to her ethnicity. As she was actively suppressing her Kurdish identity, events played out such that its importance was in fact reinforced and gained greater significance in the face of mutual contact with non-Kurdish individuals and social structures.

Jala started middle school in 1994 at what point she has described herself as becoming politically active. Perhaps contingent to this was her father's activity in the legal party of the Kurds, the DTP and his incarceration by the Turkish state which disrupted her schooling and caused her family to move house and enter a relatively difficult economic period. Such change in her life which she has clearly indicated was the result of certain ethno-political contentions may be seen to have affected Jala's political identity. She has said, "We were always involved in politics. It started in middle school when we would give each other cassettes. We would read about Deniz Gezmiş… so we became more political. It all happened at the same

time." She has spoken of her time at high school saying, "Then in high school we were secretly putting out a magazine with friends. It was called *Patika* (Path)… Of course we only gave it to those students that we didn't find dangerous." Jala has said that she felt caught between different social groups in high school, another example of multiple loyalties of individuals in contemporary society in Turkey. She has reminisced, "I was always forced to have different categories because I was divided between groups with different identities. I had class mates, generally girls, and we would joke around but I could only share things with them to a certain point. Then I had leftist friends that I could share some things with but perhaps with them I couldn't muck and joke around so much because they always had things to achieve and were serious. They had positions to uphold." Jala has gone on to say, "In high school all my friends knew I was a Kurd. It wasn't so bad by then, the environment had changed or maybe I was different. It wasn't a problem. But there was something like this - "the fact that you are a Kurd is not a problem. But let's not talk about how you are a Kurd. We accept you like this. This is a defect but we tolerate it." It is clear that Jala has felt suppressed in her life because of being a Kurd yet this has not deterred her from embracing this identity and incorporating it heavily into her left-leaning political contentions.

Dilhar's experiences in the nineties may be seen to have impacted his political identity markedly. Events such as his family home being demolished and his experiences at high school may be seen to have been particularly relevant in terms of how his political understandings have formed in line with his own ethnic identifications. Dilhar may be seen to have negotiated many aspects of his ethno-political identity throughout this time. In the early nineties Dilhar's family home in his village was demolished by Turkish state forces. He has noted that he didn't witness these events but he saw the end result. Elaborating further, Dilhar has said, "My father and mother were there at the time and I saw the nervous breakdowns they had after. I only saw the house in its demolished state. That alone was enough to annoy me. For example, there was a television that they tried to smash. When it didn't break, they opened up the back of the television and chopped it apart with an axe. They did things like that. They chopped the walls with an axe. They mixed up

rice with bulgur so that they couldn't be used. They threw all our belongings outside, overturned all our appliances, tore apart all of our beds and mattresses. It was like that." Dilhar has said that his parents didn't go back to the village for two years but were later forced to return as their only source of income was their lands. This major upheaval in Dilhar's life may be seen as the direct result of conlict between Turkish state forces and the ethno-nationally framed movement of the PKK. Such first-hand exposure to this conflict may be seen to have reified Dilhar's sense of being Kurdish and also causing him to question the Kurdish identity and the means by which Kurds called for their political rights. Dilhar has questioned heavily both the Turkish and the Kurdish sides of the conflict while maintaining a strong sense of being Kurdish.

Throughout his time at high school in Batman, Dilhar has said that he came to understand politics and particularly, Kurdish political movements very well. He has commented on certain transformations he felt at the time stating, "I viewed events differently. Kurdish ideas and opinions started to become more amplified. This is between 1996 and 1999 when events started to ripen. I wasn't very active, I have never been active but I did have a certain attitude [about it]." At this point Dilhar has taken a tangent to explain the political situation as he views it, portraying Batman as monopolized by Kurdish nationalist political rhetoric. He has said, "As a result of [there being only one party], the party would not do anything in order to develop itself and acted as though it was enough for the people. And so people would only gather around one stance and that was, Kurdishness and struggle. The first time I came across this outlook or these concepts was [during my high school years in Batman]." Dilhar has spoken of his reaction to this situation saying, "I didn't involve myself in activities at school but for myself I questioned; 'what is Kurdishness?', 'What is happening here?' You are inside these events and so are face to face with it. You don't realise you are living in an abnormal environment. Such a structure has been created that you think, 'this is how it has to be'. However, you start to realise that there is in fact a problem and this is fact not the right way for it to be. 'What is this?' By observing how people live in other cultures and societies and by figuring out what minorities mean, one realises that that the existence of minorities are advantageous for countries." Dilhar has directly referred to the the idea that the

maintenance of identarian cleavages in the social fabric of Turkey acts to legitimate a certain power constellation and, most commonly, to maintain the Turkish state's power over state institutions and the national population in general.

CHAPTER 6

MACRO LEVEL ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

6.1 Introduction

'Macro-level analysis' aims at processing that data which relates to larger scale processes in national, regional and international state and society. That is, the respondents' perception of phenomena that they may not have experienced directly but to which they must refer in order to justify their membership in the Kurdish group identity and which serve to justify the group's socio-political claims and discontents at the popular level. The macro-level interview questions and responses, and the analysis which is to follow deals with large-scale political processes that involve a number of institutions, media and various actors which come together to propogate the Kurds' (and any group's) ongoing relevance and voice in society. Each of the participants has testified to the relevance of macro factors that lay outside their direct control or realm of experience and has used such phenomena to justify their own political identity and what they contend are the key issues that make up the Kurdish Question in Turkey. The micro-level analysis preceding this section may be seen as a necessary primer that enriches our interpretation of the macro-level ideas and perceptions held by each respondent.

In order to address the research questions "How is Turkey's "Kurdish question" *(Kürt Meselesi)* perceived and defined by Kurdish, post-graduate university students from a university in Ankara?" and "What are the relevant macro-level factors informing their political identities and their perceptions of the "Kurdish question"?, the respondents have been questioned on what they believe are the relevant macro-level factors that inform their individual and more popular conceptions of what constitutes this complex set of issues.

All of the respondents have asserted that the Kurdish question is historically entrenched and have conceded that discussion of it cannot be disentangled from debating certain historical narratives. As such, the respondents' historical perspectives on the Kurdish Question in Turkey will be looked at so as to guage their understanding of historical structures which have impinged on their own experience and conditioned their social action as well as the action of Kurds as a group in Turkey. Following this the respondents' perspectives on the nature of relations between Kurds and wider society in Turkey will be looked at. It may be seen that all of the respondents, having come to a post-graduate level education in line with their individual experiences, have witnessed and continue to witness a certain antagonism between Kurds and Turks in the country. All have tended to frame this in terms of nationalism on behalf of certain Turks and nationalist-aspiration on behalf of Kurds. Each has given much more credence to the dominating idea of Turkish nationalism in Turkey as being the main factor behind ongoing antagonisms between these two groups. Each has called for a more egalitarian approach to understanding the nation in Turkey so as to accommodate Kurdish ethnic identity in the face of what all the respondents' see as a dominant ("fascist") Turkish ethnic identification that sits behind state policy and resonates throughout society. Following this discussion, an analysis of the respondents' perceptions of the Kurdish movement (Kürt Hareketi) will be attempted. The theoretical assertion that the categorisation and classification of large groups of people has the effect of conceptually and socially reifying said groups and that group distinctions have a political, organisational aspect as well as a symbolic one may be seen very clearly in the answers of the respondents. Each respondent views the Kurdish movement which began in the 1980s as greatly affecting the status of Kurds in society today. They have all demonstrated that organising as Kurds in Turkey has demonstrated that ethnicity as an organizing principle has strategic efficacy, aiding in the acquisition of social and political rights. Each of the respondents has demonstrated a common theoretical concept in the study of ethnicity – "that the unsuccessful group has the best chance of changing the system if it behaves *as a group"* (Glazer et al 1975: 19) – that is that Kurds in Turkey were able to make themselves recognised by coming together. Given that Kurdishness is an umbrella identity (just as that of Turkishness), each of the

respondents has pointed to the existence of difference and divergence of opinion amongst Kurds themselves, demonstrating that Kurdishness as a group identity itself is cleaved in a number of ways (evident in the variance of opinions among this small sample group alone). Following this, a discussion of how the respondents perceive the political atmosphere as currently exists on the domestic scene in Turkey will be broached. Each of the respondents has pointed to political liberalisation and the introduction of improved democratic structures and practices as having ushered in great change to the country in general. All of the respondents see this change as positive for the country's Kurdish population yet all are hesitant to have absolute faith in these political processes thanks to what may be seen as a socially conditioned mistrust of state and military in Turkey. While a number of positive changes have been brought up by the respondents, there are still a number of critiques, especially directed against the military, which point to genuine political liberalisation as having a long way to go before the Kurdish population in the country has the potential to be appeased and content with their socia-political and economic lot. Finally, a look at what each of the respondents' views is the future of the Kurdish question will be broached. The uncertainty present in ALL of the respondents' projections for the future directions that Turkey and its Kurdish citizenry will head down is telling of how complex this broadly named set of political discontents is. Each of the respondents may be seen to expound rational intellectual opinions contingent on their own wishes to be left outside the direct power struggles between the Turkish state and government and its politically active Kurdish constituency. Each has expressed concern over renewed violence if processes of liberalisation and democratisation do not proceed, swaying between positivity and a mistrust that is ingrained in each of them as they have carried a stigmatized Kurdish identity throughout their lives in the military-heavy Turkey.

6.2 Historical Perspectives on the Kurdish Question in Turkey

Each of the respondents has conceded that the 'Kurdish question' is a historically-entrenched set of issues. Güneş has stated that "… between Kurds themselves, in their chat and conversation, they always speak of [the Kurdish question] in terms of the past." Dilhar has voiced a similar opinion saying, "This is not a problem that belongs to today, as it has come from the past. It is in current times that the 'Kurdish question' has taken form in terms of what is being demanded and what the problem constitutes. We are living in a time where recognition of these issues is being shown. Generally, when you look at the history of [the Kurdish question], at past events, we can see that this is not something peculiar to this time." The respondents' perspectives on what they regard as those historical events which have been particularly pertinent and defining for the contemporary Kurdish question varies. There is a consensus however that the Kurdish question was born well before the 1980s and the establishment of the current Kurdish movement (*Kürt Hareketi*), and may be linked to the rise of particular nationalisms and the creation of the Turkish republic with its foundational Ataturkist national ideology. These contentions are characteristics of most ethnic phenomena universally given that ethnic groups, should they be made relevant, are generally ranked hierarchically within a society. John and Jean Comaroff have stated that "…ethnicity has its origins in the asymmetrical incorporation of structurally dissimilar groupings into a single political economy" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992). Ethnic movements have in nearly all cases developed in a colonial situation or a nation-state. This may be seen to ring true according to this sample group of Kurds in Turkey. Each of the respondents has demonstrated clearly the theoretical concept that "ideologists always select and reinterpret aspects of culture and history which fit into the legitimation of a particular power constellation" as official historical narratives in Turkey have acted to elevate a certain attitude which has in turn led to the suppression of Kurdish identities through culture assimilation policies enacted through legislation and tight military control over the country's population, especially the Kurdish-dominated South East. The populist nationalist ideology as propogated by the Turkish state (itself having changed since its inception) may be seen to have acted to limit Kurds access to

political-economic power (Hylland Eriksen 1993). According to this sample group, it has been under such historical conditions that political miscontents of Kurds have grown and manifested in conflict and attempts at political resolutions in the broad framework of the "Kurdish question", as are playing out currently.

According to Güneş the Kurdish question of today stems from Ottoman times. He has said, "The Ottoman Empire was a decentralized form of governance. The central administration was in Istanbul and so other groups [in the Empire] were comfortable and were able to deal with their own affairs…. Because of this, in Ottoman times any sort of 'Kurdish Question' was not so visible." He has elaborated on the nature of Kurdish autonomy in the Ottoman Empire arguing that "Kurdistan was being managed by *beylikler*… There were *beys* or *mirs* (roughly like Princes) whose powers ruled over tribal leaders…they [the Kurds] were comfortable governing their own affairs." He has gone on to say that "in the last years [of the Empire], in line with national movements that were developing all over the world, the Ottomans started to arrange for a more centralised form of governance. The empire was slowly shrinking and so with the *Tanzimat* the Ottoman elite started to redirect itself on the road to becoming more like a centralized nation state." In line with a move towards greater centralization Güneş has said that "they removed the *beylikler*, and replaced them with generals appointed from Istanbul. Those generals didn't have dialogue with the Kurds…They could not speak Kurdish. Kurdish tribes did not respect their authority and the situation was not legitimate because these [Ottoman generals] were not Kurdish. On top of this, *Shaykhs* gained power over tribal leaders." Güneş believes that it was at this historical juncture that Kurdish issues "exploded between Istanbul and the Kurds. At the very start people did not say, 'Hey we are Kurds, you guys can't do that.'" Their argument at the time, according to Güneş was more along the lines of, "'we have our own system of management, an autonomy, or half-autonomy, but you are sending generals from Istanbul and they are giving us commands'… it was this kind of motivation, a more tribal thing… there was no national situation per se at the time." He has argued that after such moves by the Ottoman state a more nationally-framed movement started amongst Kurds. "There was a Kurdish movement, Kurdish newspapers opened, Bedirhan rebelled, a bunch

of grammar books were written, a certain 'kurdishness' or ethnicity came into the picture. And from then on Kurds came into consciousness of a more modern take on ethnicity. Outside of the tribal, a more national edifice emerged." Güneş has demonstrated the theoretical similarities that exist between concepts of nation, nationalism and ethnicity.

Muhammed has stated that the Kurdish question really dates back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like Güneş, he has mentioned the Kurds relative autonomy in the Ottoman Empire stating that their region was seen "as Kurdistan - It was written in the legal documents and files of the Ottoman Empire as Kurdistan, they called it Kurdistan." Muhammed has also mentioned the infiltration of ideas from Europe espousing a nationally-framed socio-political organisational model. He has said, "After the French Revolution and after nationalism became a very widespread way to express yourself [people started to say] 'I am Turk' and 'I am Kurd'… Before that they all said they were Ottomans and it made no difference if you were Turk, Kurd, Armenian or Rum. After that, both sides started to identify themselves in a different way and they both said, 'we are Kurd' and 'we are Turk'. People said, 'In addition to being a Muslim we are Kurds'. The others were Turks. So they started to organise the first rebellion against the Ottoman Empire which started in 1881 or 1882. It was one of the biggest Kurdish families [who organised the rebellion] and they won the battle against the empire – the Bedirhan family. Bedirhan's sons were soldiers in the Ottoman Empire and they came to the Kurdish areas and joined the Kurdish forces, joined Bedirhan and started to rebel."

Jala has also lent importance to the Ottoman period and the rise of particular nationalisms in the history of today's Kurdish question though not to the same extent as Güneş and Muhammed. She has said, "Before [the formation of the republic] it was the Ottoman Empire which was not a nation-based state. It was an empire and Kurds lived as Kurds and the region in which they lived was called Kurdistan. There was no need for discrimination. They thought, 'We are Ottomans' and such a prestigious identity was enough for people. But when nationalism came, when

everybody wanted to create independent states of their own, it started to divide up in a more dangerous way."

Dilhar has spoken in more general terms yet has clearly alluded to national movements for independence as being pertinent to the origins and persistence of Kurdish discontents. Like Güneş and Muhammed he has lent significance to Kurdish rebellions over the past couple of centuries as playing a role in creating this set of issues. Dilhar has said that "notions of separatism have certainly been a factor in this problem being brought to the centre of attention." He has gone on to say, "[The Kurds'] demanding recognition of the Kurdish identity has been around since even before the Turkish republic was founded. Promises were given to Kurds but [the Kurds] were mostly just used. As a matter of fact, due to uprisings it was possible for [the Kurds] to be seen."

Ali has preferred to focus upon the Republican era and the foundation of the Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal Pasha in 1923 as being the main historical event leading to the Kurdish Question as it is manifest in Turkey in 2009. He has said, "It has come about mainly because of the policies adopted during the time of Mustafa Kemal. We all know that [the Turks and the Kurds] fought together to gain the independence of Turkey." He has gone on to comment on Mustafa Kemal's influences in the early years of the Turkish republic stating, "His policies alienated Kurds… Kurds until that point had been using their own language, had exercised their own autonomy in their region and had separate schools, their own *medreses* (Islamic schools). But, after the foundation of the republic, fascist-like policies were adopted. Kurdish was banned and the *medreses* were shut down." Ali has qualified his comments by stating, "I believe that this is the most important, most serious event that caused the deterioration [of the relationship between the Turkish republic and its Kurdish citizenry]. It is certainly not the absolute origin of the [Kurdish question], but issues could have been resolved at that point. The policies of Mustafa Kemal have caused the chronic Kurdish Question."

The other respondents' share Ali's opinion that the founding of the Turkish Republic was instrumental in inflaming Kurdish discontents. They have all explicitly stated that Kurds and Turks fought together for independence. They have also spoken of the policies of Mustafa Kemal and the official ideology of the Turkish nation-state as alienating Kurds (notably, none of the respondents have called the founder of the republic by his popular name "Atatürk"). Furthermore, they have all tended to mention a number of movements and uprisings that the Kurds have organised throughout the twentieth century. Güneş has said, "The republic was founded, and for this Turks and Kurds fought together. The Kurds had allied with the Turks on the condition that they would be able to setup their own government … Mustafa Kemal had told them he would give them a particular area and as such the Kurds were convinced at Erzurum and Sivas. But the republic was founded and Mustafa Kemal… went on to found one nation-one state. In this one nation there were Turks. Because of this, when the Kurds didn't find a place for themselves within this state, confirmed in the 1924 constitution, where it was written that there is only Turks in Turkey, no other '*kabil'*…Straightaway, in 1925, Shaykh Said rebelled. With much insistence, such as [official] Turkish history and the sun language theory, this ideology became official. State ideology is something like this – in Turkey, there is nobody but Turks. A Kurd is one that speaks Turkish improperly. Kurds are mountain Turks. There are no Kurds, in fact they are Turks." Güneş has elaborated on his understanding of the official ideology of the Turkish state (that is a certain mainstream Turkish nationalism) by referring to the comments of Kenan Evren in the 1980s when he was questioned about Kurdish issues by Kurds. Güneş has said that he replied in a vain that said, 'There is no such thing as a Kurd, they are those Turks that walk in the mountains and make sounds in the snow with their footsteps – it sounds like, 'Kar-Kurt Kar-Kurt' - it is from there that this term 'Kurd' comes'… He said something that even a primary school child would not believe, yet it was the official line of the state." According to Güneş, "[The Kurdish movement] emerged as a reaction to centralization and then a more modern national movement followed… There were efforts for greater assimilation after Dersim but again in the sixties the movement increased. In the eighties Öcalan and his friends formed the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and started an armed conflict from 1984. Perhaps if

they had allowed Kurdish television, newspapers and so on in the 1980s, an armed struggle may never have ensued. Unfortunately, in this country, it is only after thousands of people have died that it was even admitted that there were Kurds in the country…. As such [the Kurdish movement] has continued until now."

Muhammed has mentioned the rebellion of Shaykh Said in 1925 as having played an important historical role in the Kurdish question. He has said "When we look at Kurdish history there are many other rebellions. For example in Turkish history they say that there have been twenty eight rebellions against the Turkish Republic. These were started in 1925 by Shaykh Said. This was the first rebellion against the new, young Turkish republic. Shaykh Said said, 'this is our place and we have to elect our own governors and we want to use the Kurdish language in our daily processes.' He also said that for him Islam is a very important motive in daily life, and called for the Turkish government to lift the bans on Islam. So, there was a rebellion. It was suppressed by the Turkish army. After that, from 1928, new rebellions started." Muhammed has pointed to another historical factor which he deems as important – "Another historical factor… there was a very big soldier (General) in the Turkish army during Turkey's War of Independence. His name was Ihsan Nuri Pasha (Pasha is a very important title)... After the War (which was won by Turks and Kurds against the Rums and other occupation forces), the Turkish parliament said "we are all Turks and we have to setup a new country so we have to be more careful in order to identify ourselves because we are a new country. They said "we are Turks". Ihsan Nuri Pasha in 1930 took his army and went to Ağrı (a town in the east of Turkey) and set up a rebellion against the Turkish army. He was a Kurd and a member of the Turkish army. He saw that this country wasn't going to give rights to Kurds and used his military power and started a rebellion that lasted for 3 or 4 years."

Like all the respondents, Muhammed has commented on the official national ideology of Turkey's state as it developed throughout the twentieth century. He has done so using an analogy about love. He has said, "Turks started to push people about how they feel or how they love their country… I have a right not to love my country. Just think that you are forced to love somebody, but you don't actually love

them. It is your choice, you can love somebody or you can not. This is the biggest part - in order to solve this 'question,' it lies on the shoulders of the Turks because the origin of the problems dates to their history."

Jala has said that the formation of the Turkish Republic and an official nationalist ideology was a very important time in the history of the Kurds and today's Kurdish question. Like all the respondents, she has mentioned Kurdish movements as being in a relationship of antagonism with the official instruments and ideologies of the Turkish state – she has specifically mentioned the PKK in this sense. Also in line with all the respondents' perspectives is Jala's idea that the denial of the existence of Kurds in the Turkish republic in the twentieth century acted to feed Kurdish discontents. She has claimed, "When the republic was founded by Mustafa Kemal and his colleagues … over time they said, 'We founded this country along with Kurds'…. And then, I think as a response to calls by Kurds for independence, they started to reduce the use of the word 'Kurd'. And then they started to say, "Everyone in Turkey is a Turk". Being a Turk was like a prestigious identity… So I think it started from over there." Jala has mentioned a point made by Güneş, "And then I think it came from when people were saying that there is no such thing as Kurds. They said that Kurds are those Turkmen that live in the mountains and whose feet make the sound "kart kurt" as they walk. It is because of this that they are called 'Kurds'. [Another factor] is the laws which came from such contentions, [that there is no such thing as Kurds]. Also, the PKK may be responsible for a bunch of issues. They have brought language and Kurdish issues into the light but from another perspective the PKK is often seen as representing all Kurds. It may have acted to encourage and provoke a certain Kurdish nationalism… I think it has had such an effect."

6.3 The Kurdish question and the Kurds in Society

All of the respondents have asserted that there exists a certain level of antagonism between Turks and Kurds at a societal level in Turkey. While all have conceded that generally Kurds and Turks cohabitate the country with no problem of ethnic and/or political identity on a day to day basis, they have asserted that underlying discrimination on behalf of both groups is present. All of the respondents have pointed to nationalist sentiments on both sides as contributing to tensions between Kurds and Turks. Effectively, each of the respondents has expressed discontent over the stigma which they view is attached to the Kurdish identity in society in Turkey. The respondents view this stigma as characterised largely by political antagonism and mistrust and the fear that Turkey will be divided. They have also mentioned official state ideology as promoting a mono-ethnic image in Turkey which is legislated in the Constitution and reflected through the judiciary and media which act to politicise most of the citizens of Turkey in a nationalist direction; whether it is a dominating Turkish nationalism obsessed with territorial sovereignty and ethnicity or a Kurdish ethno-nationalism or politico-ethnicity reacting aggressively against Turkish state policy. Another discontent of all the respondents is that Kurdish issues are seldom discussed in Turkey outside the scope of the PKK-military conflict as has continued to play out since the eighties until the present in the South East. They have all asserted that this acts to melodramatise how the Kurdish question is perceived by civilians in Turkey. As such, each of the respondents has claimed that they choose carefully the situations under which they openly discuss Kurdish issues. Indeed, most of the respondents have claimed that they prefer to stay outside of any discussion of Kurdish issues, to not express their own Kurdishness so as not to provoke what they see as unreasonable reactions and emotionally-fuelled futile debate which makes them feel alienated and misunderstood.

It may be seen here that the respondents express an opinion that is resonated by the theoretical assertion of Stuart Hall in his discussion of the modern state,

> ..the circle of dominant ideas does accumulate the symbolic power to map or classify the world for others; its classifications do acquire not only the constraining power of dominance over other modes of thought but also the inertial authority of habit and instinct... Ruling ideas may dominate other conceptions of the social world by setting the limit to what will appear as rational, reasonable, credible, indeed sayable or thinkable, within the given vocabularies of motive and action available to us (Hall S, 1988: 44).

Each of the respondents may be seen to appeal to societal norms when living out their daily lives in Turkey having become assimilated through mutual contact, language and education. At the same time, through social experience and sub-national loyalties, each has maintained their sense of Kurdishness through the knowledge and emotional significance of membership to that particular group.

Ali has pointed to a certain attitude amongst Turks that causes any discussion of the Kurdish question to be placed under the umbrella of the PKK. He has also said that when discussing Kurdish issues many people in Turkey tend to lose objectivity and to highlight their Turkishness and take Kurdish demands as a personal affront to their identity and their country. Because of this Ali prefers to stay out of discussion about the Kurdish question having claimed that it is futile and alienating. Ali has spoken of a discussioin he had in a university class in order to demonstrate what he means and how he feels - "[The discussion] went on for an hour and a half and we spoke about everything regarding Kurds. It started with issues to do with Iraq - [the teacher] was calling some Iraqi leaders bad names. So I said, 'why do you call these people bad names? They are legitimate [actors]. They are recognised by the international community, recognised by the Iraqi constitution. You have to call them as they deserve, it can't be 'traitor' or something else.'" Ali has said "he was insulting certain Kurdish figures in Iraq. I asked the instructor, 'Why?' Kurdistan is recognised by the Iraqi constitution, recognised by the whole world. Even by Turkey because Turkey recognises the Iraqi constitution… 'How will you react if I call those guys in Northern Cyprus as you call those guys in Iraq?'… Only Turkey recognises Northern Cyprus, nobody else in the world does. I tried to make a comparison. The

discussion started that way …In the end I decided it is really useless and futile. The discussion didn't make any difference… people started to act emotional. It wasn't personal, nobody was addressing anybody personally." Ali has expanded further saying, "I have been realizing more, and it has been for a while now, in every discussion, everything regarding Kurds is associated with the PKK. They suppress the conversation. They fail to discuss Kurdish issues outside of the PKK. So, I thought, 'what's the point, why should I bother discussing this as I know what they are going to say?'" Ali has said that in this discussion "only one [person] was trying to establish an empathy with the Kurds. I will never discuss Kurdish issues in that class again." Ali has commented further saying, "I no longer engage in discussion over Kurdish issues in general. If I start discussing these issues and how I really think, what I believe, my views and what I think about Kurdish developments - I have to distance myself from the people around me. I have friends from Turkish regions … [it is] hard to find common ground on this issue so I prefer not to discuss it. If you do discuss it and your differences are exposed, it becomes hard to live, work or study with them. For example, my room mate - I know we don't agree on the Kurdish issue - I would never discuss it with him. He is a good guy, we share religion and we are classmates. I prefer to keep this." Ali has qualified his feelings at this point saying, "I am always aware of being Kurdish. You can't forget it [as] it's on the television, in the newspapers, in everyday discussion. I can feel the fact of being different."

Ali has said that Turkish nationalism and its ideological precepts act to prevent the Kurdish question being properly addressed, as well as alienating Kurds in society. He has said, "[the Turkish state is] based on a single ethnic group, a single language, single flag." Ali has expressed at this juncture that "when you lead a single ethnic group you of course don't allow other ethnic groups to express themselves, to exercise their own language, culture, literature… what is written in the constitution is that everyone living in Turkey is a Turk. Kurds interpret this article as [having an] ethnic [meaning]. They interpret [this part of the constitution] not in the sense of citizenship but in the sense of ethnicity." He has justified his argument by saying, "The positions and the rulings of the courts have proved that [the constitution] is

interpreted by Turkish agencies, government agencies, in the sense of ethnicity. They refused to recognise both officially and unofficially until the mid-1990s that there are other ethnic groups [in Turkey]… Any expression of the Kurdish language was banned and those who tried to speak in Kurdish at schools were questioned, taken to the courts." Ali has said he believes "the reason why people refuse to recognise [Kurds] is not secret… it is written in the constitution." Ali has commented on the political and ideological persuasions of people in Turkey noting that it is divided and not straightforward. He has said that the conflict between the state and militant PKK has not yet boiled down to the popular level. However, like all the respondents, he has mentioned nationalism as a factor in tensions between Turks and Kurds at a societal level. Ali has also given agency to the mainstream media in agitating tensions. He has said "There are extreme nationalists, those who are member of the Nationalist Movement Party (*MHP)*… they oppose any development in Kurdish issues outright. They say there are no Kurds. But, the left may be divided – there are leftists and rightists." He has gone on to say, "In practice, civilians, average people have no problems with Kurds – they co-exist, they co-reside in houses. When the political question arises the majority of them still oppose Kurdish claims. When people hear that Kurds demand Kurdish to be made a national language [along with Turkish], they oppose it outright. Even those people who don't care about politics, like peasants, they really oppose it, I know it from my experiences, I know it from friends and media. Everyone in turkey is politicized through the media. You can't say that rural people or peasants are apolitical, they have been politicized. They don't know what is going on in the Kurdish areas and they have never been to it or visited it. [Nonetheless] certain viewpoints have been instilled in those people, through media and the nationalist party." Ali has gone on to reasser his belief that "the confrontation between Kurdish political groups and armed groups with the state and the military has not boiled down to the popular level." He has added, "That, I think, is the best advantage. It provides us with hope that the Kurdish problem can still be resolved. But when it boils down to the popular level it will be really hard to resolve. All the people, all the citizens become politicized and from that point onward, other than separation, I think no projects could settle the problem." He has reasserted the he believes little conflict exists in day-to-day social

interactions in Turkey by saying, "…people live and reside together, side by side. There are intermarriages for example. [The situation is] not so bad yet." He has added that "There have been some bad experiences. In Western Turkey at political party marches and rallies, certain people, with the provocation of nationalist groups, have stormed the cars of Kurdish supporters and party members. A few months ago during a rally two people were killed… I think it was in Altinova, Balikesir." Ali believes that antagonism against Kurds and Kurdish political groups does not exist on the popular level. He has added to this by saying "… with the provocation of other groups, mainly related to the nationalist party, and through media, [people] are made active and try to suppress the organisations of the Kurdish party and other events such as in Adapazari, Balikesir… they try to lynch people participating in those organisations." Ali has reflected that, "when such antagonisms, such an atmosphere arises, the Kurdish party and its officers are the apparent targets because they are viewed as the symbols of the Kurdish fight and political movement." Ali has demonstrated the stigma attached to Kurdish political movements and has asserted that extreme Turkish nationalism acts to inflame such conflict.

Jala has also referred to an experience she had in a university class to demonstrate how she perceives the actuality of Kurds in society. She has said that she felt engaged as a Kurdish person in a class discussion but refrained from participating. Expressing a similar sentiment to Ali, she has noted that the Kurds are still a group in Turkey who are viewed with much prejudice, a prejudice which may be observed at a popular level. She has recalled, "In the psychology department they sometimes say, 'people are inside nationalism without even realising.' Sometimes it is necessary to remind people. Perhaps people need to get rid of some prejudices. For example, I had a teacher, she was talking about prejudice. Prejudices can manifest such that one doesn't explicitly say bad things about a certain group but will simply fail to mention that group. She referred to such things as not mentioning Alevis or not talking about Armenians in Turkey. These were the examples she gave. Interestingly, she didn't say 'Kurds' and in doing so made her own prejudice very clear. It was as though she didn't realise either." Jala has reflected upon what she views as general attitudes in the Turkish public that encircle and act to inflame the antagonism between Turks and

Kurds. She has said, “Until a few years ago, even saying the word ‘Kurd’ was difficult in Turkey. For example there is discussion about the way to pronounce ‘PKK’. ‘Pe Ke Ke’ is difficult for most people to say so they say ‘Pe Ka Ka’ instead. People who don’t like the PKK say this. In fact, nobody has to like the PKK. Those that say ‘Pe Ka Ka’ are people in Turkey who view the PKK very badly. I guess after a while this became something ‘sacred’. Just as *‘Turban’* is now ‘*Baş Örtüsü’* (two different ways of referring to the headscarf worn by Muslim women, each with a varied political meaning).” Jala has gone on to talk about this semantic divergence saying, “Before there was nothing like that but as soon as a certain group lays claim to a [phenomenon], people tend to choose a representative form. This choice represents an allegiance to a certain group. Actually, in Turkish the letter ‘K’ is sometimes pronounced “Ka” instead of “Ke.” But, Kurds view the pronunciation ‘Pe Ka Ka’ as an attempt to portray the PKK as something very offensive, to make it appear uncivilised. And so, Kurds in Turkey say and have become the owners of the pronunciation “Pe Ke Ke.”

Jala has reiterated Ali’s point that the Kurdish question is rarely discussed outside the scope of the PKK. She has also pointed to paranoia at both state and society levels regarding Turkey’s territory potentially being divided and ideas of sovereignty undermined. Jala has said, “Everything that is said or discussed in Turkey about Kurds is done so as though the PKK is their absolute leader and representative. People in Turkey speak as though the country is about to be divided or that there are plans to do as such. They think Kurds will protest everything. All the struggles to allow the Kurdish identity to be accepted have come across obstacles. An example of this is ‘education in your mother tongue’. Also, the DTP is still viewed with much prejudice. Also there has been very little opportunity for Kurds to voice their politics. Like I said, this is something that absolutely must be done by us, [Kurds]. However, [the state] are continuously preventing [it from happening].” Jala has mentioned that popular ideological factors such as official *Atatürkism* and nationalism effect the Kurdish question negatively. She has justified herself saying, “In the public there is something like this – ‘Ok, you are a Kurd and we are Turks, but what is the point of saying this?’ They don’t think saying something like this is discriminatory towards

Kurds. I think this is very widespread. They think, ‘Ok you are Kurds but lets all also be Turks’. They don’t realise that saying this engenders a hierarchical situation. When one says Atatürk’s words, ‘What happiness it is to say I am a Turk’, people say that he did not intend to speak of being Turk - he was speaking of being from Turkey. If that is so then he should have said “What happiness it is to say I am from Turkey”. Why do they use the name of an ethnic group? This Kemalist ideology manifests as a problem often. And so they look at us like we are just trying to create problems… I think this is a very frustrating obstacle to making Kurds visible [in society].” This anecdote raises a very interesting point about Turkish nationalism and its exclusive inclusiveness or inclusive exclusiveness, which is resonated most famously in the catch cry, “May the World be Turk” (Dünya Türk Olsun). Jala has claimed that this ideology frustrates Kurdish political claims which are based on the securing of rights which ensure that a Kurdish identity is maintained alongside a Turkish identity.

Güneş has argued that certain dynamics of the Kurdish question may be seen throughout Turkish society. He has justified this mostly on the basis of a rise in nationalisms, both Kurdish and Turkish, which Güneş has argued has led to increased antagonisms between Kurdish and Turkish civilians thus naturalizing the Kurdish question outside the scope of the PKK-Military conflict that began in the eighties in the South-East. Güneş has added however that these antagonisms are not ubiquitous throughout society in Turkey as most citizens live side by side in relative peace. He has expressed concern over the potential for the situation to become more inflamed at a civilian level should nationalism continue to rise, and the severe obstacles this would present to addressing the Kurdish question. He has said, “In the last while, nationalism [in Turkey] has risen. In the eighties when the PKK movement first started there were Kurdish uprisings in Diyarbakır - they would be suppressed by the military, the perpetrators were hung and then it would finish. After the eighties the Kurdish question became a lot more international and national. It became a feature of daily politics and news. Now it is not about ending the PKK, allowing or disallowing it, there is a ‘Kurdish question’. There is no ‘PKK question.’” He has added, “In the eighties, Turks and Kurds weren’t so much in a

mad scramble. But now amongst the public [the number of] nationalists has increased. It is not only Turkish nationalism but Kurdish nationalism is also on its way up. The question no longer exists as a fight between two sides it is also reflected through the public." Güneş has backed this up by noting that "people and groups have started lynching one another. There was an attack on Kurdish workers in Manisa and some Kurds were attacked in Bolu. In the public, from usual people, we can see an opposition to Kurds justified by nationalism. In the same way, amongst Kurds in Diyarbakır there is a feeling that Turks are the enemy. The public itself have become one another's enemies" Qualifying this further Güneş has said, "I remember there was nothing like this in 1990. In 1990 there was a lot of conflict, many guerrillas and soldiers were dying, but people on the street were just people on the street. But now it isn't like that. If you do something here, everyone will hang their flags, everybody has a reaction… This nationalism has crept into society. People [of Turkey] have become involved in it heavily. It used to be the business of the state but since 2000 or so [it is different]. When conflict increases [in the South East], funerals for martyrs (soldiers) are publicised and people in turn use this information to say such things as 'damn the PKK, may they die.' Later this has turned into heightened nationalism… I find Turkey's coming to this point very sad because if these 'nationalisms' come to involve ordinary people, then it is very bad. It is more of a mess. Before it was more of a state-level nationalism. Fascism has become normal. There is fascism everywhere." After saying this Güneş has added that "It is not too bad still, but [nationalism] is on the rise. Before there used to be many more Turkish leftists inside the Kurdish movement, now there are not [so many]. 'Turkish revolutionaries' themselves don't feel comfortable with Kurds. It is very odd. Also, patriotic Kurds in the movement don't like 'Turk revolutionaries' as they find them hypocritical and insincere."

Muhammed has argued that there is paranoia in Turkish state and society that if the Kurds are granted more social and political rights, they will call for and establish independence. He has also commented on what he essentially views as a lack of empathy among Turks towards Turkey's Kurdish population and a need for this situation to change. Muhammed has said, "There is something that has to change.

The perceptions held by the general Turkish public have to change. The reason is, there are a number of publics in this world and over time they have formed civilisations. They say, ‘we are like this’, ‘we are Iranian’, ‘Turks are like that’, the Ottoman empire. They are creating a very strange concept. They see themselves as above the others. Just before dividing our country and whenever we react to them they say, ‘Ok, if we give them more rights and more rights, then they will divide Turkey.’ This perception is very widespread among Turks… They have to have empathy, it is very important. You should try to feel the other guys’ emotions. Every day in Turkey, also in the Kurdish provinces, [children in schools are made to] chant, “I am a Turk, I am honest, I am hard working”. But they are not Turk. It is just ridiculous. Let’s say I live in the Netherlands and I have to say, ‘my language is Dutch’. It is just ridiculous. Maybe my father and mother know Turkish very well… I know Turkish very well but I also know Kurdish very well. We have to use empathy in order to understand each other… I mean this is a personal identity, you can not choose your identity… They forced other people to feel like a Turk… this is really ridiculous, this is a point we can never negotiate on or we can never come to an agreement about. There was a Kurdish politician who said in Turkish: ‘To say that everybody who lives in Turkey is a Turk is to say that all the plants in Turkey are pumpkin plants and all the birds are Hermit Ibis’. Such a thought is ridiculous. It was the grandson of Shaykh Said who said this… It is very true. In turkey you are Turk.”

Muhammed has gone on to speak of some prejudices against Kurds in society by sharing a personal experience that echoes the opinion of Jala, which calls for the acceptance of the existence of an ethnic group in Turkey that is not Turk. He has said, “If we are talking about politics, Turks should recognise that they are Turks and that there are also some Kurds living [in Turkey]… I can give you a very personal example - I went to another university to do a summer internship and my supervisor there liked me very much. She said that I was smart, I was a hard worker and that she liked me every much. She asked me, ‘Where are you from?’ I said, ‘I am from Diyarbakır ’. Then she said, ‘Is your father a soldier?’ and I said, ‘No’. And then she said, ‘Are you Turkmen?’ and I said, ‘No, I am not Turkmen.’ Then she asked ‘Do you have any Kurdish in you?’ I replied ‘Nothing else but Kurdish.’ And then she

said, ‘How can it be?’ I was ranked eightieth in a university entrance exam of 1.7 million participants. She asked ‘How can you be among the highest students?’ My point is that she is a professor, she is a scientist and her point of view is this - If you are a Kurd you cannot succeed in Turkey. So the first step in solving the problem is to find a way to change the way of thinking of the people, their minds. Because they always see it, as I said, after the invasions from towns to the big cities, they always said of these people that they are not very qualified or educated and they always see Kurds as ignorant – ‘they are not educated, you cannot talk with them’. Muhammed has given a final example of his perceived discrimination saying, “as a result of my appearance they say, ‘you cannot be Kurd because you have long hair’. And I say, ‘If you don’t cut your hair it will be long’… It is really ridiculous.” Muhammed is frustrated by the stigma attached to the Kurdish identity in Turkey.

Muhammed has argued that Kurds in Turkish society must also change their perspectives in order for Turks and Kurds to live more peacefully. Like Güneş, he has mentioned a rise in nationalist sentiments in Turkey and the potential for this to inflame the Kurdish question. He has said, “Kurds have started to ask questions about their organisations, their legal party’s policies. In many cases they think, we are Kurds, we have to take it… They are not very smart - this is my very personal point of view. They also like violence. They are not the creator of violence but after a certain time you start to be similar with your enemy, you start to resemble your enemy. It is a fact of life - you grow up together. If I were a neutral person and I could just look at what was going on I could not talk about who is right because there are people just killing each other and in cities or universities, they attack each other. Turkish and Kurdish nationalists attack each other in universities and cities and it has a really big potential to make it worse. Everything may blow up very suddenly - it may only be a matter of time. It won’t be solved and it will definitely cause unsolvable problems – it will be a very big question.” This opinion reflects the theoretical assertions that warns against the view of state as a mechanical device carrying out an ideological project – the idea that in most states the struggle for consensus is not ordinarily contested in the realm of politics but rather in that of social life where consensus is built must not be forgotten.

Muhammed has reflected on the relationships between Kurds and Turks on a more personal level and in doing so has diluted his claims of antagonism between Turks and Kurds in Turkey. He has demonstrated that he perceives the discord between Turks and Kurds as emanating from the Turkish state. He has said, "I think the relations between Turks and Kurds in everyday life is okay. But like I said it may blow up suddenly. This stuff is very hard for both sides. It is really hard to accept. It is not the crime of the Turks themselves but the crime of education and the crime of the state. A Kurd doesn't have the right to believe in something else [in this country]. They are educated in a way, they learnt that 'we are Turks, once upon a time we were powerful and the Russians and Bulgarians are enemies. Everybody except Turks is the enemies.' It is not everyday [Turks'] fault. Kurds have to understand Turks in this way. It is very important… there are some widespread beliefs among educated Turks, for example, many of my friends who are Turks and who love me very much and with whom I have no problems… but when we come to discuss the Kurdish question they suddenly start to feel themselves as 'I am a Turk'. They say [to me], 'how can you say that, you are well-educated, you are smart and you are all these things - so how can you say this about Kurds?' I say, 'Maybe because I have read a lot. Maybe because I am smart and so I can say that.' I always say that the point is not to be a Kurd or a Turk. For example, in the North of Iraq, there are also Turkmens in that region and some friends asked me a question about them, 'If they have designs to live as Turkmen [in Kurdistan], what would you do?' I said, 'I will definitely act against the Kurdish government because this is about human rights. It is not just a Kurd-Turk thing. That is not my point of view. I hate all identities… I shouldn't have to identify myself. If there wasn't a Kurdish problem in Turkey I would not say, 'I am a Kurd', I would say 'I am just me'… it would identify me more than if I say 'I am a Kurd.' If you are treated badly because of your identity, then you have to protect this identity. I will answer to anyone who asks that I am from Turkey. If they ask me if I am a Turk, I will say 'no I am a Kurd'. I don't have any problem being a citizen of Turkey but I have a problem with being a Turk because it is not me. The problem is not that Turks are bad people but I am not a Turk. They are wonderful, they are good, they are kind, but…" Muhammed has

shown that mutual contact has made him an active citizen of Turkey while also entrenching his sense of Kurdishness. He has linked the Kurdish identity directly with the political and has expressed a leaning towards the rule of human rights as an acceptable navigator for states and governments.

Dilhar has noted that there are ideological boundaries in Turkey's society which hinder the Kurdish question's being addressed. He has provided what he views as concrete examples of this situation, speaking of the dominance of a discourse on the PKK and notions that all Kurds are terrorists. He has commented, "If I speak of those in Turkey who are not Kurds, a majority of people consider Kurds terrorists. We may not see this in the public sphere. People don't necessarily know who is a Kurd and who is not. It is not about being Kurd or not. A Kurd may degrade another Kurd. I am not saying, 'all Kurds are like this and all Turks are like this'… At the society level the image of Kurds, that is the perception in the public sphere, is "Ah, our brothers, the Kurds." However, when you turn to special circumstances, it appears they are saying such things with a mask on. When you put on a mask, things change. On internet sites there are certain rumours and nicknames. You may visit some sites and if you focus on comments written about the Kurdish question or Kurds you can see people's perspectives more clearly… When you see the comments of people with net-nicknames on the internet about Kurds you can see much more clearly how they view Kurds. There is a great amount of intolerance. Everybody describes all the Kurds as terrorists. For example, there were comments which described the PKK women attending a PKK funeral as prostitutes. Or, there was some news that had something to do with Kurds and when I looked at the comments on it they said "Kurds are the misfortune of this country" and "The best Kurd is a dead Kurd". People are associating Kurds with such things. If a Kurd did something like this, for example if they write, "the best Turk is a dead Turk" they are just as fascist. I am trying to say that it is just wrong to say such things. But, in this society the number of people who view Kurds in such a light and think in this way is not small. The existence of such people in society represents an obstacle to finding a solution to the Kurdish question. The actions of the government alone are insufficient in solving the Kurdish question. They claim that these two peoples are brothers, but the majority in

actual fact say, "Who is whose brother?" and are not concerned about [Kurds]." Dilhar has shown that despite the state's attempts to impose a Turkish identity, Kurds and Turks are indeed cemented in their awareness of being distinct from one another.

6.4 Perspectives on the Kurdish Movement

Each of the respondents has contended that the uprisings and political movements of Kurds in Turkey have played an integral role in bringing the Kurdish question onto the domestic political scene, endowing this multi-faceted problem with autonomous organisational structures. Ethnicity as an organising principle for collective action may be seen to have garnered much social and political relevance in Turkey. As such, it is no surprise that all the respondents have well-formed opinions about the nature and role of what they have coined the current "Kurdish movement" (*Kürt Hareketi*). Each of the respondents has tended to discuss the Kurdish movement beyond the narrow scope of the PKK. They have all asserted that the PKK is not the only aspect of the movement, despite a popular-level tendency for the state and society in Turkey to anchor their discourse on the Kurdish question to this illegal organisation (Ali has pointed to the fact that the EU's stance on the Kurdish question in Turkey is centred around the PKK and security concerns). In this vain, Muhammed has said of the latest movement, which he concedes has been facilitated remarkably by the activities of the PKK in antagonism with the Turkish state, "I really want to call it the Kurdish movement, not 'terrorists' or 'guerrillas' because it is a movement actually. This is one of the biggest Kurdish movements in Kurdish history." The respondents all characterise the Kurdish movement as predominantly a leftist and secular movement that is led nominally and in a legal capacity by the Democratic Society Party (DSP/*DTP*). It is their contention that separatism is no longer on the agenda of the official Kurdish movement nor the vast majority of Kurdish citizens living in Turkey. Given the respondents' varied geographical disposition across Turkey each has encountered and thus internalised different aspects of the Kurdish movement, lending to the notion that this ethnically-framed assertion of political identity is far from uniform in its constituency and indeed its

purported aims. The respondents' have shed light on the historical and organizational aspects of the Kurdish movement, its deficiencies and its continued relevance in Turkish politics as a vehicle for obtaining greater democratic rights for Turkey's Kurdish citizenry. Most have questioned or denied the continued need for an armed conflict between PKK-members and the Turkish military showing that these young intellectuals adhere to a certain 'liberal democratic rationale' and desire peaceful solutions.

All of the respondents have claimed that the most important aim of the current Kurdish movement is full recognition of the Kurdish identity and not separatism. Muhammed has said, "The Kurdish movement in Turkey now say that 'we don't want a state, we don't want autonomy, we have relatives and friends living in Iraq, Iran and Syria… we don't want to be a free country because nothing will change, we just want democracy and we want these countries to respect our rights and we want to live together, the Kurds from all four countries. These countries have to find a way to open the borders but not divide the countries… something more like the EU. For the Kurdish movement the best solution is this." Güneş has also said that the current Kurdish movement is not calling for a separate state and has, like Muhammed, spoken of a confederation-like setup for the Kurds of Syria, Iran, Iraq and Turkey. He has qualified such claims by saying, "the Kurds are making demands of the country, and what they are demanding is very clear. Fundamentally, the PKK in the 1980s was demanding an independent Kurdistan. And this Kurdistan is not just in Turkey. It is also in Iran, Iraq and Syria… They demanded it as an independent, united and socialist Kurdistan. But the conditions of the world were inappropriate. I think most Kurds, not all but most, from now on don't want their own state. They don't want a nation state, instead of that they want something more like a confederation, to be more autonomous, to be given complete cultural and human rights… a solution down this path. Because from now on Kurds have realised, from Adana and Urfa to the east, nobody will call this territory 'Kurdistan.' It is impossible. But I think it is also clear that in the imagination of a lot of Kurds there is a Kurdistan. Kurds call this area a 'country' or 'our country' … Güneş has gone on to say, "So Kurds want something like this but, there is the official state line of

assimilation and of all citizens in Turkey being 'Turk'. The state having not answered [Kurdish demands] is a painful thing, not easy."

Jala has asserted that there is major economic disparity between the east and the west of Turkey. She has contended that the state must provide more infrastructure and better education to the south east otherwise notions of separatism among some Kurds may persist legitimately. She has said, "If [they don't invest more into the East of Turkey], nobody can say to [the Kurds] "Why do you want to separate?" There is no road works over there. There are roads between the mountains, winding along cliffs and they haven't even made barriers for such roads. Around here, [Ankara], something like that could not be. They need to do a lot regarding education in the east… they really need to improve the state of education there for the local people. The state should provide far more services in the East."

Ali has disagreed with Jala's contention that the problem must be addressed economically and educationally. He has argued, "After the government recognised, although informally, the existence of the Kurdish question and the Kurdish ethnic reality in Turkey, they have always talked of it as being caused by economic underdevelopment and illiteracy. They [have] said illiteracy is very high in Kurdish regions and it is economically underdeveloped. [They think], 'if we feed the schools and establish a certain economic monopoly like establishing a few factories, for example the Greater Anatolian Project (GAP)… if we finalise it, [the Kurdish question] will be resolved.' This is what the military, the rightist and the leftist governments have always believed and this is what they have always claimed as the causes of the Kurdish question." Ali has expressed his contention with this view stating, "I think the main problem is starting from this view point… Kurds believe the problem is neither economic nor educational, it is political and social. They demand a political self-rule in the most extreme form or the abolition of restrictions on Kurdish culture and language." He has elaborated on the juxtaposed viewpoints of official bodies in Turkey and its Kurdish population by saying, "[The beliefs of Kurds] is against what many governments have believed is needed to solve the problem. When you provide people with education facilities and more jobs and employment, I don't believe they move away from ethnic awareness. On the contrary

they will be more aware of their differences, their language and culture and as such they will demand more, they will demand social and political rights. But the state, the military, the rightists and the leftists, refuse to grant any political and social rights. So the way Kurds and the way Turks, the government, handle the problem is quite different. One sees it as a political problem and one sees it as an economic or educational problem." Ali has pointed out at this juncture that he believes "it is not possible to grant political rights to Kurds with the existent constitution. [The Constitution] has to be amended. Especially certain founding articles should be revised. An amendment must be made to include Kurds too. This is why the problem persists." Turning to another issue to which he lends importance, Ali has pointed out that the PKK is an important factor. He has commented here that "after the mid-nineties [the PKK] gave up the idea of independence and said, 'we want political and social rights'" Reflecting upon recent political developments in Turkey, Ali has said, "In fact the opportunity to resolve the problem, the chances are getting higher. But if you believe it is an economic and educational problem, you will be shocked to see that if economic development is achieved in Kurdish areas, the problem will still persist. It is ironic that both leftists and rightists agree when it comes to the Kurdish problem. Political Islamists agree also."

Dilhar has pointed to the effectiveness of the Kurdish movement as a vehicle for acquiring rights - "In the end the Kurdish Movement has been an important catalyst. You cannot discount this movement's struggle. It is thanks to this movement that people became aware of the fact that many Kurds were oppressed and were deprived of their rights." In the same vain, Jala has spoken of the organisations that dominate the Kurdish movement saying, "the PKK is struggling and the DTP is doing things in a political sense… The PKK struggle has its own character. They have fulfilled their usefulness and are achieving nothing anymore. But I cannot say that they have achieved nothing. For example the things that the government is doing now, such as recognizing Kurds, accepting that they have their own language, and allowing them to use Kurdish - They act as though they did this despite the PKK but I think the PKK played the greatest role in affecting such changes. If they hadn't formed such a struggle nobody would have known that the Kurds had these problems. I don't how

else they could have gained a voice. I guess a little violence was necessary. [The PKK] started with very different goals. They hoped to form their own state. But now they are calling for language rights, and there is a Kurdish language channel. They demand that Kurdish should be permitted to be used in certain places. I don't know if what they wanted to happen has happened. Then there is the DTP which is a legitimate political party. I think it works like the political party of the PKK. I think they have done things to voice Kurdish concerns. For example Osman Baydemir, [DTP member and the recently re-elected mayor of Diyarbakır] is a very sharp guy. He appears, in some way, to be a speaker for the PKK. He keeps the two organisations, the DTP and PKK, in Diyarbakır under tight control. Diyarbakır is like a castle [for the Kurdish people]." Jala has said that people [such as Ahmet Turk] are treated like the voices of the Kurds. This is a good thing I think because before they always entered elections under the DTP and as such they didn't win seats in parliament. Their entering the elections as independent candidates is better because they can bring problems from the south-east to parliament."

Güneş has spoken of the PKK and Turkish state relations as the major obstacle to finding solutions to the Kurdish question. He has given much political agency to Abdullah Öcalan as the leader of the Kurdish movement saying, "The PKK has some five or six thousand guerrillas. A solution needs to be found for these people. Television channels and newspapers alone will not satisfy these people. They are warriors, they are in the mountains. How will they come down? Under what conditions and stipulations will they come down?" From here Güneş has said, "According to me, and I am really very sincere, Abdullah Öcalan stands in a very important place in terms of solving the Kurdish question. It seems as though the question may only be solved completely between the PKK and the state. They are the two sides. The DSP may be involved as it is the legal political movement [of the Kurds in Turkey at the moment]. … Kurds are walking for [Ocalan]. They call him '*serok*' which means 'president.' He is the leader of the Kurdish movement. This is a reality." Güneş has attempted to back his opinion further by adding, "the PKK's guerrillas didn't come from Europe, Germany or France. One is somebody's cousin and another is someone's younger brother, older brother, father or Uncle. They come

from Mardin, Urfa, Sirnak, Batman - these people aren't from outer space. They may be like me, study at uni and then become a guerrilla. Or perhaps they went from their village to the mountains. They come from here… So why is Öcalan important here? Because, the whole PKK respects him, and accept what he says…" Gunes has pointed to a major substate loyalty which frustrates the Turkish state – that of a constituency of voting Kurds to Abdullah Ocalan and Kurdish organisations and political claims in general. It is such antagonisms which may be seen to propagate the Kurdish question as members of ideologically extreme groups, both with constituencies that are politicized on the world stage, have traditionally refused to enter political discussion.

After having discussed the PKK-dimension of the Kurdish question Güneş has tried to revisit certain cultural aspects. He has noted, "Kurdish language is free now, Kurdish music is allowed to be played, there is the Kurdish television channel TRT6 – I think these are important. Perhaps if they increase such efforts the PKK will think, 'what is left to fight for?' Perhaps they will recognise that they served no function anymore and come down from the mountains of their own accord. Perhaps if everything was free and allowed we, the Kurds, would also say to the PKK, 'Why are we fighting?'" Güneş has added that democratic standards are poor especially for Kurds in Turkey and has said that "because of this there remains some sort of legitimacy behind the PKK, their movement remains legitimate."

Muhammed has discussed the Kurdish movement at length throughout his interview and has attributed this to his childhood in Diyarbakır where it was an integral part of every day life. Muhammed recalls actively trying to gauge an understanding of the events around him in 1991. His first point of reference were his family members which he recalls as all "needing" to support the Kurdish movement but harbouring very different ideas about how action should be affected. He has reflected, "In those days when the movement really started to gain power, things started to be prohibited [by the PKK]. They started to prohibit some peaceful actions. We were in a war, so [they thought] 'either you support us or, if you don't, it means you support the Turkish state.' They forced the people to choose a side. So, most of the people I

know were forced to support this movement without any choice. It was an obligation for them to join the party (HEP), the organisation of the Kurds…. It wasn't an absolute obligation, I must clarify that point. They said [to Kurds], 'we are your organisation. This state has prohibited your language, your cultural identities. You can not say 'I am a Kurd.' You can not pass your culture on to your sons and daughters because it is all illegal. You cannot name your children Kurdish names, there is no such language as Kurdish it is [seen as] just a sub-language of Turkish.' The movement started to say that, and this is also true for the Kurdish part of Iraq, Iran and Syria. They said, 'we are a poor nation so we have to act together in order to destroy the occupation.' They said 'we will fight in order to make this vision real.' At the beginning they said, 'we will set up a free and united Kurdistan.' [This Kurdistan] was to include the four parts of Kurdistan and they said that their aim was to force the Turkish army to retreat from the Turkish areas. They said 'after that we will decide how we want to live, whether we will be free or stay with the state.' But the first condition was to cause the Turkish forces to retreat. This was one of their aims at the beginning of their struggle. They said to the people, 'just support us' and very many people, many of the big Kurdish families started to support them. [These families] started to give money to [the movement] and they sent their children to the mountains to be part of the armed organisation. They set up an army in higher areas… ARGK (National Army of Kurdistan). They reached more than twenty thousand people. They really supported the struggle in all cities of Kurdistan. But in those days, around 1992, the organisations that the Kurds had developed said 'we have come to a step, we are powerful in the mountains.'" Muhammed's recollection points to the kindred nature of ethnicity and nationalism.as leaders of the Kurdish movement acted similarly to the leaders of Nation-states, attempting to convince a people that they are one and to be loyal to a certain ideology and leadership. Muhammed has said that following the hardline actions of the PKK "they [had] proved they were serious about it. People started to believe in them and started to support them." Muhammed has speculated on public opinion in Diyarbakır at the time saying, "People thought, 'there are mountains and there are some guerrillas, terrorists, whatever you want to call them it doesn't matter, there are some guys in the mountains and they have guns. When they face the soldiers they just kill each

other.' This is not the case. [The PKK] are well organised in all the cities [of Turkey]. For example, they set up big demonstrations in all the cities and the official workers started to support the Kurdish movement and they held strikes against the government. This is one of the most important events at the beginning of the nineties."

Muhammed has made a reference to the group Hizbullah which became active in the South East in the early nineties. He has said, "There was Hizbullah." He has gone on to comment that four or five years ago, (around 2005), "it became clear that [Hizbullah] was organised by the state. The police forces educated these guys, Hizbullah. [Members of Hizbullah] said to the public 'we want Kurdish rights, we give importance to Kurds but we also want to be religious people. They, [the PKK and HEP] will destroy anything about religion, they are socialists so join us and lets fight them." Muhammed has commented at this juncture, "I think this is one of the most important milestones in the Kurdish movement because many Kurds started to support Hizbullah and the power of the PKK was broken... [Before], people either supported the PKK or they were neutral." Muhammed has asserted that the situation changed because "After Hizbullah started to organise in the Kurdish region….When they started to organize the religious people in the Kurdish area, these religious people knew who is who so they started to kill the other. They start to kill and attack each other. Maybe the state doesn't know who the important people are, because as I said, there is a huge amount of supporters and Kurds know each other. So, this was a break in the development of the movement in the cities and they decided to stop organisation. They found it to be a very dangerous situation for themselves." Tracing his understanding of the development of Hizbullah further Muhammed has asserted, "After that, Hizbullah also started to attack the police … these organisations don't always go as planned… they started to act differently. And then they killed the governor of Diyarbakır . After that the state started to [conduct] operations against Hizbullah. They took many members of Hizbullah and now [that organisation] is not powerful amongst Kurds."

Dilhar who, like Muhammed, lived in the South East throughout the nineties has reflected on his time in Batman. He has pointed to the fact that there was no choice for the Kurdish citizens as to whom they wanted or didn't want to support. He has commented on certain transformations he felt at the time stating, "I viewed events differently. Kurdish ideas and opinions started to become more amplified. This is between 1996 and 1999 when events started to ripen. I wasn't very active, I have never been active but I did have a certain attitude [about it]." At this point Dilhar has taken a tangent to explain the political situation as he views it, "Here in Ankara you can see many fractions - from Marxists (*Marksist cepheler*) to *"yeni yolcular*" and from patriots ("*yurt severler*") to PKK supporters. But, in places like Diyarbakır and Batman you can't see such fractions. There was one group - there was nothing except patriots. Everyone was the same. As a result of this everything would turn over inside you. I think it was a disadvantage because there should be other groups, at least in order to discuss the current structure and to improve upon its weaknesses. But there was just one way of thinking." He has qualified what he means at this stage by saying, "Think as if there is just one party in a country. There is only one party for which people could vote for, no second alternative." Referring back to the situation in the South-East of Turkey at the time Dilhar has said, "As a result of [there being only one party], the party would not do anything in order to develop itself and acted as though it was enough for the people. And so people would only gather around one stance and that was, Kurdishness and struggle." Dilhar has spoken of his reaction to this situation saying, "I didn't involve myself in activities at school but for myself I questioned; 'what is Kurdishness?', 'What is happening here?' You are inside these events and so are face to face with it. You don't realise you are living in an abnormal environment. Such a structure has been created that you think, 'this is how it has to be'. However, you start to realise that there is in fact a problem and this is fact not the right way for it to be. 'What is this?' By observing how people live in other cultures and societies and by figuring out what minorities mean, one realises that that the existence of minorities are advantageous for countries."

Jala has argued in the same vain as Dilhar saying, saying, "Over there, it is not like here where there are more political options. Here I could have joined the DTP or

ODT, EMEP or others – DTP was one of a number of choices. In the east it works differently. The only alternative over there is the DTP. You are either a traitor or a patriot. People are left between these two options. It is not just people but it also affects villages and districts. People from these communities are forced to take one of these positions. There are Korucu villages, which are those villages that have accepted to work for the state… In fact it cannot be called "accepting", it more depends upon from whom you have seen less violence, or from which power you are less scared of, it is that one that you join. Because PKK kills *korucus*, but if people refuse to be *korucus* then the state kills them or they displace them from their villages. So, for these people the PKK are not good either it is forced upon them. It is far more mixed up over there." Jala has demonstrated that the Kurdish movement itself is far from unitary – an ideology is merely a guide, one which is never followed word for word by its adherents.

Muhammed has asserted that Kurds have started to question their own organisations and structures after the heightened conflict of the nineties. He has said, "Kurds have started to ask questions about their organisations, their legal party's policies. In many cases they think, 'we are Kurds, we have to take it… but ok, just show the way'… If I were a neutral person and I could just look at what was going on I could not talk about who is right because there are people just killing each other… Turkish and Kurdish nationalists attack each other in universities and cities and it has a really big potential to make it worse. Everything may blow up very suddenly - it may only be a matter of time. It won't be solved and it will definitely cause unsolvable problems – it will be a very big question." Muhammed has asserted that the Kurdish question must be discussed in an open forum with greater access to information. He has noted, "People must be provided with more information… without this, when talking about this issue people are not really talking." Muhammed has pointed to a certain democratic deficit in Turkey implicitly stating that acces to information and education is highly regulated by the state elites with un unacceptably low amount of civil oversight and involvement.

Ali has questioned the secularity of the Kurdish movement. He has contended that "Not even half of the Kurds would currently support the AKP, especially after cross-border operations [into Iraq in 2008]. The main reason why [some] do support it is that the AKP describes itself as a pro-religious party. The Kurdish party (DSP) refuses to do this, it is secular… but Kurds are not secular… this is the main reason why there is so little support behind the Kurdish party as well." Commenting on the secularity of the DSP Ali has said, "I don't know why they refuse to show [a religious side to themselves], to have an image which shows they are not against religion and that they support religious freedom. It is a fact that the majority of Kurds are religious and they are fastidious about their religious life. So there is a dilemma. People describe themselves as Kurds but they don't want to support a secular party … so that is why the religious-based parties usually gain support. They [gained support] in the past and they still get support from Kurds in Kurdish areas." Ali has made a personal observation saying, "I sense that people are moving away from practical issues to more theoretical issues. Instead of organising marches they have started giving Kurdish classes and having discussion groups."

6.5 Perspectives on Political Liberalisation and Democracy in Turkey

All of the respondents have asserted that there have been a number of changes in the domestic political environment in Turkey since the end of the nineteen nineties. In line with global trends towards greater political liberalisation and democratisation, an increasingly enlightened and educated nation, growing calls for the respect of human rights and socio-economic necessity, Turkey may be seen to be in a period of unprecedented democratic reform. Jala has said, "I think Turkey has been and continues to be on a path of greater liberalisation. Many things are more visible now. I am not completely sure but it seems to be going well. I think it is happening because they can plainly see that there are no other options. Many things, by nature of the day, are in conflict."

The respondents have asserted that political liberalization in Turkey has acted to open up new forums in which previously outlawed issues may be discussed. Ali has

commented on the changing nature of relations between the Turkish state and the country's religious communities. He has said, "Mainly religious communities have benefited [from this process] greatly lately - Islamists in general. Before the AKP, there were strict restriction in terms of [religious groups'] movement in society, especially in public places." All of the respondents view the Kurdish question and the socio-political state of Kurds in Turkey as representing a significant democratic deficit in the country. They all view democratisation and political liberalisation as a potential and appropriate path down which Kurdish issues may be addressed, a welcome alternative to the use of violence. Güneş has commented on rapid and vast change in the official line of the Turkish state towards Kurds and Kurdish issues stating, "Twenty years ago in this country there were no Kurds. But now the state, from its own budget, has opened TRT6, a Kurdish channel." Muhammed has pointed to the political strength of the Kurds in Turkey garnered through a relatively large population and strong organisational structures. He has said, "While [some five hundred thousand] people can come together [for Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır], there is no need to fight or go into the mountains. People generally know this, people want their human rights, they are holding protests, organising marches. There are different ways to solve this. Before there wasn't, and in places where there wasn't it may be understood why people thought differently and took up arms. But there are different paths open now." While each have quoted a number of steps taken by both state and government structures to address the Kurdish question, such as the opening of TRT 6, they claim it is still not enough and more must be done to tackle Kurdish issues directly with the input of Kurdish intellectuals and civil society leaders. They point to the education and legal systems as needing to be reformed and geared toward the existence of a more plural society. It is all of the respondents' contentions that the power to affect democratic change in Turkey lies in the hands of the state establishment. They all remain weary and uncertain whether the state is ready to truly liberalise and democratise, to ensure the rule of law, the separation of powers and to officially recognise the existence of other ethnic groups in the country. They have pointed to a number of tensions emanating from the state that remain an obstacle to greater political freedom in Turkey – notably, a paranoia regarding the state's territorial sovereignty. Ali has said, "Unless political rights are

granted or opportunities to get those rights are granted, I don't think a real dialogue can occur between Turkey's civil society and state." Each of the respondents is hopeful that further democratisation will bring about legislated solutions to a poor record of socio-political rights abuses in Turkey, especially against the Kurds. They encourage the EU accession process but do not see it as being more than a catalyst to change in Turkey, a change they believe must come from within Turkey's state and society. Dilhar has said, "If this country wants to break out of its own shell it must face up to its own realities and mistakes. Perhaps the EU has stood as an example and in turn provided the opportunity for Turkey to face up to its errors" The respondents have shown throughout that they are dissatisfied with the nationalist ideology of the elite in Turkey. They perceive Turkish nationalist ideology and practice as a particularist ideology rather than a universalistic, egalitarian one, where the mechanisms of exclusion and discrimination (along ethnic or other lines) are more obvious than the mechanisms of inclusion and formal justice. It is their contention that political liberalisation and democracy has the potential to bring political solutions to a number of unsatisfied constituencies in Turkey, although each is hesitant to embrace absolute optimism.

All of the respondents have asserted that the "Kurdish question" represents a significant democratic deficit in Turkey. Güneş has said, "At the moment, I think that the Kurdish question is really Turkey's biggest problem because it is not just about freedom of the Kurds or the Kurdish struggle. It is at the same time about democracy in Turkey, human rights issues and many other things happening in [the country]. For example it has to do with Turkey's leftist movement." He has pointed out that many issues in Turkish politics are inextricably linked. Muhammed has illustrated the democratic deficit when it comes to Turkey's Kurdish population by recalling an incident in Turkish parliament in the nineties. He has said, "In 1991 [the Kurds] set up a legal organisation and some of them were elected in the elections, they [were voted into] parliament." At this point Muhammed has said that those candidates elected into parliament wanted to take some of their parliamentary oath in the Kurdish language. The result of their doing this he has said was that "Leyla Zana and her friends were arrested. All they did was say, in Kurdish, we promise to uphold this

statement for the sake of Turks and Kurds. That's all they said in Kurdish. And they were arrested. The other people [in parliament] said, 'oh, how can you use Kurdish? There is no such language as Kurdish. Then the police came to the parliament (this is really ridiculous), and they took them. They [the Kurdish parliamentarians to be] were charged and put in prison. The EU said you cannot do that because they are the Kurdish leaders and you have to be more careful, think in a more democratic way because they have rights." Muhammed has juxtaposed this situation to an event in the Turkish parliament in early 2009 where Ahmet Türk spoke Kurdish. Muhammed has noted that his not being arrested is a positive sign. He has noted his concern however that the broadcast was abruptly stopped and the army later released a statement regarding this incident. It is Muhammed's contention that the army should not involve itself in politics in Turkey, implicitly pointing to the separation of state powers (executive, judicial and military) as integral to a functioning liberal democracy.

Ali has pointed to certain legislation in Turkey as representing a clear discrimination towards Kurds and as violating their envisioned socio-political rights and status as citizens. He views this deficit in legal rights as central to the current Kurdish question saying, "The main issue has not changed since the outset of this problem. It is not a specific topic or specific event. The Turkish state refuses to recognise constitutionally the existence of another ethnic group in Turkey. They are aware, they do recognise it in informal statements, but no party or political group in Turkey wants to recognise it… they don't want to put the word 'Kurd' on the constitution." He has gone on to say, "There is a growing informal recognition of Kurdish culture and language. [There have been] certain linguistic developments. Yet, certain issues still remain, like the PKK issue and Kurdish broadcasting. Private media are not allowed to broadcast in Kurdish, it is not allowed. There are problems [related to] political parties in that they are still forbidden from using non-Turkish languages in their propaganda. Also, election benchmarks are too high – It prevents Kurdish parties from gaining seats in the parliament. A political party must [receive] ten percent of national votes to gain the right to enter the parliament as a group. [People] may be elected as independent candidates. If they do that, [Kurds] may get more than

twenty or twenty-five seats. As a political party, say if the threshold was five or six percent [of the national vote] they could gain more than fifty seats." All of the respondents have effectively argued that the lack of formal recognition of the Kurds in Turkey is proof of an imperfect democracy.

All of the respondents view political liberalisation and democratisation in Turkey as positive for the Kurds and a potentially advantageous path down which non-violent solutions to the Kurdish question may be entertained. They all argue that the Kurds must be made to feel welcome in Turkey's state and society, officially recognised and in possession of all their socio-political freedoms. Güneş has said, "I think the solution to this question has more to do with greater democratisation. In line with greater democratisation human rights must be expanded. There is a need for a place where people can express themselves comfortably and safely. Every section [of society], every people should be able to express their own ideas on culture, politics and education… perhaps within this lies potential solutions to the Kurdish question." Muhammed has said that greater democratisation renders violent solutions to Kurdish demands null and void. He has said, "Why are they just using violence when there are so many different paths down which they may proceed, why are they only using violence?"

Ali has said that the state and military establishment no longer has a choice but to grant the Kurds their social and political rights. He has spoken of developments in Northern Iraq as aiding this process saying – "Turkey, especially the military, is afraid that Northern Iraq will be used as an example by Kurds in Turkey. When [the Kurds of Turkey] see their fellow Kurds in Iraq gain autonomy or semi-autonomy, they might demand the same thing in Turkey and demand that Turkey be divided into autonomous regions… like Turkey proper and a Kurdish autonomous region. They may demand this. So I think these are the reasons behind the launch of the Kurdish television channel and other Kurdish developments. I think [Kurds in turkey] are encouraged by Kurdish developments in Iraq. There is a growing interaction between the Kurds of Turkey and the Kurds of Iraq. [Kurds from Turkey] frequently visit northern Iraq, there are many Kurdish people of 'Turkey-origin' in Iraq,

studying and teaching in universities and schools. There are many Kurdish companies doing business with Iraqi Kurds. The Turkish government is scared [and is thinking] 'We have to gain back our own Kurds, the Kurds of Turkey, we have to give them some incentives, like Kurdish television. There are Kurdish literature departments to be opened in two universities. Also, the Prime Minister officially said 'I recognise Kurdish culture and language.' The government is giving Turkey's Kurds incentives to gain [them] back, to diminish admiration for the Kurds in Iraq."

Ali has spoken of certain liberalisation efforts which have contributed to appeasing Kurdish discontents. He has spoken of the current government as a key player saying, "A government with such a broad support base who have recognised the existence of the problem and said, 'we will not try to assimilate ethnic identities and language and we will try to take certain steps to improve it'… and they did. The state television company launched a Kurdish channel and the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with leaders of non-governmental organisations in Kurdish cities." Discussing why such developments have materialised Ali has said he believes, "The locomotive behind the government that supports developments in the Kurdish question are intellectuals. It is [intellectuals] who mainly support those developments. I believe that." He has said, "The Prime Minister and the President have some good advisors. I know one of them personally. They are 'pro-Kurdish' and they want this problem to be resolved through non-military means." Shedding further light on the political representation of Kurds in Turkey Ali has said that there are "only" twenty Kurdish Members of Parliament in the current Turkish parliament. He has added that he believes that "They [the Kurdish MPs] are not recognised, they are not taken seriously even by the Prime Minister. These MPs don't have a broad support base, even among Kurds because they describe themselves as secularists or leftists. They can't do much to improve the conditions of Kurds." Referring back to the ruling AKP, Ali has noted that "Once the AKP had taken certain steps towards resolving the Kurdish question, the opposition party (RPP, Republican Peoples Party) announced a package, in a Kurdish city, promising certain developments to resolve [the Kurdish question]. [Some of these promises] were the recognition of language and the abolition of the Village Guard system which is still active [in the

South East]. It was not much different from the package of the ruling party and it was a reaction to it." Ali has added to this saying, "very few Kurds really think the opposition party's political package) was sincere. It was just window dressing. Promises have been made"

Jala believes that liberalisation in Turkey is a positive development for its Kurdish population. She has drawn a comparison between Kurds and Alevis in Turkey saying, "I think the Alevis are a similar group to Kurds in Turkey. This was founded as a Sunni Muslim state and so Alevis were deprived of their rights. I am not sure if the struggles grow from one another but Alevis and Kurds do much work together. Sometimes Alevis show support to the CHP. After the Kurds have worked for their rights for so long, some Laz people have stood up and demanded the same treatment." Jala believes Kurds have set a certain precedent for other groupos in Turkey to demand their rights. She has noted some developments which could potentially take the cause further. Jala has added, "Well actually this is not really to do with Kurds it is more generally to dispel prejudices against other groups."

Dilhar is highly weary of the genuine intentions of the government and state in addressing the Kurdish question via outlets of liberalisation. He believes that the Kurdish question must be addressed with the input of Kurds themselves and cannot be solved as a side effect of more general democratisation measures. He has said, "From another perspective something needs to be done. They are taking some steps, and even if these steps are self-serving, they are also helping Kurds in a way. I think it is dangerous for the Kurds to accumulate [their rights] as a side product of another's advancement. It is more important for them to be granted their essential rights for their sake. There is a way of thinking which claims that TRT6 was able to broadcast thanks to the actions of the AKP. Something is being published in Kurdish and this is thanks to the AKP - this helps the AKP. It is also true that the lifting of restrictions on the Kurdish language has helped Kurds too. These types of successes, such as the opening of TRT6 – it served a purpose for both the AKP and the Kurds. But the AKP didn't do it for the Kurds, it did it for itself. I think such self-serving developments are dangerous. In the future, they will approach problem-solving from

a definite group of peoples' perspectives and this perspective will not represent the actual perspective of Kurds. One person's view may harm the Kurds. As such, applauding these events unconsciously and to applaud without assuring there is a firm basis [to these events] seems dangerous to me. It is really great that TRT6 was opened but it shouldn't be applauded so quickly. Certainly it is a big step but I think it is a problematic step."

Each of the respondents has agreed that Turkeys' EU accession negotiations have been an important catalyst to genuine democratisation and political liberalisation in Turkey. They have also all agreed that the move toward political liberalisation is not the direct result of AKP policy or EU oversight. They all believe that the Turkish state has no choice but to liberalise in line with global trends towards democratisation and calls from an evermore educated and "enlightened" society in Turkey. Güneş has said, "When the AKP came to political power they started, quite sincerely in my mind, efforts to join the EU… This is an important development that has brought changes not just in relation to the Kurdish question [specifically] but in the wider area of legal reforms, constitutional reform, issues regarding women, issues regarding the reform of state structures and they are addressing issues over Cyprus. In particular, the constitution has been improved as have laws emanating from parliament. There is no torture anymore. There used to be [torture] in police stations but not now. Some of my friends have been taken in for questioning and the police didn't beat them [as was practiced before]. [The police] generally don't practice violence and a lawyer is called and is present [at the questioning]. Before, if you were taken in [by the authorities] you may have been lost." Güneş has asserted that he sees this as "a definite gain" and has commented that "people increasingly speak of human rights."

Muhammed has commented on what he views is a positive role played by the EU in ushering the country towards greater democratisation. He has said, "Turkey's membership in the EU will definitely change many things, like the lifestyles of Kurds in the country. I am generally against the EU or other organisations that succeed in coming together as the capitalist countries. But, a positive side is that we

have to be more careful when we are defining people's rights in countries. Maybe the Netherlands is a capitalist country but they have all their rights. They can do anything in that country, this is an important point. When Turkey enters the EU, if they are successful… we will have personal rights, human rights… I hope Turkey will be a member of the European Union. When they are, [people] will start to learn to think in a different way – it will liberalise. Turkey should be more liberalised. It is a very important step for Turkey. I am not talking emotionally because people really should learn not to disrupt other peoples stuff and not disturb other people because of their appearance, because of their fashion choice, because of their way of thinking. People have to respect each other and they won't learn without external pressure."

Ali has argued that while the EU is an effective overseer for Turkey's democratisation process, it is not highly effective in stimulating true reform noting that accession negotiations are stuck on pertinent issues. He has said that the "Turkish political agenda has in recent years changed very much on paper." He has said, "The penal code was amended several times but the European Union still rejects and opposes it because nothing in fact has changed. The courts and the judiciary still interpret [the constitution] in the same way. Writers and journalists are still tried for offending 'Turkishness' under this article 301." Ali has commented that "In terms of the Kurdish question nothing has changed politically. All the amendments made to the constitution since 2004 are not directly related to the Kurdish question." Talking about Turkey's negotiation process with the EU Ali has said "Lately, it is stuck. Neither EU-related policies nor Kurdish related policies are going anywhere". Ali has said he thinks that Turkey is "kind of" liberalising. He has asserted that the "current government is affecting liberalisation in economy and politics but the judiciary and the military are opposing it." Ali has said that "If Turkey is granted membership it will benefit Kurds." He has added, "If I am not mistaken, all ethnic languages in Europe are given recognition and are respected by EU member states – for example, Spain recognises the Basque language." In this vein Ali has asserted that the "EU will make it a condition for Turkey to accept and grant formal recognition to the Kurdish language and it will put pressure on Turkey to improve conditions for Kurds. If Kurds fail to receive a fair trial in Turkish courts,

they will have a chance to apply to EU courts or parliament. Kurdish political parties will have formal representatives in the EU Council – that would be a big development." Ali has said that "Maybe [these issues] will not be resolved immediately and directly after Turkey is accepted in to the EU, but it may smooth the process [of addressing Kurdish discontents]. It is a hope but it will take a long time." At this point Ali has expressed his own cynicism alluding to EU's lack of apparent commitment and adding, stating that "The EU's inter-state interests rule more heavily than human rights, conflict resolution and human development interests. I believe if the EU is to make a choice between certain group interests and issues relating to the improvement of human rights… it will grant Turkey membership despite [the state's] real legal process towards the respect of human rights and the rule of law." He has mentioned however that despite this, "I still support membership, the advantages outweigh doubts and Turkey deserves it."

Jala has argued that the EU may act as effective oversight to political liberalisation in Turkey yet should not be relied upon totally to bring about change to minority groups in the country. She has said, "Both parties are involved in the process due to economic considerations. But who will profit off the situation more, I am not sure. Europe arranges the process so that it will profit off it. If there is any reason for the membership process to fail it is if Turkey does not present itself as a potential advantage [for the EU]. It will be advantageous for Turkey. In terms of Turkey's further democratisation, the EU seems to be a good influence. At the least the EU is acting like an observer, an overlooker. In the end Europe is like an imperial bloc with its own borders… because of this how much we should expect in terms of democracy [and democratic reforms] I really don't know. How much can they bring us is not clear. And so, things to do with Kurdish, like courses, I don't find them genuine because it is not something that has been affected from the bottom, it is happening from above. I am not sure about the whole EU situation. They need to look at economic circumstances." Despite this observation Jala has commented that, "It seems as though Turkey's accession to the EU will provide positive changes for the Kurds. The minority groups and ethnic groups in European countries, their rights are not totally met, they are not in a perfect condition. However, compared to Turkey

they are in a much better place. If these types of communities will stand in front of Turkey, then it is good for the Kurds." Some other developments she has observed in line with Turkey's EU-directed reform – "They have taken steps for the recognition of Kurds. They encourage the opening of Kurdish language, and the progress of democratization in the East of Turkey, funding [projects] in the East and things like this. There are cases being opened, for example for missing persons or unsolved murder cases – they have positions on these issues." She has gone on to say, "Most people in Turkey want to become a member of the European Union in order to be European and to live under better working conditions. There are people who are against joining the EU but I don't remember why. They criticise the EU for not being as much of a democratic place as it appears/is portrayed to be. They draw attention to the minorities in European countries."

Jala is pessimistic about Turkey's eventual membership in the EU. "I don't think the negotiations are a two-sided thing. Everything depends on Europe. The only one who has to change is Turkey, and even if they make all these changes, the final decision is still in the hands of the European Union. Turkey has no power, even if Turkey is not in Europe, they will go on."

Dilhar has commented that since Turkey started accession negotiations with the European Union, there have been many changes in the country. "According to me, these steps are very important. I live in this country. I am happy living in this country and I believe that however far democratization in Turkey may go, this is a good thing. The further ahead the democratization process is taken the better it is for the people in this country, the more pleasure they will get out of life." Dilhar has spoken hypothetically at this point, saying, "To be able to live in a place where there are no limits to thinking, no fear of being incarcerated for expressing opinions and a place where different identities are tolerated – I think these are important factors and I want to live in a country where the conditions are as such." He has added, "At the least, Turkey has entered onto a path of democratization in the past few years. There are definitely changes. We are not in a completely trouble free position as of yet. But this process should unfold step by step. The section of the population in Turkey who

think in this way is not small in fact. There should at least be open debate, this is important. The path Turkey has entered may provide hope for such people".

Dilhar is generally positive about Turkey's bid for accession into the European Union yet raises doubts over whether it is genuinely desired by both sides, especially Europe. He has said that Turkey's EU accession process "will act as a catalyst to Turkey's democratization process… I think that even if Turkey democratizes one centimetre, it will help the Kurdish question in metres." He has commented on the relationship between Turkey and the EU saying, "From what I know and what the average person knows is that there are a number of negative aspects from the perspective of the EU when it comes to Turkey's membership – some of these are border issues, religion and population. As concerns the accession process, Turkey seems to have slowed down, or at least it doesn't display the same enthusiasm as it did initially. There is a certain anxiety. I think this may be why the process has slowed at this point. There are anxieties over the positions of the EU and the EU is no longer that which it was imagined it to be. We cannot see a concrete strength anymore. The EU itself does not operate as a unified body. It is not presenting a very different alternative to the United States – It cannot form its own authority."

When speaking of whether Turkey's membership in the EU could potentially provide a solution to the Kurdish question Dilhar has said, "Not completely of course, but I think the question will be presented in a different light. The Kurdish struggle goes on in Europe too. There are many points which the Kurds cannot voice in Turkey, but are able to in Europe. There are many parliamentarians in Europe, many political structures, and they have a lot of knowledge about the Kurdish question. Because of this, the EU is watching developments concerning the Kurds in Turkey. And because the Kurds that live in Europe can express their opinions, in some way they are also able to provide feedback on what is happening regarding the Kurdish question. Such a phenomenon will contribute to the Kurdish question." Reflecting more generally on the accession process and Turkey's potential membership Dilhar has said, "From what I have observed it will be very difficult to change the stance of countries such as France who are against Turkey's joining the EU, especially given that Sarkozy is

president. The stance Turkey assumes throughout the accession process is more important than if it becomes a member or not. If Turkey [assumes a good stance], if it comes to such a point, its entry into the EU is not important."

Each of the respondents has agreed that the State-Bureaucracy-Military powerhouse remains that most relevant actor in Turkish politics and policy-making. They do not give great agency to the Government and its executive power yet they do believe that the present government represents a challenge to the legitimacy of the State establishment's legislature, structure and relatively authoritarian nature. Güneş has highlighted this idea in his discussion of developments leading up to the March local elections in 2009. He has said of the Prime Minister of Turkey, "Erdoğan is not just thinking about the Kurds, he is also thinking of leftists… for example Nazim Hikmet and Ahmet Kaya's bodies will be brought back to Turkey. Indeed, Turkey just before an election is the most democratic looking place. Politics is very pragmatic. The AKP is a very pragmatic party, it is very elastic." Güneş has further qualified his statements by saying, "I don't believe that the government has no role [to play] but in Turkey, the army, media and bureaucracy maintain a very important place in the running of the country's affairs. It is very difficult for any government to play a particularly crucial role. It is important but it is always under the watchful eye of other sections [of state and society]." Dilhar has commented in much the same vain and pointed to a "deep state structure" and the military as being particularly important decision makers in Turkey. He has said, "I don't believe the government. Even if the government of this country actually wants to address and solve the Kurdish question, the institutional framework of Turkey won't allow any government much possibility. I want to say that this country is not just run by the government, there are other administrating powers. The military structure is one. The deep state structure is another. Any solution which does not include their involvement will be a sell-out. He has said, "A solution to the Kurdish question, according to some ways of thinking, requires the removal of certain conditions. If you look at the army's budget you will be able to see very clearly what I mean. There are exceptional amounts of money involved in this issue. This creates a situation of annuity costs. Other countries use the Kurdish problem against Turkey. And Turkey uses it against

others. There is a reciprocal fight going on in this issue. In terms of this, any solution to the Kurdish question is very troubled."

Having established their view that the State and its related institutions stand as the ultimate decision makers in Turkey's political arena, each has claimed that as such, the state represents the main hindrance to the advancement of democratic reforms. They have argued that the state is comfortable with the status quo yet is feeling pressures and has no choice but to allow political liberalisation to continue. They have all pointed to instances where the state continues to flex relatively undemocratic muscles to ensure it retains its power. Güneş has illustrated dual developments both towards and away from political liberalisation. He has spoken of the murder of Hrant Dink, a Turkish citizen of Armenian descent and a vocal social commentator and journalist as move away from the establishment of a liberal and plural polity. He has said, "These events are developing at the same time. On one side you have big movements towards democratisation and then you look and in Manisa they are beating Kurdish workers…it is precisely these issues that must not be overlooked or disregarded. With or without pressure from the EU, such angles must be looked from."

Ali has said in his discussion of the current government's ability to affect democratic reform that the real decisions lie with the military, especially when it comes to the Kurdish question and the Kurdish South East. He has said that "[the government and advisors] carefully try to avoid any confrontation with the military when it comes to security issues." Qualifying what he means by this comment Ali has said, "About one year ago [the Military] declared a certain special state of emergency in certain cities in the Kurdish area. The government didn't oppose or question it. It approved the resolution that provided the military with permission to go ahead with operations. Although the government believes the problem could be solved through non-military means it still allows such [military measures]. It avoids confrontation with the military to consolidate its own power." Ali has speculated on the motives of the ruling party in approving military operations in the South East further saying that perhaps the government thinks "if we, [the government], diminish the influence of

the military, we may resolve this question easily." Ali has said that the government "avoids taking big, serious steps to gain Kurdish support. I mean a big step would be to make Kurdish language classes an elective in public schools… that would be a huge development, and it would be very helpful to gain the support of Kurds, but they can't [take such a step]." He has gone on to justify his comments saying that, "education is like a red line for the military. Many confrontations between the government and the military were caused by developments in education, especially religious high schools. Maybe the government are trying to avoid confrontation until they consolidate their power and wait until then before they take any serious steps."

When speaking of the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) role in addressing the Kurdish Question, Jala has also made it clear that she believes power is vested in the state structure and especially the military. She has said, "I don't see the AKP as being a free and independent thing. For me, whoever is in government, whoever is at the head of the state, they will only be so for a temporary amount of time. Perhaps I am underestimating [the role of the government] too much but I think it doesn't have a real impact. At the moment AKP is on the hill. The European Union wanted it like that. Maybe they gained permission from the EU who thought they were capable of getting things done. But I really don't think they are more progressive or ahead of any other parties. Then again, maybe if the CHP were in power they wouldn't have done [what the AKP has done]. But I don't think the AKP has real initiative.

Regarding a solution to Kurdish issues Dilhar has not observed any solid steps being taken by the State. He has said, "I have seen steps being taken towards a non-solution and steps which inflame the situation. They act to blow up the comfortable/entrenched stance that supports a non-solution [to the Kurdish question] and to drive the situation into a dead end." Dilhar has said that it is well-known that the Turkish state is hesitant to address Kurdish issues. He believes this is because of the dominant idea that the unity of the Turkish state will be compromised [if Kurdish issues are addressed]. He has added at this point, "What is more painful than this is the state's distrust of elements which make up its own society. If the state can make

peace with the country it formed itself and with the minorities it formed itself and with elements who work for this country too, then they will feel that troubles like this wouldn't have happened. But because the state doesn't trust [the people], they pursue a line of thought which states that 'those rights which you grant today will become a headache for you in future days' and as such distance themselves [from granting more rights]."

All of the respondents have agreed that there must be legal and education reforms in Turkey as well as the genuine development of civil society actors, that sector that sits between the private and the public sectors and is generally seen as a hallmark of multi-party democracies. The respondents have all expressed discontent over Turkey's education system – having argued that it must be geared towards the socio-political plurality that is a reality in Turkey. Constitutional and other legal reforms may also be seen as integral to democratization in Turkey and particularly pertinent to appeasing Kurdish demands.

Each of the respondents has pointed to the state education system in Turkey as being in need of further liberalisation. They argue that education should be expanded to account for cultural and linguistic plurality in Turkey. They believe that democratisation of education is a means by which Kurds may feel a part of the country, some speculating that it would move extreme elements of the Kurdish movement away from separatism (an ideal which they argue is held by a minority of Kurds). Ali has said, **"**We [Turkey] have a Kurdish population of what some say is about twenty million, some say over twenty. They should not be alienated from the state and government but the opportunity to study their culture, their language is not there." Jala has also commented on democratic deficits in Turkey's education system saying, "There are many people who want to learn Kurdish. It is also very important politically that Kurds feel that they exist." Muhammed has commented on the state of education in Turkey saying that it must be improved, "People are very poor in Turkey, I am talking at the economic level, but also poor in mind, because they don't… let me tell you something, there was a survey about the Turks and seventy percent of Turks do not read… if they don't read, they can not understand life. In

books you face different types of life, different ways of loving and so you start to think about it. The main difference is you will be more educated, you will be more conscious, you will feel more sensitive to others." Implicit in all of the respondents' contentions that the education system must be democratised is the idea that state institutions work in a close dialectic with intellectuals (educated portion of a society) – a theoretical assertion which is alluded to frequently by Pierre Bourdieu in his works on political modes functioning.

Ali has been the most vocal in his contentions with the Constitution of Turkey and the obstacle it currently represents to genuinely addressing the Kurdish question. He has said, "The way the judiciary interpret the constitution is a big problem. It is brought up by EU officials too." Ali has provided an example stating, "[The government] made an amendment to the constitution that allowed the wearing of headscarves in universities. However, the Constitutional Court rejected it… although there is nothing in the Constitution that forbids it. There is no law that forbids religious freedom in universities. But the way the courts interpret [the constitution] is a problem." He has gone on to say **"**… What is written in the constitution is that everyone living in Turkey is a Turk. Kurds interpret this article as [having an] ethnic [meaning]. They interpret [this part of the constitution] not in the sense of citizenship but in the sense of ethnicity." He has justified his argument by saying, "The positions and the rulings of the courts have proved that [the constitution] is interpreted by Turkish agencies, government agencies, in the sense of ethnicity. They refused to recognise both officially and unofficially until the mid-1990s that there are other ethnic groups [in Turkey]… Any expression of the Kurdish language was banned and those who tried to speak in Kurdish at schools were questioned, taken to the courts." Ali has said he believes "the reason why people refuse to recognise [Kurds] is not secret… it is written in the constitution."

Dilhar believes that socio-political rights must be granted to the Kurds of Turkey through legislation so as to ensure that they are upheld. He has said, "There is not enough being done in Turkey to address the Kurdish question. He has qualified his opinion by saying, "In the end, broadcasting a Kurdish television channel and

allowing Kurdish to be spoken, these are not comprehensive solutions. Kurds want such things to be secured through legislation - those possibilities given by the power-that-be today may be revoked by the next in office. In the end, Kurds that live in Turkey, they are also citizens of this country and the majority have found happiness living here and are not trying to leave this country. There are certainly some people who want to struggle to get away from Turkey, to live in another country. But, Kurds that live in Turkey want to see steps taken that will produce results. They are saying that the current state of affairs is not enough. A number of funny events are happening like people being arrested for speaking Kurdish."

Ali has touched upon another legal issue undermining democratization processes in Turkey – the need to legislate in line with Human Rights Conventions to which Turkey is a signatory. Ali has said that, "the universal Human Rights Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights are efficient and sufficient but the problem [of implementation] lies with respective states. Turkey has signed and approved [these conventions and treaties] yet it is the country with the most cases at the EUCtHR… [There is] no problem with the conventions but there is a problem with the legal systems of individual countries." Ali has clarified his point by saying, "The Swedish constitution is written in line with the [human rights] convention. Turkey's is not. Turkey has not amended its constitution in a way that places it in line with the convention – indeed they are in conflict. That is why so many cases against Turkey."

Each of the respondents believes that greater NGO activity is a gauge of democratisation in Turkey. Each has asserted that NGOs are not allowed to operate truly independent of the state however and that further development of civil society in Turkey is a must. All of the respondents have noted the work of IHADE as being particularly relevant in Turkey. Dilhar has accounted for much of the liberalisation in Turkey as being due to NGO work, which has both encouraged and been encouraged by greater education in Turkey. He has said, "Aside from the EU, the most important factor and perhaps even more important than the EU, is this - The society has become enlightened, even if only slightly, and in order to affect change

they are trying to break out of their shell. The formation and organisation of such structures (that bring about change) here in Turkey is a necessity as they play a role that is just as important as that played by the EU. The most important is the role played by intellectuals."

Güneş has discussed briefly some aspects of Non-Governmental Organisations' (NGO) presence and work in Turkey saying that they must be allowed greater independence by an over-meddling state. He has said that, "In the past ten years especially, NGOs have been more active… Inside the Kurdish movement there are many NGOs that are providing many important services. They are in Diyarbakır, the Van Women's Association, cultural and political associations, Youth Centres and Theatre centres. They exist especially in Diyarbakır." He has furthered the discussion by commenting on relations between NGOs and the Turkish state saying, "The state acts as though it is against NGOs. The relationship between state and NGOs in Turkey is like that of jealous lovers. The State seems to always think NGOs will do something bad, may deceive it or act like an enemy. As a result of this the state, in some way or another, attempts to control NGO activities." Güneş has qualified his observation saying, "the police [have been known to] come and raid The Human Rights Association *(IHADE)* as though it is against the state. These people are working on Human Rights. They are struggling for Turkey's democratisation… Akin Birdal [the former head of IHADE] was shot. This is the head of an NGO and he was shot. It happened in the nineties some time. The perpetrators came into the Association's building and shot him while he was in his office. They walked out and were never caught… that is yet another issue. The point is that the Turkish state always, when it comes to democratisation and solving such issues, it always doubts those NGOs that want to do something. It is scared of them. I don't see certain other groups as really being NGOs. For example, Ataturk dusunce dernegi, Gaziler Dernegi, Sehit Ailelerinin Kurma Dernegi…retired generals head them."

Muhammed has commented on Non-Governmental Organisations in Turkey – "There are many NGOs in the south east. For example, The Human Rights Association is one of the biggest and most effective NGOs in Turkey. They say that the army has committed many crimes in the Kurdish area and they always prepare

reports and annuals. They try to solve this problem in a democratic way but the government and the other parties believe that this organisation helps the Kurdish rebels. So the government and state treat them in a way which says, 'We respect you because we also want to develop human rights. But, you are such a core organisation that if you don't put space between you and terrorist organisations we won't view you as an acceptable organisation. There are also other organizations that are closer to the Turkish Republic. They are actually local business men that have organisations of their own. Some of them support the Kurds and some not. I mean if you are in Diyarbakır and you want to do something and you want to earn money, you have to take the permission of both the army and the Kurds' organisations. One can burn your factory [if you fail to do so]." Muhammed believes that NGOs in Turkey are becoming more efficient and that there are people trying to drive these organisations into a more democratic space. He has explained, "The PKK attacked an army vehicle a year ago but in the attack many innocent people died. These organisations also blame the PKK for the attack and hold them responsible for it. According to the UN, if you just attack soldiers you are not terrorists. You may say 'they occupy our country or they commit crimes against humanity, in this case you have the right to protect yourself with guns… this is a rule of the UN. So, these organisations are saying to the PKK, 'if you start to attack innocent people we will also call you terrorists.' Usually they don't call them 'terrorists'. Instead they say 'Kurdish rebellion' or the 'Kurdish organisation'. They prefer not to use words like terrorist but after such attacks they warned the PKK what would happen if such events continued."

Ali has broached the topic of NGOs in Turkey and especially NGOs working in the Kurdish regions. He has mentioned IHADE claiming that it is "the major NGO working to improve Human Rights in the Kurdish region. They have taken scores of cases to EUCtHR." He has also mentioned the Turkish Human Rights Foundation and the Britain-based Kurdish Human Rights Project. He has said that these organisations are most founded and managed by Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals and are generally supported by the EU. Commenting on the work these NGOs do Ali has said, "They are not effective. Not because they don't work hard but because of

state restrictions on their function. Officials [working at these NGOs are] usually subjected to trial, suspension or detention. For example, the head of most significant human rights association (IHADE) survived an attempted assassination. Now [he is] a member of the Kurdish Party (DTP) and [has a seat in] the Turkish Parliament." Ali has gone on to say, "If state restrictions [on NGOs are] removed then they could be efficient." Ali has emphasised his point adding that, "[NGOs] are the only medium through which those faced with discrimination can take their case to EU

Dilhar has spoken at this point about the role played by non-governmental organisations in Turkey. He has said, "NGO's have in a way illuminated a lot of issues for people in Turkey and so they have provided many advantages. They have organised the people. If I shout alone, my voice will not be heard. But when I see other people who have lived through similar troubles, things can change. A person who has had troubles and experienced bad events in life will usually believe he or she is alone and keep their issues closed up inside. So when it comes to NGOs, especially IHADE (Insan Haklar Dernegi, Human Rights Association) and other similar institutions such as women's associations, they teach people that their life experiences are not peculiar to only themselves and that they must call for their rights. For example, to make a woman who has experienced rape aware that she is not alone and that other people have suffered the same thing and that this is a problem. It is the same for a woman who has seen domestic violence, a Kurd whose home was demolished, or a person who has been tortured. NGOs have let people know that they must call for their rights to be respected. They have been the vanguard of such a trend in Turkey. In this way NGOs have a very important role to play. I am not implying that NGOs don't have their own flaws. In their own structure they secure a position of advantage for themselves." At this point Dilhar has said that trade unions are more passive than they should be in Turkey. He has added, "We must and NGOs must become more active. There are NGOs in the South East but not enough. Perhaps they are limited by the conditions under which they operate." Dilhar has qualified what he means by commenting, "We can't just blame the NGOs [for being inactive] because they also have problems, especially those in the South East. For example, IHADE can be raided once a week by the police. Akin Birdal, a

member of parliament from the DTP and the old mayor of Diyarbakır , was the head of IHADE. About eight years ago he was shot in a police raid of the association. He came back from his death. These days, things have changed and it is not like it used to be. However, IHADE and Kurdish NGOs still harbour anxieties about such occurrences."

6.6 Perspectives on the Future of the Kurdish question in Turkey

All of the respondents have expressed conflicting emotions when speculating about the future directives of the Kurdish question in Turkey; they are encouraged by recent moves towards greater political liberalisation in the country yet hesitant to believe that developments will unfold in an ideal manner. Uncertainty and an entrenched pessimism surround their outlook for the future of the Kurdish question although each of the respondents' hopes for non-violent solutions and a continued move towards democracy in Turkey. The respondents may be seen to be confounded by the complexity of the issues that make up the Kurdish question and thus reticent to believe in silver-bullet solutions to such a historically entrenched state of affairs. This is especially true given the ideological and legal taboos that continue to surround the Kurdish question and prevent it from being discussed in a genuinely open forum in Turkey at both state and society levels. The respondents' have in general given great agency to the Turkish state in steering the future course of the Kurdish question. Some respondents' have also said there must be greater introspection on behalf of the Kurdish movement and the Kurds themselves in order to secure a peaceful future for the Kurdish question and the granting of more social and political rights to Kurds in Turkey. These sentiments are clouded by a fear that violence may flare up yet again between Kurdish organisations and the Turkish military.

The respondents have all commented on rapid and vast changes in the official line of the Turkish state on Kurds and Kurdish issues (proving that the dominant state-propogated identity of the Turkish nation is far from straightforward and concrete, but is ever-changing so as to compete legitimatedly in ever-evolving power

constellations both domestically, regionally and internationally). Güneş has said, "Twenty years ago in this country there were no Kurds. But now the state, from its own budget, has opened TRT6, a Kurdish channel. He has gone on to say, "Overall, the developments of the past few years are positive for the Kurds. These aren't easy issues to address, a lot of pain has been caused, much blood has spilt and many people have died. But in the last few years, issues relating to the Kurdish question have become open [to discussion and change] and I find this very important and positive… When it comes to [the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey], I am very confused. There are very good things happening, and then a moment later Hrant Dink is killed. EU accession is opening up a lot of important issues, TRT6 has started broadcasting and it is all going really well. Despite this, nothing is sure. Maybe in three months the Mayor of Diyarbakır, Osman Baydemir will lose integral support. Turkey is not very stable. It is unknown [what will happen]. The government can make important moves, but, nationalist fascists may lynch these measures. Because there is a very fixed and mass nationalism, mechanisms of political control can not absolutely assure control. The state may make a decision and then after that, their decision will stay. There are a number of other formations, there are other people involved such as the bureaucracy." He has reiterated his own uncertainty and some personal hope for the political future of the Kurdish question by saying, "I am not sure what will happen but the state and the government have to take steps forward regarding the Kurdish question. They have to because it cannot continue like this. In 2000, after Öcalan had been captured, according to newspapers and television reports the PKK was finished. They didn't give more rights to Kurds and they didn't open up dialogue on relevant issues. And what happened? It started again. It will not and cannot finish in that way." He has gone on to say that "The world system has no room for such state outfits. For example the Military has lost credibility… it failed to resolve the Kurdish question and conflict in the South East. In light of Turkey's frightening history, the military's silence over TRT6 is highly relevant. It shows the system is blocked." In the end Güneş has said, "I look at [the progress made in addressing Kurdish issues] positively, I really want to. It is frightening and mixed so I really don't know." Gunes has highlighted his clear mistrust of the power structures in Turkey, both Kurdish and Turkish. He has

asserted his belief that ultimate decision-making power in Turkey lies in the hands of the state.

Muhammed has commented on the role played by the current government in addressing the Kurdish question. He has stated, "The current government has a religious character. They have Recep Tayyip. They have many Kurds in their party, and the Kurds in their organisation are forcing them to solve this problem. They are trying to win the local seat in Diyarbakır but people support the DSP. The Kurds in the AKP have been forcing the governing party to solve the Kurdish problem because otherwise they know they will not be supported by the Kurds. The most important problem for the Kurds is to be recognised or to be identified as a Kurd. "You are Kurd" and then we can solve other problems. Some things have started to change such as the new television channel, TRT 6. This is a state television channel and sometimes it includes Turkish propaganda in its programming. I sometimes watch it but I don't like it very much. I am trying to understand what the policy behind it is. It is a very big step because just five or six years ago you could not say that there are Kurds, it was a crime… but now they have a channel and it is a really big step. I think they are trying to change some things but they are not so honest. Also, they don't have such power [to affect change]." Muhammed has at this juncture stated that the Military in Turkey plays a significant role in politics stating, "Even Recep Tayyip Erdogan or the current government, they may try to solve this problem but they cannot. Who can? - This is a very important question. Who can? The Army can. In Turkey the rules are decided, not in parliament - that is just a democracy game… the actual rules [are made by the Military]."

Discussing the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey as he views it, Muhammed has said, "There have been many mistakes made, also by Kurds and Kurdish organisations. They are really serious about continuing this ridiculous situation for thirty years more. They can do it because they have power, they have guns and people support them. Also some of them are very rich. Some Kurdish businessmen who support the Kurdish movement are very rich. They are protected by this movement. There are really very dark sides of this movement and all people know

and realise that even the Kurdish movement isn't as pure as when they started to 'change the world'. I think both sides have to decide what they want. In the near future they will come to a point where they will have to decide and actually, the decision will be taken by the Turkish state. If they really want to solve this problem then they can. But as I said, both TUSIAT and the army must help the government… the government cannot solve this by itself. When it comes to the Kurdish side, if the Turkish state takes some big steps, if they say 'we want to solve this problem and we know you are Kurds and you have constitutional rights now'. If they write in the constitution, 'in addition to Turks, Kurds also live in Turkey' and if they allow education in Kurdish, which is very important, the situation will look up. In order to communicate to each other you will also have to learn Turkish in addition to Kurdish for the official language of your country. If they recognize Kurdish political parties it may be helpful. If the state says, "we want to discuss and make an agreement with your organisation… with the legal party". If these steps are taken by the Turkish side, I think it will be solved easily. After that point the Kurdish rebellion won't have any right to say anything because it will really divide the Kurds. The Kurdish legal party can't put pressure on the rebels, "just drop the guns" and call a ceasefire. 1 or 2 years ago, I am not sure of the date, the Kurdish legal party made a statement about reaching a ceasefire. They said, the first step is for the Turkish army to stop its operations and the rebellion and the rebellion has to move from Turkey to the Iraq side… no armed guerrillas inside Turkey's borders. Then the Turkish government is to forgive the rebels, allow them to come to Turkey and are to be given their rights. We will retreat and the region is to be looked after by the UN and the UN or the EU will be an observer and it will take all the guns from the Kurdish rebellion. For the other stuff, negotiations may start. This is the program of the Kurdish party but the Turkish state says that if there are armed people in the Turkish mountains, we cannot stop defence operations. And Turkish intellectuals wrote a declaration, a program similar to the Kurds. Either it will follow such a program or [conflict and the Kurdish question] will continue." Muhammed has called for political solutions to the Kurdish question and an end to violence.

Broaching the topic of what the future of the Kurdish Question in Turkey will be Ali has commented, "I can only speculate. Turkey and the EU accession process – if it results in membership there will be an improvement in the Kurdish question and the hope for a resolution to the Kurdish question will be high." Ali has added that there must be a "reduction in support for [the use of] military means [in the south east]. But if Turkey fails to settle the problem at this stage [armoured conflict] will flare up again. There is a chance. The future of the conflict to a great extent depends on the Turkish state because Kurdish groups cannot and do not have enough support to resolve the question, they can't do it. If Turkey takes serious steps they can [resolve it]. And I believe that Kurdish groups are ready." He has elaborated further stating that, "Separatism remains an ideal but for the time being most Kurds prefer to stay in the boundaries of Turkey. But [in doing so] they demand respect and recognition of ethnicity, like in Canada. If Turkey fails to grant those rights… the ideal of independence may potentially become a real goal."

Jala has commented on what she believes the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey may be: "I think that the situation of the Kurds is improving over time. I think things will be better. However, just the other day, fifteen Kurds from this university were taken in for questioning. It seems that if the state does everything it can [the situation] will continue to improve. But I think the state has been forced to undergo this process. Maybe Turkey is really coming from behind in terms of democratisation but it has no other choice but to become more democratic. People will not accept anything else from now, everyone (well, most) are directed towards Europe, at the least University students are involved in this network. From now on Turkey has to provide shelter for identities. Among these identities are ethnic identities. But I think this has occurred in the past years and quite quickly. Maybe if we had had this conversation two years ago I would have had a lot less hope. I think the process has accelerated because [the state] are more relaxed. When the word "Kurd" is said, they are not scared. There is no anxiety over whether saying the word Kurd is a bad thing. I don't think it is a plural society yet but they are obliged to go in this direction."

When commenting upon what he believes is the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey, Dilhar has said that in order to find a solution to the Kurdish question Kurds must change their own positions and attitudes in some way. “The opinions and ideas of Kurds must be developed from the bottom, given a sound foundation. There have been a number of operations that I see as being deficits in the Kurdish struggle or that I think have been approached incorrectly. I don’t like how Kurds are obedient without examining and questioning. [For all Kurds to vote for] every candidate of the DSP, whether they are candidates for mayoral positions or Parliamentary officers, is not very logical. These people should have their own agenda. The Kurds are an oppressed people. And an oppressed people cannot oppress another people or structure. The oppressed cannot oppress, they should not oppress [others]. Kurds must realize this and they must ornament themselves accordingly. The Kurds cannot afford to lose even one person. I don’t draw a line between Turks and Kurds. All Kurds should be able to explain themselves to everyone. They should even start to communicate with those Turks in this country that see Kurds as terrorists. They need to find a space in which they are able to express themselves. The Kurds haven’t had their own place or homeland for centuries and they haven’t been connected to any concrete state structure. They are living in the shadow of a number of states. They are living their lives in Iran, Iraq and Turkey. This situation is an obstacle for [Kurds] to really live as themselves. If Kurds grow and improve themselves in this way the problem will be solved naturally. A solution to the Kurdish question cannot be found without the involvement of Kurds. This question cannot be solved from the outside. The Kurdish question is not an economic problem. It is a political and social problem. The solutions they have produced so far have focused on economic issues. It is only recently that people are starting to realise that there are social points to be addressed. [People in this country] need to rise and create a more concrete organisational structure.”

Reflecting further on what he believes the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey entails Dilhar has said, “Today I can see a track towards a resolution to Kurdish issues and the spark of its future realisation. But this will take time because Kurds are newly educated and becoming a mass. My mother is illiterate, but my daughter

will not be the same. Those generations after me or after my mum will be different generations. But there is a lost generation in the middle. Those people whose homes were demolished in the 1990s, those that have fallen into life on the street, purse-snatchers and garbage collectors – they are the product of these times. You drove them from their village and they had to survive in some way. You force them to live in cities and so the result was going to be like this. There is a generation like this. A generation like [the one I represent] came out of these events also. But there is still this other generation of garbage collectors. These people, in some way, will demand an account of these events from somebody, from their country and they will ask me to account for it also. These people are growing. The little Kurdish girl in the street selling tissues will grow up. Be sure, the kind of life that is waiting for that girl worries me. In the end she could have had the same opportunities as [me] but it didn't happen. This is the two groups of Kurds. There are those that sell tissues and those like me and my friends who are in the position we are. I am troubled by how they will unite these two groups. I don't want to speak here of those factors not related to Kurds." Dilhar has made some pertinent observations here. Firstly he has clearly demonstrated the hierarchical nature of ethnic relations in Turkey pointing to those Kurds who have been majorly disadvantaged especially in the wake of conflict in the south-east in the nineties. He has considered himself lucky and projected that the democratisation of education will change the lot of Kurds in Turkey but that it will take time. He has also pointed to a cleavage amongst Kurds themselves as some have secured lives of well-being in the country while others have been left with little to nothing.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The Kurdish question in Turkey may be seen to encompass a broad range of issues for this sample group of Kurdish, post-graduate university students. In addressing the research question "How have individual experiences shaped the participants' political identities?" a brief look at each of the respondents social pasts has been looked at. It may be concluded, in line with Bourdieu's political-functionalist theoretical approach to socio-political analysis, that for this sample group of Kurds in Turkey their political identity is strongly linked to, indeed inseparable from, their ethnic identity. Having addressed the research questions, "How is Turkey's Kurdish question perceived and defined by Kurdish, post-graduate university students?" and "What are the relevant macro-level factors informing their political identities and their perceptions of the 'Kurdish question'?" three major findings are clear. Firstly, in line with the mutually effective nature of theories of nationalism and ethnicity, it may be concluded that Kurdish ethnicity as an organising principle for collective action, has developed and is maintained in dialectic with a particularistic Turkish nationalism. Secondly, according to this sample group and reflective of the theoretically established institutional and symbolic power of modern nation-state amalgams, the State of Turkey stands as the ultimate decision-maker in the country. As such, each of the respondents views the state and its related institutions as accountable (though not solely as all the respondents have also given significant agency to the Kurdish movement.) for the rise and propagation of the Kurdish question in Turkey and believe that it is this structure that has the executive and

political power to affect or allow for positive change in the situation. Thirdly, it may be seen from the respondents' personal political contentions as well as their commentary on macro-level factors related to the Kurdish question, that contemporary politics operates largely to justify an official and particular historical narrative in Turkey, typified by Kemalist nationalism. While this is true for domestic politics in general in Turkey, it seems to have particular political weight in regard to the Kurdish question and the demands of Kurds to be listened to and taken up in a peaceful and democratic forum.

The Kurdish identity in Turkey is highly politicised. Burke's theoretical assertion that identities and social structure are two sides of the same coin, "identities are tied to positions in the social structure; these positions are in turn defined by our culture," is clearly demonstrated by this sample group. Each of the respondents throughout their lives have developed their political identities through social interaction which has led to awareness of categories that are perceived according to the dimensions of meaning that have been made available in the surrounding culture in Turkey; meanings of the roles, positions and groups that exist within society in the country. In this case each respondent has said that they felt as though they were born into an essentially Kurdish identity which throughout their lives came to take on political relevance. As the respondents came into contact with non-Kurd citizens in Turkey and were exposed to the political struggles of the Kurdish movement as well as the State institutions of Turkey, each has come to attribute a large part of their political identity to the fact of being Kurdish (though this is not the only factor informing their political identity). This may be seen through a number of discontents expressed by the respondents. For example, each of the respondents has mentioned a certain social-political stigma attached to the Kurdish identity in state and society in Turkey. Jala has demonstrated this by recalling memories from her primary school where she felt 'oppressed' and out of place. Adnan has clearly shown that he feels a certain discrimination against Kurds; he actively avoids discussion of Kurdish issues with anybody (after experiences which have left him believing that real discussion was a near impossibility in Turkey), most pertinently his own current flatmate who he says would not empathise with him if they were to discuss Kurdish issues and would

leave him feeling alienated. Muhammed has said he faced an ingrained negative attitude towards Kurds from a university professor under whom he studied an internship; the professor could not believe he was Kurdish given that he was well-educated and intelligent. Each of the respondents has also expressed mistrust in the mechanisms of state based largely on their experiences as Kurds. They all tend to interpret state policy and practice in ethnic terms, suggesting that their own political contentions are framed in much the same manner. Güneş's experience of the Ülkü Ocağı's in the nineties is testimony to this. Adnan has shown that he interprets certain articles of the constitution in ethnic terms. Politics in Turkey for this sample group of students is highly ethnified. Through their own social experience each of the respondents' political identity has come to be framed by the ethnic ascription to Kurdishness.

By looking at how each of the respondents has come to perceive the Kurdish question in Turkey we may see that a particularistic Turkish nationalism has been essential to the development of their own sense of Kurdish ethnicity, and indeed of belonging to a Kurdish conscious collective. This is in line with the theoretical assertions of Hylland Eriksen that in the contemporary world where "states tend to be dominated politically by one of the constituent ethnic groups or, more accurately by its elites", the nationalist ideology of the hegemonic group may potentially be perceived by other constituent groups as a particularist ideology rather than a universalistic, egalitarian one, where the mechanisms of exclusion and discrimination (along ethnic or other lines) are more obvious than the mechanisms of inclusion and formal justice. Indeed, this kind of duality, or ambiguity, is fundamental to both nationalist and ethnic ideologies (Hylland Eriksen 1993). The cultural egalitarianism preached by Turkish nationalism (Turkish nationalism has conventionally viewed Kurds as potential Turks) may be seen to have inspired counter-reactions amongst Kurds who are a sizeable segment of the population that does not consider itself to be part of the ideological precepts of Turkey's republic. A certain cultural attitude has been elevated by the Turkish state under the guise of Turkish nationalism which has always been and remains contested in the midst of a continuous push and pull between competing cultures. This push and pull has manifested in ongoing conflict in

the South East and the current Kurdish question. The respondents have shown that the very nature of the competition between Turkish and Kurdish political elements in Turkey has verified the subjective and objective existence of the Kurdish and Turkish social identities in Turkey while reinforcing group-non-group distinctions thus maintaining dynamic differentiations and splits in the republic's social framework. The Kurdish group identity has developed alongside Turkish nationalism, each playing off one another to verify its own existence yet the Kurdish identity has become stigmatized in wider society and Kurds in general are placed in a position of relative political-economic disadvantage throughout the country. The respondents' continual expression of discontent and lack of consent that they give to Turkish nationalist ideology and its execution through state policy in light of their own ethno-political ascriptions resonate this notion clearly. All of the respondents believe that the struggle between Turkish and Kurdish group identities in Turkey is ongoing in 2009. Gunes has said that it is impossible to open a Kurdish-identity based society at his university, even if it was to be organised under cultural auspices. This demonstrates a clear domination of the Turkish nationalist mentality in state education institutions. Implicit in such a university policy as exists in 2009 is a clear mistrust and rejection of Kurds (and their culture and political contentions) in wider society – such a situation aggravates Kurdish elements potentially stirring reaction and disapproval among Turkey's Kurdish citizenry (internalized or externalized according to individual circumstances). Muhammed has pointed to a number of arrests of Kurdish university students in Ankara just days before interviewing. He has said some forty people were arrested under suspicion of membership in the PKK yet most were released. It is in the unequal nature of relations between the groups that adhere to such ideologies that the Kurdish question arises and manifests.

Addressing what the respondents' perceive as the relevant macro-level factors informing the Kurdish question in Turkey in 2009, each has tended to highlight the role of Turkey's state institutions as being the most pertinent amongst all actors. Each has placed ultimate political decision making power in Turkey in the hands of the state and its bureaucracy-military powerhouse. This is in line with Anderson's contention that state elites may "…move all the policy levers of official nationalism;

compulsory state-controlled primary education, state organized propaganda, official rewriting of militarism and endless affirmations of identity of nation" (Anderson B, 1991). It may be seen that all the respondents view the state of Turkey as a power that incorporates cultural and political forms, discourse, practices and activities, and specific technologies and organisations that when considered together act to define public interests, establish meaning and shape and naturalize social identities. This sample group has generally displayed a reaction to the signifying practices of the Turkish state as they call for socio-political rights to be granted that protect their ethnic identity. The respondents have an ingrained distrust in the state of Turkey and its willingness to bring real solutions to the Kurdish question. As the ultimate role player in the dialogue between destruction and preservation, prohibition and enablement, the respondents have called for the state to open up meaningful forums in which Kurdish issues may be discussed. They also believe that it is the military and state that ultimately has the power to provide for a solution to ongoing conflict between the extreme ideologues of the military and the PKK. As Güneş has pointed out, there is a Kurdish question in Turkey, not a PKK question. Despite this, discussion of the Kurdish question is clouded by talk of the PKK and other socially naturalized stigmas that the Kurdish identity sports, a frustration which this sample group believes can only be lifted with the blessing of the state and the progression of genuine political liberalisation and democratisation.

It may be seen that contemporary politics in Turkey tends to justify a certain historical narrative that has generally been framed under the dynamic auspices of Turkish nationalism. The very name by which the set of discontents expressed by Kurds in Turkey is referred to, "the Kurdish question", betrays this fact. It is as if the very existence of Kurds or the existence of a problem emanating from Turkey's Kurdish citizenry remains to be proven – as if it is something still to be questioned. To this sample group this set of problems is very real and has affected their past and ongoing development and social life. Each of the respondents has pointed to the fact that a mere decade ago the official line of the state in Turkey was that there was no Kurds in Turkey. The integrative needs of national elites and their claims to legitimate sovereignty over a defined area and population are such that even though

there are clearly Kurdish citizens in Turkey, the contentions of the past must not be thrown aside too quickly so as not illegitimate the elite's own claims, claims to which a majority of the country's population continue to adhere and propagate. The official narratives of Turkey's past, which may generally be viewed under the auspices of Kemalist nationalism, serve to frustrate Kurdish claims given that according to these conceptions of the nation, Kurds do not indeed exist. As Hylland Eriksen has pointed out, the majority group in a nation state is no less ethnic in nature despite ethnicity commonly being associated with sub-national groups. In light if this, just as it is instrumental for Kurds to act as a group, Turkish elites rally the majority population behind a nationalist doctrine which is in favour of the already established norms of its OWN – that is that everybody in Turkey is a Turk. Kurdish and Turkish identities in a modern political context are ever-changing as "ideologists select and reinterpret aspects of culture and history which fit into the legitimation of a particular power constellation" (Hylland Eriksen, 1993). It is clear that group histories are generally fashioned so as to serve present political needs in Turkey. Also, political decisions are generally fashioned on group histories. As processes of democratisation and mutual contact between Kurds and Turks increases, politics in Turkey is opening up to narratives alternative to those that have been propagated very effectively by the state to its citizens for the majority of the republic's history. While unprecedented change is occurring and the Kurdish identity is becoming more visible in society (the state made no objection to the opening of TRT6), change is slow as the state attempts to maintain its check on political power by peddling threatening notions of separatism (all of the respondents are of the opinion that the Kurdish movement in general is no longer calling for the establishment of its own state) and pointing to the risks of democratisation by appealing to socially entrenched stigmas associated with Kurds and their separatist aims. In order for the Kurdish question to be addressed and potentially solved in the domestic political forum, the respondents have all implied that cooperation between Kurds and Turks must be affected and historically anchored policies of military action, assimilation and cultural suppression against ethnic Kurds in Turkey must come to an end. They have all questioned or ruled out the continued utility of the PKK's armed affront against the Turkish military in contributing positively to the Kurdish movement and its

evolved political aims. In effect, according to this sample group the hierarchical relationship that has existed throughout the history of the Republic of Turkey between State elites and its Kurdish citizenry, must be disbanded and full socio-political rights are to be granted if this set of problems is to ever come to an end. All of the respondents' express doubt over such a process being carried out in a just and democratic fashion, if at all. This shows that the respondents' themselves are conditioned in their social actions and thoughts by historical impingements. The difference between the sample group and the Turkish state however is that the historical status quo favour the state elites, while for these Kurdish students, it has led to their ethnic and political reaction and assertion of their 'counter-identities' (counter to a Turkish identity). Official history, most of which is a form of cultural misrepresentation and/or exaggeration, may be seen to dictate what is seen as plausible in domestic politics in Turkey in 2009 and frustrate these respondents' political voices being heard in a genuinely open forum.

Ali has been particularly vocal about the constitution in Turkey which he has said has been written and is interpreted by the judiciary so as to protect the "Turk" majority and assimilate the Kurdish identity. All of the respondents have said or implied that until the constitution is rewritten and Turkey legislation in general is geared toward securing socio-political rights for Kurds and to protect their ethnic identity in the country, conflict has the potential to flare up despite the lip service and tentative moves of state towards greater democracy and plurality in the country. As of yet, all of the respondents believe that moves to calm extreme nationalist sections of society have been tentative and insufficient. Gunes is particularly eloquent about what he views as a two-headed push in the country, one headed toward liberalisation and the other toward maintained state control and "fascism". All of the respondents are retiscent to believe the official narratives of Turkey's past will be easily forgotten and genuine reform to be implemented despite the superficial solutions currently being employed by the elites. According to the respondents the Kurdish question in Turkey may only be comprhesively addressed if major changes in historically entrenched mentalities are affected across ALL sections of society, including Turks, Kurds, elites, citizens, university students and the small Kurdish girl selling tissues

on the street. All of the respondents call for empathy between humans of all persuasions and ethnicities, yet all have demonstrated their close acquaintance with how such a character trait and emotion is rare and riddled with difficulty.

The data collected in the researching of this thesis is highly varied and too wide in scope. Indeed, the political issues that fall under the broad scope of the Kurdish question are numerous and require empirical investigation and analysis so as to reach a distinct and meaningful socio-political finding. As such, it is my contention that specific issues that make up the Kurdish question must be defined and investigated on a smaller scale.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW DATA MICRO LEVEL TRANSFORMATIONS – PERSONAL HISTORIES OF RESPONDENTS

Respondent 1 - Güneş

Güneş was born in a town of the Mardin district in south-east Turkey, 1978. Soon after his father was transferred to work in Izmir and in 1981 his family migrated there. Güneş grew up in Izmir. At first his family lived in a rented house in a Turkish neighbourhood (*Türk mahallesi)* until his father bought a house and they moved to a Kurdish neighbourhood (*Kürt mahallesi)*. Two years ago Güneş's father passed away and his mother made the decision to move back to the Mardin district close to old friends and family. According to Güneş his home is now in Mardin although he only has the opportunity to visit on *Bayrams* and other university holidays. Güneş has little memory of his home in the Mardin district from his early childhood although he claims it remained vivid in his imagination while living in Izmir. Güneş is currently undertaking a Masters at a university in Ankara.

Amongst the members of Güneş's family Kurdish is spoken. One exception to this is the fact that Güneş preferentially speaks Turkish with his younger brother. His father knew limited Turkish while his mother knows only the very basic greetings. Both of Güneş's parents are illiterate. Güneş is one of seven siblings all of whom are bilingual in Turkish and Kurdish. Güneş has said that "we spoke Kurdish at home and Turkish on the street." He has one younger brother, three older brothers and two older sisters. All of his siblings have graduated from high school and one of his older brothers is a university graduate. Two of his older brothers are married to Kurdish women while one is married to a Kurdish-speaking Arab woman from Mardin. One of his older sisters is married to a Kurdish man and the other is single and lives with his mother. Güneş has said that, "there is no set rule saying, 'marry a

Kurd' however… in some communities there are unspoken or invisible rules". He has gone on to comment, "I may get married, and it doesn't matter who to. My family wouldn't say anything to me no matter who I marry. In the end they understand that this person has gone to school, he is in that community…"

Güneş has explained briefly about the linguistic situation of one of his older brother's household - "my brother and sister-in-law speak Kurdish to one another and both speak Turkish to the three kids." He sees his nephews as a "second generation" of Kurds following his family's move to Izmir. He remarks upon pertinent changes such as the children only understanding limited Kurdish and being unable to express themselves in the language. "The children's lives are very different from when we moved [from the south-east to Izmir]. There is less of a Kurdish impress. They live in an apartment. The kids are in primary school yet they have computers. They have grown up in a more modern time and because of that their sense of 'kurdishness' has been lost, I think."

As a child Güneş has said that he "loved studying and reading" and in general had a pleasant childhood. He enjoyed attending primary school and has pointed to the fact that he knew Turkish before he had started school so it was not as difficult for him as it was for other Kurdish children, like those he would hear about in his home town. At this point Güneş has pointed to his idea that because he didn't grow up in Mardin he has no accent and thus it is not clear to people where he is coming from. He has claimed that this helped him during school. Güneş has said he was honestly not aware during primary school of being 'Kurdish'. He added to this by recalling a very distinct memory of his teacher once asking him, "Are you Kurdish? You don't seem Kurdish. How is it that you come from Mardin?" Güneş has said that he remembers these comments making him very happy. He has added that this interaction with his teacher had no affect on his "identity", mostly due to the fact that he didn't feel like he had a particular identity at such a young age. Apart from this memory, Güneş has said that he had a pleasant experience at primary school where he mixed with all children. Middle school passed in much the same manner.

Güneş has said that the experience of going to high school in the 1990s in Turkey was more challenging than his earlier school experiences. He was in Izmir which he calls "relaxed" and a place where the people are "democratic". He attended a school where most of the pupils were Gypsies and Kurdish. He said they used to pass much time playing Darbuka (a type of drum) and dancing. From 1992 however, Güneş observed an increasing segregation among groups and "races" in the student body ("*Kamplaşmaya başlamış").* He recalls this segregation among some of his peers as having started around 1992 and becoming especially obvious in 1995, with people dividing between Kurdish and "Nationalist" camps. He remembers many fights between these groups in front of his school. He has added that the fights were provoked by members of both "sides". At this juncture Güneş has commented on what he recalls as a rising Turkish nationalist movement in the mid-1990s. He has recalled the *Ülkü Ocağı* (a place where old *Ülkücus* (Turkish nationalists) hang out and talk) near his school and how the men there would give male students from his school suits, overcoats and relatively expensive Marlboro Red cigarettes. Furthermore they would teach the kids aspects of Turkish history. Güneş has highlighted such an occurrence in saying "I was speaking with one of my *Ülkücü* friends one day and, really, he didn't know what had happened… he had just been given this identity, he didn't know what being an *Ülkücü* was… But wearing overcoats, and smoking cigarettes was something else, he was excited by it." Having shared this Güneş has gone on to reflect on the increasingly obvious Kurdish 'camp' at his school having said, "Our Kurdish identity didn't come to us [like the nationalists], we spoke Kurdish at home, we spoke Turkish outside, we had the feeling of existing between two things." While obviously relating closely with the Kurdish students Güneş has reiterated that he was in no way political during high school. "For me, studying my lessons, learning mathematics and reading books was important. Perhaps because this is what I had always done. I would never enter a fight… Nobody ever attacked me. It is because I didn't express my 'Kurdishness', instead of that I was always doing something else."

Güneş has said "my high school wasn't such high quality. From a class of fifty, seven or eight were accepted into university". Güneş was largely unimpressed by the

quality of education at his high school. He has recalled there being no discipline and much noise and fighting ("*Lambır lımbır şekilde bir liseydi*"). Most of the teachers working there were "exiled" ("*surgun olarak gelmişler")*, that is to say they were forced to work at this school as some validated form of punishment. He has pointed out that only the industrious and committed students were able to attend university. Throughout his time at high school Güneş started to be interested in becoming a journalist thanks in most part to the inspiration of Mehmet Ali Birand and his show Thirty-second Day. He was later accepted to study Communications (*Iletişim)* in Konya.

Güneş's home life throughout the early and mid-1990s, like his school life, was accompanied by some changes. Despite remaining apolitical Güneş has commented on the fact that "Ismail Besikçi's books started to enter [my home], Kurdish newspapers also came into the house. Azadiya Welat (?) and Özgür Gündem newspaper came out. Also we received news of conflicts from my home town in the south-east. There was news of murders, Hizbullah and the war going on over there. The conflicts in the south east echoed through our house in Izmir." He has concluded that during the nineties most Kurdish households became more political. During this same time Güneş has said that "I felt my Kurdish identity very intensely, but this feeling wasn't converted into any sort of activity."

Güneş started university in Konya in 1997. He had a very positive and excited attitude towards moving to a new city and living away from his family. He embraced the change. Reliant on his family for money he initially lived in the dormitories and later moved out to a house with friends. Güneş has said that "once I came to university, from that time on, I was inside the Kurdish movement (*Kürt hareketi)*." He has qualified this statement saying, "I would attend Newroz celebrations, I moved into a house with Kurdish friends, we were always discussing politics, reading the newspaper…we did so in Turkish, never in Kurdish. It is the same now. There are many people involved in the Kurdish movement and they are all speaking Turkish." Güneş has gone on to say that "University was a different experience, I perceived myself as Kurdish, and put it into practice." In trying to

explain why this was the case he has said that he believes it had something to do with greater freedom. “I couldn’t have done this during high school because my family was there. At university you are surrounded by students, we were eighteen, nineteen, twenty, so when we did something we thought we could do anything. A lot of times we thought that in a few months we could save the situation. ‘Not long to go’, we would say often. We were children.”

Güneş has put his activity as a Kurd into greater perspective by adding to the wider setting in which he lived. “Our university [in Konya] was not like one in Ankara or Istanbul. Our university was a lot more intensely fascist, the pressure from nationalists was higher. Because of this we weren’t too active but as it happened everywhere, we would celebrate Newroz.” Güneş has elaborated at this juncture, “For example, if an attack occurred in Diyarbakır, organising a protest in Ankara is possible. In Konya it was impossible. While YÖK (Higher Education Council/ *Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu*) protests were big in Ankara, in Konya very few people [would join], maybe forty or fifty maximum… at this particular university nothing could happen. Because of that nothing could be organised or done.” Güneş has claimed that the leftist and Kurdish movements in Konya were very weak. While he remembers fights breaking out at his university, it was mostly between students of different ages, unlike his time at high school in Izmir. He has gone on to say that Kurds would usually “cop a punch from behind” (“*Kürtler sadece dayak yer yan taraftan yani”*). Given Güneş’s perceptions of his University and the social environment in Konya, he has added that he was “never active inside school… we would discuss things at home, we read continuously.” Throughout this time he read “like everybody” Abdullah Öcalan’s writings, continued to read a lot of Ismail Beşikçi as well as “memoires and commentaries written from inside the Kurdish movement.” Güneş also read much fiction and other authors such as Orhan Pamuk, “a bourgeois Turkish author [who] many of my friends definitely wouldn’t read”, Amir Malov, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy. He has said that his interests were not completely restricted by his Kurdish and leftist identifications.

Güneş, referring to his final year of university, has commented on his clear memory of Öcalan's capture in 1998. Together with his Kurdish friends, Güneş had always followed Öcalan's movements since he was exiled from Syria. "We followed it and sometimes there was a sense of fear… we continuously thought of it. Is he going to get caught or not?" Güneş has said he remembers hearing the announcement by Bulent Ecevit saying Öcalan was being brought back to Turkish soil. He has reflected, "it was strange, I was scared… I felt bad things, lots of work was going to start (*çok çalışmalar başlayacak)* and from now on the different camps are going to be very clear (*kamplaşma çok net olacak)*...I thought at that time, if Öcalan said 'I have been caught, I am a captive now. Kurds, rally against this,' Turkey could have gone down a very bad path. But he didn't say anything like that… it became calmer (*ortalık yatıştı)*." Güneş has noted that he had a number of friends to whom Öcalan was very important, who "loved him" for being the "vanguard of the movement." He has qualified this by noting that some people "in Turkey, in Germany, set themselves on fire in protest to Öcalan's capture." While this event stands out in Güneş's memory he has denied it as having massive significance for him personally.

Throughout his final year at university Güneş started working in a newspaper in Konya. After completing his undergraduate degree he moved back in with his family in Izmir and worked for two years in a media agency. He then completed his compulsory army service and moved back to Izmir yet again where he grew bored and found it difficult to adjust to living with his family again. He decided at this point to move to Ankara to be closer to a number of friends whom he had met in Konya. He has said, "I had grown used to living apart from my family, I had grown up. There is a thing, if you live in the same city as your family, it is inappropriate to move into your own house… I was obliged to stay with them if I had stayed in Izmir and so I wanted to move to Ankara." After arriving in Ankara he became interested in certain projects – "I started working on these projects and have been doing so for the past 4 years. They have been about migration, violence, incest… generally they are surveys for the United Nations and the European Union." Güneş has said that he much preferred this work than being a journalist.

Güneş has said that after completing his undergraduate degree he had a working life and thus lost his ability to be inside any political movement. "When I came to Ankara I still had a relationship with my Kurdish friends. We would celebrate eighth of March (Womens Day), Newroz and May first. I was still attending these events, and do so today. But I came to Ankara not as a student but because I had to work. So, I was not inside any movement per se. By that time my identity was clear, I knew who I was, I was interested in reading more intellectual things, conducting research. My life of political activity was no longer there."

Güneş started studying his Masters in 2007/2008. Early on he became involved in a project about honour killings in Urfa which he claims has affected his intellectual and political outlook profoundly. He has said that after doing this project "I realised that all problems and questions are linked to problems in relations between men and women. Masculine structures, patriarchal structures actually lie on top of all problems… this is how I have come to think." He has expanded on this by saying "At my university I have Kurdish friends but I am not inside any Kurdish movement. I know these people, we can sit and chat but for now I am more involved with gender issues, I have more of a feminist side." He has said that "once you understand the feminist perspective, once you can identify the gender issue in any problem, no matter what you are working on, the Kurdish Question, European Union, you can work much better. The gender lessons I have taken have really helped me understand a lot of things. I can analyse things better within a feminist framework."

Reflecting upon the education he has received at his university Güneş is generally satisfied with the quality. When he compares it to his undergraduate experience he is particularly full of praise. He has said, "When I write a paper at my university, or speak to people at uni, I can speak very comfortably. I am not afraid that a bunch of fascists are going to come up to my table. At my university in Konya, if two Kurdish students are speaking in the open, somebody can come up to and make them disperse ("*dağıtabilir*")… there is that fear over there. Not here. For example, people can hang whatever posters they like here. For this reason, this experience has been good for me." Güneş has added that he feels comfortable engaging as a Kurdish person in

class discussions and has always met with a respectful reception. He gives much credit to the character and methods of the teachers acting to ensure such an environment in classes. He has added however that class discussion seldom broaches Kurdish issues as played out in Turkey.

Güneş has said that he believes the teaching of Kurdish in Turkey's public education system is essential and that the situation is "enough already". He has said, "It is very clear, universities especially must start offering Kurdish lessons. Kurdish people live in Turkey, their mother tongue is Kurdish. I am one of those people. I would have wanted to be educated in Kurdish whether it serves a purpose or not (*Kürtçe eğitim ne iş yararayacak? Hayır, yaramasın - gerek yok*)." He has gone on to say that he would ensure that any child of his own would definitely be taught both Turkish and Kurdish. He has added at this point that "especially in primary school, if a child's mother tongue is Kurdish it can be very difficult for them. I grew up bilingual so I didn't have a hard time, but if I had met with Turkish in primary school, I am sure I would have learnt to read and write later, my lessons would have been worse. There are a lot of people who have lived this trouble/annoyance. If you teach a person in their mother tongue, they have the potential to be more successful, because of that alone universities should definitely start Kurdish lessons." He has gone on to comment on the plethora of language tuition available to university students in Turkey such as Spanish, Chinese, Urdu and Hindi. He has added that the obvious omission of Kurdish lessons is "shameful." He has gone further to say that Kurdish lessons should not only be institutionalised in universities but in primary and high schools.

Güneş has commented that he enjoys his life among friends on his university's campus. He is involved in trying to establish a Gender and Women's Studies Society yet has noted that there is some opposition from university administrators. He has said, "The Rector, I know, doesn't want us to open this society. The feminist movement has become legal in Turkey - the system stomachs it from now on. But, for example, the homosexual movement is still seen as a frightening thing. The rector doesn't want there to be a gay society." Güneş has also commented on the absence of

an official Kurdish Society at his university. He has said "For example, if you tried to start a Kurdish Culture Society, outside politics – although this is very difficult - but still, even if it was attempted to open a culture-focused society, in a student cultural forum, I highly doubt it would be allowed." Güneş has gone on to reflect that it depends on where you are situated on campus as to whether it is an entirely open place, a place where you can voice and express anything. He has justified his observation with the analogy, "You may be a lesbian on campus, and make out on the lawns and nobody would say a thing. But to say 'I am going to start a society and I want a room for an office' – that cannot be. Essentially, Güneş has noted a disparity between everyday campus and class life and the university's official institutional framework. Güneş has said he believes universities should act as an open forum for ideas and that administrators should be supportive of student initiatives and societies.

Güneş has commented that, very generally, "the political outlook of my university is Kemalist, middle class… to a point." That is, he views the administration as Kemalist and the student body as coming predominantly from the middle classes. He has added that this middle class, Kemalist framework has a left and a right side – "those leaning towards radical democracy and those leaning towards fascism." In general he has said that people at the university are republican, Kemalist, anti-AKP and anti-Sharia. Güneş has noted that universities have changed a lot since the more radical "Revolution-writing" days of Deniz Gezmiş and Hüseyin Inan. He has accounted for this by the high marks required to enter university and the relative advantage of those students who are educated at better quality high schools (usually private colleges). These students, according to Güneş, are by nature apolitical due to their "material power (wealth)" which allows them to move away from political concerns. For such reasons Güneş has said that "there are many apolitical people at university, those that party and just have fun. I do the same sometimes, but there is always a question or a problem in my head." Güneş has said that most students at his university are pro-peace. Another point of solidarity among students exists in opposition to administrators and security forces. He has said that "if the rector did something to a student I think you would find students may come together to support

that person." He has also commented on a recent incident whereby students recognised and filmed an intelligence agent from Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counterterrorism (*JITEM – Jandarma Istihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele)* who was collecting information about students on the campus. He has said that, in general, the student body on campus are opposed to such activity.

Respondent 2 – Muhammed

Muhammed was born in Diyarbakır in South-east Turkey, 1982. His mother is a housewife who "reads the Qur'an, this is her work, she likes it." His father is a professional accountant who works in an office. Muhammed has an older brother and sister and one younger brother. He grew up with his family in Diyarbakır where he attended primary school and middle school. Muhammed moved to Bursa in the North-West of Turkey to attend a boarding high school. He started studying at university in 2001 and is currently a Masters student.

Thinking back to his childhood in Diyarbakır Muhammed has said, "In Diyarbakır the people generally speak Kurdish in the home and Turkish on the street." He has gone on to speak of some changes that he has observed in Diyarbakır throughout his life. He has said that there is now a new and an old Diyarbakır. "There are many people that have migrated to the city especially from villages around the area. Actually there are no villages now because they were burned as a result of war between the guerrillas and the soldiers." He has said that many migrants from rural areas moved to big cities such as Diyarbakır, which he has said is the biggest city in the South-east of Turkey citing its population as approximately one and half million, "because it is safer and they have to earn money." He has said that rural migrants preferred to move to Diyarbakır but has noted that there are many other cities in Turkey where people have migrated to. "For example, Mersin is one of the biggest Kurdish cities. It is also a Turkish city, but many Kurds live in Mersin. There is also Adana and of course Istanbul which is the biggest Kurdish city in the world."

At this juncture Muhammed has gone on to explain how he views the historical context of life in Diyarbakır. He has said that when he was a child in Diyarbakır "there was the 'Kurdish movement' - I really want to call it the Kurdish movement, not 'terrorists' or 'guerrillas' because it is a movement actually. Every movement can make some mistakes but it is still a movement. It is one of the biggest Kurdish movements in Kurdish history. When we look at Kurdish history there are many other rebellions. For example in Turkish history they say that there have been twenty eight rebellions against the Turkish Republic. These were started in 1925 by Shaykh Said. This was the first rebellion against the new, young Turkish republic. Shaykh Said said, 'this is our place and we have to elect our own governors and we want to use the Kurdish language in our daily processes.' He also said that for him Islam is a very important motive in daily life, and called for the Turkish government to lift the bans on Islam. So, there was a rebellion. It was suppressed by the Turkish army. After that, from 1928, new rebellions started." Muhammed has gone on saying, "Later the PKK started to attack the Turkish army. The difference between [the PKK] and other Kurdish movements (there were many Kurdish movements in the 1970s and the elder people in our families always tell us about [these] movements, non-armed movements) was that it started to attack the army. They started to use guns again. The first attacks started in 1984." He has elaborated at this juncture on his understanding of the historical context saying, "In 1980 there was a military coup in Turkey and, I heard, it was really very bad for political people especially the supporters of the left. There was a big prison in Diyarbakır, and it is the most famous prison in Turkey because more than ten people were killed during those days. Some hung themselves, some burnt themselves and others killed themselves in a 'death ceremony.' [These people did this because] they [thought], 'We are protesting against the government, we are prisoners of the government.' They killed themselves to support the PKK. Then the PKK gained more support. After this [event] people started to support the PKK because they thought, 'Ok, this movement is serious, they really want to change something.' So this event in Diyarbakır prison is very important for this history, it made the PKK stronger as people started to see how they were reacting against the government. There were many other Kurdish groups in the prisons, and they also started to join the PKK organisation. This is very important for

the history of the latest and biggest Kurdish movement. This all happened in the first half of the 80s."

Muhammed has spoken further of the PKK saying, "In 1984 they started to attack the army. They went to Lebanon, and Syria. There were camps there where they educated their members. Then they entered across the borders of Turkey and they attacked army buildings. They killed many soldiers in 1984. This created support for this movement. More than ten Kurdish groups said at the time, 'now we are useless' and they disbanded and joined this movement because they thought [the PKK] were serious and that maybe they would solve this problem. This is actually how this movement became a very important actor for Kurds. They were really serious about what they said. They proved they were serious about it. People started to believe in them and started to support them." Muhammed has speculated on public opinion in Diyarbakır at the time saying, "People thought, 'there are mountains and there are some guerrillas, terrorists, whatever you want to call them it doesn't matter, there are some guys in the mountains and they have guns. When they face the soldiers they just kill each other.' This is not the case. [The PKK] are well organised in all the cities [of Turkey]. For example, they set up big demonstrations in all the cities and the official workers started to support the Kurdish movement and they held strikes against the government. This is one of the most important events at the beginning of the nineties."

Muhammed has gone on to speak of his personal experiences growing up in Diyarbakır saying, "In my childhood… they were very problematic days. We always heard the sound of guns. We were not in the villages or the mountains." He has reiterated this point saying, "When I was a kid, I really heard many guns' sounds. It was very common in Diyarbakır." Muhammed has said that he always saw police forces. He has noted that these were always "special police forces because the other police forces were always attacked by the guys that were members of the organisation (PKK). When they, [PKK members] saw an unarmed police car they attacked it. We always saw such conflicts." Muhammed has gone on to say, "I witnessed many deaths in the street. It was a casual thing. I would be going home

from school, just trying to go home, then there would be a crowd and I would wonder what was going on. Then you would see a guy just lying on the ground, blood coming from his brain." He has gone on to say, "You hear the stories about it. Things like, 'he was shot just ten minutes ago.' This was a normal thing in Turkey, in Diyarbakır." Muhammed has said that none of his close friends or relatives ever died in the violence noting, "We were lucky." Speaking of his family he has said, "Interestingly, they support the Kurdish movement, but my father is a very well-educated person. He was one of the heads of a Workers Union in Diyarbakır. My father always said, 'They have the right to use guns but, it is nonsense, it will not help to solve the problems. What will solve this problem are demonstrations and massive movements. He supports peaceful movements. In those days though, you couldn't talk about such things."

Muhammed recalls actively trying to gauge an understanding of the events around him in 1991 – "I was trying to understand what was going on." His first point of reference were his family members which he recalls as all "needing" to support the Kurdish movement but harbouring very different ideas about how action should be affected. He has reflected, "In those days when the movement really started to gain power, things started to be prohibited [by the PKK]. They started to prohibit some peaceful actions. We were in a war, so [they thought] 'either you support us or, if you don't, it means you support the Turkish state.' They forced the people to choose a side. So, most of the people I know were forced to support this movement without any choice. It was an obligation for them to join the party, the organisation of the Kurds…. It wasn't an absolute obligation, I must clarify that point. They said [to Kurds], 'we are your organisation. This state has prohibited your language, your cultural identities. You can not say 'I am a Kurd.' You can not pass your culture on to your sons and daughters because it is all illegal. You cannot name your children Kurdish names, there is no such language as Kurdish it is [seen as] just a sub-language of Turkish.' The movement started to say that, and this is also true for the Kurdish part of Iraq, Iran and Syria. They said, 'we are a poor nation so we have to act together in order to destroy the occupation.' They said 'we will fight in order to make this vision real.' At the beginning they said, 'we will set up a free and united

Kurdistan.' [This Kurdistan] was to include the four parts of Kurdistan and they said that their aim was to force the Turkish army to retreat from the Turkish areas. They said 'after that we will decide how we want to live, whether we will be free or stay with the state.' But the first condition was to cause the Turkish forces to retreat. This was one of their aims at the beginning of their struggle. They said to the people, 'just support us' and very many people, many of the big Kurdish families started to support them, the Kurdish movement. [These families] started to give money to [the movement] and they sent their children to the mountains to be part of the armed organisation. They set up an army in higher areas (ARGK - National Army of Kurdistan). They reached more than twenty thousand people. They really supported the struggle in all cities of Kurdistan. But in those days, around 1992, the organisations that the Kurds had developed said 'we have come to a step, we are powerful in the mountains.'" Muhammed has noted at this point that "[Turkey's] army started to leave some villages because they couldn't protect them." Going on about the PKK's development Muhammed has said "they had a balance in the mountains with the Turkish army, so they thought 'now we have to show them our force in the cities.' And in 1992, there were Newroz celebrations in Turkey (Kurds celebrate Newroz on the 21st of March). It is very important for Kurds and of course it was illegal in Turkey up until 2001 or 2002." He has claimed that "the organisation told people to celebrate it, and Kurds started celebrating and police attacked the Kurds and more than thirty people were killed in a day in just one town."

Muhammed has spoken of his memories of Newroz saying, "We always celebrated. In fact, I remember I was at middle school and the principle came into our class and said, 'OK children, today is Newroz and we want you to all join us. First of all we will celebrate here at school and then we will join the other guys.' All the people got up and started folk dancing, and then we had a big fire in the middle of our dance. Before the Kurds were Muslim they believed in Zoroaster, they shared this common belief with Persians. So, on Newroz they sit at a big fire and started dancing and actually this is a tradition that was passed on from Zoroastrianism before Islam." Muhammed has harked back to his memory of Newroz in 1992 saying, "there was a big celebration. Then the army attacked and big demonstrations started in different

towns. People were killed at these demonstrations by the armed forces. And then the organisation said we will avenge this. By the way, a foreign journalist was killed during these celebrations in Cize. The town [of Cize] was half burned [after celebrations]. So the organisation said 'let us just show the world that we are here and we are not terrorists, that people support us.'" Muhammed has said that it was at this juncture that the PKK "decided it was time to use the normal way, [state mechanisms], and so they set up a party named HEP (*Halk Emek Partisi* – People's Labour Party). This organisation was a socialist organisation and they gave a lot of importance to labour, women's rights, and were also against religion. They really started to struggle against religious organisations in Kurdish areas. In 1991 they set up a legal organisation and some of them were elected in the elections, they [were voted into] parliament." At this point Muhammed has said that those candidates elected into parliament wanted to take some of their parliamentary oath in the Kurdish language. The result of their doing this he has said was that "Leyla Zana and her friends were arrested. All they did was to say, in Kurdish, we promise to uphold this statement for the sake of Turks and Kurds. That's all they said in Kurdish. And they were arrested. The other people [in parliament] said, 'oh, how can you use Kurdish? There is no such language as Kurdish. Then the police came to the parliament (this is really ridiculous), and they took them. They [the Kurdish parliamentarians to be] were charged and put in prison. The EU said you cannot do that because they are the Kurdish leaders and you have to be more careful, think in a more democratic way because they have rights."

Elaborating more on what he understands of the events of the early nineties in Diyarbakır, Muhammed has said, "There was Hizbullah." He has gone on to comment that four or five years ago, (around 2005), "it became clear that [Hizbullah] was organised by the state. The police forces educated these guys, Hizbullah. [Members of Hizbullah] said to the public 'we want Kurdish rights, we give importance to Kurds but we also want to be religious people. They, [the PKK and HEP] will destroy anything about religion, they are socialists so join us and lets fight them." Muhammed has commented at this juncture, "I think this is one of the most important milestones in the Kurdish movement because many Kurds started to

support Hizbullah and the power of the PKK was broken... [Before], people either supported the PKK or they were neutral. People that were neutral or against the PKK were not organised, so when you look around the city… you can say, OK they are PKK, they are well-organised, really well-organised. In my eyes, I could see who is who in the cities." Elaborating on this topic Muhammed has said, "Let me say a very crucial thing – the state and its intelligence agency knows the leaders of the Kurdish movements in the cities. But, as I said, you can find 100 000 people that support the PKK in Diyarbakır. For example now more than half of the people support the PKK and it is impossible for them to know all the people, I mean who is who. It is impossible. But if you are a member, you are easily identifiable [by local people]." Turning back to his discussion of Hizbullah, Muhammed has said the situation changed because "After Hizbullah started to organise in the Kurdish region….When they started to organize the religious people in the Kurdish area, these religious people knew who is who so they started to kill the other. They start to kill and attack each other. Maybe the state doesn't know who the important people are, because as I said, there is a huge amount of supporters and Kurds know each other. So, this was a break in the development of the movement in the cities and they decided to stop organisation. They found it to be a very dangerous situation for themselves." Tracing his understanding of the development of Hizbullah further Muhammed has asserted, "After that, Hizbullah also started to attack the police … these organisations don't always go as planned… they started to act differently. And then they killed the governor of Diyarbakır. After that the state started to [conduct] operations against Hizbullah. They took many members of Hizbullah and now [that organisation] is not powerful amongst Kurds."

Speaking of his more personal experiences with Hizbullah Muhammed has said that his brother had a "conflict" with some members of the organization. "Hizbullah killed one of my brother's friends, and they [my brother and his friends] attacked Hizbullah in 1994 or 1995. I remember it. After that people started to act legally in the cities, they made such a decision because they realised that the state knew all their members and supporters. So they thought it was a useless war. They said 'we can't win a war against the official soldiers...it is impossible to win this.' Also,

families started to divide. For example imagine there are some cousins. One of them supports the PKK, and some of them Hizbullah. [Because of things like this] they said they had to stop this war. They knew that if they continued the war they would lose. This was a fact. It was not a matter of who supports who. They [the PKK] had a majority, when you compare it with Hizbullah. However, Hizbullah had the guns, the maps and all of these [kinds of] things. So it was very difficult for the PKK to continue this war in the cities." Muhammed has stated at the end of his spiel that, "These are all my personal points of view. This is my general view of Diyarbakır in the 1990s."

When trying to remember more personal accounts of his childhood Muhammed has said, "It is very hard to talk about yourself because actually you never think about yourself." He has gone on to say that he remembers always having liked basketball. He was a member of a team that would travel to other cities in Turkey to play. He remembers that they always lost their matches. Muhammed also remembers the "wonderful girls" at his middle school in Diyarbakır. He has added here, "I went to the most prestigious school in Diyarbakır. I had a girlfriend when I was twelve, I was very lucky because they were hard days to have girlfriends." Muhammed has spoken of his home life saying that his grandfather owned a building in which his extended family all stayed, "two of my aunts, two maternal uncles." He has said "we all lived together and we had very close relations." Muhammed recalls that he always hung out with his cousins growing up. He has noted, "We weren't allowed to go out because it wasn't safe to walk around so we would just stay in the home. We could go out in the daytime… We were very affected by the violence in the city. Maybe we were not aware of the political violence but it was always there. In our street we always had fights with other guys. It was like playing football. My cousins would call me and say, 'Ok, we will fight them, [at this place and time].' It could get very violent, we would use glasses, throw stones at each other. Of course I got hurt many times. I went to hospital when a rock hit my head." Aside from fighting in the streets with his cousins Muhammed has said he really enjoyed going to the local theatre with his father. He has said, "My father always took me to the theatre, he likes it. He is a very intellectual person; he knows French, Arabic and two sub-languages of

Kurdish. He was from Mardin originally, all of his family lives there. He went to university in Istanbul, he was educated in economy there and he also took French courses. Then he came to Diyarbakır and started to give French courses at some high schools. Then he decided to become an accountant because he really likes mathematics and is really a smart guy." Muhammed has spoken of his mother saying, "My mum went to school, she finished primary and middle school. My aunts have told me that she was the most outstanding student at her school. My mother's family forced her to go to high school but she [didn't end up going]… She was actually enrolled in high school but she always went to meet her friends [instead of going to class]. One day one of my uncles realised this situation and said, 'You have two ways. If you don't want to go to school then you will have to stay at home – there are some cultural habits [like this]. And my mother said, 'I don't want to go to school then.' As I said she could have. She is just wonderful and she is smarter than my father. I always ask my mother things."

Muhammed has said that he started reading in high school. "When I was in Bursa, I was alone and I thought, "What can I do?" I read Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy – the common culture of mankind. And then I started to read political things, I read Marx and asked 'is there another way of life?' But then I started to read poems and novels and other stuff, I read a lot. I started to read something about religion and I decided to be rid of it. It was a wonderful moment for me." Muhammed has gone on at this point to speak about his family and religion saying, "My family are very religious people, they really are. My father says he is a social democrat. Actually I think he is more than a social democrat but he is not aware of his situation. He always prays to God (*Namas)*, sometimes more than five times a day." He has repeated here that his mother "always reads the Qur'an." Muhammed has said that neither of his parents have ever told him to pray or read anything to do with religion and for this they are "perfect." "They say that it is my life and I am free. I can choose my own way. My father always told me, 'I think you are on the wrong way but I trust you will find the true way one day.'" He qualifies his relative freedom to choose his own lifestyle by saying, "I have lived with my girlfriends twice in Ankara. They did not support this but they didn't say 'How can you live together, you should be married.' They think,

'this is your life.' They came to visit us and they met with [my girlfriends]. [My parents] are really very kind people. But they don't love each other. They say that they are different. They loved each other when they got married. There is no such thing as divorce among Kurds - it is a very, very big shame. In the last five or ten years they have started to, not love each other, but they have grown used to it." Muhammed has gone on to say, "I think my mother is the best mother and my father is the best father. They have a responsibility to their children. They devoted their life to us but they missed out on loving each other. This is very widespread among Kurds. All Kurdish fathers or mothers they really love their children. Maybe they don't say "I love you" because it is another shame for Kurds, we never say to each other "I love you". The first time I said it to my mum I was sixteen and in Bursa. My mother said, "oooh don't say it". She got embarrassed and said, 'don't say it, it is a shame!' One time I said this to my father because I really wanted to demolish all of the borders, because I love him."

Reflecting on his own history Muhammed has spoken of his views on human relationships more generally and tied it back to the domestic climate in Turkey. He has mused, "After a while, you start to treat people differently, different to how you initially promised. This is how relationships go. For example, you have a girlfriend, and there is a problem between you. After a while, that problem grows and you start fighting all the time, a lot… at the stage where people fight all the time, who started the fighting, or where it started is of no importance. It is both of your faults. Turkey's Kurdish question is at this point. It started from (*Kürtlerin tanımlanması*) the idea that there are no Kurds, the need to assimilate Kurds, everybody in Turkey is a Turk etc. But now it has reached a different point, so much violence has been used. Violence is not just beating or slapping somebody - treating somebody badly is violence, breaking someone's heart is violence. So I think that violence itself is not the problem here ("*Şiddetin kendisi sorun değil burada*"). How you use violence, how much violence you use, these are problems. Why are they just using violence when there are so many different paths down which they may proceed, why are they only using violence?" Muhammed has gone on at this juncture to speak of the political strength of Kurds in Turkey saying, "The Kurds are highly organised and

they have many supporters. They are important in elections - they give three million votes, more than that perhaps… these are large numbers. They could be more actually."

Respondent 3 – Ali

Ali was born in 1983 in a village outside the city of Şırnak. He has said "I don't know the Turkish name of the village but I know the Kurdish name." His parents are both from a village near Batman which was evacuated by the army in 1973 due to security concerns. His family lived in Şırnak for some twenty years before moving to a town in the district of Mardin in 1989. Ali's family still lives in the Mardin district.

Ali's parents are married and live together. His mother is a housewife who has spent most of her time caring for Ali and his seven sisters and three brothers. His father was a labourer for a construction company and later went to work for the local council in Mardin. He is now retired. His father speaks Turkish but is not fluent while his mother is illiterate and does not know Turkish. Four of Ali's sisters are married, as is his only older brother. He has said that "not half of my siblings went to school." Of his seven sisters, only the youngest two have attended school (they are currently in primary school). His older brother did not go to school but Ali has said that he learnt to read and write when doing his military service. This brother lives with his five children in the same apartment as his parents. His family speak only Kurmanji, "Kurdish," to one another and Ali has added to this saying, "Everybody in the South-east, well almost all, speak Kurmanji, just a few speak Zaza." Ali has said he does not return to his parents' home very often, stating "I haven't seen [my family] for six months."

Ali is an "observant Muslim." His family is religious and Ali has said that "because they are illiterate they don't practice [Islam] 'traditionally.'" He has qualified what he means by adding, "We don't know what is said in the book, [the Qur'an]. Of course I know now because I have read it and studied it. But my parents didn't know it and they still don't know it. My father attends the mosque, ceremonies and

preachings. He has a certain amount of knowledge about the book, what Islam requires, what he is supposed to do and some rituals. He tries to do these things." Ali has also said that his family practices Islam but has never been involved in politics or social movements related with their religious faith. Ali has said he was advised but never forced to pray as a child and he has prayed and been observing Islam, of his own volition, since he was in the eighth grade.

Ali has said he remembers very little of his village in Şırnak beyond a few of his peers, his grandmother's house and the fact that there was no school. He has said that there were many different families living in the village. His own family network in the village was "small," extending only so far as his uncles and grandparents. He has added at this point that, "While it is widespread among Kurds, we don't belong to any tribe. It was an advantage…We could make our own political and religious choices." Ali has gone on to say that his father's salary supported his whole family when he was growing up. Their livelihood was supplemented by small investments, such as a share in a truck, and a small plot of land in the village. Ali first left his village at the age of six when his family moved to a village of Mardin. His father had been a labourer for a construction company involved in the building of a highway between Turkey and Iraq in the 1980s. After the completion of the highway the workers were transferred to work for the Municipality in Mardin. Ali's entire family, including his grandparents and uncles, moved to Mardin. Ali has never returned to his village in Şırnak. Ali's family lived in a rented house in Mardin until his father bought a plot of land and built a house on it. Ali has said that their new village was not very different from the village as "everybody was still Kurdish." He has added that at that stage in his life "I hadn't had any contact with non-Kurdish speakers yet." From his childhood Ali has said, "I don't remember three consecutive nights I spent in our house." He has gone on to explain, "In Kurdish culture we call it '*Serguheb*.' [It is when] families get together at a house at night and chat, eat and drink. We spent every night doing this. Our relatives and neighbours would come together." He has elaborated by saying, "There was no electricity, it was dark and romantic and they would tell stories about old times. Sometimes they would tell myths - there was one about a 'fish-man'…. And some stories about bears to scare kids. The stories

were often mythical or supernatural… There were also stories of what my great-great grandfathers did, what problems they had and how they solved these problems." Ali has commented on another distinct memory, saying, "I remember sitting next to the highway and watching the trucks and cars passing. We were talking to each other and we were saying 'these trucks are coming from Turkey.' We were in Mardin so these trucks were going to and coming from Turkey. Turkey was like another country, we weren't aware that we were part of Turkey. We were still kids and hadn't attended school yet so it was normal. We hadn't seen anywhere other than our village [before this time]."

Ali started to attend school "one year late" at the age of seven in 1990. He has said "I hadn't learnt Turkish yet. My first encounter with the Turkish language was when I first watched television a few months before I started school. All the kids at school were speaking Kurdish, they didn't know Turkish." He has gone on to say, "I couldn't speak Turkish with my teachers. So my education started with them teaching us Turkish, not subjects like mathematics… By the end of the second grade, I can say we were fluent [in Turkish]." He has explained that "The teachers were of Kurdish origin but had to teach in Turkish, never a word of Kurdish. If [a teacher] attempted to use a Kurdish word they were fined or fired." Speaking of his personal reaction Ali has said, "I was shocked, I mean we didn't understand anything. Beating with sticks was widespread. [We could be] hit for speaking Kurdish in class or for being naughty. Of course I got beaten too." Ali has said he always spoke with his friends in Kurdish adding that, "We had no Turkish kids [among us]. There were kids of civil servants, teachers and government officials. Some [of these children] could speak Turkish to a degree but we never spoke Turkish outside school." He has noted that it would feel very strange to speak to his family in Turkish and has never done so.

Outside of school Ali has said he spent his time playing football and hanging out with friends, "I liked walking and touring the town. I walked in the countryside, went swimming and went on picnics. There was an irrigation channel just outside town. I didn't know how to swim but I could play in the water… I almost drowned once.

When the kids pulled me out of the water I was unconscious." Ali was an "achieving" child who was skipped ahead to grade five and did not have to study grade four. In grade six Ali has recalled going to Kocaeli, Izmit (a city in the eastern hinterland of Istanbul in the North-West of Turkey) to work for the summer. He worked with his sisters and some of his cousins and neighbours picking hazelnuts at different farms for two months. His grandfather escorted them and he has said "We didn't earn much. I was twelve." He did this again the following summer. When he was in middle school Ali has said that his family owned an electronics store in which his youngest uncle worked. Ali has said he helped his uncle often, especially with their finances. He has added to this by saying, "I was hard-working. I never had any pressure on me. My father told me, 'if you don't want to go to school, you don't have to attend.' I said, 'I want to go to school.' I needed an adult with me to be able to enrol in middle school. My father said, 'if you want to register, take your grandfather [as your guardian].' It was not obligatory for me to go to school after primary level but I don't like to be idle."

Ali has said "My happiest memory is when I entered the entrance exams for special high schools – Anatolia Teacher Training High Schools. I received a good score and was entitled to attend a school in Malatya. It was a public boarding school and all expenses were met by the [Turkish] government." He has elaborated saying, "I was aware by the end of middle school that if I didn't get out of this town, I was not going to study at university. This is because there was one high school in town and about two thousand kids. Only five or ten people could achieve getting into university. My chances of studying were limited, so I had to get out of town to Turkish cities in order to attend a quality school, study hard and get into university." He has explained his desire to go to university saying, "My youngest uncle was studying to get into university. He couldn't get in but I got the idea from him. He didn't consciously tell me to go for it however. He was my ideal figure in terms of studying. Nobody in the family had ever attended university and I was going to be the first." He has gone on to say, "None of my teachers encouraged me. I can be honest and say that they were thinking that I was stupid. The idea of studying at university was unachievable. Almost nobody who graduated from the local high

school went to university. Going to university wasn't a completely conscious choice either. I knew what university was, I couldn't say that I knew what I was going to do or what my chances were after graduation, but it was an ideal, an unachievable ideal…. And I knew I had to try."

Reflecting further on his childhood Ali has said that he remembers celebrating religious festivals such as *Eid,* and *Newroz* which Ali has described as the "Kurdish new year celebration." It is generally celebrated by "performing traditional Kurdish dances around burning tyres and a fire." Expanding on his memories of Newroz he has said, "It was forbidden to celebrate it. It was very bitter…I started highschool in Malatya in 1998 and before that every Newroz celebration was like a war to me. Every celebration ten or fifteen people would get killed including some of my neighbours and other people I didn't know." Ali has elaborated, "Every Newroz a curfew was imposed, we couldn't go out, but people still attempted to celebrate it, to burn tyres, to organise protest marches. They were protesting government policies against Kurds and Kurdish culture. In the morning just before Newroz celebrations, all the houses in town were searched by soldiers. That is the army, not just the police. It happened three times in my home. They [soldiers] came to our house and searched through everything in the house for guns or symbols that could be associated with the PKK. The house was like a mess after their searching, they walked into the house in their boots. They could search everywhere, we couldn't interfere." Ali has gone on to say, "You could hear fighting and guns on celebration day, March 21." He has said that the most violent celebrations were in 1993 or 1994, adding "twenty people from my town were killed." He has said, "I remember I visited the bridge where the parties were organised. [There was] blood everywhere, you could see. The neighbours told us [about those who had died] and we also saw it on Kurdish television [broadcast] from Europe." Although he cannot recall the year, his sister was arrested for attending a Newroz celebration in their home town and was sentenced to six months in prison. Expanding on this Ali has said, "My family was a pro-Kurdish family of course, we were supporting, but not in practice… My father and my mother didn't attend protest marches, they weren't activists. Just once my sister tried to be." He has added, "I don't remember much about [Newroz] celebrations before middle school,

before it became political and violent." He has said that Newroz is celebrated very differently in Turkey compared to Iraq and Iran and has justified this on the basis of its being illegal in Turkey. Ali has said that "people would give gifts, visit friends, get together and dance. But when it turned violent and got a political colour people forgot this [aspect] and came to view it as a reaction against government policies." He has spoken at this point of another celebration he remembers well from his childhood saying, "We have another unknown celebration - the Kurdish new year. Newroz is not [actually] the Kurdish New Year. It is an important period in Kurdish history. The [actual] Kurdish New Year is on January thirteen…My family and people around me celebrated on [this day]. It was not violent or political, it was just cultural. Some boys from the village would wear clown clothes, or women's clothes. They coloured their faces with ash or paint and visited each house in the village, played the Def (a musical instrument), and asked for a gift. It was theatre, like a play. They sang traditional songs and children's songs. It was purely cultural." Ali has added that he no longer celebrates on January 13 and may not even think of it when that day of the year comes around.

Ali started at a public boarding high school in Malatya in 1998. Ali has described the experience as a "big change." "When I first caught sight of the boys and the school I was frightened. I was secure in my home town. I thought, 'will I be successful here?'" He has said it was "a different environment, the people were different and it was a higher quality school." He has gone on to say "I got greedy and I had to prove a point. I am a Kurd, I am different here. I had to be successful, I had to prove something. We are Kurds but we are as smart as you, we can achieve it. I felt that way but I didn't tell anyone." Ali has noted that "Maybe half the kids [at my high school] were Kurdish. It was in the south." He has gone on to comment, "We had to speak in Turkish. I had a distant relative in Malatya who was encouraging us to speak in Turkish. [He would say], 'If you don't speak in Turkish, your Turkish will not improve.'" Reflecting on the change he felt when moving into high school Ali has said it was "the first time I got out of my town and saw new cities like Diyarbakır, Malatya, Elaziğ. I had many different friends – leftists, rightists." He has

said there were some fifty girls and three hundred and fifty boys attending the school. He has said he was "close with all" and had no "bitter experiences."

Ali has said, "I changed a lot at school. I started to realize what was going on in Turkey, a consciousness started to form at that time. I met political figures at school, started to read books and never stopped after that." He has gone on to say that at his high school "there were some Kurdish, some nationalist and some religious groups. I was aware of different groups. I was closer to Kurds and had good relations with religious groups…I was able to be close with leftists because I was Kurdish…I was an observant Muslim and there were mosques in our school – [the mosque was] always a centre of political activity. Each religious group had its own quarters, for preaching, ceremonies and gathering. I could understand differences and had no problem with anyone. I even spoke and had friends from nationalist groups." It was during high school that Ali has said, "I began to understand what Kurdish nationalism meant because I had started reading."

Ali has said that during high school the idea of "university became more realistic." He has said, "I was one of the most successful kids. The teachers encouraged me." He has also commented on influences from "older guys" saying "[My] literature teacher was the biggest influence on me, [he was] like a model teacher to me. He had charisma and authority, never beat any kids, rarely shouted and everyone respected him. He wasn't nationalist, not strict and had good relations all round. I looked up to him." Ali has said that during high school he grew used to being away from his family quite quickly. He has said "In summer holidays I stayed in Malatya, studied and prepared for university. I wanted to study [as] I *had* to get into university. I wanted to secure a good university entrance exam mark. I visited my family every three or four months." Ali has said at this point that he had more friends in Malatya towards the end of high school than he had in his "home town." He spent his weekends in Malatya where he came into contact with university students, "mostly religious [people]." He has said, "They influenced my understanding of religion and nationalism. They were sociology students… They gave us all kinds of books. One of them was an English teacher and encouraged me to do the same [as him]… I was

good at languages and my teachers and peers encouraged me." Ali chose to study in the language department from grade nine which filtered him into the areas of translation, English teaching and American literature from then on.

Ali completed high school in 2002. He had secured a position at a good university in Istanbul in Istanbul studying English language teaching, which he started in September of the same year. It was his first time in Istanbul and he has said that "my friends from Malatya created connections [for me] to mostly Kurdish friends in Istanbul." Ali met with these "friends" and lived together with them. Originally they were four students, all of whom were Kurds, one a Zaza-speaker. They spoke both Turkish and Kurmanji in the house. He has said that his flatmates changed constantly throughout his time in Istanbul and by the end of his stay he had lived with people from all over Turkey. Ali has said "accommodation is a big problem for students in Istanbul." It took Ali one and a half hours to get to university. Ali received a scholarship in his second semester. Before that time he had received financial support from his family which was a "really big burden on them… I was spending more money than they earned." During this time Ali started English tutoring and has said that "by the end of second year I was economically independent… I worked at a private language centre and then at a newspaper, the English webpage of Zaman Daily." He has added that "They [the Zaman Daily] began printing a Daily. I worked for about fifteen months there. It was a professional job so I could support myself."

Ali has said that the move to Istanbul was "not as big as when I first went to Malatya." He has said, "I was already aware of Turkey, ideological boundaries and differences in Turkey. At University I furthered my understanding." He has noted that "at my university I didn't get into close contact with any group. I was more active at high school. The atmosphere was more individualist [at university] – I didn't spend much time there outside class hours." By his third year at university Ali has said he started to regret having chosen language teaching so he deferred his enrolment and took a year off. During this time he started preparing for the university entrance exam again saying that "language teaching was not appealing to me, it was dry. I wanted to study economy." Ali did not end up studying in the Economics

department but resumed his teaching degree and graduated a year after his original class. Ali has said his final year was “very busy” as he was “studying, working at the newspaper and tutoring English.” He has said “I did badly in classes.” Ali has also said, “I started to read social academic books because I had decided to get a graduate degree in social sciences, not in languages.” He graduated in June 2007. At this time he continued to work for an aid agency, IHH, which he had started doing translation for in 2006. He left the Zaman Daily saying it was an “Islamist newspaper.” Referring to Fethullah Gulen, the newspaper’s owner, Ali has commented, “I was aware of who I was working for and the stance of the paper. It was boring to me, like mental torture. They appreciated my work but I didn’t like working for them.”

Ali applied to undertake a Masters at a university in Ankara and was initially denied entrance in June of 2007 only to be accepted the following January. He has said “I really wanted to study about the Middle East. I am interested in culture and language, lifestyles, plurality and a bit in ethnicity, rather than politics.” Ali has said he wants to gain sociological and historical knowledge of the region and to learn Arabic. He has said he is mostly happy with the education at his current university. Ali has said he is enrolled as a non-thesis student and does not want to pursue an academic career. He has said, “I just want knowledge to use in a job. [I want] to work in civil society, working for an NGO or the United Nations... I want to live in a Middle Eastern country for ten years. [I want] to live that experience and work maybe in Syria or Egypt.”

Ali has said that classes at his university are “good enough quality” though he expresses concern over certain instances when “the instructors fail to distance themselves from their ideological stances.” He has qualified this recalling a discussion he had in a class he attended. “[The discussion] went on for an hour and a half and we spoke about everything regarding Kurds. It started with issues to do with Iraq - [the teacher] was calling some Iraqi leaders bad names. So I said, ‘why do you call these people bad names? They are legitimate [actors]. They are recognised by the international community, recognised by the Iraqi constitution. You have to call them as they deserve, it can’t be ‘traitor’ or something else.’” Ali has said “he was

insulting certain Kurdish figures in Iraq. I asked the instructor, 'why?' Kurdistan is recognised by the Iraqi constitution, recognised by the whole world. Even by Turkey because Turkey recognises the Iraqi constitution… How will you react if I call those guys in Northern Cyprus as you call those guys in Iraq… only Turkey recognises Northern Cyprus, nobody else in the world does. I tried to make a comparison. The discussion started that way and…In the end I decided it is really useless and futile. The discussion didn't make any difference… people started to act emotional. It wasn't personal, nobody was addressing anybody personally." Ali has expanded further saying, "I have been realizing more, and it has been for a while now, in every discussion, everything regarding Kurds is associated with the PKK. They suppress the conversation. They fail to discuss Kurdish issues outside of the PKK. So, I thought, 'what's the point, why should I bother discussing this as I know what they are going to say.'" Ali has said that in this discussion "only one [person] was trying to establish an empathy with the Kurds. I will never discuss Kurdish issues in that class again." Ali has commented further saying, "I no longer engage in discussion over Kurdish issues in general. If I start discussing these issues and how I really think, what I believe, my views, what I think about Kurdish developments, I have to distance myself from the people around me. I have friends from Turkish regions … [it is] hard to find common ground on this issue so I prefer not to discuss it. If you do discuss it and your differences are exposed it becomes hard to live, work or study with them. For example, my room mate - I know we don't agree on the Kurdish issue - I would never discuss it with him. He is a good guy, we share religion and we are classmates. I prefer to keep this." Ali has qualified his feelings at this point saying, "I am always aware of being Kurdish. You can't forget it [as] it's on the television, in the newspapers, in everyday discussion. I can feel the fact of being different."

Ali has said that "there is officially no Kurdish language instruction at university. Of course there should be." He has explained himself saying, "We [Turkey] have a Kurdish population of what some say is about twenty million, some say over twenty. They should not be alienated from the state and government but the opportunity to study their culture, their language is not there. So they are doing it informally." Ali has said he believes that "providing them, [Kurds], with the opportunity to do this

legally and officially, [will allow them to] start to feel like a part of the country… I think it will move them away from separatist movements." Expanding on this issue, Ali has said that Kurdish language instruction is "needed. There are language departments in Turkish universities that teach almost half of the languages spoken in the world. Like Chinese, like Hebrew, African languages, Asian languages. Why not Kurdish? It will be more beneficial, you are teaching the language of part of your population."

Ali has said, "I rarely engage in campus activities…. I don't know the atmosphere of the campus. I spend very little time on campus." He has said that he believes the university he attends is an "open place" yet has added that "[my university in Istanbul] was more open and free. Students and teachers were more tolerant, girls attended classes in headscarves which is unimaginable at [my current university]. [At my old university there was a] Kurdish Literature club, we had Kurdish classes, Kurdish activities, Kurdish writers and journalists were invited and gave speeches… [there was] a lot more activity." Ali has said he believes that there is a greater role to be played by students in developing his university's campus by stating, "[One] won't be granted a freedom if [one] doesn't ask for it or demand it… that is a general thing. In Turkey, citizens are granted things only if the people ask for it – pressure has to come from the bottom." Commenting upon the community at his university Ali has said that people are generally "centrist which is pro-state…teaching the official ideology such as Kemalism, statism and secularism." He has said most students at the university agree upon secularity, are anti-government (that is, anti-AKP) and against the Higher Education Council (YÖK). Ali has said "I have heard that activist people - especially Kurdish activist students – they are experiencing many problems with the administration and the instructors. I hear this from them." Ali has said, "I attend Kurdish classes on campus. Actually, I can say I am not an active activist. I mostly am for peaceful activism, not attending protest marches. [I am interested in] the Kurdish language and Kurdish literature, studying it and developing it. [These things] appeal more to me than Kurdish politics. I teach Kurdish to some friends, I support cultural issues of Kurds, literary and linguistic issues but I try to distance myself from politics and even sometimes from discussing it." Ali has said, "I sense

that people are moving away from practical issues to more theoretical issues. Instead of organising marches they have started giving Kurdish classes, having discussion groups."

When speaking of his personal future Ali has said, "I have so little plan about my future. I feel like I am moving away from everything regarding nationalist and ethnic differences. I no longer want to discuss these issues. I want to live - not partying, as I am an observant Muslim, also a Kurd - I want to reduce my Muslim and Kurd side to intellectualism. I want to move away from any sort of activism, of course I am not an activist, but to get out of that area completely." Ali has said that he wants to engage in "something that has nothing to do with the state or any ideological goal."

Respondent 4 – Jala

Jala was born in 1983 in a village of Muş. Her father is a pharmacist and her mother works at home. Jala has an older sister who is a lawyer and a younger brother who was born in 1992. When Jala turned seven her family migrated to Izmir in order for her to start primary school. They moved there after her father's brothers had migrated – "My dad has four older brothers who all moved to Izmir. Three still live there." She has said, "At that point we lived in Erzurum and my older sister had completed one year of primary school over there. My parents realised that the education there was bad quality so they wanted to move somewhere with higher quality education. So we moved to Izmir. I lived in Izmir until I finished high school. After that, I was accepted to study at a university in Ankara. Since that time I have lived in Ankara." Jala is currently enrolled in a PhD at her university in Ankara.

Jala grew up speaking Turkish. She has said, "I always spoke Turkish. My mother is from a village of Erzurum. They have a perception like this - Turkish is an indicator of modernity, so forget Kurdish. The more Turkish you speak the better it is for you. And so my mother and the others always spoke Kurdish amongst themselves (but always mixed with Turkish) and Turkish to me." Jala's father was born in a village of Muş and learnt Turkish as his second language. She has said, "In order for our

education to improve, they always spoke to us in Turkish, because of that I don't know Kurdish. I want to learn Kurdish but the current available resources are not so strong. The courses that are available are merely symbolic - they represent a reaction… so I don't know how I can learn it." Jala has said that she tries to understand Kurdish when she hears her friends speaking it but that she has not developed her skills in the language very far.

Jala's mum and dad are Sunni Muslims but she is not religious. She has said, "My father cannot be counted as being very religious, he just conforms to his surroundings. [My parents] didn't give us a very tough religious education. My mother is a believer but they didn't pressure us at home [to be religious]."

Jala does not remember much of her time in Muş except that there was a lot of snow. Later her family moved to Erzurum where they had many relatives. She has said, "My mother's relatives are over there, my father has a chemist there… my mother and father have moved back there. When I was in the fourth grade, due to our economic circumstances we moved back there and my father opened a pharmacy. And now, they spend half their time in Izmir and the other half in Muş."

Jala has recalled her memories of moving to Izmir saying, "…It is a very vivid memory for me. When I first went to school I felt oppressed *("ezik").* My Turkish wasn't that good. I didn't speak Kurdish but my Turkish was different [from the other children]. I understood that I was different. So it was really difficult for me to adapt. I found women with makeup scary, my teacher used to wear heaps… I remember that really well. Also, my friends were a little bit more 'high society' and 'modern' than I was used to. At that time we felt Kurdish but knew that we weren't able to say 'we are Kurds' in public. So we weren't openly saying that we were Kurdish… But my mum and family have some patriotic beliefs ("*yurt severlik bilinçleri var*") and they didn't want us to forget that we were Kurdish in the home… My father is in the DTP, he was working at party meetings. Despite this, they would always tell us, when you're outside don't show off [who you are]. It was around 1989. That was a very fast period from the perspective of Kurds. I have a memory

from primary school, something that I still find quite traumatic. I said to my best friend at the time… I didn't know how I understood this but I knew she didn't like Kurds… So I asked her, "If I was a Kurd, you know I am not, but if I was, what would you have felt?" She replied, "I would have strangled you" ("*Boğardım*"). It was really bad, I still remember it well." Speaking of her primary school briefly Jala has said, "I went to a standard school, it wasn't a school with many kids from very rich families. There were people from usual families. There were worker's children and doctor's children. There were other Kurdish students. We found each other later on. It was a kind of situation where we would come together and whisper, "Hey! Do you know this song?" It was something else. We all had other friends apart from each other. But the conversations I would have with Kurdish kids were always more genuine. It felt as though we were siblings (*"kardeşlik*"), it appeared like that. Even if you didn't get along too well [with the other Kurdish child], you were able to make this kind of connection."

Bayram celebrations were important for Jala's family because it was a time when all of their relatives would come together. She has said, "It was like a ceremony, we would feast, visit graves and then sit all together." Jala has added at this point, "Another thing, which is not a tradition but rather something that we celebrated, is *Newroz*. Given that my family are 'patriots' [*Newroz*] was an important day for them. At least, this was the case while we were in Izmir. Later our family became scattered. We didn't celebrate [*Newroz*] every year, because some years there were conflicts. Whenever there were conflicts my family would not join and they didn't want or allow me to either. But if something was organised by the leftists in our suburb, for example if they organised an activity or to meet at a place, then we would join in. But we would never involve ourselves in anything dangerous."

Jala has spoken of her parents' families saying, "My mother is one of six. I guess they were twelve or sixteen siblings before. My father was one of seven, but now they are six. They were fifteen originally. They don't remember how some of the children died. One of them died when something fell on him, another drowned and I don't know about the rest. They had so many children. It seems like a worthless thing

over there. Like they think, 'whatever happens lets have kids.'" Jala and her family were always close with their relatives until things changed in recent years. She has said, "We would always get together but then there were issues over a will and money and we broke away from them. The relations are still tense. They are not completely out of contact but they prefer not to see each other. I visit them in Muş sometimes but I really don't know how their life is going over there. I just go for a couple of days as a guest. I spend my holidays in Izmir. My little brother is still a high school student in Izmir so we still have a house where my mum also lives half the time; she comes and goes from Muş."

Jala started middle school in 1994. Her schooling was disrupted when her father received a prison sentence and her family moved house and the children changed schools. She has commented at this point, "My father was not always politically active but he was always defensive. How can I explain? Once you have lived a sort of pain, [it does not go away easily]. He was charged with aiding an illegal organisation ('*yardım yataklık')*. After that happened it became a bit difficult [for my family]. My Mum pressured him a lot. My Father was a fugitive for some five years. Before that we had a lot of possessions like a house and a pharmacy. [When my Dad was a fugitive] all of them were sold. We had no house. My Mother would always say, 'I have suffered a lot, I am in such pain' ("*ben cok çektim, ben cok aci çekiyorum*"). I think she blamed it on Dad, so he felt pressure and tried to distance himself [from political activity] - at least to have a family house. Then he started to concentrate on work. At one point my mother also started working. She said [to my Dad] 'if you are working, I will work too'. She started working in the women's arm of the DTP. But of course my mum was a lot more in control. She left any time she thought something may go wrong or affect her. My dad stayed in prison for a couple of months, later he was a fugitive for five years and then he received a pardon."

Jala's parents have said they moved to Izmir for her and her siblings' education but she is not entirely sure. She has said that, "Later on they were very relaxed about our education. We organised our own courses, took care of school. My parents would never come to teacher-parent meetings ("*Veli Toplantılarına hiç gelmezler").* At the

same time I also said “don’t come.” But now I think, “I wish they had come.” Commenting upon her own approach to education Jala has said, “I was a sensitive student, I still am. I was a good student in primary school, but I guess the other students just weren’t that good because I didn’t study very much. In middle school I was an average level student, I was never much of a nerd. But I wasn’t really lazy either. Then I worked hard for the last two years to get into university. I was an average student.” Jala has said that she started to be politically active while in middle school. She has said, “We were always involved in politics. It started in middle school when we would give each other cassettes. We would read about Deniz Gezmiş… so we became more political. It all happened at the same time.” She has spoken of her time at high school saying, “Then in high school we were secretly putting out a magazine with friends. It was called ‘Path’ (*Patika).* I wasn’t writing so much but was checking the articles. It would be about, for example, famous leftist poets, literature, politics, problems of high school students. We just distributed it among students. Of course we only gave it to those students that we didn’t find dangerous. We worked on *Patika* for two years or so.”

Jala felt caught between different social groups in high school. She has reminisced, “When I was in high school I always felt that I was a leftist but also that there was something different [about me]. I still felt different – like I had when we first came to Izmir… that feeling remained. I never totally felt like I was from Izmir. I don’t know exactly how I was different… I wasn’t as modern as my peers I guess. Sometimes this was a problem… for example I didn’t like the places where [my peers] hung out, I didn’t like what they wore or the music they listened to. I was always wearing second hand stuff. For me, the older clothing was, the better it was. That is how I rolled (“*ben öyle takıldım”*). That is how I was but [my peers] were a bit more upper class. Bergama was a more humble place but I had moved by this time to Karşıyaka. So it was like that - I was a part of it but I also wasn’t (“*hem oralıyım, hem de değilim”*). These weren’t my leftist friends.” Jala has gone on to say, “I was always forced to have different categories because I was divided between groups with different identities. I had class mates, generally girls, and we would joke around but I could only share things with them to a certain point. Then I had leftist friends that I

could share some things with but perhaps with them I couldn't muck and joke around so much because they always had things to achieve and were serious. They had positions to uphold." Jala has gone on to say, "In high school all my friends knew I was a Kurd. It wasn't so bad by then, the environment had changed or maybe I was different. It wasn't a problem. But there was something like this - "the fact that you are a Kurd is not a problem. But let's not talk about how you are a Kurd. We accept you like this. This is a defect but we tolerate it." It was like that, that is how they viewed the situation." Jala has said that after high school her path diverged from many of her peers and that they entered "a high society life". She sometimes bumps into old peers on the street in Izmir.

Jala loved reading in high school. She is not sure if she read a lot because she was a social or if she seemed asocial because she read a lot. She has commented, "I don't know whether it was the effect or the result but I always found myself reading in the break and not with my friends. But I don't know whether it was because my friends were different or I liked reading. I generally read novels, leftist novels and classics. There was a book called "Debate" (*Tartışma*) by Samim Kocagöz. I also read Orhan Pamuk and any book that talked about Deniz Gemiş's life. Gülümün Solduğu Akşam, Erdaloz. I read Gorky and Zola. In fact, I was very affected by Emile Zola's work. I generally read stuff like that, novels like that."

Jala has said, "Growing up I was a pretty introverted kid. My father being a fugitive really affected me. I am a pessimistic person and could not be counted as extraverted. Because of this, I was easily offended ("*çokda kırılacağım").* I could cry at any word and I really didn't understand people. An example of this is that conflict in which I had my rich friends and leftist friends and I didn't feel myself ("*kendimi ait hissedemiyordum*"). This caused me to always have bad feelings and maybe it is why I always wanted to read books." Jala has related her personal attributes to the decisions she made regarding tertiary education. She has said, "I always thought, 'what can I study? I should study something to help me understand people.' At first I was thinking of studying sociology. But then I thought of the need to earn money. After I read some of Freud, I decided to study psychology. I planned to study

psychology since my second year of high school. My parents wanted me to do something that would make me earn money. My parents wanted me to be a doctor. My big sister is a lawyer. But I didn't want to and I always acted like I knew what I was doing – because of this, they didn't interfere. They never said anything."

Jala has said that her parent wish for her to marry a Kurdish man. She has noted, "it is not a nationalist thing. But, they worry about cultural differences. So they wouldn't prefer even an Alevi. I had an Alevi boyfriend and they didn't say anything really. But they did say, "oh, we wish he was Sunni". They think it is a given that I will marry a Kurd ("'*Zaten Jala bir Kürt ile evlenecektir' diyorlar*")." Jala has said however that even if she married a Turkish man, her parents would not refuse it. Speaking personally, she has said she has no set criteria saying "I will marry a Kurd". She has commented however, "From my experiences I have come to understand that I get along better with Kurds. As soon as you say something, they understand what is to follow. Perhaps it is due to how we were brought up ("*yetişme tarzıdan dolayı*") or because of language. Even though I don't speak Kurdish I know the tones, the word games that are related to Kurdish. There is a joke about being Kurdish - "*Kürtlere örgüt, Kürdün bir prototipi vardır*". I find I can share these things better with Kurds. I had a Turkish boyfriend and sometimes I would just look emptily at him because I didn't understand him. I would tell a joke and he wouldn't understand and I thought, 'but that was really funny, why didn't you laugh?' After that I said to myself, 'no, I guess it will be better with a Kurd.'"

Jala's Mum is part of an "*aşiret,*" (tribe) "but over there it is more like a division between neighbourhoods" ("*mahalle mahalle ayrılmak gibi*"). She has said, "People call my mother's family the '*Amaller*'. I guess her grandfather was called Ömer and then the name developed and changed. They don't have a strong connection or official connection with the *aşiret.* In my mother's home town, there is *Amallar,* and other groups and when you speak with people, you may ask 'Who do you come from?' But we are not expected to stand up for one another." Jala has said that her father's family comes from a Sheikh and as such have no *aşiret.* She has commented, "My grandfather is seen as a sheikh-like figure over there [in Muş].

Jala moved to Ankara to attend university in 2000. She initially lived in the dorms on her university campus. She has said, “Before I had even chosen what to study, I knew I wanted to go to a school in a different city. I wanted to create my own house, organise myself, these are the first things you learn when you stay by yourself. These are good things. I enjoyed moving to Ankara.” Jala expended a lot of energy organising scholarships in order to fund her life in Ankara. She has said, “I received [scholarships] from a number of places. I had dorm and food scholarships and a scholarship from the ‘Contemporary Names Support Association’ (*Çağdaş Isimler Destekleme Dernegi)*. [This Association] usually give scholarships to Kurds in the name of assimilating them. A condition of receiving it is that you have to do something every week. There are these Ataturkist women (“*Atatürkçu Teyzeler var*”), who are republican and don’t talk about anything except *Atatürk*. We had to go and see them. For me it was like torture. They have a bunch of societies. I entered the folk music society and had to listen to older women singing songs at us (*“başımızda bir teyze durup şarkı söylüyor”).* [The condition of the scholarship] was something like this. They take attendance, so if you don’t go they don’t give you your scholarship money.”

Jala has spoken about how she adapted to a new social life in Ankara – “When I came here I lived much the same problem [as I had in Izmir]. Feeling distanced from the rich kids et cetera. Then I got a boyfriend who was involved politically (“*örgütlü birisi*”) so we started doing things together like going to political organisations.” Jala remained depressed in her early years in Ankara. She has said, “There were times when I really wanted to just hit my head against the wall and there was in fact no reason.” She has said that after a while, after hanging out with leftists and entertaining nostalgic and romantic ideas and creating her own home, she began to “open up.” She has commented at this juncture, “For a long time I wasn’t involved in political activities (“*örgütlenemedim*”) because I always thought, ‘I am listening to everything and it seems like you always have to know everything that is going on’. I never felt at home in any organisation (“*örgüte ait hissedemedim kendimi*”). That was pretty bad, floating, not feeling as though I belonged anywhere. I also didn’t join

the DTP. I think it was a reaction that remained from my family's experience. I thought, 'my parents are patriots so I can't be' *("onlar yurtseverler… ben olamam*."). The truth is that I don't completely think like them." She has said that once again she felt caught in the middle.

Jala has expressed the opinion that Kurdish lessons are needed at Turkish universities. She has argued that, "There are many people who want to learn Kurdish. It is also very important politically that Kurds feel that they exist ("*Kürtlerin kendilerini var hissetmenini için çok önemli").* There are some [Kurdish language] courses but they are usually more symbolic than effective. I really want to learn Kurdish but the courses are still very unprofessional. I think they should open [Kurdish courses] in universities so they may be supported in a professional capacity. It would be very good." Jala has gone on to say, "It is also important for the Kurdish language itself. Those that work on the Kurdish language have said that it is a language that hasn't modernised. Since it has ceased being used, there are no new terms being developed. There are no technological terms for example. Because of this, some sort of ridiculous, mixed language is being developed. When people try to translate things, the things they translate, there are not enough people using any such words. Villagers are using the language - so if you translate the word for "freezer" into Kurdish, they're not going to use it. They don't have freezers. So perhaps they need to develop [Kurdish] into an academic language - that would be very good.

Jala has said that she has been engaged as a Kurdish person during class discussions at her university. She has recalled, "In my department they sometimes say, 'people are inside nationalism without even realising.' Sometimes it is necessary to remind people. Perhaps people need to get rid of some prejudices. For example, I had a teacher, she was talking about prejudice. Prejudices can manifest such that one doesn't say bad things about a certain group but will simply fail to mention a group. She referred to such things as not mentioning Alevis or not talking about Armenians in Turkey. These were the examples she gave. Interestingly, she didn't say "Kurds" and in doing so made her own prejudice very clear. It was as though she didn't realise either. Until a few years ago, even saying the word 'Kurd' was difficult in

Turkey. For example there is discussion around the way to pronounce 'PKK'. 'Pe Ke Ke' is difficult for most people to say so they say 'Pe Ka Ka' instead. People who don't like the PKK say this. In fact, nobody has to like the PKK. Those that say 'Pe Ka Ka' are people in Turkey who view the PKK very badly. I guess after a while this became something 'sacred'. Just as '*Turban*' is now '*Baş Örtüsü'* (two different ways of referring to the headscarf worn by Muslim women, each with a varied political meaning)." Jala has gone on to talk about the divergence in semantics saying, "Before there was nothing like that but as soon as a certain group lays claim to a [phenomenon], people tend to choose a certain form. This choice represents an allegiance to a certain group. Actually, in Turkish the letter K is sometimes pronounced "Ka" instead of "Ke." But, Kurds view the pronunciation 'Pe Ka Ka' as an attempt to portray the PKK as something very offensive, to make it appear uncivilised ("*Kaba göstermek için. Kaba gözüksun diye*"). And so, Kurds in Turkey say and have become the owners of the pronunciation "Pe Ke Ke." Referring back to her experience in class Jala has said, "When this happened in class I dint raise my hand I just took note of it. Perhaps, given that I have explained this story to a few other people, I should have raised my hand and got it out of my system but I didn't. It stayed inside."

Jala enjoys life on her university campus. She has said, "When I compare my university and its campus to other places in Ankara it seems very isolated. Everyone at the uni has received a good education and they have some amount of perspective. It is as though an artificial situation is created. I don't know Europe but if you placed this university in Europe it seems like it would fit in. But it doesn't fit in with Kızılay for example. There is a very different world here. When you hang out here for too long you can become very surprised by the news you receive from outside. Everyone thinks everyone is pretty much the same but for example most students at my university can't believe Melih Gokcek's presence in Ankara. From our perspective, something like his being elected mayor is not possible. So I really like it, I find it very free here despite some problems." Elaborating upon her perceptions of campus life Jala has said, "We are able to say a number of things here that we can't say outside. I haven't seen another university so here seems to be the best … but there

are many people who complain about this. They say, 'We do not have enough freedom at our university'. There are problems of course, like JITEM coming into the school – things like that should not happen. They put a camera in the Architecture faculty and that is also a problem. Yesterday the students boycotted their lessons over it. I guess they put it there to watch, I am not really sure why. The Architecture faculty used to be the most political place. They even divided sitting areas according to organisations… Social sciences used to be like that too apparently."

Jala has said that her university has a reputation for having a leftists leaning but that she believes this is not necessarily the case. She has noted that the colour of her university is changing as more upper class students have started to come due to the phenomena of private high school education and private courses. She has clarified, "I don't think the university has a certain political mission." She has gone on to say, "Now there are hardly any Kurds from the east coming to this university. In the sixties and seventies those that were smart and could use their heads could be accepted into university. But now, without attending private lessons it is almost impossible to enter university. Leftists are usually from lower classes and because of economic reasons they cannot attend this university."

Speaking of her personal activity as a Kurdish person, Jala has said, "I don't involve myself in Kurdish-related groups like the DTP supporters. Of course they don't have a real society but they have some groups. I don't know about them because I don't join. I have joined a socialist feminist collective however. I join in their activities and this is very important for me. I feel like I belong there ("*Kendime ait bir yer buldum*"). I find it important to have a school life and an outside life otherwise the two begin to disagree. If you start to think in a structured or traditional way you start to stop giving importance to other issues, like political issues." When Jala finishes university she is contracted to go and teach at a university in the South East of Turkey. She has explained her situation saying, "I am an instructor ("*öğretim üyesi*"). I have an agreement that stipulates that I work here as an assistant and study and then I have to go to a particular university. It seems very far off, but the place I will move

to is not such a bad place. But the other day my friend came from there and really, it was like he had escaped from the place. I will have to stay six or seven years there I guess."

Respondent 5 – Dilhar O'Reilly

Dilhar O'Reilly was born in 1980 in a village in the district of Diyarbakır. His village's name was changed from a Kurdish name to a Turkish name at the beginning of the nineties. Dilhar is one of ten children, six girls and four boys. He has briefly explained each of his siblings saying, "My youngest sister is twenty and she is at university in Istanbul. Then I have two more sisters neither of whom wanted to go to university. They got married. Then there is me. I have an older sister who finished high school and then didn't continue to study. She lives at home. Then I have two older sisters who are both married. I have two older brothers who are both engineers. One works in Izmir and the other in Muğla. My oldest brother studied a PhD at university." Dilhar's father has always and continues to work as a farmer and his mother is a house wife.

Dilhar went to primary school in his village. He stayed in his village until he was twelve or thirteen. He has said, "… the school in the village only taught up to grade five, so once I had completed that I became a boarding student. At first I was studying at a middle school in Batman and then I moved to Urfa." Dilhar has said that he moved from his middle school in Batman to live with his older brother who was studying in Urfa because his family home in their village was demolished ("*evimiz yıkıldi*") "due to all the events [in the South East] at the time." He has elaborated on this by saying, "[Our family] couldn't go back to the village. The only means we had to get by was agriculture ("*Tek geçim kaynağımız tarim").* We owned vehicles in the village which we operated in order to earn money. From 1993, my father couldn't go back to the village for two years due to the intense conditions in the area at the time. In those times, the political activity of the PKK was very intense. They were organising in the villages. They would come and go to our village. The army at this time was trying to intervene in this activity ("*Asker müdahale etmek istiyorlardı"*). Most of the villages in that area were given the ultimatum that either

their villages would be burned or they were to become "protectors" ("*Korucu*") [for the Turkish military]. We were given such an offer but my family refused to become "*Korucu*". And so, they [the Turkish army] came one day and scattered everything ("*dağıttilar").* They came to the houses of some head people in the village and dispersed their belongings every where. They burnt some peoples' homes. And in the end, we couldn't go back to the village because the army was looking for my father. At that time my older brother was a student in Urfa and so all the kids in my family who were attending school at the time moved in with him. I studied in Urfa for two years." After staying in Urfa for two years Dilhar moved back to Batman to attend high school.

After completing high school Dilhar was accepted into a university in Adana. He graduated from university in 2005 and moved on to do a Masters degree at Dicle University. Dilhar then applied to study a PhD at a university in Ankara. He was accepted and is currently in the second semester of his PhD.

Speaking more of his family Dilhar has said, "My mother doesn't know Turkish. Well, she speaks a little Turkish ("*Annem çat pat biliyor*"). Because of this my relationship with my mum developed only in Kurdish. In our family, about ninety percent of our conversation is in Kurdish. Depending on the surroundings we are in, the topic we are talking about or whatever the moment brings, the language we speak can vary. Generally, when we speak about serious topics and especially when we speak about people, we speak in Turkish. Apart from my mum, we can all express ourselves in Turkish." Dilhar has said that his father completed a primary school education and his mother didn't attend school at all. Dilhar himself learnt Turkish when he began to attend primary school at the age of seven. He has said, "Before that I only spoke Kurdish because that is the language we spoke at home." He has said that the situation was the same for all his friends at school. He has added however that he had an ear for the Turkish language from watching television, listening to the radio and being exposed to Turkish-language newspapers. Dilhar has elaborated on the experience of learning Turkish at primary school by saying, "It was forbidden to speak Kurdish in class in order that we would learn Turkish. I remember my primary

school teacher really well. I think he was a good person. Because the majority of the population there [around Diyarbakır] are Kurdish, the relationships formed in the village schools were not hard/cold ("*köy okullarında ilişkiler cok katı olmiyordu*"), at least it never was for me. The teachers were very scholarly, especially in regards to language. They always taught us of the importance of education. They would emphasise that we were learning Turkish for a purpose. They didn't not emphasise the fact that Kurdish was forbidden. That is how we were taught. For example, my older brothers' primary school teacher was my uncle. He was the teacher in the village. According to what my brothers have told me, he would get angry at them when they spoke Kurdish, but as I have said, he did so because he wanted them to learn Turkish." At this point Dilhar has commented, "In fact, it is said that those people who learnt Turkish at primary school have a sounder knowledge of the language. For example, such people would learn Turkish from television and so they learnt a pure form of the language. Or they would develop their Turkish by reading newspapers. Our knowledge was developed in this way ("*Tek muhattap o*"). We always spoke Kurdish."

Dilhar has spoken of the role of religion in his family by saying, "My mum is the most connected to religion. We are Sunni Muslims. My mother and father have both made the pilgrimage to Mecca ("*Annem ve Babam hacıdır*")." He has said that his father is more relaxed than his mother when it comes to religion and that if it was up to his mother they would perform the pilgrimage five more times. Dilhar has said that none of his siblings are very involved in religion and has qualified this by noting that none of his sisters cover their heads. He has added at this point, "Of course my mum taught us some things and she sent us to Qur'an School when we were children. I also remember we would go to the mosque. But [my parents] never forced us into [religion]. My sisters and my mum fast [at Ramazan] but none of my brothers do. I don't fast either, I am not religious."

Dilhar has reminisced about growing up in his village saying, "My life in the village was a lot simpler than my life since. We lived with nature. We had a garden. We would spend much of our time in the apple and walnut orchards. My deceased

grandmother ("*rahmetli ninem*") would always get angry at us for picking unripe walnuts. When you pick walnuts your hands turn red from the skin so she would always make us show her our hands and then she would get angry with us for having picked them." Dilhar has recalled fond memories of playing with his friends in saying, "Playing games in the village was intense. We would play hide and seek, we would go on picnics and we would spend time at the stream." He has noted at this point that the gardens that his family owned played an important part in his childhood. He has recalled, "My grandma never wanted any strangers to enter her gardens. It made her angry. We would go and collect other kids from the village and then sneak into our own gardens like thieves." Dilhar has drawn a picture of his village at this point by giving the following description, "Our house in the village was on top of a hill ("*höyük*"). So the house was built some 56 metres higher than the surrounding land. The other houses in the village were built at the foot of the hill where my uncles lived. Our village was the greenest of all the villages in the region. It was such a nice place that people from neighbouring villages would come as guests to our home to feel the wind that blew at the top of the hill. My deceased grandmother would always sit on top of the hill and keep an eye on the gardens. So, whenever we came to the gardens with the other village kids she would yell out to us, 'Who is there? Who is there?' I would reply, 'It is me,' and she would reply, 'Oh, it is you my son'. Then we would all go into the garden and have apple races. We would pass our days like this."

Dilhar has recalled how he spent his evenings as a child in the village, saying that in the evenings the men from the village would meet in the guest room ("*misafir odasi*" in Turkish and "*oda meyvana*" in Kurdish) of his family home. He has said, "From what I remember, they would listen to the radio, especially to more objective news like the BBC, and comment and interpret what they heard. We, as kids, would bring them tea and empty their ash trays. We had a big house." Dilhar has said that "The women would hang out in a different part of the house. It was not like we had a women's and a men's section ("*haremlik ve selamlik değildi*"). Whenever I got bored of the men I would go and hang out with the women. They would sit and gossip, they could speak about millions of things. I would listen to them, I enjoyed it. I spent

more time with the women [than with the men]." Elaborating on the evening time ritual Dilhar has said, "It wasn't every single evening but in the end they did gather together a lot." He has gone on to explain further the daily life in his village by saying, "When you live in a village, work on the farm starts at five in the morning. The women would look after the animals. Then they would clean the garden. Then they would have lunch and then take care of their own jobs like washing, cooking and gossip. Then after dinner, people would go to other families home to drink tea. Most of the people in the village would come to our home. There was no official name for this activity but it may be called *Serghueb* in Kurdish which essentially means to come together and talk. Even my school teachers would come."

Dilhar has recalled some annual events from his childhood. He has said, "On the date of the new year in the Muslim calendar (*Hicri takvim*) we would have a thirteen day party. At that time we would play games. A couple of boys would change their sex by wearing women's clothes and walk around from house to house. They would get money and food. We had such games." Dilhar has recalled that wedding celebrations were conducted differently in his village saying that there was always a massive attendance. He has commented, "no matter whose wedding it was, everyone would join in and help." Dilhar has also said that they celebrated April 23 each year by saying, "When I was a child the twenty-third of April was important for us. Looking back on it now it seems a little insensitive. We earned an above average income in the village. Our village was a privileged place, and so compared to other villages we were seen as a greater possibility. Our family would put on our best clothes and go to April 23 celebrations. In fact, I remember going off with a Turkish flag in my hand. Looking back on it, it seems very strange." Dihar has also said that *Bayrams* are important in his family. He has commented, "It had an importance because everyone in the family definitely comes home at these times." Explaining the celebration Dilhar has said, "On *Bayram* we would wake in the morning and go to the mosque with all the men in the village. After this everybody would gather in a house at about eleven in the morning. In our village there is a tradition that our family always provides the food. The tradition was passed down from my grandfather. We would have feasts. The women and children did not join the men. Instead, they prepare food

according to how many people are in each family in the village and then package it and give it to each household. So, according to the population and how many children each household had [the women in my family] would make an appropriate amount of salads, rice, meat and desserts and drop it over to their house. As the children we would give everybody sweets. And when my grandmother was alive we would collect and distribute apples. This tradition continues now. I have only ever been separated from my family for three *Bayrams*. These include the last two *Bayrams* this year. We all come together the night before *Bayram*."

Dilhar has said, "My paternal uncles lived in the village as well some other, more distant relatives." He has gone on to say that there were three leading families in his village and some fifty or sixty houses. Each of the three main families had land in the village. He has said, "These families would work their land by employing other people in the village. For example, members of the head families give their land to normal villagers to work on (that is, those people in the village not from one of the head families). The leading villagers say 'take and operate this land. You may plant tobacco or cotton, whatever you like. Half of the final profit is mine'". Cherries, peaches, pears, apricots and apples grew in the village.

Speaking of his family currently Dilhar has said, "My family lives in the village in the summer and move to the city [Diyarbakır] in the winter due to the cold weather." He has said that he stays with his family in summer but that life in his village "doesn't have the same flavour." He has added, "There are a lot less houses. All the relationships between people have changed since my childhood. Now, when I go back, within a couple of days I start to become bored."

Dilhar has recalled, "The saddest moments [in my childhood] were when I lost my younger sister in an accident and when my sister who was one and half years older than me died because a gun exploded in her hand. These events played a very important role in my life." He has also mentioned his house being wrecked as another sad memory. He has noted that he didn't witness these events but he saw the end result. Elaborating further, Dilhar has said, "My father and mother were there at

the time and I saw the nervous breakdowns they had after. I only saw the house in its demolished state. That alone was enough to annoy me ("*O bile yeterince can sıkıcıydı*"). For example, there was a flat screen television that they tried to smash. When it didn't break, they opened up the back of the television and chopped it apart with an axe. They did things like that. They chopped the walls with an axe. They mixed up rice with bulgur so that they couldn't be used. They threw all our belongings outside, overturned all our appliances, tore apart all of our beds and mattresses. It was like that." Dilhar has said that his parents didn't go back to the village for two years but were later forced to return as their only source of income was their lands. He has added, "We were supported by friends and family through that period."

Speaking of his relationship with his siblings and family Dilhar has said that he is closer with his sisters than his brothers. He has added that he has grown closer to his brothers since they have been married and that is mostly because of their wives – "I didn't spend that much time with my older brothers as a child. I started primary school and they left the village to attend middle school. We never established a strong relationship. For example, my oldest brother is fifteen years older than me. We come from different periods. There are many reasons why I am not very close with my older brothers." Dilhar has gone on to speak of his relationship with his father, "My father, for example, would hardly ever touch us and would avoid showing us love. My brothers treated me much the same. They would never tell me anything directly ("*Bana direk soylenmezlerdi*"). It is because in Kurdish culture things are explained by allusions and hints ("*ima yolu ile*"). People don't tell you things directly. Instead they tell somebody else who will then come and tell you. You learn in this way. There is the fear that if you say something to somebody's face, the wall that is between you may be broken down or their reaction may be problematic. Our attitude was dictated by what others thought ("*Başkası ne der, düşüncesi çok hakim*"). Because of this, for a long time, there was this sovereignty. Whatever we did we approached it with thoughts of what others say. Thoughts like, 'If we do something like that it may bring harm to our family. We must be careful of what we say and in whose company we speak'. We were a well known family in the area and

so were accountable for our mistakes. We had to behave." Dilhar has bone on to say that this is how he was raised and so after a while it affected even his language. He has added, "Perhaps it is because of such thoughts that I have such a fundamentally tense nature." Dilhar has said that he closer with his mum and noted, "Because I developed with women I was brought closer to women. I could always express myself more comfortably with women. My older sisters are some of the most important people in my life. Their openness and real love they show me from inside them makes me very attached to them. And this makes me really happy."

Dilhar has spoken of his experiences at school in Batman saying, "Middle school was like torture for me. I went from my village school to a private middle school ("*Kolej*"). As I have said, the environment at my primary school was friendly and sincere. Nobody ever tried to harm anybody else. Nobody made fun of another's deficits. Everybody was equal at the primary school in my village. My family sent me to a private middle school and most of the kids were rich. They would make fun of the way you spoke, what you wore and lots of other things. Things which were normal for me, things I was used to would be a topic to deride and mock for them. This was very difficult for me. It wasn't an easy transition." He has elaborated, "It was a very different life [at school in Batman]. The people were pretentious due to money. People would approach one another according to how much money they earned. I never faced a situation like this in my village. When I was in the village I could find common points with even the most ordinary people, I could always share something. But in Batman I took more care because anything could be mocked. They were always mucking around. I remember there being lots of fights at school between boys. Both girls and boys attended the school. The life I had learnt in the village when compared with the life I had at school in Batman, was very different. I received my first social slap in the face [in Batman] ("*hayatımdaki ilk sosyal tokatı orada yemiştim*").

After being at school in Batman for two years Dilhar moved to a state school in Urfa following the events that went down in his village. He has said, "I stayed in Urfa for two years and then moved back to Batman again. Urfa was a little different. My older

brothers were around so I had a more reliable shelter, I was able to defend myself better or at least that is what I thought." Dilhar was fortunate in the first days at school in Urfa as he was chosen as class president. He has said, "It was a chance occurrence. My class teacher was an English teacher and as such wanted to take attendance in English. The teacher wanted one of the students to do this and so asked who may be able to do it. Other people in the class didn't know English so I raised my hand and said "I can do it". Then the teacher asked me a few questions in English. I became the class president on my second day at school. Being given that status straight away and given that I was coming from a private school to a state school (when you compare private schools to state schools you can recognise the difference), it didn't take too long to get used to the changes and it passed comfortably."

Dilhar moved back to Batman for high school where he felt roasted once again. He has commented on certain transformations he felt at the time stating, "I viewed events differently. Kurdish ideas and opinions started to become more amplified. This is between 1996 and 1999 when events started to ripen. I wasn't very active, I have never been active but I did have a certain attitude [about it]." At this point Dilhar has taken a tangent to explain the political situation as he views it, "Here in Ankara you can see many fractions- from Marxists (*Marksist cepheler*) to *"yeni yolcular*" and from patriots ("*yurt severler*") to PKK supporters. But, in places like Diyarbakır and Batman you can't see such fractions. There was one group - there was nothing except patriots. Everyone was the same. As a result of this everything would turn over inside you. I think it was a disadvantage because there should be other groups, at least in order to discuss the current structure and to improve upon its weaknesses. But there was just one way of thinking." He has qualified what he means at this stage by saying, "Think as if there is just one party in a country. There is only one party for which people could vote for, no second alternative." Referring back to the situation in the South-East of Turkey at the time Dilhar has said, "As a result of [there being only one party], the party would not do anything in order to develop itself and acted as though it was enough for the people. And so people would only gather around one stance and that was, Kurdishness and struggle. The first time

I came across this outlook or these concepts was [during my high school years in Batman].” Dilhar has spoken of his reaction to this situation saying, “I didn’t involve myself in activities at school but for myself I questioned; ‘what is Kurdishness?’, ‘What is happening here?’ You are inside these events and so are face to face with it. You don’t realise you are living in an abnormal environment. Such a structure has been created that you think, ‘this is how it has to be’. However, you start to realise that there is in fact a problem and this is fact not the right way for it to be. ‘What is this?’ By observing how people live in other cultures and societies and by figuring out what minorities mean, one realises that that the existence of minorities are advantageous for countries.

Dilhar has spoken of other aspects of his life in high school by saying that he became more immersed in social life. He was introduced to literature and what he describes as “melancholic attitudes like love.” He read “the classics”, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy but has added, “I wasn’t very conscious of what I was reading. I felt more like I had to read them.” Dilhar was involved in the writing and circulation of a newspaper in high school but has said they only released three editions. He has said that he continued to speak Kurdish “most of the time” throughout high school but has noted, “We were speaking less Kurdish than when we were in primary and middle schools however. From this period in my life my Kurdish started to dwindle. When I was in the village it was my base language and then my level started to decrease in middle school and more so in high school. My Turkish began to improve.” He has commented further, “I was always reading in Turkish. In the end, the dangerous thing is that I think the way I express myself in the village is not the same as in the city. Also, the Kurdish language that we developed was suited to village life. For example, I cannot talk about literature or I can’t talk about and explain political issues in Kurdish. As a result of this, when we would speak of such issues, due to the fact that we couldn’t express ourselves in Kurdish we had no choice but to speak in Turkish.”

Dilhar’s parents place great importance on education. He as commented, “It is one of the points that my family feel the most proud of. In the area we live in I know

families that were of equal or better economic status than us, yet their children were educated at very low levels. My family places great importance on our education. In fact they were very strict about it. It is very important for there to be a leader in a family. If somebody paves the way, those behind are able to believe that they can accomplish things. My oldest brother acted to pave a way for us in a sense. In our family the girls were treated the same and lived under the same conditions as me. It was their choice to get married or not to."

Speaking of marriage in his family Dilhar has said "Some of my siblings have married Turks. My sister in law is a Turk from Izmir. There is no pressure in our family about whether we marry Turks or Kurds." Dilhar feels like marriage for him is a distant possibility. He has added tentatively, "If I was to think of being married I would want to marry a Kurd. It has nothing to do with nationalism or anything like that. I just want it in order to be able to speak the same language, due to my situation. If I was to marry with a non-Kurd it seems that it would be difficult as we would have two different make ups ("*Başka bir yapıda olması sanki her iki taraf içinde zor olacakmış gibi geliyor*"). I don't have definite limits I guess. I just think that and I may be wrong."

Dilhar's family has a 'tribal identity' but it is not something which ties his family down [to any structure or authority, it plays more of a nominal role]. He has said, "It is not something which determines who we are. It is just that there is an edifice like this in a village… I have never been included in any way. It is not at all institutionalised. It is like asking 'Where are you from?' And you reply, "Diyarbakır." "Ah, which aşiret?" "This aşiret." It is like that and nothing more for us. For example, my younger sisters, if asked which aşiret they belong to, they may not even answer the same way I would. We are not inside it."

After high school Dilhar was accepted into university in Adana on his second attempt. He lived in a house and was supported by a scholarship and money he received from his parents. He has spoken of his experience at university, "My years at university represent a time in my life where I matured and was moulded into the

person I am. I view it as the time when I defined my social identity and was able to grow. I can say that they were the best years of my life."

Dilhar has been at university in Ankara for seven months. It has taken him a while to adapt to Ankara and the new university. He has said, "I had a network of friends in Ankara when I moved here. Because I came from very different universities, the change to this university was quite big. This university is run very differently. I study here more than I have ever studied before. The interesting thing that I have felt at this university is that I always have to study. Even when I walk around outside, I feel like I should be studying. The thesis I wrote for my Masters was apparently important, my teachers thought as such. It corrected a lot of mistakes in previous work. But when I came to this university my confidence was turned upside down. I didn't feel worthy. I felt like I shouldn't be over confident and that I would screw up if I didn't study heaps. I felt insufficient. I felt that I had to give it what it deserved and that could not be done by sitting idle. So I had to work." Dilhar has noted that he has adapted and relaxed to this new environment now.

Commenting on Kurdish language education in Turkey Dilhar has said, "I think that Kurdish lessons should be available at least as an elective. And beyond that I believe there should be departments dealing with this topic. If there is Roma Literature Departments in this country, why shouldn't there be Kurdish Literature departments. We are speaking about a language that some 20 million people speak."

Dilhar does not involve himself in activities at university explicitly as a Kurdish person. He has gone on to say, "I discuss Kurdish issues as a Kurd depending upon who I am speaking with and what kind of situation I find myself in. I would not talk about [Kurdish issues] in a fascist situation ("*Faşist bi ortam olsa, ben dahil olmak istemem*"). In order for me to talk about it, it must be a situation where there are people will listen. My involvement must contribute in some way. If the situation is not like this, my reflex is to not become involved."

Speaking of university campus life Dilhar has said, “As far as I have observed, there is a lot of freedom on this campus and any opinion may be voiced. This is the third university I have been exposed to and it is the most open as far as I am concerned.” Dilhar believes that universities are not just about education. “Universities should act to provide a place where people are able to express themselves however they want. If this is restricted people will express themselves in other places and in a different way. Instead of limiting these activities, universities should act as institutions that encourage them.”

APPENDIX B

MACRO LEVEL FACTORS – RESPONDENTS' POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE KURDISH QUESTION

Respondent 1 - Güneş

Güneş has stated that "the Kurdish Question (*Kürt Meselesi)* is a historically entrenched thing. There is much to support this ("*bunu cok fazla dayanağı var*") and between Kurds themselves, in their chat and conversation, they always speak of it in terms of the past." He has said that this is not a problem that started in the 1980s, nor did it start in 1923. According to Güneş the Kurdish question of today stems from Ottoman times. "The Ottoman Empire was a decentralized form of governance. The central administration was in Istanbul and so other groups [in the Empire] were comfortable and able to deal with their own affairs…. Because of this, in Ottoman times any sort of 'Kurdish Question' was not so visible." He has elaborated on the nature of Kurdish autonomy in the Ottoman Empire arguing that "Kurdistan was being managed by *beylikler*… There were *beys* or *mirs* (roughly like Princes) whose powers ruled over tribal leaders…they [the Kurds] were comfortable governing their own affairs." He has gone on to say that "in the last years [of the Empire], in line with national movements that were developing all over the world, the Ottomans started to arrange for a more centralised form of governance. The empire was slowly shrinking and so with the *Tanzimat* the Ottoman elite started to redirect itself on the road to becoming more like a centralized nation state." In line with a move towards greater centralization Güneş has said that "they removed the *beylikler*, and replaced them with generals appointed from Istanbul. Those generals didn't have dialogue with the Kurds…They could not speak Kurdish. Kurdish tribes did not respect their authority and the situation was not legitimate because these people [the Ottoman generals] were not Kurdish. On top of this, *Shaykhs* gained power over tribal leaders." Güneş believes that it was at this historical juncture that Kurdish issues "exploded between Istanbul and the Kurds. At the very start people did not say, 'Hey we are Kurds, you guys can't do that.'" Their argument at the time, according to Güneş was more along the lines of, "'we have our own system of management, an

autonomy, or half-autonomy, but you are sending generals from Istanbul and they are giving us commands'… it was this kind of motivation, a more tribal thing… there was no national situation per se at the time." Although soon after this time, he has argued that, "there was a Kurdish movement, Kurdish newspapers opened, Bedirhan rebelled, a bunch of grammar books were written, a certain 'kurdishness' or ethnicity came into the picture. And from then on Kurds came into consciousness of a more modern take on ethnicity. Outside of the tribal, a more national edifice emerged."

Having argued that the Kurdish question's origin lies in the late stages of the Ottoman Empire, Güneş has gone on to speak briefly of some issues as played out in the Republican period. "The republic was founded, and for this Turks and Kurds fought together. The Kurds had allied with the Turks on the condition that they would be able to setup their own government … Mustafa Kemal had told them he would give them a particular area and as such the Kurds were convinced at Erzurum and Sivas. But the republic was founded and Mustafa Kemal… went on to found one nation-one state. In this one nation there were Turks. Because of this, when the Kurds didn't find a place for themselves within this state, confirmed in the 1924 constitution, where it was written that there is only Turks in Turkey, no other '*kabil'*…Straightaway, in 1925, Sheykh Said rebelled. With much insistence, such as Turkish history and the sun language theory, this ideology became official. State ideology is something like this – in Turkey, there is nobody but Turks. A Kurd is one that speaks Turkish improperly, Kurds are mountain Turks. There are no Kurds, in fact they are Turks." Güneş has elaborated on his understanding of the official ideology of the Turkish state (that is a certain mainstream Turkish nationalism) by referring to the comments of Kenan Evren in 1980 when he was questioned about Kurdish issues by Kurds. Güneş has said that he replied in a vain that said "There is no such thing as a Kurd, they are those Turks that walk in the mountains and make sounds in the snow with their footsteps – it sounds like, 'Kar-Kurt Kar-Kurt' - it is from there that this term 'Kurd' comes… He said something that even a primary school child would not believe, yet it was the official line of the state." According to Güneş "[The Kurdish movement] emerged as a reaction to centralization and then a more modern national movement followed… There were efforts for greater

assimilation after Dersim but again in the sixties the movement increased. In the eighties Öcalan and his friends formed the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and started an armed conflict from 1984. Perhaps if they had allowed Kurdish television, newspapers and so on in the 1980s, an armed struggle may never have ensued. Unfortunately, in this country, it is only after thousands of people have died that it was even admitted that there were Kurds in the country…. As such it [the Kurdish movement] has continued until now."

Recognizing that the "Kurdish question" is a very complex set of issues Güneş has stated that "At the moment, I think that the Kurdish question is really Turkey's biggest problem because it is not just about freedom of the Kurds or the Kurdish struggle. It is at the same time about democracy in Turkey, human rights issues and many other things happening in [the country]. For example it has to do with Turkey's leftist movement." He has pointed out that many issues in Turkish politics are inextricably linked. He has said that he believes the next biggest 'question' in Turkey is related to issues between the central state and "the Islamists", a relationship which is usually debated in terms of the military establishment, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its perceived Islamist constituency. Güneş has summed this up by stating that he does not see a sha'ria-based future for Turkey but it must be seen that a "definite Islamic, conservative group has slowly gained power from the hands of a Kemalist structure." Güneş has commented that the entrance of the Refah Party into Turkish politics and now the ruling AKP, have acted to "threaten the army and the ideals of Kemalism. Sometimes they get along but most of the time they conflict. After the Kurdish Question this is the second biggest problem, an Islamic-secular clash, state structures versus the surrounding… even if it isn't a real or big problem, it is something that keeps them busy in everyday politics."

When broaching the discussion of potential and currently implemented 'solutions' to the 'Kurdish question' Güneş has reiterated that "it is really a very complicated and complex question." He has noted that efforts such as the opening of a state-funded Kurdish language television channel, TRT6, is an example of a positive step towards

meeting certain Kurdish demands yet has added to this by saying, "…broadcasting a channel or addressing education and cultural rights is not a [comprehensive] solution to this problem." He has gone on to say that "there is a region, and this region is home to a majority of Kurds. It is Kurdistan with [distinctively] 'Kurdish cities' (*Kürt Kentleri*). It is because of this that for the last two hundred years there have been Kurdish rebellions in what is today Turkey. It started with Shaykh Bedullah and Bedirhan, then Shaykh Said's rebellion in 1925, Dersim, Tunceli, Seidena and now the PKK movement. Due to all of this, the Kurdish question, in terms of the necessary demands of politics and culture in general, has become a permanent part of the day to day politics and the daily news of the country." He has gone on to say "I think the solution to this question has more to do with greater democratisation. In line with greater democratisation human rights must be expanded. There is a need for a place where people can express themselves comfortably and safely. Every section [of society], every people should be able to express their own ideas on culture, politics and education… perhaps within this lies potential solutions to the Kurdish question."

At this juncture Güneş has pointed again to his idea that cultural and political measures as are being enacted now may have been more effective in the 1980s and has elaborated saying, "but now there is something more and that is the PKK who have some five or six thousand guerrillas. A solution needs to be found for these people. Television channels and newspapers alone will not satisfy these people [PKK guerrillas]. They are warriors, they are in the mountains. How will they come down? Under what conditions and stipulations will they come down?" From here Güneş has said, "According to me, and I am really very sincere, Abdullah Öcalan stands in a very important place in terms of solving the Kurdish question. It seems as though the question may only be solved completely between the PKK and the state. They are the two sides. The Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi,* DTP) may be involved as it is the legal political movement [of the Kurds in Turkey at the moment]. But still there is the problem of guerrillas, people who are fighting and may have been in the mountains for some twenty or thirty years. Where will these people fit into politics? To just come back, be regretful, get married and have

children - it can't be. These people must be dealt with in some political way. I am saying, while Öcalan is with us there is a chance because no matter what is said he is seen as a leader of the Kurds. There are millions of Kurds in Turkey who accept Öcalan as the leader of the Kurdish movement. This is a reality, we cannot move past this fact. We may say as much as we want about him, 'baby murder' (*bebek katili*), Bolucu Basi, 'Armenian Seed' (*Ermeni Tohumu)*, 'a bad man', 'truly without honour'… yet the thing is that many Kurds are walking/marching for him. They call him '*serok*' which means 'president.' He is the leader of the Kurdish movement. This is a reality." Güneş has attempted to back his opinion further by adding, "the PKK's guerrillas didn't come from Europe, Germany or France. One is somebody's cousin, another is someone's younger brother, older brother, father or Uncle. They come from Mardin, Urfa, Şırnak, Batman - these people aren't from outer space. They may be like me, study at uni and then become a guerrilla. Or perhaps they went from their village to the mountains. They come from here (*buralı*)." Güneş has said that "back where we lived in Izmir, our neighbours' son was in the mountains. A solution needs to be found for those people too… their heart is over there. Do you think you just forget your son because he has gone into the mountains? There mind will stay with them. Always thinking, 'what will happen to my son'? So why is Öcalan important here? Because, the whole PKK respects him, and accept what he says… If Öcalan says, 'okay we will solve this, guerrillas come down from the mountains, we should not have an armed movement in Turkey'… they would accept this. They would respect this and accept it. Of course a marginal group may stay in the mountains, perhaps they wouldn't listen to Öcalan… but they would be marginal and Kurds would not feed their existence rhetorically and they too would have to come down from the mountains…The state, while Öcalan is still alive and healthy should use this chance. If Öcalan dies in 3 years, the guerrilla movement itself will become divided, a common point will be lost, there will be a fight for the leadership, everyone will want to lead… and who will keep them under control? At the moment it is a movement under control but once Öcalan dies it will be an out of control situation. That's why I see him as a chance now. I think the solution lies with Öcalan."

After having discussed the PKK-dimension of the Kurdish question Güneş has tried to revisit certain cultural aspects. He has noted, "Kurdish language is free now, Kurdish music is allowed to be played, there is the Kurdish television channel TRT6 – I think these are important. Perhaps if they increase such efforts the PKK will think, 'what is left to fight for?' Perhaps they will recognise that they served no function anymore and come down from the mountains of their own accord. Perhaps if everything was free and allowed we, the Kurds, would also say to the PKK, 'Why are we fighting?'" Güneş has added that democratic standards are poor especially for Kurds in Turkey and has said that "because of this there remains some sort of legitimacy behind the PKK, their movement remains legitimate."

In an attempt to elaborate upon what the demands of the Kurds in Turkey are and whether they are being met, Güneş has said, "the Kurds are making demands of the country, and what they are demanding is very clear. Fundamentally, the PKK in the 1980s was demanding an independent Kurdistan. And this Kurdistan is not just in Turkey. It is also in Iran, Iraq and Syria… They demanded it as an independent, united and socialist Kurdistan. But the conditions of the world were inappropriate. I think most Kurds, not all but most, from now on don't want their own state. They don't want a nation state, instead of that they want something more like a confederation, to be more autonomous, to be given complete cultural and human rights… a solution down this path. Because from now on Kurds have realised, from Adana and Urfa to the east, nobody will call this territory 'Kurdistan.' It is impossible. But I think it is also clear that in the imagination of a lot of Kurds there is a Kurdistan. Kurds call this area a 'country' ('Ülke') or 'our country' ('bizim ülkemiz') … if you go to Mardin you will not find a Turk who can trace back having lived there for more than 300 years. There are Suriyanis, Christians and Jews who have lived in Mardin for centuries, but no Turks. If there are any Turks in Mardin they are working for the government, they are civil servants, teachers and police." Güneş has gone on to say, "So Kurds want something like this but, there is the official state line of assimilation and of all in Turkey being a Turk (*Türk kalması*). The state having not answered [Kurdish demands] and it is a painful thing, not easy." After noting this Güneş has said that "the [Turkish] state has become increasingly

nationalist… I am thinking, if a government says I am going to head down a road towards making an agreement with the Kurds, the public is so nationalist from now on it would not be easy. All the structures, such as the army, the media, the government - all of these [elements of society] would have to work very hard and be united [in their aims] in order to solve the Kurdish question. It is not something that can be done by a government alone. Because of that, at this time, the Turkish government is not really heeding the demands of the Kurds. But if the struggle moves forward, we never know." He has commented on rapid and vast change in the official line of the Turkish state towards Kurds and Kurdish issues stating, "Twenty years ago in this country there were no Kurds. But now the state, from its own budget, has opened TRT6, a Kurdish channel. Yesterday you said there were no Kurds but now there is a TV channel, what is this? [Furthermore], despite this development, for example Deniz Baykal from the CHP, the speaker for the Kemalists thinks such a thing should not happen. He objected a lot. Turkey is like this." He has gone on to reiterate his point about the need for broader cooperation between the main sectors and interest groups saying, "There is the army, media, government, bureaucracy, other states. For example from now on America, England, the EU, nothing is solved independent of them. Everybody's voice must come together."

Discussing the role played by the current ruling government in Turkey in addressing the Kurdish question Güneş has commented, "I don't think the AKP plays a positive role in addressing the Kurdish Question, I don't believe it. I don't think the AKP is a government that can solve this issue. The AKP is taking positive steps but in fact it is not the AKP itself taking these steps, it is the State… The [Turkish] state is up against a wall these days. They have to take these steps. Even if the ruling government had been the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP), TRT6 would still have gone on air. [I believe this] because Turkey's fundamental and most sincere policy is to join the European Union (EU) which is placing certain conditions on Turkey [in its accession process]. The Kurdish question cannot be solved only like this." Commenting further on the AKP he has said, "The AKP is two-faced. TRT6 just started broadcasting yet Recep Tayyip Erdogan (the Prime Minister) just two months ago said, 'Those that don't love this country can

leave.' He said it to Kurds. It seems as though the things that the AKP has done certain things not because they want to but in fact because they are obliged to do them." Güneş has broached the topic of local elections which are to take place in March saying, "The local elections are coming up… Maybe a month before the elections some Kurdish courses will open, Erdoğan may apologise in Diyarbakır, an economic package may be planned for Diyarbakır and the South East, perhaps a factory will open… maybe they will send someone to stay with Öcalan who is in solitary confinement. This may please the Kurds. Maybe 15 days they could send people to his side and publicise photos of Öcalan playing ball, volleyball. He is comfortable, not confined to one room." Güneş has noted here that the "AKP really wants to win the Diyarbakır seat" in the upcoming elections. He has gone on to say, "Erdogan is not just thinking about the Kurds, he is also thinking of leftists… for example Nazim Hikmet and Ahmet Kaya's bodies will be brought back to Turkey. Indeed, Turkey just before an election is the most democratic looking place. Politics is very pragmatic. The AKP is a very pragmatic party, it is very elastic." Güneş has further qualified his statements by saying, "I don't believe that the government has no role [to play] but in Turkey, the army, media and bureaucracy maintain a very important place in the running of the country's affairs. It is very difficult for any government to play a particularly crucial role. It is important but it is always under the watchful eye of other sections [of state and society]."

Güneş has said, "In the last while, nationalism [in Turkey] has risen. In the eighties when the PKK movement first started there were Kurdish uprisings in Diyarbakır , they would be suppressed by the military, the perpetrators were hung and then it would finish. After the eighties the Kurdish question became a lot more international and national. It became a feature of daily politics and news. Now it is not about ending the PKK, allowing or disallowing it, there is a 'Kurdish question', there is no 'PKK question.'" He has added, "In the eighties, Turks and Kurds weren't so much in a mad scramble (kapışmanda değillerdi). But now amongst the public [the number of] nationalists has increased. It is not only Turkish nationalism but Kurdish nationalism is also on its way up. The question no longer exists as a fight between two sides it is also reflected through the public." Güneş has backed this up by noting

that “people and groups have started lynching one another. There was an attack on Kurdish workers in Manisa and some Kurds were attacked in Bolu. In the public, from usual people, we can see an opposition to Kurds justified by nationalism. In the same way, amongst Kurds in Diyarbakır there is a feeling that Turks are the enemy. People in the public itself have become enemies of one another (*Halkların kendisi artık düşman haline geldi*).” Qualifying this further Güneş has said, “I remember there was nothing like this in 1990. In 1990 there was a lot of conflict, many guerrillas and soldiers were dying, but people on the street were just people on the street. But now it isn’t like that. If you do something here, everyone will hang their flags, everybody has a reaction… This nationalism has crept into society. People [of Turkey] have become involved in it heavily. It used to be the business of the state but since 2000 or so [it is different]. When conflict increases [in the South East], funerals for martyrs (soldiers) are publicised and people in turn use this information to say such things as “damn the PKK, may they die.” Later this has turned into heightened nationalism. “I find Turkey’s coming to this point very sad because if these ‘nationalisms’ come to involve ordinary people, then it is very bad. It is more of a mess. Before, it was more like State-level nationalism. Fascism has become normal. There is fascism everywhere.” After saying this Güneş has added that “It is not too bad still, but [nationalism] is on the rise. Before there used to be many more Turkish leftists inside the Kurdish movement, now there are not [so many]. ‘Turk revolutionaries’ (*Türk Devrimciler)* themselves don’t feel comfortable with Kurds. It is very odd. Also, patriotic Kurds in the movement don’t like ‘Turk revolutionaries’ as they find them hypocritical and insincere.”

Speaking of recent Turkish state and government policies in a wider sense Güneş has said, “When the AKP came to political power they started, quite sincerely in my mind, efforts to join the EU. These efforts have busied daily news reporting and Turkey’s political agenda since then. This is an important development that has brought changes not just in relation to the Kurdish question [specifically] but in the wider area of legal reforms, constitutional reform, issues regarding women, issues regarding the reform of state structures and they are addressing issues over Cyprus (though these moves are still tentative/half-assed/yarım yamalak). In particular, the

constitution has been improved as have laws emanating from parliament. There is no torture anymore. There used to be [torture] in police stations (*karakollarda*) but not now. Some of my friends have been taken in for questioning and the police didn't beat them [as was practiced before]. They [the police] don't practice violence and a lawyer is called and is present. Before, if you were taken in [by the authorities] you may have been lost." Güneş has asserted that he sees this as "a definite gain" and has commented that "people increasingly speak of human rights." He has added a nuance to his observations saying, "In opposition to this (these positive developments), Hrant Dink was killed." He points to the dual developments of "a number of issues being addressed in conjunction with the EU" AND a rise in nationalism which he has used to account for the murder of Hrant Dink. Güneş has raied his suspicion of the government at his point saying "I think that the AKP was not innocent in this. A sincere government would have prevented this murder." Güneş has added, "These events are developing at the same time. On one side you have big movements towards democratisation and then you look and in Manisa they are beating Kurdish workers…it is precisely these issues that must not be overlooked or disregarded. With or without pressure form the EU, such angles must be looked from."

Güneş has said, "Overall, the developments of the past few years are positive for the Kurds. These aren't easy issues to address, a lot of pain has been caused, much blood has spilt and many people have died. But in the last few years, issues relating to the Kurdish question have become open [to discussion and change] and I find this very important and positive." Here he has reiterated his opinion regarding the source of change stating, "This is to do with the state. The powers and scale of the State reach beyond the government. The time has come [for change], and the 'state mentality' knows this… it cant continue like this, it isn't working out (*"yürümüyor*"), the system isn't working and so the system itself needs to open up (*"açılmak zorunda")* … TRT6 begins broadcasting and the army says nothing because the army knows too, there is no other means [with which to address the Kurdish question]. After a while, even if they don't like it, they have to take such steps. They are giving certain rights, but much remains to be done. They opened

TRT6 and said that only those Kurds with no previous conviction may work there… In Turkey there are no such Kurds, most have in some way gone to prison."

Addressing in more detail Turkey's relationship with the neighbouring European Union Güneş has said, "EU accession is not a process that started with the AKP. It was a policy of the Ozal government and the Demirel government. The 'contemporary civilisation' that Mustafa Kemal spoke of was 'the West' or Europe. Relations with Europe started in the Ottoman times, starting with Tanzimat." Paraphrasing a writer Güneş has asserted that, "The West came to these lands before 'turkishness' (*Türkiye de, bu topraklarda, Batı, Türklükten önce geldi).''* He has gone on to say, "I think this is a good and true observation. Turkey's course has always been oriented towards Europe, never to Iran, always west. When the republic was founded this became a governmental ideology. Over time, even if people haven't liked it, if there have been complaints about the EU or the West, all Turkish governments have been aligned to Europe and they know that it must be directed towards it. It doesn't matter which government comes to power, the EU will always be the main ideology. Perhaps you here complaints about EU but there has never been a full break between the two or a change in course of Turkey. Nobody in Turkey has ever outright rejected alignment with the EU and no government has ever said such a thing, even the Islamists who are represented at the moment by AKP (who are the biggest supporters of EU accession). Relations between Europe and Turkey started before the republic, it is a historical relationship."

Güneş has commented that the "EU's involvement in Turkey seems to promise something for the Kurds. As a Kurdish Turkish citizen (*Kürt yurtdaş olarak*), I don't find the EU to be sincere all the time. They're not so concerned with cultural issues, or they want such issues to finish. For example, there are some issues regarding Armenian genocide. It is not saying [to the Turkish state], 'accept this happened', it is not a condition [of accession]. It [Armenian-Turkish events] happened in the past so it is finished." Güneş has gone on to say, "The EU seems to be concerned with living problems such as the Kurdish Issue, Cyprus, women, human rights and the development of the economy. It is approaching [Turkey's accession] from these

angles." Despite his lingering concerns Güneş has said that "with EU pressure, Kurds will be given more rights. Human rights issues are raised in Holland and indeed there is a lot to be done. Torture is finished but it doesn't just end there" He has then addressed issues of the implementation of reforms proposed by the EU having said, "At times the EU takes sincere measures to ensure its proposed reforms, sometimes [their proposals] stays as mere rhetoric.' Broaching some concerns about Turkey's EU accession process, Güneş has stated, "The EU is not so sure about allowing entry to Turkey. I think there is a worry about potentially being neighbours with Syria and Iraq. If Europe is Europe, a continent, then now it will touch the most problematic countries (Iran, Iraq and Syria)." In another vain he has asserted that, "very fundamentally, their population is aging. If the EU economy and population becomes backed against a wall, Turkey's enormous 70 million strong market representation and labour force [is important]. The EU from this perspective doesn't want to delete Turkey from its agenda. As I have said this process didn't start with the AKP. Turkey is a country that has wanted to be in Europe for some 150 years, has wanted to be Western. But, what a shame, this western country is a 'bridge country' - one side Asian, one side European. Istanbul stands as a symbol of this."

Güneş has discussed briefly some aspects of Non-Governmental Organisations' (NGO) presence and work in Turkey. He has said that, "In the past ten years especially, NGOs have been more active… Inside the Kurdish movement there are many NGOs that are providing many important services (cok onemli acilimlara buluntulu). They are in Diyarbakır , the Van Women's Association, cultural and political associations, Youth Centres and Theatre centres. They exist especially in Diyarbakır ." He has furthered the discussion by commenting on relations between NGOs and the Turkish state saying, "The state acts as though it is against NGOs. The relationship between state and NGOs in Turkey is like that of jealous lovers. The State seems to always think NGOs will do something bad, may deceive it or act like an enemy. As a result of this the state, in some way or another, attempts to control NGO activities." Güneş has qualified his observation saying, "the police [have been known to] come and raid The Human Rights Association (*Insan Hakları Derneği, IHADE)* as though it is against the state. These people are working on

Human Rights. They are struggling for Turkey's democratisation… Akin Birdal [the former head of IHADE] was shot. This is the head of an NGO and he was shot. It happened in the nineties some time. The perpetrators came into the Association's building and shot him while he was in his office. They walked out and were never caught… that is yet another issue. The point is that the Turkish state always, when it comes to democratisation and solving such issues, it always doubts those NGOs that want to do something. It is scared of them. I don't see certain other groups as really being NGOs. For example, *Atatürk Düşünce Derneği, Gaziler Derneği, Şehit Ailelerinin Kurma Derneği*…retired generals head them."

Speaking about NGOs and human rights as he has experienced more directly, Güneş has said that he has not met anyone applying to NGOs or making human rights-based claims. He has said however that he knows that "people talk about it." He has elaborated saying, "Many people know about such mechanisms. For example I know what I can do if I was tortured. People are conscious of these things. Even if some people don't know, many do and so help one another. They give each other the news." Commenting on the processes of applying to NGOs he has said, "It is not very effective. For example, you may apply to IHADE and then you open a case. That case, however, is not taken sincerely. Because of that insincerity, [the process] doesn't seem very effective. Such human rights claims cases go to the EUCtHR and it is tried there [in Holland]. The judgement passed is affective under Turkish law. Most of the cases are processed in this way. It is not very effective."

Taking a look at Turkey's relationship with its southern and eastern neighbours from his perspective as a Kurd, Güneş has said, "Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria are not states that agree very much. However, when it comes to the Kurdish question, they all in some way want to use this issue to show those across from them how this is a problem. If it really comes to the Kurds reuniting, all of these states have a common stance. When you look at the relationship between Iran and Turkey in regards to Sharia law and secularism, their relations may not be so good. But when it comes to the Kurdish question, Turkey and Iran work together. They are fighting the PKK together. Syria was home to Öcalan for a long time. PKK's 'Bekaa camp' was

situated there. Later, when turkey said that it couldn't be that way, Syria told Öcalan to go. Iraq is much the same. Saddam Hussein got along well with Turkey, When the Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein bombed Halepce, Turkey, Syria and Iran said nothing against these actions. Indeed all the states of the world remained silent."

Speaking on more of a personal level regarding cross border relations in the South and East Güneş has said that he has relatives living in Syria. He has added, "When they [the ruling powers after World War One] drew the new map some of my relatives happened to be living in [a new] Syria. My paternal uncle is in Syria. My father lived there for a long time as well. In fact, before I was born my family lived in Syria for some 20 years. They worked there." Güneş has elaborated on local cross-border relations from his home town, Nuaybin, with people on Syrian territory saying, "There are many smuggled goods in Nusaybin such as televisions, tea, radios, coffee. They are sold there. In fact Nusaybin is like a David Lynch film with hand-less, one eyed, blind, lame men walking around. They are smuggling goods along secret roads and at times step on mines… There is no other economic outlet [for these people]. There are no factories, no workshops, no other chance [to make money]… so there is smuggling."

When discussing his thoughts on future directives for the Kurdish question in Turkey Güneş has said, "When it comes to this I am very confused. There are very good things happening, and then a moment later Hrant Dink is killed. EU accession is opening up a lot of important issues, TRT6 has started broadcasting and it is all going really well. Despite this, nothing is sure. Maybe in three months the Mayor of Diyarbakır , Osman Baydemir will lose integral support. Turkey is not very stable. It is unknown [what will happen]. Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counterterrorism ı The government can make important moves, but, nationalist fascists may lynch these measures. Because there is a very fixed and mass nationalism, mechanisms of control can not absolutely assure control. The state may make a decision and then after that, their decision will be. There are a number of other formations, there are other people involved such as the bureaucracy." He has reiterated his own uncertainty and some personal hope for the political future of the Kurdish question

by saying, “I am not sure what will happen but the state and the government have to take steps forward regarding the Kurdish question. They have to because it cannot continue like this. In 2000, after Öcalan had been captured, according to newspapers and television reports the PKK was finished. They didn’t give more rights to Kurds, they didn’t open up dialogue on relevant issues. And what happened? - It started again and it will not and cannot finish in that way. Let us say there are 5000 PKK guerrillas. If this isn’t soloved it will continue like this. There is a conservative bureaucracy [in Turkey] yet from now on [the Kurdish question] will not be solved with weapons. Democratisation can help… Yet it appears to be going in two directions now. A television channel opens, and then there is an armed conflict. They allow Kurdish lessons, and then Hrant Dink is killed. There are two sides pulling at one another. The world system has no room for such state outfits. For example the Military has lost credibility… it failed to resolve the Kurdish question and conflict in the South East. In light of Turkey’s frightening history, the military’s silence over TRT6 is highly relevant. It shows the system is blocked/gasping for air (system artik tikandi).” In the end Güneş has said, “I look at it [progress in addressing Kurdish issues] positively, I really want to. It is frightening and mixed so I really don’t know.”

Respondent 2 – Muhammed

Muhammed has illustrated what he views as a certain change in Turkey’s political climate by referring to Ahmet Türk’s use of the Kurdish language in parliament recently. He has said “…nothing is happening to them.This shows that things are changing. No good reason remains to justify insisting upon the use of violence. If you are still insisting upon using violence, it means you have a different problem - you have another perspective. Some five hundred thousand people may gather for *Newroz* this year. While that many people can come together, there is no need to fight or go into the mountains. People generally know this, people want their human rights, they are holding protests, organising marches. There are different ways to solve this. Before there wasn’t, and in places where there wasn’t it may be understood why people thought differently and took up arms. But there are different

paths open now." Muhammed has clarified his opinion further saying, "People must be provided with more information… without this, when talking about this issue people are not really talking. Turks are also right. If a mother loses her son who was a soldier, you can't talk about this with her, you can't say anything." He has continued in this vain by recalling an event in Diyarbakır that occurred in March two years ago. He has said, "[The PKK] killed soldiers and people. We went over there with the university, students from my university and Boğaziçi University. We spoke with the mothers of the people who had died. Because I was both from Diyarbakır and from a university they made me talk. The woman said to me, 'Everybody feels pain the same way, all women's tears are the same colour ("*Butün kadınların gözyşlarının rengi aynıdır").'* This is a very important thing, realizing and knowing this is very important."

Muhammed has taken this line of thought further by sharing his thoughts on mass society in the Turkish nation-state. He has commented, "There is something that has to change. The average perceptions of the Turkish people has to perceptions held by the general Turkish public has to change. The reason is, there are a number of publics *("halklar")* in this world and over time they have formed civilisations. They say, 'we are like this', 'we are Iranian', 'Turks are like that', the Ottoman empire. They are creating a very strange concept. They see themselves as above the others. Just before dividing our country and whenever we react to them they say, 'Ok, if we give them more rights and more rights, then they will divide Turkey.' This perception is very widespread among Turks. But they never think, before we came to Anatolia they were there, Kurds were living there. Kurds have been living in that area for about two or three thousand years. This is the known history of Kurds in Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Turks came to Anatolia just one thousand years ago. Kurds helped them on their passage through. They passed through Kurdish lands and attacked the Rum. Ok, they may think, 'this is our country' - but it is not actually theirs. This is not the point. They have to have empathy, it is very important. You should try to feel the other guys' emotions. Every day in Turkey also in the Kurdish provinces, people say "Turkum, dogruyum, I am hard working/industrious" but they are not Turk. It is just ridiculous. Let's say I live in the Netherlands and I have to say, 'my

language is Dutch'. It is just ridiculous. Maybe my father and mother know Turkish very well, and I know Turkish very well and many of my Turk friends say to me… well, in my university exam I didn't have any incorrect answers in my Turkish language part and they say "you are a Kurd but you get these marks." I know Turkish very well but I also know Kurdish very well. We have to use empathy in order to understand each other… I mean this is a personal identity, you can not choose your identity… you can not say 'I feel like a Turk' or 'I feel like a German'. When a Turk says, 'I feel German', other Turks say, 'No you are Turk. This is your identity, come on'. But they forced other people to feel like a Turk… this is really ridiculous, this is a point we can never negotiate on or we can never come to an agreement about. There was a Kurd politician who said in Turkish: To say that everybody who lives in Turkey is a Turk is to say that all the trees in Turkey are Poplar trees and all the birds are Kelaynaks *("Türkiyede yaşayan herkez Türktür demek, Türkiyedeki bütün ağaçlar Kavak Ağacidir, bütün kuşlar kelaynaktir").* Such a thought is ridiculous. It was the grandson of Shaykh Said who said this but I forget his name. It is very true. In Turkey you are Turk."

Muhammed has continued saying, "What I mean is that Turks started to push people about how they feel or how they love their country… I have a right not to love my country. Just think that you are forced to love somebody, but you don't actually love them. It is your choice, you can love somebody or you can not. This is the biggest part - in order to solve this 'question,' it lies on the shoulders of the Turks because the origin of the problems dates to their history." Qualifying what he means Muhammed has spoken in greater detail about what he believes are some important historical points in the development of the current Kurdish question. He has said, "…it really dates back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Before that they, [the Kurds], had autonomy in the Ottoman Empire. Their vision saw it as Kurdistan. It was written in the legal documents and files of the Ottoman Empire as Kurdistan, they called it Kurdistan. There was a local governor and local army and they joined the Ottoman Army if they were in war with Europe or Iran or Egypt. And they had an agreement and they respected their rights, mostly. But after the French Revolution and after nationalism became a very widespread way to express yourself – I am Turk,

I am Kurd. When people start to talk about their identity in terms of nation… well, Turks also started to [identify themselves in this way] – before that they all said they were Ottomans and it made no difference if you were Turk, Kurd, Armenian or Rum. After that, both sides started to identify themselves in a different way and they both said, 'we are Kurd' and 'we are Turk'. People said, 'In addition to being a Muslim we are Kurds'. The others were Turks. So they started to organise the first rebellion against the Ottoman Empire which started in 1881 or 1882. It was one of the biggest Kurdish families [who organised the rebellion] and they won the battle against the empire – the Bedirhan family. Bedirhan's sons were soldiers in the Ottoman Empire and they came to the Kurdish areas and joined the Kurdish forces, joined Bedirhan and started to rebel."

Muhammed has pointed to another historical factor which he deems as important – "Another historical factor… there was a very big soldier (General) in the Turkish army during Turkey's War of Independence. His name was Ihsan Neri Paşa. Paşa is a very important title. He held a high position in the army. After the War (which won by Turks and Kurds against the Rums and other occupation forces), the Turkish parliament said "we are all Turks and we have to setup a new country so we have to be more careful in order to identify ourselves because we are a new country. They said "we are Turks". Ihsan Veli Pash in 1930 took his army and went to Agri and set up a rebellion against the Turkish army. He was a Kurd and a member of the Turkish army. He saw that this country wasn't going to give rights to Kurds and used his military power and started a rebellion that lasted for 3 or 4 years… Agri is a very high city and Turkish soldiers could not enter. So, this happened." Muhammed has gone on to say, "There are also some PKK members that were soldiers in the Turkish army. They joined the Kurdish organisation after the 1990s. In fact, one of them is responsible for the big attacks against the Turkish army. Last summer they attacked and killed many people in the military building. The head of this group is a former soldier of the Turkish army, he was a Commander. He is in the organisation." Muhammed has said that he gets his information from the Turkish newspapers and from the internet, usually news coming from Europe."

In terms of addressing and solving Kurdish discontents Muhammed has said, “It is the Turks responsibility to grant more rights to the Kurds and to other ethnicities - there are Laz and Circassians… they are not Turk. When you start to recognize people, you are Kurds but we can live together because we share many things. The wives of my uncles are Turk and we love each other. The most important thing is they have to respect us because generally the Kurds do not hate Turks but some Turks hate the Kurds… they say they are uneducated, they are useless. But the reason is… you forced them to move to cities and they don’t have, you know, they are not really civilised because they have a town-habit and a village culture… so when they came to the big cities such as Izmir (one of the nice places in Turkey), they didn’t know how to live in a city. So, some Turks started to say, ‘Kurds are different’, and this forced Kurds to organise in cities as Kurds.”

Muhammed has looked from another perspective at this juncture saying, “I want to add something - also Kurds have started to ask questions about their organisations, their legal party’s policies. In many cases they think, we are Kurds, we have to take it… but ok, just show the way. They are not very smart - this is my very personal point of view. They also like violence, they are not the creator of violence but after a certain time you start to be similar with your enemy, you start to resemble your enemy. It is a fact of life - you grow up together. If I were a neutral person and I could just look at what was going on I could not talk about who is right because there are people just killing each other and in cities or universities, they attack each other. Turkish and Kurdish nationalists attack each other in universities and cities and it has a really big potential to make it worse. Everything may blow up very suddenly - it may only be a matter of time. It won’t be solved and it will definitely cause unsolvable problems – it will be a very big question.”

Muhammed has commented on the role played by the current government in addressing the Kurdish question. He has stated, “The current government has a religious character. They have Recep Tayyip. They have many Kurds in their party, and the Kurds in their organisation are forcing them to solve this problem. They are trying to win the local seat in Diyarbakır but people support the DTP. The Kurds in

the AKP have been forcing the governing party to solve the Kurdish problem because otherwise they know they will not be supported by the Kurds. The most important problem for the Kurds is to be recognised or to be identified as a Kurd. "You are Kurd" and then we can solve other problems. Some things have started to change such as the new television channel, TRT 6. This is a state television channel and sometimes it includes Turkish propaganda in its programming. I sometimes watch it but I don't like it very much. I am trying to understand what the policy behind it is. It is a very big step because just five or six years ago you could not say that there are Kurds, it was a crime… but now they have a channel and it is a really big step. I think they are trying to change some things but they are not so honest. Also, they don't have such power [to affect change] because in Turkey… well, nationalism is very important in Turkey. They tell us, 'We can fight against anybody, we are superior and we can kill a thousand people in one day.' Really, it is like this. We have history courses, and we learn, we kill Germans and we won the battle against the Austrian people etc… Why? This was one thousand years ago, it is ridiculous but they teach Turks and Kurds this history and they have started to see all foreigners as the enemy. For example, if Russians or English people come to Turkey and decide to buy a house the Turks start to say, 'this may be a dangerous point because the English came before and they tried to divide us and they support Kurds.' This point is very important. Even Recep Tayyip Erdogan or the current government, they may try to solve this problem but they cannot. Who can? - This is a very important question. Who can? The army. Because in Turkey the rules are decided, not in parliament, that is just a democracy game… raise your hands, I support this. But the actual rules - the army can send a file to the parliament and they are able to change the rules. They can say, 'we need more guns, we need more money from the budget.' Also, the Turkish army has the right to interfere with Turkish democracy. They have a constitutional right - if something goes wrong in Turkey the army has the right to conduct a coup. The army has to protect the country from enemies from both inside and outside the borders. It allows the army to have autonomy and to act freely. The government also has many problems with the army."

Muhammed has elaborated at this juncture on his ideas on the role of government and the army in Turkish politics and decision-making. He has said, “They are trying to show us that something has started to change, that the army no longer interferes with political decisions. I think this a big lie. It is a lie.” He has gone to comment, “The other question is, ‘how may the army be convinced to solve this problem’? Actually I think this is a policy of the universe, when a big country, for eg America or Israel, when the country wants to solve this problem they will put pressure on the army and then the army will say to the government, ‘ok solve this problem.’ There was an answer to a Kurdish speech, made by Ahmet Turk (leader of the DTP who spoke in Kurdish in parliament, which is an illegal thing. When he started to speak in Kurdish they just cut off the television broadcast), in the parliament three or four days ago. The leader of the parliament said this is illegal behaviour and you have to do something about it and also the army made a short statement about it. They said they were against such speech in parliament. So, [Ahmet Turk and friends] have to be more careful and such things and they said that they support some cultural developments for Kurds. Maybe they feel pressure on themselves in order to solve this problem but the first step should be to understand Kurds. Televisions and newspapers can be used very effectively in this way. You can start to tell some stories about the Kurds and their lifestyle. [The notion that these people are] Kurds and we live together should be encouraged. Maybe they can tell some stories of the natures of Kurds and Turks and the successes of some Kurds in Turkey. For example there are many Kurdish sport stars and Turkish cinema stars. Let’s talk about them. Then maybe they will start to take initiative to attend meetings. Then maybe Turks and Kurds will say, ‘ok we want to live together but we have to respect each other blah blah’… these are maybe the first steps. If we are talking about politics Turks should recognise that they are Turks and that and some Kurds are also living here… I can give you a very personal example - I went to another university to do a summer internship and my supervisor there really liked me very much. She said that I was smart, I was a hard worker and that she liked m every much. She asked me, ‘Where are you from?’ I said, ‘I am from Diyarbakır ’. Then she said, ‘Is you father a soldier?’ and I said, ‘No’. And then she said, ‘Are you Turkmen?’ and I said, ‘No, I am not Turkmen.’ Then she asked ‘Do you have any Kurdish in you?’ I replied

'Nothing else but.' *("Sen de hiç Kürtlük var mı?" Dedim ki, "Bende başka bir şey yok.").* And then she said, 'How can it be?' I was ranked eightieth in the university entrance exam of 1.7 million participants. She asked 'How can you be among the highest students?' My point is that she is a professor, she is a scientist and her point of view is this - If you are a Kurd you cannot succeed in Turkey. So the first step in solving the problem is to find a way to change the way of thinking of the people, their minds. Because they always see it, as I said, after the invasions from towns to the big cities, they always said of these people that they are not very qualified or educated and they always see Kurds as ignorant – 'they are not educated, you cannot talk with them'. Muhammed has given a final example of his perceived discrimination saying, "as a result of my appearance they say, 'you cannot be Kurd because you have long hair'. And I say, 'If you don't cut your hair it will be long'… It is really ridiculous."

Muhammed has reflected on the relationships between Kurds and Turks on a more personal level. He has reiterated, "I think the relations between Turks and Kurds in everyday life is okay. But like I said it may blow up suddenly. This stuff is very hard for both sides. It is really hard to accept. It is not the crime of the Turks, it is the crime of education and the crime of the state. A Kurd doesn't have the right to believe in something else. They are educated in a way, they learnt that we are Turks, once upon a time we were powerful and the Russians and Bulgarians are enemies. Everybody, except Turks are the enemy. It is not their [Turks] fault. Kurds have to understand Turks in this way. It is very important. By the way there is a very widespread belief among educated Turks, they say that, for example, many of my friends are Turks and they love me very much and there are no problems in their life… but when we come to discuss the Kurdish question they suddenly start to feel themselves as 'I am a Turk'. They say, 'how can you say that, you are well-educated, you are blah blah, you are smart you are all these things so how can you say this about Kurds?'. I say, 'Maybe because I have read a lot. Maybe because I am smart and so I can say that.' I always say that the point is not to be a Kurd or a Turk. For example, in the North of Iraq, there are also Turkmens in that region and some friends asked me a question about them, 'If they have designs to live as Turkmen,

what would you do?' I said, 'I will definitely act against the Kurdish government because this is about human rights. It is not just a Kurd-Turk thing, that is not my point of view.I hate all identities… I feel like an anarchist. I shouldn't have to identify myself. If there wasn't a Kurdish problem in Turkey I would not say, 'I am a Kurd', I would say 'I am just me'… it would identify me more than if I say 'I am a Kurd.' If you are treated badly because of your identity, then you have to protect this identity. I will answer to anyone who asks that I am from Turkey. If they ask me if I am a Turk, I will say 'no I am a Kurd'. I don't have any problem being a citizen of Turkey but I have a problem with being a Turk because it is not me. The problem is not that Turks are bad people but I am not a Turk. They are wonderful, they are good, they are kind, but…"

Muhammed has reflected upon Turkey's European Union accession process and potential membership. He has said, "Turkey's membership in the EU will definitely change many things, like the lifestyles of Kurds in Turkey. I am generally against the EU or other organisation that succeed in coming together as the capitalist countries. But, a positive side is that we have to be more careful when we are defining people's rights in countries. Maybe the Netherlands is a capitalist country but they have all their rights. They can do anything in that country, this is an important point. When Turkey enters the EU, if they are successful… we will have personal rights, human rights. In Turkey you may be killed in an operation, your whole house can be visited, and they can't say, 'we just knocked on the door and shot them.' Nobody will say, 'that is not the case, he just opened the door and he killed them.' This is the whole story but we cannot say it and we can not rely on it to resist. There is a really big problem in the mind, the way of thinking. I hope Turkey will be a member of the European Union. When they are, they will start to learn to think in a different way – it will liberalise. Turkey should be more liberalised. It is a very important step for Turkey. I am not talking emotionally because people really should learn not to disrupt other peoples stuff and not disturb other people because of their appearance, because of their fashion choice, because of their way of thinking. People have to respect each other and they won't learn without external pressure. I believe that. Turkey won't do it. People are very poor in Turkey, I am talking at the economic

level, but also poor in mind, because they don't… let me tell you something, there was a survey about the Turks and 70% of Turks do not read… if they don't read, they can not understand life. In books you face different types of life, different ways of loving and so you start to think about it. The main difference is you will be more educated, you will be more conscious, you will feel more sensitive to others."

Muhammed has speculated on why Turkey and the EU have engaged in the accession process saying, "I don't know why Turkey wants to enter the EU, I think it is has something to do with economic relations. In Turkey, as I said before, the power and restrictions of the army are important but the capitalists are also very powerful. They are an important actor in Turkey's political affairs. They really want to be a member of the EU because they have to be a part of world trade and the international market. Previously the laws in Turkey set up borders for [rich business men] and restricted them. So, they forced the government to become a member of the EU in order to become richer. I think the main motivation for being in the EU is not human rights or the beautiful European girls, but it is economic. I think this is the motivation of the state and TUSIA."

Speaking with a shift in perception, Muhammed has spoken of the EU saying, "I think the EU doesn't want Turkey to be a member of the Union because we are really different. I think it will be the end of the EU, I am serious. I am not joking. Just think about a guy that lives in a town, for example in Yozgat in the middle of Turkey. He will go to Sweden and it will be really funny because when they lift the borders restrictions, people start to travel in Europe they will try to change the life in Europe. If they see a gay couple kissing each other then they will, you know. The most important thing for Kurd and Turk townspeople, after nationalism, is Islam. Islam hinders these people's tolerance levels on certain points. Because the thing with Islam is, if there is something wrong, fix it. For example, my hair used to be longer and my girlfriend's was even longer than that… whenever we went somewhere they would make many rude remarks about us – 'Cut your hair!' They think they are right so they interfere with what we are doing. I think, 'What's it to you? Do I say anything about your hair? What you think doesn't affect me. I am a person'. Now

think if these kinds of guys went to Europe. They would comment on everything. So, I think Europe should not accept Turkey to be a member. I want Turkey to become a member but I think that no "European culture' will exist after that." Muhammed has given another example to illustrate what he means, "you know how in Greece, Alexis that anarchist, died… they held demonstrations, they did a number of things. Not one person died. In Turkey, if there was a demonstration even half that big, tens of people would die. People here get mixed up in each others business. They get so mixed up to the point that they kill one another." He has made another abstract comparison saying, "I cannot go from here to Australia. My family is here, friends… none of them would give me permission. Everyone would forbid it. You can't just say, 'I want to go.' Their analysis is very different. It is just like when two people are not suited to one another. It is something like that. Turkey is not for Europe. Turkey would be able to join together with Israel more easily. Europeans are relaxed, we are not. It is always, 'don't do that. Stop that' here."

Muhammed has commented on Non-Governmental Organisations in Turkey – "There are many NGOs in the south east. For example, The Human Rights Association is one of the biggest and most effective NGOs in Turkey. They say that the army has committed many crimes in the Kurdish area and they always prepare reports and annuals. They try to solve this problem in a democratic way but the government and the other parties believe that this organisation helps the Kurdish rebels. So the government and state treat them in a way which says, 'We respect you because we also want to develop human rights. But, you are such a core organisation that if you don't put space between you and terrorist organisations we won't view you as an acceptable organisation. There are also other organizations that are closer to the Turkish Republic. They are actually local business men that have organisations of their own. Some of them support the Kurds and some not. I mean if you are in Diyarbakır and you want to do something and you want to earn money, you have to take the permission of both the army and the Kurds' organisations. One can burn your factory [if you fail to do so]." Muhammed believes that NGOs in Turkey are becoming more efficient and that there are people trying to drive these organisations into a more democratic space. He has explained, "The PKK attacked an

army vehicle a year ago but in the attack many innocent people died. These organisations also blame the PKK for the attack and hold them responsible for it. According to the UN, if you just attack soldiers you are not terrorists. You may say 'they occupy our country or they commit crimes against humanity, in this case you have the right to protect yourself with guns… this is a rule of the UN. So, these organisations are saying to the PKK, 'if you start to attack innocent people we will also call you terrorists.' Usually they don't call them terrorists; they say 'Kurdish rebellion' or the 'Kurdish organisation'. They prefer not to use words like terrorist but after such attacks they warned the PKK what would happen if such events continued."

Muhammed has spoken of his personal ties with Kurds from neighbouring Iraq and Syria. He has said, "Of course I have many friends in Iraq. I have relatives in Syria and friends in Iraq. They sometimes come to Turkey and I also go there. They are PhD students studying at university in North Iraq or South Kurdistan. They are Iraqi Kurds. One of my friends and I went to see the Kurdish region, the development of the Kurdish region and the life in the Kurdish region. I met friends and we liked each other and kept in contact. When they visited Turkey they visited me in Ankara. They really like Turkey very much. They don't like Turks very much but they like Turkey. The cities surprise them. For example when they saw Ankara they said, "Oooh Ankara, we cannot have such a city in Northern Iraq". I have no idea about Iran, the Kurdish culture of Iran. We try to feel ourselves, Kurds, not myself but the Kurds feel that they are part of a nation so we have to act together. The Kurds in Iraq say that our capital is Diyarbakır. They say that one day we will lift the borders and there will be no lines between us. Also, Kurds in Turkey say they are our brothers. The Kurdish movement in Turkey now say that 'we don't want a state, we don't want autonomy, we have relative and friends living in Iraq, Iran and Syria… we don't want to be a free country because nothing will change, we just want democracy and we want these countries to respect our rights and we want to live together, the Kurds from all four countries. These countries have to find a way to open the borders but not divide the countries… something more like the EU. For the Kurdish movement the best solution is this - If we have a free Kurdistan we will definitely have to fight

against the Turks, the Persians and the Arabs because they will say that we have divided there country and this is enough they said. We don't want to fight again and we want to live with Turks, Arabs and Persians together. But if you won't respect our rights we will start to think of another way. You know there is always a way to set up a state. It is not that we don't know it or are not powerful to do it… our choice is to live together but you also have to learn to respect our rights. And we also want to visit our relatives n the other Kurdish parts because, for example in this last Kurdish rebellion there were also Kurds form Iraq, Iran and Syria. Especially Syria, Syrian Kurds are maybe more than half of the guerrillas in the mountains… they are from Syria, not from Turkey. Now there is another Kurdish organisation that is a part of the Kurdish organisation of Turkey. They have setup a war in Iran. Their name is DJAK and they are also armed. They attacked Iranian soldiers, for four or five years there has been a big struggle in Iran, bigger than the one in Turkey now. The Kurds fighting there are from Syria, Iran and Iraq. This movement is really a brilliant movement. They took Kurds from Syria and co-opted them in Turkey, they fight in Turkey. Also, they took the Kurds from Turkey and put them into Iran and tried to create a way for all Kurds to relate. I don't know how it will be solved." Muhammed has briefly commented on state power and government relations vis a vis the Kurdish population of its eastern neighbours – "Iran and Turkey conduct operations together. Some guerrillas are situated in the area where the border of Iran, Turkey and Iraq meet… they enter over the borders. Turkey has agreements with America so it is impossible to be more close to Iran or Iraq without the permission of these bigger countries."

Muhammed has commented on extracurricular opportunities for Kurds to express themselves as Kurdish on his university campus. He has said, "You cannot create a Kurdish society. You know, soldiers conducted an operation on Kurdish students in universities in Ankara the other day. More than 20 people were arrested under suspicion of being members of the PKK. Due to my own family relations, I always keep a distance. It means that I never express my feelings, 'I am a Kurd' or 'I am a Kurdish nationalist'. Usually I will only o so far as to join protests organised by the Kurds because I feel that I have to be part of this because it is a suppressed identity. I

am also part of other protests, women's marches for example. I just do this because they are suppressed identities. I have many friends, because we speak the same language and we have some cultural habits, it is easy to understand each other, and I really love them. Some of those arrested stayed in the station for three days. Some were put into prison and some were let go. My friends said that in Ankara, more than 40 people were arrested by the police but just 8 or 9 imprisoned. I have no idea, I cannot know if they are active. If you are not a member of such an organisation you can never be sure. They always deny it, and I always deny it if somebody asks. I always say I have sympathy for their rights."

Discussing the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey as he views it, Muhammed has said, "There have been many mistakes made, also by Kurds and the Kurdish organisation. They are really serious to continue this ridiculous situation for thirty years more. They can do it because they have power, they have guns and people support the. Also some of them are very rich. Some Kurdish businessmen who support the Kurdish movement are very rich. They are protected by this movement. There are really very dark sides of this movement and all people know and realise that even the Kurdish movement isn't as pure as when they started to 'change the world'. I think both sides have to decide what they want. In the near future they will come to a point where they will have to decide and actually, the decision will be taken by the Turkish state. If they really want to solve this problem then they can. But as I said, both TUSIA and the army must help the government… the government cannot solve this by itself. When it comes to the Kurdish side, if the Turkish state takes some big steps, if they say 'we want to solve this problem and we know you are Kurds and you have constitutional rights now'. If they write in the constitution, 'in addition to Turks, Kurds also live in Turkey' and if they allow education in Kurdish, which is very important, the situation will look up. In order to communicate to each other you will also have to learn Turkish in addition to Kurdish for the official language of your country. If they recognize Kurdish political parties it may be helpful. Say, "we want to discuss and make an agreement with your organisation but they are officially terrorist organisation so we want contact with the legal party". If these steps are taken by the Turkish side, I think it will be solved easily. After that

point the Kurdish rebellion won't have any rights to say anything because it will really divide the Kurds. The Kurdish legal party can't put pressure on the rebels and say, 'just drop the guns and call a ceasefire'. 1 or 2 years ago, I am not sure of the date, the Kurdish legal party made a statement about reaching a ceasefire. They said, the first step is for the Turkish army to stop its operations and the rebellion and the rebellion has to move from Turkey to the Iraq side… no armed guerrillas in Turkey's borders. Then the Turkish gment to forgive the rebels, allow them to come to turkey, they are to be given their rights. We will retreat and the region is to be looked after by the UN and the UN or the EU will be an observer and it will take all the guns of the Kurdish rebellion. For the other stuff, negotiations may start. This is the program of the Kurdish party but the Turkish state says that if there are armed people in the Turkish mountains, we cannot stop the operations; it is outside of our program. And Turkish intellectuals wrote a declaration, a program similar to the Kurds. Either it will follow such a program or it will continue. If it goes down this track it will be much better.

Respondent 3 – Ali

In his discussion of what he believes make up the primary issues of the Kurdish Question in Turkey in 2009 Ali has said, "The main issue has not changed since the outset of this problem. It is not a specific topic or specific event. The Turkish state refuses to recognise constitutionally the existence of another ethnic group in Turkey. They are aware, they do recognise it in informal statements, but no party or political group in Turkey wants to recognise it… they don't want to put the word 'Kurd' on the constitution." He has gone on to say, "There is a growing informal recognition of Kurdish culture and language. [There have been] certain linguistic developments. Yet, certain issues still remain, like the PKK issue and Kurdish broadcasting. Private media are not allowed to broadcast in Kurdish, it is not allowed. There are problems [related to] political parties in that they are still forbidden from using non-Turkish languages in their propaganda. Also, election benchmarks are too high – It prevents Kurdish parties from gaining seats in the parliament. A political party must [receive]

ten percent of national votes to gain the right to enter the parliament as a group. [People] may be elected as independent candidates. If they do that, [Kurds] may get more than twenty or twenty-five seats. As a political party, say if the threshold was five or six percent [of the national vote] they could gain more than fifty seats." Expanding further upon what he sees as central to the Kurdish question in Turkey Ali has referred to "Northern Iraq issues…. Turkey, especially the military, is afraid that Northern Iraq will be used as an example by Kurds in Turkey. When [the Kurds of Turkey] see their fellow Kurds in Iraq gain autonomy or semi-autonomy, they might demand the same thing in Turkey and demand that Turkey be divided into autonomous regions… like Turkey proper and a Kurdish autonomous region. They may demand this. So I think these are the reasons behind the launch of the Kurdish television channel and other Kurdish developments. I think they (Kurds in turkey) are encouraged by Kurdish developments in Iraq. There is a growing interaction between the Kurds of Turkey and the Kurds of Iraq. [Kurds from Turkey] frequently visit northern Iraq, there are many Kurdish people of 'Turkey-origin' in Iraq, studying and teaching in universities and schools. There are many Kurdish companies doing business with Iraqi Kurds. The Turkish government is scared [and is thinking] 'We have to gain back our own Kurds, the Kurds of Turkey, we have to give them some incentives, like Kurdish television. There are Kurdish literature departments to be opened in two universities. Also, the Prime Minister officially said 'I recognise Kurdish culture and language.' The government is giving Turkey's Kurds incentives to gain [them] back, to diminish admiration for the Kurds in Iraq." At the end of his discussion, Ali has said, "These are the headlines."

Ali has gone on to discuss what he believes is being done to address issues related to the Kurdish question. He has said as his point of departure, "The military and secularists are against serious developments regarding the Kurdish question. The present government, the AKP, have taken incentive and given things to Kurds." He has commented that there are "only" twenty Kurdish Members of Parliament in the current Turkish parliament. He has added that he believes that "They [the Kurdish MPs] are not recognised, they are not taken seriously even by the Prime Minister. These MPs don't have a broad support base, even among Kurds because they

describe themselves as secularists or leftists. They can't do much to improve the conditions of Kurds." Referring back to the ruling AKP, Ali has noted that "Once the AKP had taken certain steps towards resolving the Kurdish question, the opposition party (the CHP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/* RPP, Republican Peoples Party) announced a package, in a Kurdish city, promising certain developments to resolve [the Kurdish question]. [Some of these promises] were the recognition of language and the abolition of the Village Guard system which is still active [in the South East]. It was not much different from the package of the ruling party and it was a reaction to it." Ali has added to this saying, "very few Kurds really think the opposition party's political package) was sincere (*samimi değildi yani*). It was just window dressing. Promises have been made"

Returning again to his discussion of the ruling government Ali has said "The most important recent development is when the Prime Minister spoke to a large Kurdish group in Diyarbakır and said, 'I recognise the existence of the Kurds.'" Ali has commented on this stating that it is "Ironic really. Of course they exist. But it was a formal recognition… a government with such a broad support base, recognised the existence of the problem and said, 'We will not try to assimilate ethnic identities and language and we will try to take certain steps to improve it… and they did. The state television company launched a Kurdish channel and the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with leaders of non-governmental organisations in Kurdish cities." Discussing why such developments have materialised Ali has said he believes, "The locomotive behind the government that supports developments in the Kurdish question are intellectuals. It is [intellectuals] who mainly support those developments. I believe that." He has said, "The Prime Minister and the President have some good advisors. I know one of them personally. They are 'pro-Kurdish' and they want this problem to be resolved through non-military means." He has further noted that "they (the government and advisors) carefully try to avoid any confrontation with the military when it comes to security issues." Qualifying what he means by this comment Ali has said, "About one year ago [the Military] declared a certain special state of emergency in certain cities in the Kurdish area. The government didn't oppose or question it. It approved the resolution that provided the

military with permission to go ahead with operations. Although the government believes the problem could be solved through non-military means it still allows such [military measures]. It avoids confrontation with the military to consolidate its own power." Ali has speculated on the motives of the ruling party in approving military operations in the South East further saying that perhaps the government thinks "if we, [the government], diminish the influence of the military, we may resolve this question easily." Ali has said that the government "avoids taking big, serious steps to gain Kurdish support. I mean a big step would be to make Kurdish language classes an elective in public schools… that would be a huge development, and it would be very helpful to gain the support of Kurds, but they can't [take such a step]." He has gone on to justify his comments saying that, "education is like a red line for the military. Many confrontations between the government and the military were caused by developments in education, especially religious high schools. Maybe the government are trying to avoid confrontation until they consolidate their power and wait until then before they take any serious steps."

Complementing his discussion of patterns of political party support in Turkey Ali has commented that "Not even half of the Kurds would currently support the AKP, especially after cross-border operations [into Iraq in 2008]. The main reason why [some] do support it is that the AKP describes itself as a pro-religious party. The Kurdish party (DTP/ Democratic Society Party, DSP) refuses to do this, it is secular… but Kurds are not secular… this is the main reason why there is so little support behind the Kurdish party as well." Commenting on the secularity of the DTP Ali has said, "I don't know why they refuse to show [a religious side to themselves], to have an image which shows they are not against religion, that they do support religious freedom. It is a fact that the majority of Kurds are religious and they are fastidious about their religious life. So there is a dilemma. People describe themselves as Kurds but they don't want to support a secular party … so that is why the religious-based parties usually gain support. They [gained support] in the past and they still get support from Kurds in Kurdish areas."

Ali has commented on what he believes to be the origins of the Kurdish question as exists in 2009 in Turkey saying "It has come about mainly because of the policies adopted during the time of Mustafa Kemal. We all know that they [the Turks and the Kurds] fought together to gain the independence of Turkey." He has gone on to comment on Mustafa Kemal's influences in the early years of the Turkish republic stating, "His policies alienated Kurds… Kurds until that point had been using their own language, had exercised their own autonomy in their region and had separate schools, their own *medreses* (Islamic schools). But, after the foundation of the republic fascist-like policies were adopted. Kurdish was banned, the *medreses* were shut down." Ali has qualified his comments by stating, "I believe that this is the most important, most serious event that caused the deterioration [of the relationship between the Turkish republic and its Kurdish citizenry]. It is certainly not the absolute origin of the [Kurdish question], but issues could have been resolved at that point. The policies of Mustafa Kemal have caused the chronic Kurdish Question."

Ali has spoken of certain political factors that surround and make-up the Kurdish question and its resolution. He has said, "[There are] obstacles to addressing the Kurdish question that are hidden in the agenda and the official ideology of the state." He has commented that he does not know what this agenda or ideology really is but has attempted to elaborate upon what he means by saying, "[the Turkish state is] based on a single ethnic group, a single language, single flag." Ali has expressed at this juncture that "when you lead a single ethnic group you of course don't allow other ethnic groups to express themselves, to exercise their own language, culture, literature… what is written in the constitution is that everyone living in Turkey is a Turk. Kurds interpret this article as [having an] ethnic [meaning]. They interpret [this part of the constitution] not in the sense of citizenship but in the sense of ethnicity." He has justified his argument by saying, "The positions and the rulings of the courts have proved that [the constitution] is interpreted by Turkish agencies, government agencies, in the sense of ethnicity. They refused to recognise both officially and unofficially until the mid-1990s that there are other ethnic groups [in Turkey]… Any expression of the Kurdish language was banned and those who tried to speak in Kurdish at schools were questioned, taken to the courts." Ali has said he believes

"the reason why people refuse to recognise [Kurds] is not secret… it is written in the constitution."

Ali has said, "After the government recognised, although informally, the existence of the Kurdish question and the Kurdish ethnic reality in Turkey, they have always talked of it as being caused by economic underdevelopment and illiteracy. They [have] said illiteracy is very high in Kurdish regions and it is economically underdeveloped. [They think], 'if we feed the schools and establish a certain economic monopoly like establishing a few factories, for example the Greater Anatolian Project (GAP)… if we finalise it, [the Kurdish question] will be resolved.' This is what the military, the rightist and the leftist governments have always believed and this is what they have always claimed as the causes of the Kurdish question." Ali has expressed his contention with this view stating, "I think the main problem is starting from this view point… Kurds believe the problem is neither economic nor educational, it is political and social. They demand a political self-rule in the most extreme form or the abolition of restrictions on Kurdish culture and language." He has elaborated on the juxtaposed viewpoints of official bodies in Turkey and its Kurdish population by saying, "This, [belief among Kurds], is against what many governments have believed is needed to solve the problem." He has gone on to say, "When you provide people with education facilities and more jobs and employment, I don't believe, they move away from ethnic awareness. On the contrary they will be more aware of their differences, their language and culture and as such they will demand more, they will demand social and political rights. But the state, the military, the rightists and the leftists, refuse to grant any political and social rights. So the way Kurds and the way Turks, well the government, handle the problem is quite different. One sees it as a political problem and one sees it as an economic or educational problem." Ali has pointed out at this juncture that he believes "it is not possible to grant political rights to Kurds with the existent constitution. [The Constitution] has to be amended. Especially certain founding articles should be revised. An amendment must be made to include Kurds too. This is why the problem persists." Turning to another issue to which he lends importance, Ali has pointed out that the PKK is an important factor. He has commented here that

"the PKK… has given up the idea of independence. When it was established it embarked on a project of independence, to achieve independence for Kurds in Kurdish areas. But after the mid-nineties it gave up the idea of independence and said, 'we want political and social rights'" Reflecting upon recent political developments in Turkey, Ali has said, "In fact the opportunity to resolve the problem, the chances are getting higher. But if you believe it is an economic and educational problem, you will be shocked to see that if economic development is achieved in Kurdish areas, the problem will still persist. It is ironic that both leftists, rightists agree when it comes to the Kurdish problem. Political Islamists agree also."

Ali has commented on the very current political environment in Turkey especially in light of the lead-up until the March nineteen local elections. He has said that political "debate has shifted from Kurdish question to other things such as the Ergenekon gang which is a very hot issue at the moment." Ali has said that he has learnt mostly from foreign press resources that "the government is trying to win Kurdish votes through economic incentives. They are now distributing bags of foodstuffs to people in Kurdish cities such as Diyarbakır, Van, Siir and Mardin." He said that the government, governors and town councils are giving out "basic foodstuff and coal" and that "Everyone is interpreting this delivery as a preparation for municipal elections." He has added that "Most of the people they are distributing to are poor and illiterate, so they are easier to manipulate." Reflecting further on current political developments Ali has said, "There have been no serious political developments. [No developments] that could gain the support of the Kurds to the ruling party." Ali has gone on to comment on the activity of the DTP commenting that the party has "no policy shifts in in its agenda." Ali has said that there will be a lot of competition over the Diyarbakır seat, especially between the AKP and the DTP. He has said that Diyarbakır is a "Kurdish metropole. It would have great symbolic meaning if the ruling party wins the mayoral elections there. It would be seen as a huge blow to the Kurdish party. It is important for the DTP to win. [Diyarbakır] is the biggest Kurdish city [in Turkey]. The current Mayor is from the DTP… He will probably win." Elaborating on this Ali has added, "Kurdish intellectuals have interpreted that the cross border operations [into northern Iraq] will really reduce support among Kurds

to the ruling party." He has qualified his comments further adding that "the AKP was the leading party in Kurdish areas in the last parliamentary elections."

Ali has commented on the political and ideological persuasions of people in Turkey in general noting that it is divided and not straightforward. He has said "There are extreme nationalists, those who are member of the Nationalist Movement Party (*MHP)*… they oppose any development in Kurdish issues outright. They say there are no Kurds. But, the left may be divided – there are leftists and rightists." He has gone on to say, "The ruling party and its supporters are in favour of a settlement but they still disagree on the causes of the problem, they still believe it is an economic problem. The secularists, [looking at] past experiences we can say they don't have the initiative to resolve the problem because they are closely related to the military and we know that the military will oppose any development. So, the best option from the view point of a Kurd is the current ruling party." Moving away from his discussion of political parties Ali has said, "In practice, civilians, average people have no problems with Kurds – they co-exist, they co-reside in houses. When the political question arises the majority of them still oppose Kurdish claims. When people hear that Kurds demand Kurdish to be made a national language [along with Turkish], they oppose it outright. Even those people who don't care about politics, like peasants, they really oppose it, I know it from my experiences, I know it from friends and media. Everyone in turkey is politicized through the media. You can't say that rural people or peasants are apolitical, they have been politicized. They don't know what is going on in the Kurdish areas and they have never been to it or visited it. [Nonetheless] certain viewpoints have been instilled in those people, through media and the nationalist party." Ali has gone on to assert that he believes "the confrontation between Kurdish political groups and armed groups with the state and the military has not boiled down to the popular level." He has added, "That, I think, is the best advantage. It provides us with hope that the Kurdish problem can still be resolved. But when it boils down to the popular level it will be really hard to resolve. All the people, all the citizens become politicized and from that point onward, other than separation, I think no projects could settle the problem." He has reasserted the he believes little conflict exists in day-to-day social interactions in

Turkey by saying, "…people live and reside together, side by side. There are intermarriages for example. [The situation is] not so bad yet." He has added that "There have been some bad experiences. In Western Turkey at political party marches and rallies certain people, with the provocation of nationalist groups, have stormed the cars of Kurdish supporters and party members. A few months ago during a rally two people were killed… I think it was in Altinova, Balikesir." Ali believes that antagonmism against Kurds and Kurdish political groups does not exist on the popular level. He has added to this by saying "… with the provocation of other groups, mainly related to the nationalist party, and through media, [people] are made active and try to suppress the organisations of the Kurdish party and other events such as in Adapazarı, Balıkesir… they try to lynch people participating in those organisations." Ali has reflected that, "when such antagonisms, such an atmosphere arises, the Kurdish party and its officers are the apparent targets because they are viewed as the symbols of the Kurdish fight and political movement.

Ali has entered a discussion of Turkey-EU relations stating that the "Turkish political agenda has in recent years changed very much on paper." He has said, "The penal code was amended several times but the European Union still rejects and opposes it because nothing in fact has changed. The courts and the judiciary still interpret [the constitution] in the same way. Writers and journalists are still tried for offending 'Turkishness' under this article 301." Ali has commented that "In terms of the Kurdish question nothing has changed politically. All the amendments made to the constitution since 2004 are not directly related to the Kurdish question." Talking about Turkey's negotiation process with the EU Ali has said "Lately, it is stuck. Neither EU-related policies nor Kurdish related policies are going anywhere The accession talks with the EU on certain articles are frozen because Turkey refused to open ports to Greek ships in Cyprus." Ali has said that the "Main development lately is the legal action against gangs that have links to the military – Ergenekon. [This development has] gained the ruling party really big support." Ali has said he thinks that Turkey is "kind of" liberalising. He has asserted that the "current government is affecting liberalisation in economy and politics but the judiciary and the military are opposing it." Ali has said that he thinks "The way the judiciary interpret the

constitution is a big problem. It is brought up by EU officials too." Ali has provided an example stating, "They [the government] made an amendment to the constitution to allow the wearing of headscarves in universities. However, the Constitutional Court rejected it… although there is nothing in the Constitution that forbids it. There is no law that forbids religious freedom in universities. But the way the courts interpret [the constitution] is a problem."

Speaking more about liberalisation in Turkey Ali has said, "Mainly religious communities have benefited [from this process] greatly lately. Islamists [have benefited]. Before the AKP, there were strict restriction in terms of [religious groups'] movement in society, especially in public places." Ali has commented that restrictions still exist such as the ban on the headscarf but has added that a number of universities don't enforce this law on their campus. Ali has gone on to say, "the main beneficiary of the present government is middle-class islamists, a certain merchant class especially in Anatolia - Kayseri, Konya and Denizli. They are main supporters of government and have benefited from economic liberalisation policies." Ali has qualified his point by saying, "Before this government all Islamist companies were under pressure from the military. Their trade licences would be cancelled." Ali thinks that while there has been little to no change in the official, legal status of interest groups, "informally most interest groups are in a better situation." Giving credit to the AKP Ali has said, "Before this government they faced apparent discrimination, nationalist groups attacked and killed priests, and Greek Orthodox buildings were vandalised in Istanbul." He has said that "Since the AKP came to power apparent attacks on Non-Muslim groups have diminished. I don't really know why, but that is my observation." Ali has gone on to argue in a more critical vein that "Unless political rights are granted or opportunities to get those rights are granted, I don't think a real dialogue can occur between Turkey's civil society and state. What the government is doing is bypassing the Kurdish NGOs, Kurdish civil society, human rights organisations and carrying out its policies through state-sponsored or state agencies."

Ali has spoken further of Turkey's relations with Europe saying, "the idea to join the EU was established by Mustafa Kemal. Since [that time] it has been an objective [of Turkey] to join the Western bloc." Ali has cited certain economic incentives provided by America and Europe, such as the Marshall Plan, as crucial to Turkey's push for accession. He has also spoken of ideological factors stating that the "idea behind it is that Mustafa Kemal wanted to cut ties with history and representations of the past that are associated with the 'Middle East.' He wanted to establish ties with the west. So, it has been a general objective of both left and right since then." Ali has spoken of the practical manifestation of Turkey-EU relations saying, "Certain laws were enacted to grant more freedoms [such as] freedom of expression and greater respect for human rights. Turkey has signed the Human Rights Convention and must accept the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights." Ali has commented that it is up to Turkey to implement these standards and conventions.

Ali has said that "If Turkey is granted membership it will benefit Kurds." He has added, "If I am not mistaken, all ethnic languages in Europe are given recognition and are respected by EU member states – for example, Spain recognises the Basque language." In this vein Ali has asserted that the "EU will make it a condition for Turkey to accept and grant formal recognition to the Kurdish language and it will put pressure on Turkey to improve conditions for Kurds. If Kurds fail to receive a fair trial in Turkish courts, they will have a chance to apply to EU courts or parliament. Kurdish political parties will have formal representatives in the EU Council – that would be a big development." Ali has said that "Maybe [these issues] will not be resolved immediately and directly after Turkey is accepted in to the EU, but it may smooth the process [of addressing Kurdish discontents]. It is a hope but it will take a long time." At this point Ali has expressed his own cynicism alluding to EU's lack of apparent commitment and adding, stating that "The EU's inter-state interests rule more heavily than human rights, conflict resolution and human development interests. I believe if the EU is to make a choice between certain group interests and issues relating to the improvement of human rights… it will grant Turkey membership despite [the state's] real legal process towards the respect of human

rights and the rule of law." He has mentioned however that despite this, "I still support membership, the advantages outweigh doubts and Turkey deserves it."

Ali has said that the EU's stance on the Kurdish question in Turkey "centres on the PKK." He has elaborated saying, "[The EU] is not willing to push Turkey to take bigger steps to resolve the problem. {Their] main concern is security, and they have never hesitated to express support to Turkey regarding its fight against the PKK.' Ali has added that the EU does not have a consensus across its member state regarding Turkey's membership. He has said, "The Nordic countries are more concerned about human rights but France and Britain more with security and inter-state relations."

Ali has broached the topic of NGOs in Turkey and especially NGOs working in the Kurdish regions. He has mentioned IHADE claiming that it is "the major NGO working to improve Human Rights in the Kurdish region. They have taken scores of cases to EUCtHR." He has also mentioned the Turkish Human Rights Foundation and the Britain-based Kurdish Human Rights Project. Hehas said that these organisations are most founded and managed by Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals and are generally supported by the EU. Commenting on the work these NGOs do Ali has said, "They are not effective. Not because they don't work hard but because of state restrictions on their function. Officials [working at these NGOs are] usually subjected to trial, suspension or detention. For example, the head of most significant human rights association (IHADE) survived an attempted assassination. Now [he is] a member of the Kurdish Party (DTP) and [has a seat in] the Turkish Parliament." Ali has gone on to say, "If state restrictions [on NGOs are] removed then they could be efficient." Ali has emphasised his point adding that, "[NGOs] are the only medium through which those faced with discrimination can take their case to EU. These people [who do as such] are usually illiterate. NGOs main function is to take these cases to the courts." At this point Ali has said that, "the universal Human Rights Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights are efficient and sufficient but the problem [for their implantation] lies with respective states. Turkey has signed and approved [these conventions and treaties] yet it is the country with the most cases at the EUCtHR… [There is] no problem with the conventions but there is

a problem with the legal systems of individual countries." Ali has clarified his point by saying, "The Swedish constitution is written in line with the [human rights] convention. Turkey's is not. Turkey has not amended its constitution in a way that places it in line with the convention – indeed they are in conflict. That is why so many cases against Turkey."

Speaking of Turkey's relationship with its eastern neighbouring states Ali noted that he has relatives in Syria. He has gone on to say, "Turkey is cooperating with Iran and Syria (and Iraq until the US invasion) regarding the PKK. To a great extent [they cooperate in order] to smash Kurdish political movements and insurgencies in these neighbour countries." He has said that "There is a broad cooperation between these states because all are against Kurds. Iran, Syria and Turkey cooperate in military action against Kurdish groups on the borders." He has commented that, "Since 1999 there has been a rapprochement between Turkey and Syria and a normalisation of relations. Their cooperation always affects the Kurds negatively." Speaking briefly about Iraq and Turkey Ali has said, "Since the removal of Saddam, the Kurdish autonomous region has become a main player in relations between Turkey and Iraq."

Broaching the topic of what the future of the Kurdish Question in Turkey will be Ali has commented, "I can only speculate. Turkey and the EU process – if it results in membership there will be an improvement in the Kurdish question and the hope for a resolution to the Kurdish question will be high." Ali had added that there must be a "reduction in support for [the use of] military means [in the south east]. But if turkey fails to settle the problem at this stage [armoured conflict] will flare up again. There is a chance. The future of the conflict to a great extent depends on the Turkish state because Kurdish groups cannot and do not have enough support to resolve the question, they can't do it. If Turkey takes serious steps they can [resolve it]. And I believe that Kurdish groups are ready." He has elaborated further stating that, "Separatism remains an ideal but for the time being most Kurds prefer to stay in the boundaries of Turkey. But [in doing so] they demand respect and recognition of ethnicity, like in Canada. If Turkey fails to grant those rights… the ideal of independence may potentially become a real goal."

Respondent 4 – Jala

Considering what she believes are the main issues that make up the Kurdish question (*Kürt meselesi*) Jala has said, "It seems to be like this - the Kurds' language must be visible and the Kurds must be visible." She has gone on to say, "But I think there are more fundamental problems. For example, however much talk there is of the Kurdish language being free - this seems like a cover in line with a certain conjecture. [That conjecture is that] Europe likes it so we have to do this. Fundamentally there are more important things to be done. For example, there is still a split between the east and the west [of Turkey] in every way. They haven't developed [the east] ("*Orada yapımlar yapılmadı*"). They need to take steps in order to stop the Kurds from wanting to separate from Turkey. If not, nobody can say to them "why do you want to separate" because there is no road works over there. There are roads between the mountains, winding along cliffs and they haven't even made barriers for such roads. Around here something like that would not be. They need to do a lot regarding the education in the east. Teachers are forced to work there ("*Zorunlu hizmet alır*"). They can't find people who want to work there, and those they find are new graduates, have no experience and are people who plan to stay no more than a year or two. So they really need to improve the state of education there for the local people. The state should provide far more services in the East."

In regards to what she views is being done to address the Kurdish question Jala has said that "the PKK is struggling and the DTP is doing things in a political sense (*PKK mücadele ediyor ve DTP politik anlamda bir şeyler yapiyor*). In recent times the government made a decision to do something. Of course the leftist organisations support us, [the Kurds], as they are against all forms of ethnic discrimination *("Bize tabi sol örgütler sahip çıkıyorlar. Bütün etnik ayrımcılıklara karşı çıktıkları gibi*"). But I don't know what is really being done and who actually has the capacity to do anything. For example, the PKK struggle has its own character. They have fulfilled their usefulness and are achieving nothing anymore. But I cannot say that they have achieved nothing. For example the things that the government is doing now, such as

recognizing Kurds ("*Kürtlere tanımak*"), accepting that they have their own language, and allowing them to use Kurdish - They act as though they did this despite the PKK but I think the PKK played the greatest role in affecting such changes. If they hadn't formed such a struggle nobody would have known that the Kurds had these problems. I don't how else they could have gained a voice. I guess a little violence was necessary. [The PKK] started with very different goals. They hoped to form their own state. But now they are calling for language rights, and there is a Kurdish language channel. They demand that Kurdish should be permitted to be used in certain places. I don't know if what they wanted to happen has happened. Then there is the DTP which is a legitimate political party but I think works like the political party of the PKK. I think they have done things to voice Kurdish concerns ("*Gayet ses getiren şeyler yapıyorlar*"). For example Osman Baydemir, [DTP member and the current mayor of Diyarbakır] is a very sharp guy ("*keskin*"). He appears, in some way, to be a speaker for the PKK. He keeps the two organisations, the DTP and PKK, in Diyarbakır under tight control. Diyarbakır is like a castle [for the Kurdish people]." Jala has gone on to speak of other developments that she views as important by saying, "Ahmet Türk spoke Kurdish in parliament the other day and it wasn't so bad. From now on it is not complained about because people have accepted Kurdish. I mean, before, Leyla Zana and others were imprisoned for speaking Kurdish in parliament. But nowadays it is not such a striking move ("*Şimdi o kadar çarpıcı bir hareket değil*"). These people [such as Ahmet Turk] are treated like the voices of the Kurds. This is a good thing I think because before they always entered elections under the DTP and as such they didn't win seats in parliament. Their entering the elections as independent candidates is better because they can bring problems from the south-east to parliament. The steps taken by the government are simply a couple of symbolic developments. It is like that."

Jala has said "I don't think any of the measures [that have been taken to address the Kurdish question] are enough. I think they are more superficial. Maybe I should not be so pessimistic about it. It is a little bit like this - if I do something it will be done. If something needs to be done you must do it yourself. There are people who want to learn the Kurdish language, to receive education in the Kurdish language, my older

sister included, so they started a school. Then they went to prison. After so many things like this happen and then later to act like nothing ever happened, to act like they are doing it because they have chosen to, because they want to… it is very *kadir kiymet bilir* and despotic. It is as though those in power have said, 'I feel like doing it and so I will get into it and do it'. So, I don't give great kudos to what the government has done, but we may view it as a step forward." She has gone on to say, "I think moves by the state to change public prejudice, to mend the relationships between people, is a lot more important. If a Turk says, "I am not against Kurds" ("ben Kürtlere karşı değilim"), or if they still can't say the word 'Kurd' with ease or have an attitude like 'despite the fact that you are a Kurd I like you because you are human too" - Such an attitude is also a negative thing. Things like TRT 6 and Kurdish literature departments are good developments and can help to dispel such attitudes. So, yes these steps may be important but it is still not enough."

Jala has said that the formation of the Turkish Republic was a very important time in the history of the Kurds and today's Kurdish question. She has said, "Before [the formation of the republic] it was the Ottoman Empire which was not a nation-based state. It was an empire and Kurds lived as Kurds and the region in which they lived was called Kurdistan. There was no need for discrimination. They thought, 'We are Ottomans' and such a prestigious identity was enough for people. But when nationalism came, when everybody wanted to create independent states of their own, it started to divide up in a more dangerous way. When the republic was founded by Mustafa Kemal and his colleagues … over time they said, 'We founded this country along with Kurds'…. And then, I think as a response to calls by Kurds for independence, they started to reduce the use of the word 'Kurd'. And then they started to say, "Everyone in Turkey is a Turk". Being a Turk was like a prestigious identity and there can be no hierarchy [in society]. So I think it started from over there. And then I think it came from when people were saying that there is no such thing as Kurds. They said that Kurds are those Turkmen that live in the mountains whose feet make the sound "kart kurt" as they walk. It is because of this that they are called 'Kurds'. [Another factor] is the laws which came from such contentions, [that there is no such thing as Kurds]. Also, the PKK may be responsible for a bunch

of issues. They have brought language and Kurdish issues into the light but from another perspective the PKK is often seen as representing all Kurds. It may have acted to encourage and provoke a certain Kurdish nationalism… I think it has had such an effect.

Reflecting upon some obstacles to addressing the Kurdish question Jala has mentioned, "Everything that is said or discussed in Turkey about Kurds is done so as though the PKK is their absolute leader and representative. People in Turkey speak as though the country is about to be divided or that there are plans to do as such. They think Kurds will protest everything. All the struggles to allow the Kurdish identity to be accepted have come across obstacles. An examplke of this is 'education in your mother tongue' ("*anadilde eğitim hakkı*"). Also, the DTP is still viewed with much prejudice. Also there has been very little opportunity for Kurds to voicing their politics ("*siyaset yapmasına çok izin verilmiyor"*). Like I said, this is something that absolutely must be done by us, [Kurds]. However, [the state] are continuously preventing [it from happening]."

When speaking of the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) role in addressing the Kurdish Question Jala has said, "I think they have a very tense approach. I don't see the AKP as being a free and independent thing. For me, whoever is in government, whoever is at the head of the state, they will only be so for a temporary amount of time. Perhaps I am underestimating [the role of the government] too much but I think it doesn't have a real impact. At the moment AKP is on the hill ("*tepede AKP var*"). The European Union wanted it like that. Maybe they gained permission from the EU who thought they were capable of getting things done. But I really don't think they are more progressive or ahead of any other parties. Then again, maybe if the CHP were in power they wouldn't have done [what the AKP has done]. But I don't think the AKP has real initiative. They act like spoilt children now but when it is necessary they will begin to prohibit [certain things].

When speaking of political developments leading up to the local elections, Jala has said "Perhaps we can speak only of what Recep Tayyip has done because for those

that think there are no Kurds, they don't even go to the east. Devlet Bahceli, Deniz Baykal. Republican Peoples' Party went [to the South-East] but I don't know what they said. They went to Tunceli. Actually they visited a few places but Tunceli was the most prominent. Maybe this is an election tactic but it wasn't about the Kurds. Maybe it was to win Kurdish votes but it wasn't for Kurds. Maybe they have done things in Diyarbakır too but I don't know." Jala has said, "I think the government should play a greater role [in addressing the Kurdish question] but I generally believe that we should not wait for anything from the state. It may be 'Kurdish paranoia' or 'leftist paranoia'. [The government and state] are taking steps for their own reasons. It is definitely not for us. And so these developments such as TRT6 - I don't find them sincere. Perhaps you could view this as a distrust that has stayed with me from my past. If I could trust [the government], there are a number of roles to be played but because I don't trust them, I am not waiting for anything from them."

When speaking of certain popular ideological factors as relate to the Kurdish question Jala has mentioned official Ataturkism ("*resmi Atatürkçülük")* and nationalism ("*Milliyetçilik*") as being relevant factors. She has justified herself saying, "In the public there is something like this – 'Ok, you are a Kurd and we are Turks, but what is the point of saying this?' They don't think saying something like this is discriminatory towards Kurds ("*Kürtlerin bu sekilde ayrımcılığa uğradığını düşünmüyorlar*). I think this is very widespread. They think, 'Ok you are Kurds but lets all also be Turks'. They don't realise that saying this engenders a hierarchical situation. When one says Atatürk's words, 'What happiness it is to say I am a Turk' ("*Ne mutlu Türküm diyene*"), people say that he did not intend to speak of being Turk. They say he was speaking of being from Turkey ("*aslında Türkü kastetmemiştir, Türkiyeliyi kas etmiştir*"). If that is so then he should have said "What happiness it is to say I am from Turkey" ("*ne mutlu Türkiyeliyim demek gerekir*"). Why do they use the name of an ethnic group? This Kemalist ideology manifests as a problem often. And so they look at us like we are just trying to create problems… I think this is a very frustrating obstacle to making Kurds visible [in society]."

Jala has spoken of some recent changes in the political environment in Turkey. She has said, "I think Turkey has been and continues to be on a path of greater liberalisation. Many things are more visible now. I am not completely sure but it seems to be going well. I think it is happening because they can plainly see that there are no other options. Many things, by nature of the day, are in conflict (*"Pek çok şey artık celişme halinde.* The goals set by the EU are important. They disagree on some points." She has gone on to say, "People are shouting loudly for the Kurds to be granted their rights. And maybe they don't have the power to struggle with the PKK now, but I am not sure. I think these changes are happening because they have to. And maybe they have become more aware of their own paranoia that the state and the nation will be divided, I think they are moving away from this perception. With greater limitations, we become more polarized (*"Onlar bizi kısıtladıkça, uçlara doğru kayıyoruz").* Maybe they think that by providing us a spark of an opportunity it will turn into a fire and remained a little scared."

Jala believes that liberalisation in Turkey is a positive development for its Kurdish population. At this juncture she has drawn a comparison between Kurds and Alevis in Turkey saying, "I think the Alevis are a similar group to Kurds in Turkey. This was founded as a Sunni Muslim state and so Alevis were deprived of their rights. I am not sure if the struggles grow from one another but Alevis and Kurds do much work together. Sometimes Alevis show support to the CHP. After the Kurds have worked for their rights for so long, some Laz people have stood up and demanded the same treatment." Jala believes Kurds have set a certain precedent for other groupos in Turkey to demand their rights. She has noted some developments which could potentially take the cause further – "They may put more money into the east, open factories. Intellectuals can be a help to this problem, I think they are doing things. And then there are those that work on the Kurdish language and literature, their work is achieving much. For example, Mehmet Uzun always wrote in Kurdish and then they would translate it into Turkish. Apparently he writes very beautifully in Kurdish and he has been a great help. Teachers can help. Well actually this is not really to do with Kurds it is more generally to dispel prejudices against other groups."

Jala has commented on the political climate in the South-East saying, "Over there, it is not like here where there are more political options. Here I could have joined the DTP or ODT, EMEP or others – DTP was one of a number of choices. In the east it works differently. The only alternative over there is the DTP. You are either a traitor or a patriot ("*ya hainsin ya da yurtseversin"*). People are left between these two options. It is not just people but it also affects villages and districts. People from these communities are forced to take one of these positions. There are Korucu villages, which are those villages that have accepted to work for the state… In fact it cannot be called "accepting", it more depends upon from whom you have seen less violence, or from which power you are less scared of, it is that one that you join. Because PKK kills *korucus*, but if people refuse to be *korucus* then the state kills them or they displace them from their villages. So, for these people the PKK are not good either it is forced upon them. It is far more mixed up over there."

Reflecting upon Turkey's relationship with the European Union Jala has said, "Both parties are involved in the process due to economic considerations. But who will profit off the situation more, I am not sure. Europe arranges the process so that it will profit off it. If there is any reason for the membership process to fail it is if Turkey does not present itself as a potential advantage [for the EU]. It will be advantageous for Turkey. In terms of Turkey's further democratisation, the EU seems to be a good influence. At the least the EU is acting like an observer, an overlooker. In the end Europe is like an imperial bloc with its own borders… because of this how much we should expect in terms of democracy [and democratic reforms] I really don't know. How much can they bring us is not clear. And so, things to do with Kurdish, like courses, I don't find them genuine because it is not something that has been affected from the bottom, it is happening from above. I am not sure about the whole EU situation. They need to look at economic circumstances." Despite this observation Jala has commented that, "It seems as though Turkey's accession to the EU will provide positive changes for the Kurds. The minority groups and ethnic groups in European countries, their rights are not totally met, they are not in a perfect condition. However, compared to Turkey they are in a much better place. If these types of communities will stand in front of Turkey, then it is good for the Kurds."

Some other developments she has observed in line with Turkey's EU-directed reform – "They have taken steps for the recognition of Kurds. They encourage the opening of Kurdish language, and the progress of democratization in the East of Turkey, funding [projects] in the East and things like this. There are cases being opened, for example for missing persons or unsolved murder cases – they have positions on these issues." She has gone on to say, "Most people in Turkey want to become a member of the European Union in order to be European and to live under better working conditions. There are people who are against joining the EU but I don't remember why. They criticise the EU for not being as much of a democratic place as it appears/is portrayed to be. They draw attention to the minorities in European countries."

Jala is pessimistic about Turkey's eventual membership in the EU. "I don't think the negotiations are a two-sided thing. Everything depends on Europe. The only one who has to change is Turkey, and even if they make all these changes, the final decision is still in the hands of the European Union. Turkey has no power, even if Turkey is not in Europe, they will go on."

Jala has touched briefly upon the topic of NGOs in Turkey saying, "I don't know any NGOs dealing specifically with Kurds. But generally, I think that NGOs are like this – one section are masturbation vehicles for the wealthy ("*zenginlerin masturbasyon araçlar*"). They think they are helping. This may be an advantageous thing for social movements to have a greater effect but I don't think it is a help. I think NGOs are harmful (zararli) institutions in terms of social movements. It is also bad because the work that is supposed to be done by the state, they transfer it to a different area, privatise and this results in the State shrinking."

Jala has no contact with any Kurdish persons from countries other than Turkey. She has commented on state relations between Iraq and Turkey saying, "There is a tense relationship between Turkey and Iraq on the issue of the PKK. Perhaps they worry about the PKK uniting with the Kurds of Iraq and developing a bigger movement from within Turkey. Maybe they know that nothing like that is happening…I even

find it a little strange but according to me it is as if there are only Kurds in Turkey. I don't know what is happening over there."

Jala has commented on what she believes the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey may be, "I think that the situation of the Kurds is improving over time. I think things will be better. However, just the other day, fifteen Kurds from this university were taken in for questioning. It seems if the state does everything it can it will continue to improve. But I think the state has been forced to undergo this process. Maybe Turkey is really coming from behind in terms of democratisation but it has no other choice but to become more democratic. People will not accept anything else from now, everyone (well, most) are directed towards Europe, at the least University students are involved in this network. From now on Turkey has to provide shelter for identities. Among these identities are ethnic identities. But I think this has occurred in the past years and quite quickly. Maybe if we had had this conversation two years ago I would have had a lot less hope. I think the process has accelerated because [the state] are more relaxed. When the word "Kurd" is said, they are not scared. There is no anxiety over whether saying the word Kurd is a bad thing. I don't think it is a plural society yet but they are obliged to go in this direction."

Respondent 5 – Dilhar O'Reilly

Dilhar has said, "According to me the main issue behind the Kurdish question is the recognition of the [Kurdish] identity. This is the biggest problem. By recognition I mean to acknowledge that there are Kurds and [for Turkey to] recognize what the Kurds want. In addition to the recognition of a Kurdish identity, the pressures that lie on top of this identity must be removed ("*bu kimliğin tanınması ve bu kimlik uzerindeki baskınları kaldırılması"*).

Regarding a solution to Kurdish issues Dilhar has not observed any solid steps being taken by the State. He has said, "I have seen steps being taken towards a non-solution and steps which inflame the situation. They act to blow up the comfortable/entrenched stance that supports a non-solution [to the Kurdish question]

and to drive the situation into a dead end." At this juncture Dilhar has added, "From another perspective, to solve the Kurdish Question, in the end the Kurdish Movement has been an important catalyst. You cannot discount this movement's struggle. It is thanks to this movement that people became aware of the fact that many Kurds were oppressed and were deprived of their rights.

Dilhar believes there is not enough being done in Turkey to address the Kurdish question. He has qualified his opinion by saying, "In the end, broadcasting a Kurdish television channel and allowing Kurdish to be spoken, these are not comprehensive solutions. Kurds want such things to be secured through legislation - those possibilities given by the power-that-be today may be revoked by the next in office ("*Kürtler bunun yasal bir güvenmeye bağlanmasın istiyorlar. Bugünün iktidari bunun olanak yarınınki ellerinden alır"*). In the end, Kurds that live in Turkey, they are also citizens of this country and the majority have found happiness living here and are not trying to leave this country. There are certainly some people who want to struggle to get away from Turkey, to live in another country. But, Kurds that live in Turkey want to see steps taken that will produce results. They are saying that the current state of affairs is not enough. A number of funny events are happening like people being arrested for speaking Kurdish."

When speaking of some historical factors that Dilhar believes have played a role in producing the Kurdish question as it is today, he has said "notions of separatism have certainly been a factor in this problem being brought to the centre of attention." He has gone on to say, "[The Kurds'] demanding recognition of the Kurdish identity has been around since even before the Turkish republic was founded. Promises were given to Kurds but they were mostly just used. As a matter of fact, due to uprisings it was possible for them to be seen. This is not a problem that belongs to today as it has come from the past. It is in current times that the 'Kurdish question' has taken form in terms of what is being demanded and what the problem constitutes. We are living in a time where recognition of these issues is being shown. Generally, when you look at the history of [the Kurdish question], at past events, we can see that this is not something peculiar to this time."

Dilhar has said that it is well-known that the Turkish state is hesitant to address Kurdish issues. He believes this is because of the dominant idea that the unity of the Turkish state will be compromised [if Kurdish issues are addressed]. He has added at this point, "What is more painful than this is the state's distrust of elements which make up its own society. If the state can make peace with the country it formed itself and with the minorities it formed itself and with elements who work for this country too, then they will feel that troubles like this wouldn't have happened. But because the state doesn't trust [the people], they pursue a line of thought which states that 'those rights which you grant today will become a headache for you in future days' and as such distance themselves [from granting more rights].

Dilhar has said, "I think the actions of the ruling AKP government are insincere ("*samimiyetsiz bir davranış olduğuna düşünuyorum*"). It is not sincere ("*Içten değil"*). If a solution for the Kurdish question is to be found or if there is someone who says they are struggling to find a solution to the question, they would not stand up and order [the police] to attack a crowd even if they are hitting women and children. I am speaking of Tayyip Erdogan who in events in Diyarbakır , affronting the situation where the women and children were in the front lines of a protest, said to the police "even if it is a child or a woman, attack" *("Çocukta olsa kadında olsa, vurun")."* Dilhar has commented further, "The politics of the AKP is aimed at securing the voting potential of the Kurdish population, to harness their strength in the Kurdish region. So I don't find them sincere." He has added however, "From another perspective something needs to be done. They are taking some steps, and even if these steps are self-serving [for the government], they are also helping Kurds in a way ("*Adımlar atılıyor bunlar bazılarının menfaatine de olsa en azından Kürtlere de bir şekilde yarıyor*"). I think it is dangerous for the Kurds to accumulate [their rights] as a side product of another's advancement ("*Kürtlerin sadece başkasının menfaatine olan şeylerden nemalanmasi tehlikeli geliyor bana*"). It is more important for them to be granted their essential rights for their sake. There is a way of thinking which claims that TRT6 was able to broadcast thanks to the actions of the AKP. Something is being published in Kurdish and this is thanks to the AKP -

this helps the AKP. It is also true that the lifting of restrictions on the Kurdish language has helped Kurds too. These types of successes, such as the opening of TRT6 – it served a purpose for both the AKP and the Kurds. But the AKP didn't do it for the Kurds, it did it for itself. I think such self-serving developments are dangerous. In the future, they will approach problem-solving from a definite group of peoples' perspectives and this perspective will not represent the actual perspective of Kurds. One person's view may harm the Kurds. As such, applauding these events unconsciously and to applaud without assuring there is a firm basis [to these events] seems dangerous to me. It is really great the TRT6 was opened but it shouldn't be applauded so quickly. Certainly it is a big step but I think it is a problematic step.

Speaking of developments that relate to the Kurdish question leading up to the local elections Dilhar has said, "Leading up to elections, any political move seems to be an attempt to garner support. The last I heard, on his way to Iran, President Gul said there would be further developments in the Kurdish question and this seems to be like an "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine"-like situation ("*bozacının sahidi şıracı bir durum"*). They are just behaving like this to help one another. It must be noted that these kinds of things are being said just before the elections. So it doesn't seem like something that will lead to any solutions." Dilhar has commented further, "I don't believe the government. Even if the government of this country actually wants to address and solve the Kurdish question, the institutional framework of Turkey won't allow any government much possibility. I want to say that this country is not just run by the government, there are other administrating powers. The military structure is one. The deep state structure is another. Any solution which does not include their involvement will be a sell-out. He has said, "A solution to the Kurdish question, according to some ways of thinking, requires the removal of certain conditions. If you look at the army's budget you will be able to see very clearly what I mean. There are exceptional amounts of money involved in this issue. This creates a situation of annuity costs. Other countries use the Kurdish problem against Turkey. And Turkey uses it against others. There is a reciprocal fight going on in this issue. In terms of this, any solution to the Kurdish question is very troubled.

Dilhar has noted that there are ideological boundaries in Turkey's society which hinder the ability of the Kurdish question to be addressed and there are concrete examples of this situation. He has commented, "If I speak of those in Turkey who are not Kurds, a majority of people consider Kurds terrorists. We may not see this in the public sphere. People don't necessarily know who is a Kurd and who is not. It is not about being Kurd or not. A Kurd may degrade another Kurd. I am not saying, 'all Kurds are like this and all Turks are like this.' Indeed, there are some Turks to whom it is not fit for Kurds to hold a candle to them (*"Öyle Türkler vardır ki, Kürtler onların eline su dökemez"*). I am speaking of Turkish intellectuals. At the society level the image of Kurds, that is the perception in the public sphere, is "Ah, our brothers, the Kurds." However, when you turn to special circumstances, it appears they are saying such things with a mask on. When you put on a mask, things change. On internet sites there are certain rumours and nicknames. You may visit some sites and if you focus on comments written about the Kurdish question or Kurds you can see people's perspectives more clearly. Why do I give importance to such things? I do so because this is happening outside the public sphere. When people wear a mask, they can act more like their true selves. They can express themselves a lot more comfortably. When you see the comments of people with net-nicknames on the internet about Kurds you can see much more clearly how they view Kurds. There is a great amount of intolerance. Everybody describes all the Kurds as terrorists. For example, there were comments which described the PKK women attending a PKK funeral as prostitutes. Or, there was some news that had something to do with Kurds and when I looked at the comments on it they said "Kurds are the misfortune of this country" and "The best Kurd is a dead Kurd" (*"Kürtler bu Űlkenin belasıdır" ve "En iyi Kürt ölü Kürttür").* People are associating Kurds with such things. If a Kurd did something like this, for example if they write, "the best Turk is a dead Turk" they are just as fascist. I am trying to say that it is just wrong to say such things. But, in this society the number of people who view Kurds in such a light and think in this way is not small. The existence of such people in society represents an obstacle to finding a solution to the Kurdish question. The actions of the government alone are insufficient in solving the Kurdish question. They claim that these two peoples are

brothers, but the majority in actual fact say, "Who is whose brother?" and are not concerned about [Kurds] (*"Kim kimin kardeşi?... Ne kardeşi lan?!").*

Dilhar has commented that since Turkey started accession negotiations with the European Union, there have been many changes in the country. "According to me, these steps are very important. I live in this country. I am happy living in this country and I believe that however far democratization in Turkey may go, this is a good thing. The further ahead the democratization process is taken the better it is for the people in this country, the more pleasure they will get out of life." Dilhar has spoken hypothetically at this point, saying, "To be able to live in a place where there are no limits to thinking, no fear of being incarcerated for expressing opinions and a place where different identities are tolerated – I think these are important factors and I want to live in a country where the conditions are as such." He has added, "At the least, Turkey has entered onto a path of democratization in the past few years. There are definitely changes. We are not in a completely trouble free position as of yet. But this process should unfold step by step ("*sindiresindire olması gerekiyor*"). The section of the population in Turkey who think in this way is not small in fact. There should at least be open debate, this is important. The path Turkey has entered may provide hope for such people ("*Umit verici bir süreçte*")".

Accounting for Turkey's move towards what he views as further democratization, Dilhar has said ,"If this country wants to break out of its own shell it must face up to its own realities and mistakes. Perhaps the EU has stood as an example and in turn provided the opportunity for Turkey to face up to its errors. When you look at the conditions in Turkey you may see many changes. A number of developments are happening in line with people's perspectives. People think that developments will be handled by a hero rather than a political ideology. These are dangerous things actually. It should not be a hero that transforms a society - it should be the society itself. Some people act as the front foot [of society]. Within the current societal framework, even if it is not desired, certain transformations occur and society tries naturally to break out of its shell. People in this country like intellectuals (I am not just speaking about Kurds and Turks) and those who assume radical stances should

organise and wake one another up, bring one another to action. Formal organisation in a number of areas, from the non-governmental to political sectors, has taught the people that something has to change. Dilhar has added at this point, "Aside from the EU, the most important factor and perhaps even more important than the EU, is this - The society has become enlightened, even if only slightly, and in order to affect change they are trying to break out of their shell ("*Toplum biraz olsun aydınlandı ve bir şeyler değistirmek için kabuğunu kırmaya calıştı"*). The formation and organisation of such structures (that bring about change) here in Turkey is a necessity as they play a role that is just as important as that played by the EU. The most important is the role played by intellectuals. Also important is the impact of the media, I think it has an effect. The media persuades people that there may be an alternative way of life in which they may express themselves. As such, [the organisational process] accelerates.

Dilhar is generally positive about Turkey's bid for accession into the European and believes "It will act as a catalyst to Turkey's democratization process… I think that even if Turkey democratizes one centimetre, it will help the Kurdish question in metres." He has commented on the relationship between Turkey and the EU saying, "From what I know and what the average person knows is that there are a number of negative aspects from the perspective of the EU when it comes to Turkey's membership – some of these are border issues, religion and population. As concerns the accession process, Turkey seems to have slowed down, or at least it doesn't display the same enthusiasm as it did initially. There is a certain anxiety. I think this may be why the process has slowed at this point. There are anxieties over the positions of the EU and the EU is no longer that which it was imagined it to be. We cannot see a concrete strength anymore. The EU itself does not operate as a unified body. It is not presenting a very different alternative to the United States – It cannot form its own authority.

When speaking of whether Turkey's membership in the EU could potentially provide a solution to the Kurdish question Dilhar has said, "Not completely of course, but I think the question will be presented in a different light. The Kurdish struggle goes on

in Europe too ("*Kürt mücadelesi Avrupada da sürdürülen bir mücadele*"). There are many points which the Kurds cannot voice in Turkey, but are able to in Europe. There are many parliamentarians in Europe, many political structures, and they have a lot of knowledge about the Kurdish question. Because of this, the EU is watching developments concerning the Kurds in Turkey. And because the Kurds that live in Europe can express their opinions, in some way they are also able to provide feedback on what is happening regarding the Kurdish question. Such a phenomenon will contribute to the Kurdish question." Reflecting more generally on the accession process and Turkey's potential membership Dilhar has said, "From what I have observed it will be very difficult to change the stance of countries such as France who are against Turkey's joining the EU, especially given that Sarkozy is president. The stance Turkey assumes throughout the accession process is more important than if it becomes a member or not. If Turkey [assumes a good stance], if it comes to such a point, its entry into the EU is not important."

Dilhar has spoken at this point about the role played by non-governmental organisations in Turkey. He has said, "NGO's have in a way illuminated a lot of issues for people in Turkey and so they have provided many advantages. They have organised the people. If I shout alone, my voice will not be heard. But when I see other people who have lived through similar troubles, things can change. A person who has had troubles and experienced bad events in life will usually believe he or she is alone and keep their issues closed up inside. So when it comes to NGOs, especially IHADE (Insan Haklar Dernegi, Human Rights Association) and other similar institutions such as women's associations, they teach people that their life experiences are not peculiar to only themselves and that they must call for their rights. For example, to make a woman who has experienced rape aware that she is not alone and that other people have suffered the same thing and that this is a problem. It is the same for a woman who has seen domestic violence, a Kurd whose home was demolished, or a person who has been tortured. NGOs have let people know that they must call for their rights to be respected. They have been the vanguard of such a trend in Turkey. In this way NGOs have a very important role to play. I am not implying that NGOs don't have their own flaws. In their own structure

they secure a position of advantage for themselves." At this point DIlhar has said that trade unions are more passive than they should be in Turkey. He has added, "We must and NGOs must become more active. There are NGOs in the South East but not enough. Perhaps they are limited by the conditions under which they operate." Dilhar has qualified what he means by commenting, "We can't just blame the NGOs [for being inactive] because they also have problems, especially those in the South East. For example, IHADE can be raided once a week by the police. Akin Birdal, a member of parliament from the DTP and the old mayor of Diyarbakır, was the head of IHADE. About eight years ago he was shot in a police raid of the association. He came back from his death. These days, things have changed and it is not like it used to be. However, IHADE and Kurdish NGOs still harbour anxieties about such occurrences."

Broaching the subject of Kurds living in Iran, Iraq and Syria, Dilhar has said he has no relations with anybody from these countries. He remarks on his rapport with the common turn of phrase amongst Kurds in Turkey, "We wonder! What is it like over there?" He wishes to see life for Kurds in these countries and is certain he will visit one day. He has said, "I especially am very curious about the universities over there. What kind of structures are they? And maybe in the future, if it is possible I would like to go and teach there even just temporarily. I want to do something." He notes however that there is a language problem stating, "Actually, the problem with the language [in Iraq] is that they still use the Arabic script. They have not changed to the Latin script the animals ("*Latin Alfabesine geçmedi öküzler*"). If they had [changed to the Latin script] it would be much better for me. I don't know the Arabic script."

When commenting upon the relationships between the governments of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey Dilhar has said, "to be honest, it changes every day. Five months ago, Barzani said "we won't give Turkey even one cat." But next week, Barzani is coming to Turkey." It is generally a situation of conflict. But I do believe that Turkey is obliged develop its communication with these countries when it comes to [the Kurdish question]. This question will not be solved independent of these countries

because the PKK is settled in this region [in Northern Iraq] and are managed from there. So in order to reach the PKK Turkey needs to use these countries." Dilhar has gone on to say, "There is communication between Kurdish communities of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey through the PKK. For example, the PKK is organised in Iran and Syria and Northern Iraq. When I say that it would be very difficult to find a solution to the Kurdish question without these countries' cooperation I was referring to this phenomenon. They have a unified structure." Speaking of civil ties between Kurds of these countries Dilhar has said, "The last I heard, in order to attract students from Turkey they opened up a quota for Turkish citizens to attend universities in Northern Iraq. You just have to apply to go to those universities. That provides a civil-level communication link or relationship between the Kurds of these countries. Apart from that, there are construction contracts for Turkish companies and workers in Northern Iraq, to build things there. There are some civil groups working together in the area of politics. For example, some organisations have set goals regarding education and so teachers go to Northern Iraq from Turkey and vice versa. These communications are generally becoming reality only between the Kurds of Northern Iraq and Turkey."

When commenting upon what he believes is the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey, Dilhar has said that in order to find a solution to the Kurdish question Kurds must change their own positions and attitudes in some way. The opinions and ideas of Kurds must be developed from the bottom, given a sound foundation. There have been a number of operations that I see as being deficits in the Kurdish struggle or that I think have been approached incorrectly. I don't like how Kurds are obedient without examining and questioning. [For all Kurds to vote for] every candidate of the DTP, whether they are candidates for mayoral positions or Parliamentary officers, is not very logical. These people should have their own agenda. The Kurds are an oppressed people. And an oppressed people cannot oppress another people or structure. The oppressed cannot oppress, they should not oppress [others]. ("*Kürtler ezilen bir halk, ve ezilen bir halk başka bir halka veya yapıyı ezecek bir halk olamaz. Ezilen Ezemez. Ezilen Ezmemeli*"). Kurds must realize this and they must ornament themselves accordingly. The Kurds cannot afford to lose even one person. I don't

draw a line between Turks and Kurds. All Kurds should be able to explain themselves to everyone. They should even start to communicate with those Turks in this country that see Kurds as terrorists. They need to find a space in which they are able to express themselves. The Kurds haven't had their own place or homeland for centuries and they haven't been connected to any concrete state structure. They are living in the shadow of a number of states. They are living their lives in Iran, Iraq and Turkey. This situation is an obstacle for [Kurds] to really live as themselves. If Kurds grow and improve themselves in this way the problem will be solved naturally. A solution to the Kurdish question cannot be found without the involvement of Kurds. This question cannot be solved from the outside. The Kurdish question is not an economic problem. It is a political and social problem. The solutions they have produced so far have focused on economic issues. It is only recently that people are starting to realise that there are social points to be addressed. [People in this country] need to rise and create a more concrete organisational structure."

Reflecting on what he believes the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey entails Dilhar has said, "Today I can see a track towards a resolution to Kurdish issues and the spark of its future realisation. But this will take time because Kurds are newly educated and becoming a mass. My mother is illiterate, but my daughter will not be the same. Those generations after me or after my mum will be different generations. But there is a lost generation in the middle. Those people whose homes were demolished in the 1990s, those that have fallen into life on the street, purse-snatchers and garbage collectors – they are the product of these times. You drove them from their village and they had to survive in some way ("*köyünden ettin, o da bir şekilde geçinmeliydi"*). You force them to live in cities and so the result was going to be like this ("*şehire taşıttın, olacağı buydu"*). There is a generation like this. A generation like [the one I represent] came out of these events also. But there is still this other generation of garbage collectors. These people, in some way, will demand an account of these events from somebody, from their country and they will ask me to account for it also. *These people are growing. The little Kurdish girl in the street selling tissues will grow up ("Sokakta mendil satan, o Kürt kızı büyüyecek*"). Be sure, the

kind of life that is waiting for that girl worries me. In the end she could have had the same opportunities as [me] but it didn't happen. This is the two groups of Kurds. There are those that sell tissues and those like me and my friends who are in the position we are. I am troubled by how they will unite these two groups. I don't want to speak here of those factors not related to Kurds. People must reach and ripen a solution inside their own selves. If conflicts persist and take refuge inside a person, these dilemmas will be used by others. If [people] organise their inner selves, finding a solution may be easier ("*kendi içilerinde örgütlenirlerse, bir çözüm bulmaları daha rahat olabilir")*. I wonder how these people's futures will be and how this will effect the Kurdish question, will it add to the problem or harm the situation further… I don't know what will happen. But I believe that things have changed. The world needs to become a more bearable place to live.