

DEMOCRACY AND VIOLENCE:
SOCIAL ORIGINS OF ANTI-KURDISH RIOTS IN
TURKEY

by
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the eruption of anti-Kurdish communal violence in Turkey in the 21st century. It aims to answer the following research questions: *Why violent attacks against Kurdish civilians escalated in a period when democratization has increasingly become the norm for resolving the Kurdish armed conflict? And why ordinary people played a major role in these violent attacks?*

To study this puzzling relationship between democratization and ethnic violence, the dissertation analyzes a wide range of data including (1) a new database on right-wing nationalist and communal violence in Turkey compiled by the author from newspaper archives (The Ethnic and Nationalist Violence in Turkey (ENViT) database), (2) interviews conducted by the author in regions with high levels of communal violence, and (3) statistical and archival data from secondary sources and databases. Through a mixture of quantitative/statistical, qualitative, and comparative-historical analysis, the dissertation argues that contrary to what is widely assumed in the literature, the emergence of ethnic violence in post-conflict democratization processes is not necessarily due to deep divisions emanating from a history of ethnic warfare. Likewise, the rise of anti-Kurdish communal violence in the early 21st century is not related to socio-economic competition or deprivation, state incapacity or revenge and retribution due to secessionist conflicts.

Instead, the dissertation argues that democratization-from-below led by the Kurdish population in Western cities of Turkey through social movement and electoral mobilization led to a deepening of ethnic “us-them” divisions between civilian populations in Western Turkey, creating the social preconditions for violence. While focusing on the role of social

mobilization from below, the overall analysis demonstrates that it was the interaction of intra-elite, intra-group, and elite-mass contention in the course of democratization that created the conditions for the emergence and institutionalization of anti-Kurdish communal violence in present-day Turkey.

This dissertation demonstrates that democratization is not a magical tool to resolve ethnic conflicts, notwithstanding academic and political hopes to the contrary. While this finding is in line with a segment of the existing social science literature, the dissertation attempts to move beyond the existing literature by avoiding static/rigid definitions of ethnicity, formalist conceptualizations of democratization, and elite-centric approaches to ethnic violence that ignore societal dynamics. By focusing on how social movement driven democratization processes create contention on the societal level, the dissertation seeks to provide a more grounded and nuanced analysis of why democratization processes are susceptible to communal violence.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I started my dissertation project to study fascism. I started reading voluminous works on classical fascism and rise of far-right movements in the world. My move from a general and vague project on fascism to a tangible project on communal violence, right wing politics and de-democratization in Turkey was possible, first and foremost, to my late advisor, Giovanni Arrighi. In our meetings, Giovanni bombarded me with countless questions about the importance of fleshing out why and how to study fascism in the current context. He listened to my broad questions based on historical and theoretical readings on fascism and guided me to inquire why and how it matters in the world we are living in. He urged me to start with a tangible ‘social problem’ and study it through a historical and theoretical lens. That is what I tried to do. If this dissertation has any empirical vigor and an embedded comparative logic, it’s due to Giovanni’s mentorship. This project came into fruition, took shape, and was finalized thanks to Beverly Silver’s intellectual, scholarly, and personal support throughout my graduate studies. Her unique quality as an advisor to have deep respect to ideas and projects of her graduate students was key for me to develop my confidence in my work and persistence in producing social scientific knowledge that matters. This dissertation would not have been possible without her and Giovanni. Joel Andreas has always provided me with guidance and support whenever I needed them. His comments and questions, which emanate from his analytical vigor, urged me to shape as well as present my work in its most coherent form. Another mentor, Ho-Fung Hung has been an important source of intellectual and academic stimulation both for this project and beyond. As members of my committee, Siba N. Grovogui and Mohammed Ali Khan read my dissertation and provided wonderful comments that helped me further think beyond my disciplinary boundaries.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Makbule and Ahmet Kumral.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In September 2008, a small rural town on the Aegean coast of Turkey called *Altınova* was torn by anti-Kurdish communal violence. On the first day of *Ramadan*, a discussion between Kurdish and Turkish teenagers turned into a fight, where two Turkish local residents were killed. The fight broke out not for political but personal reasons. But it turned into an ethnic contention whereby an angry mob attacked homes and shops of Kurds. As this nationalist fervor continued, in the evening, the electricity in the Kurdish neighborhood was cut off—resembling the launch of the Rwandan genocide—which was followed by another episode of fierce mob violence. The next day, funeral ceremonies of local residents were turned into anti-Kurdish nationalist processions by extreme right politicians. These nationalist processions succeeded in mobilizing thousands of local residents that attended the funeral shouting slogans “Down with the Kurds!”, “Death to the Kurds!”, “Damn the PKK!” This popular nationalist upheaval gained the symbolic support of the armed forces as well. For three days, Kurdish residents of the town were trapped in their homes with no electricity and food, watching their homes and shops being raided by their neighbors, and waiting to be attacked with no hope of intervention or protection by the security forces.

This was not a solitary incident. Kurdish civilians in diverse settings have become targets of lynch mobs and riots throughout the 2000s. Since 2004, the number of mob violence against Kurdish civilians has increased fourfold. The ‘trigger’, or the ‘exogenous shock’ of violence was different in each case. In certain cases, a personal fight triggered mass violence against Kurds, in other cases, workers speaking in Kurdish became targets of lynch mobs. Most importantly, while initial cases of anti-Kurdish mob violence in early 2000s were met with shock and fear by the

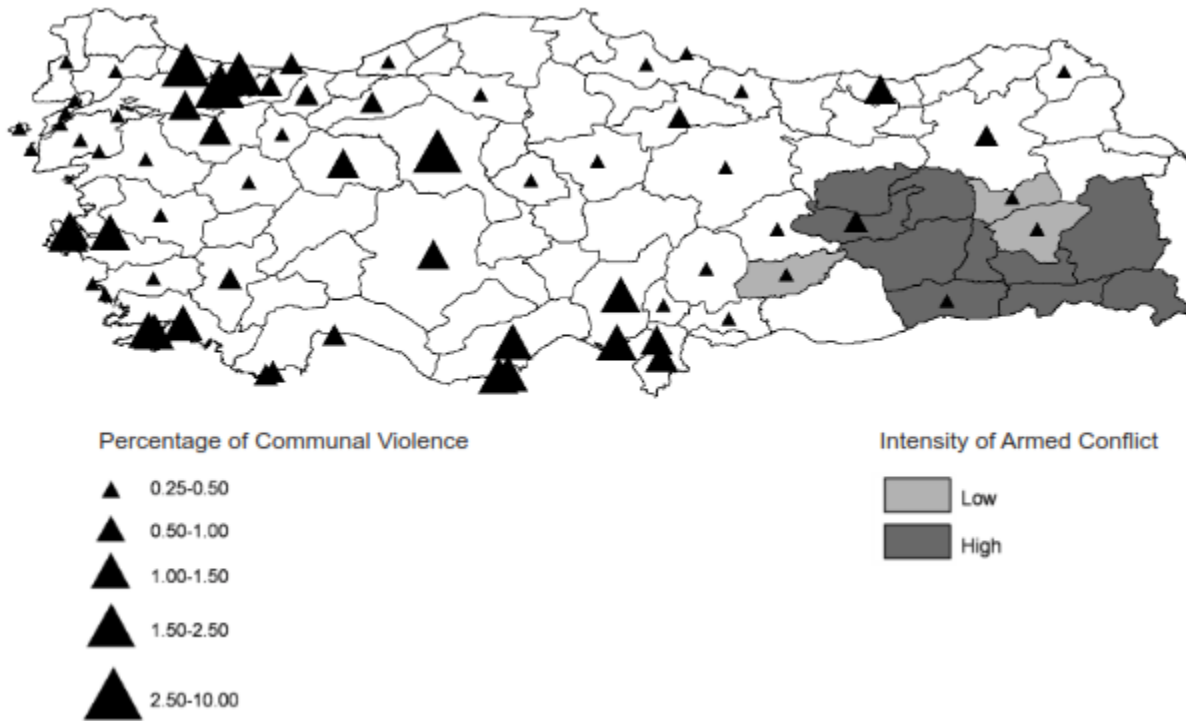
commentators and society in general, by 2015, they were by and large accepted as *business as usual*. This form of violence has become so regular and frequent that, in the words of a Kurdish resident, Kurdish civilians are “no longer safe” in the 21st century cities and towns of Turkey.

This is a new form of ethnic violence, which is fundamentally different from the *secessionist armed conflict* between the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistanî (Kurdistan Workers’ Party, PKK) and the Turkish armed forces that took place in the Kurdish region (corresponding to Southeastern and some Eastern parts of Turkey) throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The primary novelty of the post-2000 wave of ethnic violence resides in its *civic/popular* nature, whereby groups of civilians are the perpetrators of lynching attempts and collective raids against the Kurdish population. In other words, this violence can be categorized as *violence from below* since civic populations instead of the state emerge as the main perpetrator of ethnic violence. Moreover, it can be characterized as *popular violence* since it goes beyond the confines of violence associated with non-state political actors (such as skinhead violence against immigrants in Europe). This form of ethnic violence corresponds to what Fearon and Laitin (1999) calls *communal or societal ethnic violence*, which is “[v]iolence between members of different ethnic groups that does not directly involve arms of the state on either side” (Fearon & Laitin, 1999, p. 9) and includes various forms such as ethnic riots, pogroms, feuding, and hate crimes.

The geography of violence is also new. Anti-Kurdish communal violence incidents take place in various cities and towns of Western, Northern, Southern and Central Turkey, which are geographically detached from the primary locations of the armed conflict (Gambetti, 2007; Ergin, 2012; Bora, 2008; Patterson, 2007), as shown in Figure 1.1. These new centers of societal ethnic violence were destination points for hundreds of thousands of internally displaced Kurds, who had

migrated to metropolitan and industrial cities of western Anatolia in late 1980s and 1990s, at a time when the armed conflict between the Turkish armed forces and the PKK had come to a peak (Ayata & Yüksek, 2005). These “new” Kurdish residents of historically “Turkish” cities and towns make up the primary targets of this new wave of nationalist collective violence in Turkey.

Figure 1.1. Geographic Distribution Communal Violence and the Armed Conflict



Source: Locations of communal ethnic violence is calculated from Ethnic and Nationalist Violence in Turkey (ENViT) database compiled by the author. The figure shows the geographical distribution of violence from 2000 to 2011. The triangles show communal violence incidents that take place in that region as a percentage of all incidents. Intensity of armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state data is from KONDA (2011). The data shows regions with low intensity of armed conflict and high intensity of armed conflict between 1987 and 2002.

Targets of this violence are also new. While there have been many incidents of deadly communal violence in the history of modern Turkey, their targets were often religious/sectarian minorities, who were openly perceived as ‘the other’ in both official and societal conceptions of the Turkish nation. The September 1955 riots targeting non-Muslims in Istanbul, the 1978 anti-Alewite pogroms in Maraş and Çorum, and the 1993 massacre of Alewites/intellectuals in Sivas

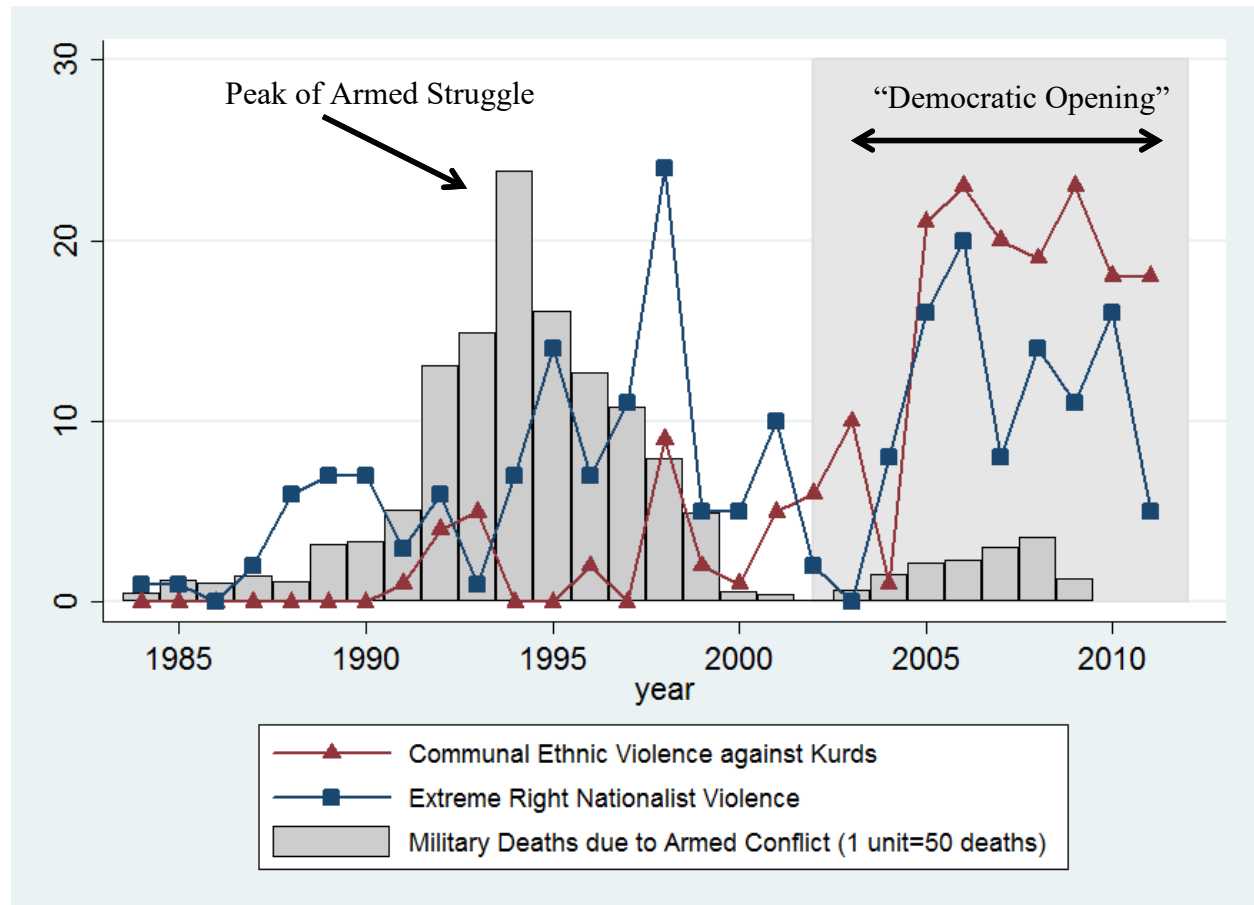
that were committed in the name of the ‘Turkish nation’ and ‘sunni-Islam’, all belong to the darkest pages of the history of modern Turkey. It is the first time that Kurds--who have historically been considered by official Turkish ideology as an integral part of the Turkish nation and regarded as *Eastern Turks* by both official state ideology and the general public--have become targets of communal violence in the name of Turkish nation.

This is the first “wave” of communal violence in modern Turkey. These violent attacks against the Kurdish population differ from other instances of communal violence in the history of modern Turkey. These other instances of communal violence (September 1955 riots in Istanbul, the 1978 pogroms in Maraş or Çorum; or the 1993 massacre in Sivas) were very deadly incidents but they did not produce a secularly increasing wave of communal violence. Anti-Kurdish communal violence in western Turkey, however, has been secularly increasing throughout the 2000s and gradually culminated into a significant wave. Hence, it bears a historical resemblance to the wave of anti-Armenian violence in the Ottoman Empire in late 19th and early 20th century.

1. The Puzzling Historical Conjuncture of Violence

This dissertation is the first systematic attempt to analyze this new form of ethnic violence against the Kurds in Turkey in the 21st century. Different chapters of the dissertation will unpack various mechanisms, dynamics and relations that help us account for the emergence of this new wave of communal violence. Various aspects of the anti-Kurdish violence in the 21st century (e.g. its popular and civilian nature, its geography and targets) make this case interesting for a sociological analysis in itself. However, there is also a striking puzzle regarding the *historical timing/conjuncture* of this violent upsurge. It is the curious historical timing/conjuncture during which this ethnic violence erupted that informs the primary research question of this dissertation.

Figure 1.2. Trends in Communal vs. Extreme Right Nationalist Violence and Military Deaths, 1984-2011



Source: Frequency of communal ethnic violence and extreme right nationalist violence is calculated from Ethnic and Nationalist Violence in Turkey (ENViT) database created by the author; Data on military deaths due to armed conflict is from Sener (2010).

The wave of anti-Kurdish communal violence erupted during a *post-conflict democratization process that started in the 2000s* (see Figure 1.2). This was a period when (a) the armed conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK started to wane, (b) when the macro political-economic context was widely characterized by relative stability in comparison to previous decades, and (c) when ‘democratization’ was adopted as the primary tool to resolve the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces by different actors.

The anti-Kurdish communal violence started in a period when claims and action repertoires of the Kurdish movement changed dramatically. From 1984 to 1999, the PKK engaged in an armed

rebellion against the Turkish state - in the pursuit of separate statehood - which came to a peak in the mid-1990s. After the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's capture by the Turkish armed forces in 1999, however, the PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire. The 7th and 8th Congress of the PKK – held in 2000 and 2002 - embraced democratic participation as a new strategy as opposed to armed struggle against the Turkish state. In this new period, Kurdish parties started to make coalitions with broader sections of the Turkish left wing parties, socialists, trade unions and civil society organizations and started to send MPs to the parliament, despite constitutional obstacles (such as the national 10 percent election threshold). Various studies in the literature of Turkish politics have documented the increasing organizational efforts of the Kurdish movement since the 2000s in Western Turkey (Saraçoğlu, 2009) as well as the escalation of social and political activism, associational life, and politicization of the Kurdish migrant population in Western metropolises (Çelik, 2005; Secor, 2004). Since the mid-2000s, Istanbul has been host to the second largest annual gathering/demonstration of the Kurdish people (accommodating 500 thousand people) on *Newroz* day¹, the largest being held in Diyarbakir, a Kurdish city.

In this same period, there was a “democratic turn” in the state’s attitude towards the Kurdish issue as well. This “democratic turn” was particularly evident after the 2002 elections, which started the fourteen-year-long rule of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP). In 2005, Prime Minister Erdogan officially unleashed a period that is widely known as *Democratic/Kurdish Opening Process*—by admitting the past mistakes of the state, declaring the existence of a “Kurdish problem” in Turkey, and promising to solve this problem through extending democracy and welfare. This change in political attitude was

¹ Newroz is a cultural tradition for celebrating the coming of spring; which over the years has gained the status of a Kurdish national day and a symbol of Kurdish identity.

formalized as the National Security Council declared in June 2007 that the “fight against terrorism would be carried out ‘on the basis of democracy and rule of law’” (Karaosmanoğlu, 2011, p. 257). State-initiated democratic reforms of this period included partial extension of “freedom of expression and association” (Karaosmanoğlu, 2011, p. 257), introduction of laws and measures against torture, “adoption of EU standards for the death penalty” (Muftuler Bac, 2005, pp. 25-26), lifting the legal ban on broadcasting in other languages, particularly in the Kurdish language (Smith T. W., 2005; Benli Altunisik, 2005).

Overall, the 2000s was marked by the partial extension of rights and freedoms of the Kurds in the spheres of education, culture and media— whereby legal barriers on publication in Kurdish were removed, a TV channel broadcasting in Kurdish was launched by the official state television (TRT), and Kurdish language courses were initiated (Ayata, *Kurdish Transnational Politics and Turkey's Changing Kurdish Policy: The Journey of Kurdish Broadcasting from Europe to Turkey*, 2014). Above all, in this period, the long-denied Kurdish problem started to be discussed publicly in “the media, civil society, and universities” (Keyman, 2012, pp. 474-75). As Grigoriadis (2006) puts it: “Instead of addressing it as a problem of separatist insurgence, the Kurdish problem was increasingly approached as a minority rights problem linked with the greater issue of Turkey’s democratization” (Grigoriadis, 2006, p. 449).

Despite academic expectations and political hopes for democracy’s potential as a peaceful solution to ethnic conflicts, however, the most alarming wave of communal ethnic violence in the history of modern Turkey has emerged in this period of political opening and democratization. This timing constitutes the main empirical puzzle of the dissertation: *Why civilian populations started to engage in violent attacks towards Kurdish civilians in a period when democratization has increasingly become the norm for resolving the Kurdish armed conflict?*

1.1. The Puzzling Relationship between Democracy and Ethnic Violence in the World

This puzzle goes beyond the empirical scope of the Turkish case. It has a global empirical salience and echoes a deeper theoretical and conceptual debate regarding the relationship between democracy and ethnic violence. After all, embracing a democratic solution to ethnic conflict and the concomitant rise of popular ethnic violence in this process of democratization in Turkey is interesting, but not globally and historically unique.

A large number of theories and narratives in the literature (a) associate democracy with internal/international peace and (b) see democratization as *the* solution to various different types of internal/international conflicts, including ethnic violence. This association - also supported by some empirical studies (Smith, 2000; Roeder, 1991) - is mainly based on the assumption that democratic regimes provide non-violent means of claim making, competition, and protest, which would result in peaceful resolution of conflicts (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015)². Talbott (2000), for instance, maintains that democracy is the best solution to civil war because “in a truly democratic state, citizens seeking to run their own lives have peaceful alternatives to taking up arms against their government” (Talbott, 2000, p. 160). Likewise, Viñas (2004) argues that ethnic conflicts would come to an end under strong democratic institutions because “democracy itself operates as a conflict management mechanism, allowing social disputes to be voiced by political parties and

² “If deadly ethnic and religious conflict concentrates in low-capacity undemocratic regimes, then, it is not because ethnic and religious divisions are completely absent from high-capacity democracies. High-capacity democracies simply manage to reduce the scale and armament of their domestic ethnic and religious conflicts, channel them into mainly non-violent forms of contention, and thus reduce the levels of death, damage, and destruction that result directly from contention. Their political opportunity structure and prevailing repertoires move them in the direction of social movements.” (Tilly&Tarrow 2015)

mediated by democratic competition in the electoral process without degenerating into violence” (Viñas, 2004, p. 219; Sisk, 2003)³.

These ideas have extensively been defended by various historians, social and political scientists in the course of the 20th century. For instance, Hans Kohn’s (1994) famous distinction between the Western (civic) and Eastern (ethnic) nationalisms was based on the association of these peaceful/”good” and conflict-driven/”bad” forms of nationalism respectively with liberal/democratic and illiberal/undemocratic political structures. The same line of thought was also apparent in many neoliberal and neoconservative scholars like Francis Fukuyama (1992), who believed that incidents of ethno-nationalist violence will also come to an end after the spread of forces of globalization and “liberal democracies” worldwide.

But the real importance and strength of this theoretical framework is to be found in the attention it received from governments and policy-makers after the collapse of the USSR. During the post-Cold War period, democratization was widely embraced as a solution to civil strife not only by US foreign policy makers (Snyder J. , 2000, p. 15) but also by a number of states (including Turkey) who have been struggling to resolve ongoing armed ethno-nationalist struggles. In various cases, however, democratization did not bring about the promised peace to conflict torn societies but further contributed to increasing ethnic conflicts. Due to the sudden escalation of ethnic violence parallel to the global spread of democracy (Saideman, Lanoue, Campenni, & Stanton, 2002; Diamond & Plattner, 1994; Snyder J. , 2000; Olzak, 2011) a large number of scholars have started to contest the view that democracy is a magical solution to ethnic conflicts (Snyder J. ,

³ “Democracy as a system of political decision making is in many ways a system of conflict management in which the outcomes are unknown but the fundamental rules of the game provide a safe arena in which to compete.” (Sisk, 2003)

2000; Roeder & Rothchild, 2005; Ottaway, 1995; Gurr, 1994; Wimmer, 2003-04; Wimmer, 2013; Reilly, 2001; Mann, 2004; Mousseau, 2001).

2. Democracy and Ethnic Violence

This dissertation will contribute to this emergent critique, which points out how democracy and democratization might promote ethnic and communal violence in specific contexts. In doing so, however, it will depart from existing explanations which theorize how democracy might trigger ethnic conflicts. As I will demonstrate, existing explanations cannot adequately account for the upsurge of anti-Kurdish communal violence in Turkey in the 21st century. This is largely due to a number of limitations and faulty dualisms inherent in existing theoretical approaches. The theoretical-conceptual framework, explanatory scheme, and empirical analysis pursued in this dissertation aims to critically extend existing frameworks. Before we move on, I will summarize the main contributions this dissertation makes to the existing frameworks in the literature.

2.1. Transcending the ‘transition’ argument

Various scholars who explain the conflict-bearing potential of democracy maintain that while democracy brings about stability in the long run, the transition to democracy is actually a violent-prone process (Snyder J. , 2000; Mann, 2004; Ottaway, 1995; Kohli, 1997). Comparative-historical research has shown that the early phases of democratization in today’s Western democracies included some of the ‘world’s bloodiest nationalist struggles’ (Snyder J. , 2000, pp. 15-16) and ‘deadly ethnic cleansings’ (Mann, 2004).

In line with this conceptualization, it is not surprising to see that as modernization spreads, the epicenter of ethnic conflict/cleansing moves to the Global South (see Mann 2004). Various

scholars have studied how transitions to democracy in the Global South – from post-communist regimes in Eastern Europe and Asia, to various African countries—have further unleashed ethnic contentions due to weak civil societies and the uncertainty associated with political change. In a report on U.S. democratization programs in Africa, Ottaway notes how democratic transitions and the introduction of elections have promoted ethnic violence in various African countries such as Burundi, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ethiopia (Ottaway, 1995).

However, the view that violence emerges in early democratizers has been challenged by recent research which shows that young democracies are actually less susceptible to violence compared to old democracies (Saideman, Lanoue, Campenni, & Stanton, 2002). In addition, due to their focus on ‘transitory democracies’ or ‘early stages of democratization’, these analyses border on theories of political modernization and are unable to capture the relation between democracy and ethnic/religious violence in older democracies; i.e. societies that have long passed the ‘democratic transition phase’ or ‘liberal-democratic revolution’ (Snyder J. , 2000) such as India and Turkey. Finally, they also categorically exclude possibility of further democratization as well as upsurge of ethnic and communal violence in Western Europe or North America.

The *democratization* process discussed in this dissertation is categorically different from early democratic transitions. If we understand democratization as a transition from an autocratic regime to a parliamentary system, Turkey’s transition to a parliamentary system started during the Ottoman Empire after the 1908 Revolution. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the newly established Turkish Republic had a single-party authoritarian period between 1923 and 1945, however, after the transition to a multiparty system in 1945, this “early stage” of democratic transition was over. While the multiparty system was temporarily suspended during military coup

regimes in 1960, 1971 and 1980-1983/7 periods, after these different forms of military junta regimes, the multiparty system was restored. The period we are focusing on, the post-2000 period, is not a democratic transition period as has conventionally been conceptualized in the literature.

The “democratization process” that we are concerned with in this dissertation is also substantially different from the transition that occurred in the post-colonial world or post-communist countries. It neither refers to the introduction of “competitive elections” nor a regime change. In our case, *democratization corresponds to a process of expansion of democratic rights and liberties of civilian populations, which inevitably incorporates cultural recognition of previously unrecognized populations (including the right to speak their language in the private and public sphere, the right to education in one's own language etc.) and political inclusion of previously excluded populations*. In the literature on Turkish politics, this particular period of post-2000 democratization is often referred to as democratic consolidation and deepening; the maturing of Turkish democracy; or as Turkey becoming a *substantive* rather than a *procedural* democracy (Kirisci, 2011; Heper, 2005; Onis, 2009, p. 25; Grigoriadis, 2006, p. 457). Put differently, we adhere to an approach which analyzes various processes and mechanisms through which democracies become more inclusive - even at their more advanced stages - and how these processes are related to the rise of ethnic and nationalist violence.

2.2. Challenging the ‘divided-societies’ assumption

In explaining why democracy may promote ethnic violence, another group of scholars draw attention to the conflict bearing potential of the majoritarian logic of democracy in ‘*multi-ethnic*’, *plural*, or *divided societies* (Diamond & Plattner, 1994; Horowitz, 1994; Reilly, 2001; Lijphart, 2002; Zakaria, 1997). This approach originates from the writings of John Stuart Mill, who

considered establishment of democratic institutions in multi-national [in our case, multi-ethnic] societies “next to impossible” (Mill, 1958 [1861]). This Millian approach was echoed in recent scholarship on democracy, and ethnic conflict as well (Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972; Reynal-Querol, 2002; Lijphart, 1980; Horowitz, 1994; Reilly, 2001; Roeder & Rothchild, 2005). Whether they call it divided, plural, multi-ethnic societies, or societies with ‘politically salient ethnic cleavages’, these scholars underline the hardships in establishing winner-takes-all majoritarian democracies in these multi-ethnic and post-conflict contexts. According to this approach, democracy has a potential to bring about conflict in multi-ethnic societies as diverse as India, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia due to ethnic based inter-elite and/or inter-group competition.

Largely dominated by research in the field of political science, these studies lack various theoretical-conceptual tools and insights that arise from the sociological studies of ethnicity, violence, and democratization. First of all, they adhere to a formalistic approach of democratization which emphasizes the centrality of constitutional and institutional design, and do not acknowledge the role of social movements and societal actors from below. Moreover, they take ethnic divisions as static and given, remain agnostic about findings of the “constructivist consensus” in studies of ethnicity (Fearon & Laitin, 2000, p. 847; Wimmer, 2013, p. 2; Brubaker, 2009) and fail to take into consideration how existing ‘us-them’ boundaries are formed and activated in time and space (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007; Wimmer, 2013).⁴

I argue that the current-wave of civic ethnic violence against Kurds in western cities of Turkey provides an important empirical challenge to this ‘divided-societies’ assumption. Unlike

⁴ Yet, these scholars are not as pessimistic as J.S. Mill, and contend that through ‘specific’ institutional, and electoral arrangements can be crafted to fit multi-ethnic societies (also see (Wimmer, 2008) . Although there is no consensus over which arrangement is the best solution, various scholars have offered consociationalism, power-sharing arrangements, autonomy, electoral incentives, power-dividing arrangements as fixes which would contain ethnic confrontations in multi-ethnic democracies.

what is conventionally assumed, it is hard to talk about long-lasting ethnic divisions between Kurdish and Turkish civilians in the Western cities and towns with high levels of ethnic violence against the Kurdish population. This is because for a very long time, official Turkish nationalism and societal notions of the Turkish nation have denied the existence of Kurdishness as a separate identity. Kurds were described and considered as ‘Easterners’ or ‘Eastern Turks’.

In line with this conceptualization, when a large group of villagers were displaced in the Kurdish region in late 1980s and 1990s and migrated to towns and cities in non-Kurdish cities of western, southern, northern and central Turkey, they were perceived as ‘Eastern citizens of Turkey’ running away from the armed conflict and ‘PKK *terror*.’ As I will show in later chapters of the dissertation, even during the heyday of armed conflict in the Kurdish region, for the local residents, the Kurdish civilians were not perceived as the ‘other’ but as a part of ‘Turkish nation’ (i.e. ‘*us*’). However, something curious happened in the 2000s, which transformed this perception, along with relations between local residents and Kurdish migrants. In this period, ‘us-them’ boundaries along ethnic and political lines emerged on the ground.

One of the key arguments of this dissertation is that this transformation in “us-them” boundaries was driven by social movement mobilization, protests and collective action by the Kurdish population demanding cultural recognition and political inclusion. Put differently, by turning its gaze to the “societal level”, this dissertation highlights the prominent role of democratization movements from below in the formation/transformation of ethnic boundaries on the ground, and the emergence of violent ethnic relations as an outcome of this process. In doing so, it radically diverges from the ‘divided-societies’ approach which starts from an idea that there are pre-existing, long-standing and stable ethnic differences between ethnic communities.

2.3. From political competition to democratic contention

Another group of scholars in the literature point out the conflict bearing potential of electoral competition/challenge in democratic regimes (Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*, 2004; Brass, 2003; Dhattiwala & Biggs, 2012; Olzak, 1990). Various quantitative and qualitative studies have shown how nationalist elites have purposely engaged –and often succeeded- in violent ethnic mobilization of masses in the course of electoral competition in India, the world’s largest democracy (Brass, 2003; Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*, 2004; Dhattiwala & Biggs, 2012). A central claim of these scholars working on deadly riots in India is that democratic/political competition between elites has a significant role in the production of so-called spontaneous eruptions of communal violence (Brass, 2003; Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*, 2004). Ultranationalist elites can use ethnic violence for electoral gains by intensifying ethnic identification and attracting the ethno-nationalist votes. In line with these studies, Eifert et. al. (2010) also found how electoral competition actually strengthens ethnic identification based on public opinion surveys in ten African countries (Eifert, Miguel, & Posner, 2010).

A significant achievement of this scholarship is that it goes beyond assumed divisions/cleavages between ethnic groups in the society. Put differently, they show how ethnic/religious cleavages can be forged/activated by political elites for electoral gain (Brass, 2003; Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*, 2004). Hence, they provide a dynamic explanation for the emergence of ethnic divisions and cleavages in the course of electoral competition. Nevertheless, one significant limitation of these analyses is that

they put too much emphasis on the role of elites and fail to answer a fundamental question: *why masses follow these elites* (Fearon & Laitin, 2000).

Another strand of political competition theories goes beyond the elite-driven framework and draws attention to inter-group competition at the societal level. These accounts emphasize the political and electoral challenge posed by minority populations as a source of racial and ethnic violence by dominant populations. A good example of this dynamic is the lynchings and urban violence against Blacks by Whites in the United States during the populist challenge to white supremacy in the South (Olzak, 1990). Olzak (1990) shows that racial and ethnic violence against the Black population in the US increased when white supremacy was being challenged in the political sphere. Yet, in her analysis, the political challenge is *tested* by focusing on *electoral politics* (i.e. electoral challenge by minority political parties and the percentage of minority population) without any discussion of how democratic contention unfolds on the ground, in the arena of *social movement mobilization*.

This dissertation captures a broader conceptualization of democratic contention which goes beyond the narrow scope of electoral competition by focusing on the role of social movement mobilization and contentious politics. This emphasis on social movements as triggers of democratic contention also resonates with our criticism of procedural, formalist and institutionalist definitions of democratization. More specifically, we draw upon the literature on the role of social movements in democratization processes, which has long been underlined by scholars of social movements, contentious politics and democracy (Collier & Mahoney, 1997; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, & Stephens, 1992; Collier, 1999; Stroschein, 2012; Tilly, 2003). The push from working classes for the extension of suffrage was central in the final construction of modern democracies

(Rueschemeyer, Stephens, & Stephens, 1992; Eley, *The Social Construction of Democracy in Germany*, 1995) and the incorporation of the masses in the definition of the ‘nation’ (Carr, 1945). The political consciousness of working classes and world-wide labor movements played a major part in democratic transitions in different parts of the world (Collier, 1999; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, & Stephens, 1992; Bunce, 2003; Silver, 2003). Likewise, popular mobilization of excluded and oppressed populations - including women, ethnic groups, and the *poor* - have also been critical in the extension and deepening of democracy in Western liberal societies, and in the democratic transition and consolidation processes in non-Western societies (Stroschein, 2012, pp. 6-7; Bunce, 2003; Ekiert & Kubik, 1999; Wood, 2001; Beissinger, 2008; Cadena-Roa, 2003). Such a conceptualization of democratization, which sees “the crowd as an enduring political force” (Tambiah, 1996, pp. 260-261), enables a more grounded analysis of why democratization processes are susceptible to violent struggles between civilians without relying on elite-centric approaches to ethnic violence, static/rigid definitions of ethnicity, competition theories focusing on ‘elections’, or formalist conceptualizations of democratization.

2.4. Overcoming Elites vs. Masses Dualism

Attention towards social movements does not mean that our focus will be solely on ‘mass’ grievances and contentions. On the contrary, this extended conceptualization of democratic contention enables us to overcome the often pronounced dualism between *elite-centric* and *mass-level* explanations of ethnic violence. The literature on ethnic violence is broadly divided into two categories. On the one end of the spectrum, we see “mass-explanations” which focus on actions, sentiments, and grievances of ordinary people engaged in ethnic violence. These “mass behavior” explanations either focus on the “irrationality” of the masses, mass emotions, or socio-economic

grievances and competition that give way to eruptions of mass violence (Petersen, 2002; Olzak, 1990). Such explanations are especially prevalent in accounts that see communal violence as spontaneous eruptions of violence. On the other end of the spectrum, we see “elite theories” of ethnic riots, which argue that these violent incidents are not “spontaneous” upsurges but they are produced by elites (Brass, 2003). Instead of focusing on mass sentiments and behavior, this literature draws attention to actions and motivations of political elites in the production of ethnic violence.

In an attempt to reconcile these seemingly opposite perspectives, the dissertation adopts a relational approach and shows how examining the interplay between elites and masses is necessary to explain the emergence of societal ethnic violence.⁵ In doing so, we will show that both actors – different sections of the “masses” (e.g. “Kurdish” migrants and “Turkish” local residents), on the one hand, and different sections of elites (e.g. ultranationalist extreme right actors and the state/government), on the other hand - play an equally important and complementary role in this process.

An explanation that focuses primarily on the role of political elites⁶ cannot explain why extreme right politicians were unable to find a mass following for violent mobilization against Kurdish civilians back in the 1990s, despite their massive nationalist mobilization against the PKK as shown in Figure 2. Moreover, an elite centric perspective cannot provide us with a satisfactory answer to the long neglected question of ‘*why ordinary folks*’ (Fearon & Laitin, 2000) engage in

⁵See (Stroschein, 2012) for a relational approach to the role of elites and masses in democratization and ethnic struggle in Romania. For a similar discussion on the divide between elite-mass explanations in the literature of nation building and ethnic politics, see (Wimmer, 2013, p. 40; Mann, 2004)

⁶On the one hand, elites that belong to the ruling moderate-Islamic liberal party, AKP and that adhere to an ultra-nationalist extreme right party, MHP have different roles in the production and institutionalization of this emergent civic ethnic violence.

ethnic violence. Such perspectives often ignore that for the masses to participate in these ethnic riots, certain societal contentions on the ground must be available. Likewise, explanations that merely look at the societal level grievances and discontent tend to forget that non-violent contentions do not automatically turn into ethnic riots. *The analysis presented in this dissertation suggests that for ethnic riots to occur, (a) social contentions at the mass level must be present, and (b) they should be mediated by different elites.* We will also show that actions by elites not only affect violent mobilization of the masses, but they are also shaped and limited by opportunities provided by collective action from below. In doing so, I will adopt a relational approach which shows the critical role of elites without adhering to ‘elite manipulation’ arguments.

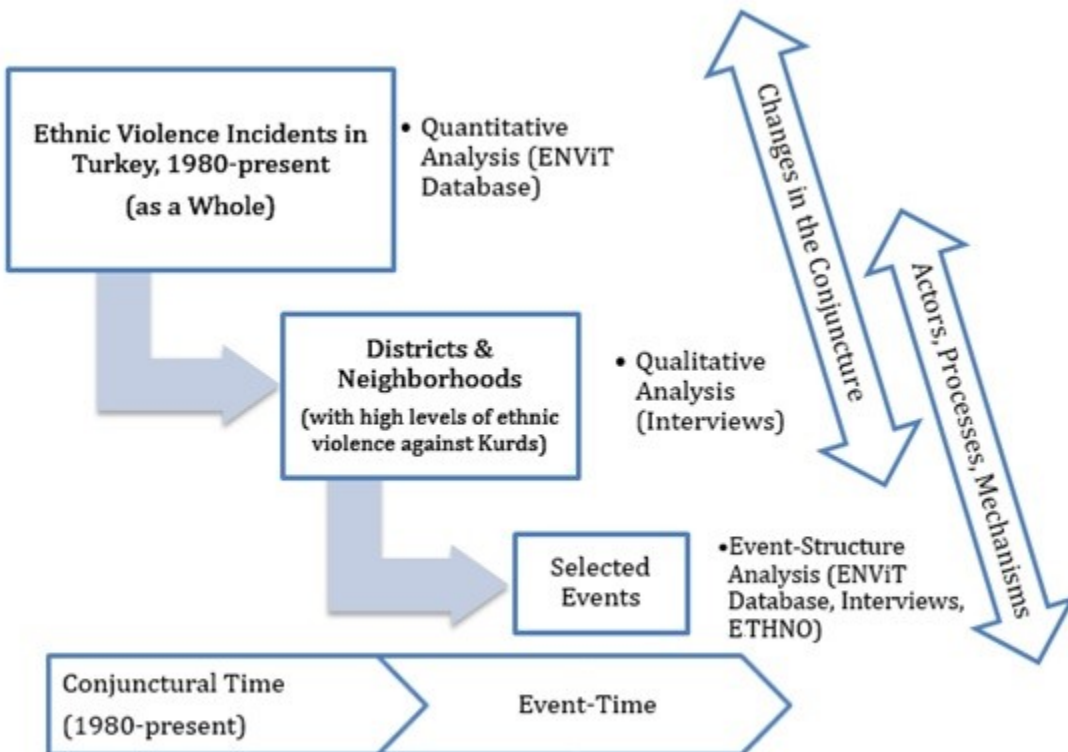
3. Methodological Premises and Data

In order to understand the mechanisms and dynamics behind this new wave of communal violence against the Kurdish population in Turkey, this dissertation utilizes mixed methods, data triangulation and multiple level analyses. Mixed-method analysis is frequently utilized by studies of communal violence, which necessitates different analytical and methodological approaches to study the various aspects of the problem (Beissinger, 2002; Brass, 2003; Wilkinson, Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India, 2004). Quantitative, qualitative and different forms of historical methods are used in different chapters utilizing a combination of primary and secondary data.

The logic of utilization of mixed methods in this dissertation is based on Terence Hopkins’ assertion that statistical and historical explanatory accounts are not distinct types of accounts but two complementary parts of a single inquiry. For Hopkins, the statistical half tells the generalized story of the collectivity of cases and the patterns of their distribution; the historical half tells the

specific story in the narrative form of each case separately. We will utilize a similar approach in our mixed methods study, in which quantitative analyses will *provide the pattern to be explained* and is considered complimentary to both qualitative and historical narrative inquiry. Using a combination of quantitative, qualitative and comparative-historical methods, we will be able to show in different parts of the dissertation (a) the changes in the conjuncture and (b) different actors, processes and mechanisms that have played a role in the emergence of anti-Kurdish communal violence. Mixed methods strategy will also help us move back and forth between micro- and macro-level analysis— as well as back and forth between Braudel’s “conjunctural-time” and “event-time” level of analysis, as seen in Figure 1.3 below.

Figure 1.3. Levels of Research, Analysis and Methods



Based on this scheme, Chapter 2 will utilize quantitative methods to present the general patterning of the case in question, and to test various alternative hypotheses regarding the rise of communal violence using negative binomial time-series regression analysis. Having laid out broad patterns and relations in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 will focus on the local level and analyze relations between ethnic groups and transformations of these relations in time, and accounts of how violence is experienced on the ground through an analysis of qualitative data derived from fieldwork in districts with high levels of ethnic violence. Our analysis of the role of extreme right wing movements – in Chapter 4 – will use quantitative analysis (negative binomial time-series regression analysis and quantile time-series regression analysis) together with qualitative analysis of the interview data. Chapter 5 will focus on the ‘event-time’ and ‘temporality of incidents’ by using event-structure analysis of *Altinova riots of 2008*. Finally, Chapter 6 will provide a comparative-historical analysis of the role played by the governing party – the AKP – focusing on the interaction between national politics and geopolitical transformations in the region.

3.1. Quantitative Analysis: Broad Patterns and Macro-Structural Indicators

I utilize quantitative analysis in order to view the historical and broad patterning of the emergent civic ethnic violence in Turkey, as well as to see how various macro indicators are related to ethnic violence. For this purpose, I compiled a dataset of collective nationalist violence incidents in Turkey from the 1980s to 2012 using historical newspaper archives and a wide range of reports by human rights associations and institutions.

Using news reports to analyze diverse forms of social unrest is a common and well-developed strategy in the social movements literature (Koopmans, 1993; Paige, 1975; Snyder & Tilly, 1972; Tilly, 1978; Silver, 2003; Korzeniewicz, 1989; Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, &

Giugni, 1995)⁷; literature on ethnic/racial conflict and communal violence (Olzak, 1990; Wilkinson, 2004; Varshney, Tadjoeeddin, & Panggabean, 2008), as well as literature on radical right-wing and racist violence (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; Koopmans, 1997; della Porta, Caiani, & Wagemann, 2012). For scholars studying social movements and collective/political violence, sometimes, newspapers are the only possible choice due to the lack of official or alternative statistics. Even with the existence of official statistics, however, various scholars have suggested that newspaper sources can be more reliable than official statistics on measuring different forms of social unrest (Silver, 2003). Likewise, newspaper data is often preferred over other methods of gathering quantitative data such as household surveys for studying ethnic and communal conflicts (Barron et. al. 2010: 148; also see Wilkinson 2004, Varshney et. al. 2008).

Following in the footsteps of these studies, I compiled the “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence in Turkey Database (ENViT)” from historical archives of the *Milliyet* newspaper. The ENViT database is the first comprehensive dataset of ethnic and nationalist collective violence in Turkey. I included in the database every reported incident of ethnic and nationalist collective violence from 1980 to 2012 in Turkey, recording information on the type of collective violence, actors and victims of incidents, location of these events, the number of people who participated in the incidents, number of people who were killed or injured in the incidents; reported causes of events, attitudes of the state and government institutions, and roles of other political organizations (extreme right groups, left-wing organizations etc). Because the ENViT database is the first of its kind, there is no alternative database which can be used to check its reliability. For these purposes, I used a combination of secondary sources including the annual reports of the Human Rights

⁷ Also see Burstein, 1985; Danzger, 1975; Jenkins & Perrow, 1977; Koopmans, 1993; McAdam, 1982; Snyder & Tilly, 1972; Sugimoto, 1978; Tarrow, 1989; Tilly et. al., 1975; Tilly, 1981; Franzosi, 1995; Earl et. al., 2004.

Association of Turkey (see <http://ihd.org>) and existing secondary literature on lynching attempts and ethnic violence in Turkey (Bora, 2008) to check if the ENViT database has a systematic bias towards a particular region or time-period. These reliability studies give us confidence that the ENViT database does not have a particular spatial or temporal bias. Appendix A of the dissertation discusses data collection procedure and reliability tests in detail.

Of course, data collection strategies that rely on news reports, however, are not without limitations. On the contrary, one must be very careful while analyzing collective action and violence through news reports, especially with respect to potential biases such as (1) “selection bias” due to newspapers not reporting all events or reporting them selectively with a systematic bias over space and time, (2) “description bias” due to missing or incorrect information in news reports, and (3) “data collection bias” due to systematic biases that emerge because of data collection schemes employed (Earl, Martin, McCarthy, & Soule, 2004). As long as the researchers are aware of these possible biases, however, they can implement strategies to minimize their effects. For instance, in a study that focuses on the role of far right nationalist movements on communal violence incidents, a tendency to associate most forms of attacks against laborers or ethnic minorities with extreme right political actors (e.g. fascists) without much evidence (a tendency of most of the left-wing newspapers) or a tendency of not reporting these violent incidents or the political identities of the perpetrators of these events (a tendency of extreme right-wing newspapers) may affect findings.

While it is not possible to completely eliminate these selection and description biases, one can minimize their effects by selecting news sources whose biases are minimal (or much less compared to existing alternatives) and consistent across time and space (Silver, Forces of Labor:

Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870, 2003). Likewise, reliance on low quality search engines of the online versions of newspapers that tend to produce more results for recent years also introduces systematic “data collection bias” to the research. This bias can also be minimized through using newspaper archives that use higher quality historical archives. The strategies employed in this dissertation to minimize possible biases are explained in Appendix A.

In addition to this primary dataset, I also compiled a set of secondary data on electoral statistics, macro-economic and political indicators (including indices of democratization), employment statistics, and reports about the level of social mobilization of the Kurdish population, census data and various opinion polls. In Chapter 2 of the dissertation, through evaluating the alternative explanations and hypotheses in light of empirical evidence, I highlight the centrality of the association between “democratization” and this new form of “ethnic violence” as well as identifying the broad patterns of violence. In Chapter 4, I will also examine the role of extreme right wing violence and democratization processes using the ENViT database and secondary sources.

3.2. Qualitative Analysis: From Broad Patterns to Social Relations and Processes

Although quantitative analysis will help us test the plausibility of competing explanations for the emergence of communal violence in Turkey, it cannot properly explain the main dynamics and processes affecting different actors propensity to engage in these violent incidents. Qualitative methods are better suited to explain transformations of the inter-group relations and specific mechanisms that give way to violence. Through qualitative analysis, we also hope to link micro-level processes to macro-level developments.

The qualitative data used in this dissertation is drawn from 77 in-depth interviews conducted from 2010 to June 2013 in seven districts of four cities of Turkey. All selected locations are home to Kurdish forced migrant populations and have high levels of communal violence against Kurdish civilians. In the selection of cities and districts for interviews, I relied on the ENViT database discussed above. Using the ENViT dataset and secondary sources on communal violence in Turkey, I first identified cities and neighborhoods with largest numbers of communal ethnic violence directed towards Kurdish migrants. I further specified the cities which witnessed at least one major *mob* violence against Kurdish civilians. In the final decision of selecting the locations for interviews, I paid particular attention to introducing a large degree of variety in terms of their demographic properties (population size, approximate proportion of Kurdish population, existence of other ethnic groups), geographies and labor market structures (e.g. in which sectors of the economy the Kurdish population works). The locations I chose for interviews are situated in three different regions of Turkey: Western (*Aegean*), Northwestern (*Marmara*) and Mediterranean (*Akdeniz*) regions. All of these cities differ in terms of their population size and the approximate proportion of Kurdish residents (see Figure 1.4 and Table 1.1) below.

Figure 1.4. Interview Locations and Their Demographic Properties

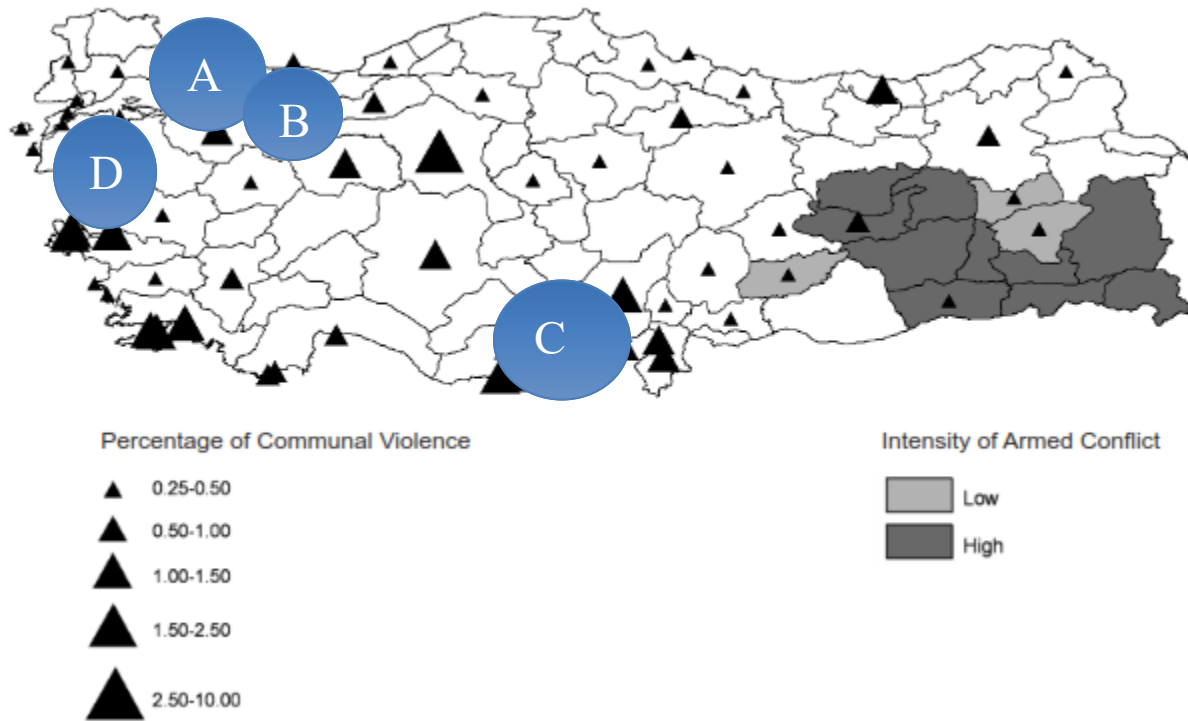


Table 1.1. Population, Estimated Percentage of Kurdish Population, and Unemployment Levels of Interview Locations

City	A		B		C		D
Districts (Pseudonyms)	Isler	Durusu	Karatepe	Kirazli	Senkoy	Bayramlı	Ferte
Percentage of Kurds (Estimated)	24.71	26.54	6.57	2.02	37.64	29.98	8.68
Total Population	167,717	270,951	238,502	82,980	279,142	33,401	63,312
Unemployment	14.3	14.3	11.4	11.4	14.1	14.1	8.0

Sources: *ADNKS 2010, Turkish Institute of Statistics; **Household Workforce Statistics 2010, Turkish Institute of Statistics

Respondents include 16 local officials (both government and elected officials, including *mukhtars*⁸), 20 political party leaders/representatives and activists - including the ruling party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP), the pro-Kurdish party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*, BDP), the main opposition party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP), as well as ultra-nationalist parties (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP) - 14 civil society organization representatives/members (migration institutes, human rights organizations, labor unions, extreme-right organizations), and 27 local residents from different ethnic backgrounds. I identified interviewees using snowball sampling. Ranging from 1-3 hours, the interviews were semi-structured and included open-ended questions.

Interviews focused on (1) inter-communal economic, political and social relations between Kurds and other ethnic groups in the district since the 1990s, (2) instances of inter-communal violence in their districts and residents' perception towards these incidents. More broadly, they explored how inter-ethnic relations and violent incidents are related to the following processes: migration, socio-economic transformation of the neighborhood, economic competition, and political mobilization of Kurdish migrants. The questions also included the comparison of relations between 1990s and 2000s to capture transformation of relations (See Appendix B for interview questions). Names of respondents and locations used in the analysis part are pseudonyms.

The way I use qualitative analysis in the dissertation departs from conventional methods in a number of respects. First of all, the dissertation adopts a *relational* analysis. We study communal violence as a struggle and a form of conflictual relations between multiple actors. Hence, the main object of the current analysis is “*processes* involving configurations of relations” between various

⁸ Elected neighborhood/village headman. Mukhtars have a unique position in the governing structure of Turkey, providing the link between citizens in neighborhoods and the state.

actors (including the Kurdish migrant population, local residents, state elites, and extreme right actors) rather than an ethnography of a “bounded group,” a particular “location” (Desmond, 2014, p. 547), or a specific social outcome such as communal violence. Put differently, rather than focusing on a pre-determined set of possible *interactions between independent and dependent variables* (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 286)- like democratization, economic competition etc. and violence - our qualitative inquiry aims to unearth *interactions* between different actors, units, and contentious events. That’s why Chapter 3 and 4 of the dissertation will use qualitative analysis – sometimes simultaneously with quantitative analysis as in Chapter 4 – to explain these complex interactions from the angle of one group of actors. Chapter 3 will focus on interactions between ordinary masses. Chapter 4 will focus on ultranationalists and extreme right wing actors in relation to state and masses. Each chapter will also incorporate, complement and extend ‘the story’ told in previous chapters.

For this reason, we did not adopt a multi-site variation-finding comparison as a research and analytical strategy for our qualitative analysis. We used existing variations among these seven districts –such as geographical location, proportion of Kurdish migrants and their position in the labor market – to identify processes that are *common to all localities* despite contextual variation. Put differently, instead of taking “time” as static and looking at the variation between these different sites (as conventionally done in multi-site variation-finding comparisons), we used qualitative analyses to examine changes (i.e. variation) *over time* in the transformation of social relations between different actors (and transformations of ethnic “us-them” boundaries) in all of these localities. This strategy will help us to answer the question of “what has changed in these localities?” to explain the emergence of communal violence against Kurdish residents. Put differently, the qualitative analysis we present will be a narrative of the transformation of relations

among migrants, local residents, different political actors and major processes - at micro and macro-levels - that are at play.⁹

The dissertation also uses a number of strategies to overcome possible problems and limitations due to the conduct and interpretation of interview data. One of key limitations of using interview data for qualitative studies, according to recent scholarship, is the “attitudinal fallacy”. “Attitudinal fallacy” is a limitation common to many interview-based accounts, which arises due to discrepancy between verbal accounts by interviewees and their actual social action/behavior (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014, p. 2). The analysis presented in this dissertation uses two main strategies to avoid “attitudinal fallacy.” First of all, resembling the ethnographic approach, which draws attention to the interpretation of “discrepancies between saying and doing” (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014, p. 5), our analysis tries to uncover and interpret the discrepancies (1) embedded in the accounts of violence by various actors; and (2) between accounts of interviewees and those found in newspaper data and human rights reports. This strategy was made possible by utilizing mixed-method research and combining our interview data with prior analysis of secondary data (news reports, reports by human rights organizations) and archives. Furthermore, unearthing these discrepancies was largely possible since questions that were asked to each interviewee were informed by accounts derived from previous interviews with various other actors in the field. This strategy resembles the logic of *treating each interviewee as a single case* in interview-based studies (Small, 2009).

⁹ We also used a modified version of the *narrative* strategy, which views social phenomena “as temporally ordered, sequential, unfolding, and open-ended ‘stories’ fraught with conjunctures and contingency” (Griffin, 1992, p. 405; Abbot, 1992). We will use a modified version of this approach, since we will (1) look at *processes-in-relations* (Emirbayer, 1997) rather than sequence of events through time, and (2) analyze processes whose timing are not sequentially demarcated but shows some overlaps.

Finally, we must note that our qualitative analysis does not take the actual accounts of “incidents” by interviewees at face value as an ‘objective reality’. Rather, it uses these accounts to understand the social construction of ethnicity and violence including (1) the way residents and governmental/political actors in the neighborhood view ethnic relations and their transformation, (2) the way various actors (including masses and political actors) perceive and explain the use of violence, emergence – or lack of - of communal violence incidents in their regions, and the role played by different actors in the emergence of these incidents.

3.3. Historical Methods: Focusing on the Event-Time and Temporality of Incidents

Chapters 5 and 6 use different comparative-historical methods to explain the emergence of anti-Kurdish communal violence. In Chapter 5, we will bring together different elements discussed in previous chapters at the level of the “event-time”. Analysis of the actual unfolding of violent incidents, as well as comparing them, provides valuable information regarding mechanisms of violence, and most importantly, about how each actor is related to the actual unfolding of violence. I selected the *Altınova riots* to study the actual unfolding of these incidents in detail, which provides invaluable information for the study of micro-level causal mechanisms (such as the role of political entrepreneurs, the intervention/non-intervention of police forces, etc.) that are critical in the emergence of ethnic collective violence. For this reason, I conducted an event structure analysis, which is a computer-assisted method of analysis to interpret qualitative narrative sequences. The event structure analysis in Chapter 5 provides an illustration of how the dynamics discussed in each chapter manifested themselves in the emergence of a particular event while showing the role of violent events in transforming ethnic relations on the ground.

In Chapter 6, when examining the role of the governing party (the AKP) in the emergence

of these incidents, I expand the temporal and spatial scope of analysis in order to account for geopolitical and macro-structural dynamics, the relationship between governing parties and the policies recommended by the United States, and transformation of the form of ethnic violence once again after 2015. Using comparative-historical analysis of the effects of these different turning points (in relation to how different actors responded to these movements) I explain how strategies of the governing parties, including the degree to which they relied on coercion or consent to “resolve” the Kurdish problem have changed and transformed overtime. The strategy of comparison utilized in this chapter resembles what McMichael (1990) has called “incorporating comparison”, where interaction between different actors are presumed to constitute and transform the existing totality of relationships over time. The comparative-historical analysis presented in this chapter will also explain how the AKP’s democratic opening process with respect to the Kurdish problem suddenly disappeared in the post-2013 era.

4. Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 will sketch out the empirical research problem, specifically, the emergence/upsurge of a new form of collective nationalist violence in Turkey in the last decade in more detail. Situating the case of ethnic violence in Turkey as part of the global upsurge of ethnic and religious violence in the post-Cold War period, this chapter will survey the existing theories on ethnic violence (including socio-economic competition theories, nationalist backlash or declining state-capacity theories, theories of retribution and revenge) and assess the explanatory power of these existing explanations in the context of emergent civic ethnic violence in Turkey. This chapter will undertake a detailed analysis of actors, triggers, targets, timing and locations of these incidents, as well as a quantitative analysis of the possible effects of

various socio-economic, political, and demographic indicators of ethnic violence. In doing so, it will show (1) the existing explanations in the literature are not adequate to explain our case, and that (2) the democratization process has a significant impact on the upsurge of civic ethnic violence in Turkey.

Once showing the relevance of democratization for the emergence of ethnic violence in Turkey, the following chapters will seek to unpack the relations, mechanisms and dynamics between the democratization process and ethnic violence. Chapter 3 will turn the gaze to the societal level and show how the process of democratization from below gives way to the transformation of ethnic boundaries at the local level. Based on in-depth interviews in districts with high levels of ethnic violence against the Kurdish civilians, this chapter will show the constitution of Kurdish civilian masses as political actors through collective action, and how it has transformed ethnic relations on the local level throughout the 2000s. More specifically, it will demonstrate that democratic mobilization of Kurdish migrants in the public sphere, their involvement in national and local elections, their increasing social activism in public rallies, protests and demonstrations has transformed ethnic (us-them) boundaries on the local level, providing the groundwork for civic ethnic violence. Before the collective mobilization, these migrant populations were perceived by local residents as a part of the “Turkish nation” (“the Easterners”) who escaped the terror of the PKK. After their collective mobilization, however, they were perceived as a dangerous, rebellious and different ethnic group.

Chapter 4 will change the focus from ‘masses’ to ‘extreme right political elites’ by discussing the role of extreme right organizations in this process. This chapter has three main purposes. On the one hand, it aims to debunk the myth that extreme-right political actors will

become more moderate actors and give up using “violence” as a political tool if they successfully participate in elections. Through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the transformation of action repertoires of the ultranationalist *ülküücü* movement since 1980s - the largest extreme right movement in Turkey and a ‘major’ actor in communal violence incidents -, this chapter will show that the electoral successes of the extreme right in Turkey went hand in hand with increasing use of political violence. The second purpose of this chapter is to show that these extreme right elites cannot manipulate the masses at their own will. Although extreme-right wing actors engaged in violent actions in the 1990s, the masses – ordinary folks - did not follow them. Only their militants followed their violent actions, not the masses. But this changed in the 2000s. I will argue that in addition to changing societal dynamics in us-them boundaries (discussed in Chapter 3), what changed was the increasing appeal of the extreme right Nationalist and Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP) which was linked to their “discursive moderation” strategy and their electoral success. Thirdly, this chapter will present an analysis of the various roles these extreme right wing militants have played in the emergence of communal violence incidents.

Chapter 5 will present the event structure of an ethnic riot in *Altınova* and shows how various actors including state elites, extreme right political activists, and ordinary civilians are engaged in violent incidents through specific mechanisms such as nationalist marches and processions and state action/inaction. Chapter 6 will bring into the analysis the role of the government party in relation to other political actors involved in the process, as well as bringing the larger geopolitical dynamics into the picture. First, it will analyze the governing party's (the AKP's) relation with the process of democratization and the Kurdish mass movement, as well as its role in the emergent communal violence in the 2000s. Secondly, it will explain the sudden death of the “democratic opening” process led by the AKP and its increasing “authoritarianism” in

relation to the democratization from below mobilization led by the Kurdish movement. The chapter will also discuss how the rising geopolitical crisis in the Middle East has escalated anti-Kurdish violence from communal violence to a new form, resembling the beginnings of a state-led genocidal violence in the 2015-2016. Chapter 7 concludes.

Overall, this dissertation provides a multi-layered analysis that designed to provide insights into the mechanisms and processes through which democracy promotes ethnic collective violence. To borrow a metaphor used by Charles Tilly (2003) , our analysis resembles a river. Looking from upstream, the reader will see our quest for understanding the processes and dynamics of anti-Kurdish communal violence in Turkey. Looking from downstream, she/he will see an analysis of dynamics of contentious democratization and how different dynamics of democratization can be violent-prone in the face of power-struggles between different social and political actors. Thus, the aim of our analysis, is to describe the *totality* of the river and to demonstrate the complex relationship between processes of democratization and ethnic violence.

Chapter 2

Patterns of Violence: Democratic Contention and Communal Violence

This chapter discusses the temporal patterning of anti-Kurdish communal violence in Turkey from 1981 to 2011 in the light of competing explanations of ethnic and communal violence in the literature. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this dissertation aims to turn attention to the role contentious democratization processes play in the emergence of communal violence incidents. Yet before we discuss how contentious democratization and communal violence incidents interact, we need to explain why alternative explanations in the literature – such as socio-economic deprivation and competition theories; state-weakness and political instability approaches; revenge, fear and retribution theories – are not adequate for explaining the dynamics of anti-Kurdish communal violence in Turkey.

For this purpose, this chapter is organized as follows. Section 1 reviews existing approaches in the literature focusing on the relationship between democracy and ethnic violence and Section 2 surveys alternative explanations in the literature. Section 3 explains the data, variables and the rationale of the methods used in this chapter to test the validity of competition explanations of anti-Kurdish communal violence incidents in Turkey. As we will explain in detail, we will use two distinct but interrelated strategies to assess the validity of competing explanations. First, we will use negative binomial time-series regression analysis to test the validity of competing explanations. Section 4 presents the findings of the regression analysis and discusses the explanatory power of each theory. Second, in Section 5, we will provide a more detailed

discussion of the targets and reported causes of the incidents using news reports data in the ENViT database and discuss how the distribution of targets and reported causes are explained by competing theories. Section 6 concludes.

1. Democracy and Ethnic Violence in Turkey

As explained in Chapter 1, anti-Kurdish lynchings and riots erupted in a period when democratization was adopted as a conflict resolution mechanism to end the armed rebellion in the Kurdish region. Primary characteristics of this period include (1) the Kurdish movement's change in strategy from armed conflict to electoral and social movement mobilization; (2) the changing demands of the Kurdish movement from separate statehood to extension of democratic rights and liberties; (3) the launch of negotiations between the state and the PKK; (4) the introduction of partial democratic reforms regarding cultural rights and liberties of the Kurdish population by the state. How does the emergence of communal violence in this curious context resonate with the existing literature on democracy and ethnic violence? Based on the overview of literature on democracy and ethnic violence presented in the previous chapter, one can delineate three major positions. A first group of scholars views democracy as a conflict resolution mechanism and as a *sine qua non* for internal peace (Smith Z. K., 2000; Talbott, Self-Determination in an Interdependent World, 2000; Viñas, 2004; Sisk, 2003). The second group of scholars argues that democracy or democratization is not a deterrent for ethnic violence (Wimmer, 2013; Olzak, 2011). The third group of scholars argues that democracy and democratization may actually promote ethnic violence in specific circumstances.

The burgeoning literature that draws attention to the conflict-bearing potential of democracy (or democratization processes) can also be categorized into three main sub-groups –

despite some overlaps with each other¹⁰ -- based on their main emphasis: (1) transition theories, (2) institutionalist theories, and (3) competition theories. “Transition” theorists either focus on the violent-prone nature of early democratization periods (Snyder J. , 2000; Mann, 2004) or instabilities associated with ‘transitory regimes.’ For them, early periods of democratization are fertile for conflicts but these conflicts will disappear as democracy is consolidated in its advanced periods. “Institutionalist” scholars emphasize the hardships in establishing democratic institutions in multi-ethnic and divided societies and discuss what kind of institutions best fit societies with deep ethnic divisions (Diamond & Plattner, 1994; Horowitz, 1994; Reilly, 2001; Lijphart, 2002; Zakaria, 1997). For them, democratization can be violence prone in ‘divided societies’ with long-historical and politicized ethnic divisions. Finally, “competition” theories focus on electoral competition and challenge as a key factor for ethnic violence in multiethnic democracies (Wilkinson, 2004; Dhattiwala & Biggs, 2012; Olzak, 1990).

Table 2.1. Theories of Democratization and Ethnic Violence

	TRANSITION THEORIES	INSTITUTIONALIST THEORIES	COMPETITION THEORIES
MAIN EMPHASIS	Democratic Transition	Institutional Design in Divided Societies	Electoral Competition and Challenge
NATURE AND FOCUS OF ANALYSIS	Processual - Change	Contextual – Societies and Regimes	Mechanism and Actors
ACTORS	Elites and Ordinary People	Elites	Elites and Ordinary People
LIMITATIONS	Cannot account for violence in democratic societies that have	Assumes rigid and already existing ethnic divisions.	Over-generalization of political competition. No detailed explanation and

¹⁰ Wilkinson (2004) and Mann (2004), for instance, both discuss multi-ethnic contexts; Horowitz (1994) emphasizes how elections in divided societies promote ‘exclusion’ of minorities which may end give way to violent mobilization.

Before we present our own model for how democracy might trigger communal violence, in this chapter we will first investigate the viability of existing theories on ethnic violence and democracy for explaining the upsurge of anti-Kurdish communal violence in Turkey. In doing so, we will also test the socio-economic, political, demographic and security fear-retribution explanations of ethnic violence in the literature using regression analysis as well as an analysis of targets and reported causes of violence in our database. The pattern that emerges from these analyses will add additional elements to our theoretical and empirical puzzle on the relation between democracy and ethnic violence.

2. Alternative Explanations of Ethnic Violence

2.1. Economic Deprivation and Competition

Scholars often focus on materialist sources of ethnic violence such as economic deprivation, competition and underdevelopment (Kim & Conceicao, 2010; Miguel, Satyanath, & Sergenti, 2004; Olzak, 1989; Olzak, 1990; Hechter, 1975; Nairn, 1977). In cases as diverse as anti-black lynchings in post-reconstruction U.S., communal violence in post-Sukharto Indonesia, and post-crisis anti-immigrant violence in Europe, socio-economic deprivation is considered as a major source of ethnic violence (Tolnay & Beck, 1995; Krell, Nicklas, & Ostermann, 1996). These perspectives also echo the recent Polanyian explanations that focus on the impact of market destruction of local communities accompanying the “worldwide decline of developmental regimes” (Derluguian, 2013; Polanyi, [1944] 2001). According to these Polanyian formulations that link economic decline to ethnic violence, the attractiveness of seeking protection from ethnic

and religious communities and leaders has increased with the decline of developmental regimes in regions as diverse as the post-Soviet countries and India (Derluguian, 2013).

Competition between ethnic groups for jobs and scarce resources in the same niche is also seen as being at the root of ethnic antagonism and violence in a variety of cases (Bonacich, 1972; Olzak, 1990; Myers, 1997). The ethnic competition approach is based on the premise that ethnic antagonism and conflict is an outcome of intense competition for scarce resources and jobs in the labor market. These dynamics have been observed for historically and geographically diverse cases of ethnic violence such as Southern anti-black lynchings and urban racial violence in the United States, the Rwandan genocide, and Hindu-Muslim riots in India (Olzak, 1990). Since ethnic competition approaches underline the critical role of ‘desegregation’ processes, which bring different ethnic groups into the same geography where competition will take place, they have been particularly popular in explaining ethnic violence related to conflicts arising in the face of heightened migration/immigration as well as economic crisis and contraction. Hence, it has been used to explain the current rise of ethnic violence in various instances--ranging from extreme right violence in Europe to anti-Chinese riots in Xinjiang--where international and internal migration has altered existing labor relations (Betz, 1994; Kitschelt, 1995; Ignazi, 2003). Another formulation of ethnic competition theory postulates that the wealth of market-dominant minorities at the expense of majority populations – such as Jews in pre-war Europe and Chinese merchants in South East Asia (e.g. Indonesia and Malaysia) — generates resentment by majority groups and produces ethnic conflict (Bonacich, 1973; Chua, 2003).

A particular appeal of materialist explanations is the emphasis they put on grievances of ordinary people. Put differently, most of these materialist theories assume that ordinary people are

‘rational actors’ who are driven by their own interests, rather than blindly following irrational emotions or political elites. Despite this appeal, materialist explanations are widely criticized in the literature. While major economic transformations in world history coincide with ethnic and racial violence, economic factors like crisis, unemployment and contraction are shown to be neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for ethnic violence to erupt (Gurr, 1993). Focusing on the impact of the recent global crisis in Europe, Brubaker (2011) also contends that all economic crises and problems do not “uniformly” aggravate ethnonational conflict (Brubaker, 2011, p. 94). The ethnic competition approach has also been criticized for overgeneralizing the existence of ethnically-based “competing labor pools” (Horowitz, 1985, p. 125) and its inability to account for why *certain* ethnic minorities or immigrants are more vulnerable to exclusion and ethnic violence (Björge & Witte, 1993; Koopmans, 1996). Furthermore, as Wilkinson (2004) rightly points out in the case of India, sometimes socio-economic explanations tend to present outcomes of riots as the actual ‘causes’ of violence when it is not necessarily the case.

2.2. State Weakness and Political Instability

Besides economic explanations that focus on mass grievances, various scholars draw attention to how weak state institutions, declining state capacities, and heightened political instability give way to ethnic and communal violence. Theories of state weakness and failure – both their Hobbessian and Weberian variants— are particularly dominant in the post-Cold War period, which is marked by “disorder and the lack of governmental control” (Desjarlais & Kleinman, 1994, p. 10). In their review of the vast literature on ethnic violence, Brubaker and Laitin (1998) emphasize that “weakly Weberian states or quasi-states” of the Third World –with their decreasing repressive capacities— are more prone to ethnic violence (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 424). From a Hobbessian perspective, Lake and Rothchild (1996) argue how arbitration

and mediation between ethnic groups becomes problematic in the face of state weakness and collapse. Scholars of contentious politics have also underlined that ethnic and religious conflicts are concentrated in low capacity undemocratic regimes, which are unable to ‘channel [conflict] into mainly non-violent forms of contentions’ as high-capacity democracies do (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). In most of these explanations, the motivation for mobilization and the consequent violence is generally derivative of the opportunity provided by state collapse and weakness.

Although arguments that relate state weakening, statelessness, or state disintegration to the post-Cold War upsurge of ethnic violence are compelling and in various cases shown to have a significant effect (Beissinger, 2002; Woodward, 1995), too much emphasis upon state weakness may lead to faulty generalizations. In their large-n study, Fearon and Laitin (2003) find that political instability, which matters for civil wars, does not have a significant effect on the outbreak of ethnic wars (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Furthermore, while “*scenes of statelessness* and ethnic strife in Rwanda, Somalia, Liberia, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Georgia, Sri Lanka, and India” (Desjarlais & Kleinman, 1994, p. 10) seem to exist together, various studies document the *roles states play* in the emergence and institutionalization of ethnic violence (Das & Kleinman, 2000; Wilkinson, 2004; Brass, 2003). Wilkinson (2004), for one, shows how “[e]ven the weakest state governments, like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh [in India], still seem to possess the minimal state capacity necessary to prevent Hindu-Muslim riots if this is made a political priority by their political leaders” (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 65). In these formulations, *state inaction* rather than incapacity emerges as a key reason why ethnic riots develop.

2.3. Revenge, Retribution and Security Fear

History of armed conflict also become a factor for escalation and/or transformation of violence into communal clashes and into deadly forms of ethnic cleansing. One strand in the literature draws attention to the cycle of ‘retributive violence’, which is driven by revenge and retaliation in times of inter and intra-state armed conflict. For instance, Paul Brass shows how the violence that preceded the partition of India was critical to understand the retributive genocide in Punjab (Brass, 2003). The upsurge of communal violence in South East Asia in the 1980s is argued to show a similar pattern --Tamil secessionist rebellion giving way to anti-Tamil riots in Sri Lanka in 1983 and 1984 Delhi riots following Sikh militant violence (Spencer, 1992, p. 261).

Another group of scholars have shown how actual and perceived threats to group security and fear becomes a source of elite and mass involvement in ethnic violence (Lake & Rothchild, 1996; Posen, 1993). Posen (1993), for one, argues that “the drive for security in one group can be so great that it produces near-genocidal behavior toward neighboring groups” (p.30)¹¹. Fear for group security and physical safety in times of armed conflict are shown to have a role in promoting genocidal violence in various cases including the Rwandan (Prunier, 1995) and Armenian genocides.

Theories of security, fear and retributive violence are particularly relevant for our case, since most commentators on anti-Kurdish communal violence in Turkey generally refer to feelings of retribution and fear of the Turkish population in the face of Kurdish armed rebellion. Put differently, the dominant discourse tends to understand the current rise of communal violence in

¹¹ In his overall theory, Posen underlines the role of state collapse in the emergence of a security threat and security dilemma for groups to strike first.

Turkey as a nationalist backlash motivated by feelings of group insecurity and a threat to territorial integrity. The most widely held argument about the rise of popular violence against Kurds, or electoral support for extreme right parties is the “rising national reflex” in Turkish society as a result of the Kurdish question in Turkey. It is true that since the 1990s, the MHP showed itself as the only party that genuinely defended its tough and uncompromising position vis-à-vis the Kurdish movement in Turkey and in 1999, the capture of the PKK leader Ocalan directly resulted in the rise of MHP votes (Arıkan, 2008; Başkan, 2006). Yet as we illustrated in Chapter 1, and as we will document in more detail in this chapter, the tempo of the armed conflict between the state and the PKK, and the rise of communal violence are completely out of synchrony. Communal violence increased when the armed conflict decreased.

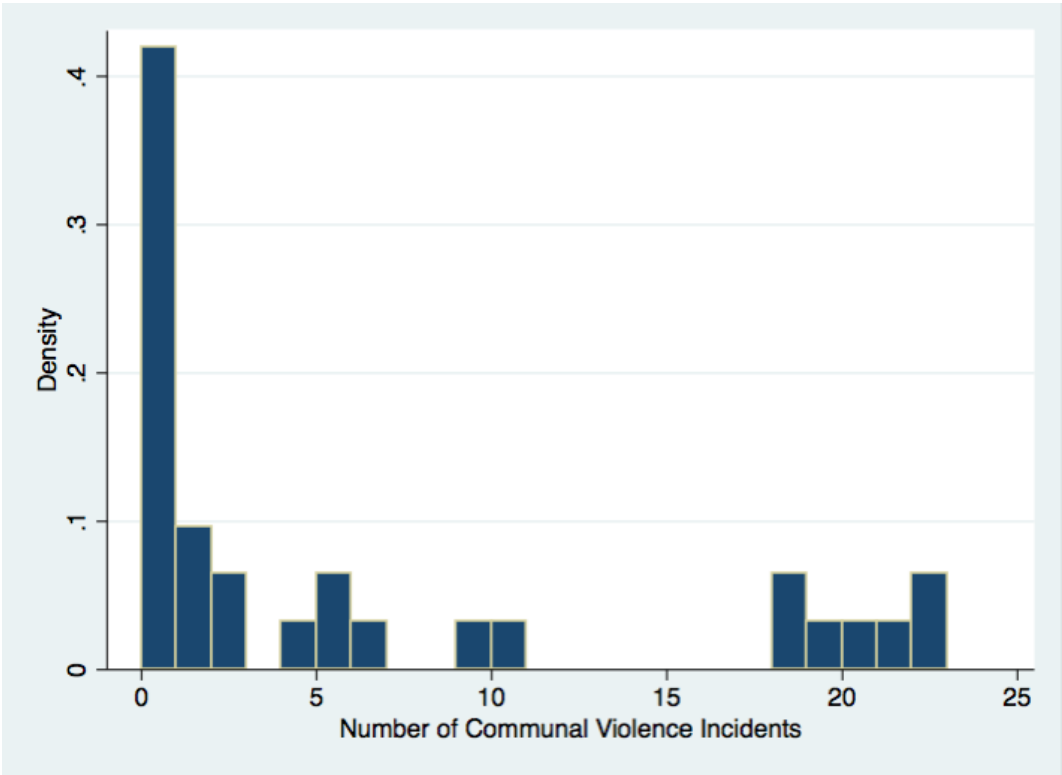
3. Data, Methods and Variables

To test the validity of these competing explanations in the context of anti-Kurdish violence in Turkey, we will use two strategies. First we will use negative binomial time-series regression analysis to test the viability of socio-economic, political, demographic and fear-retribution explanations as well as different approaches to democracy-ethnic violence relation. Secondly, we will provide a more detailed discussion of the targets and reported causes of events in the light of these competing theories.

Our dependent variable is number of anti-Kurdish communal violence incidents aggregated by year. This data is filtered from the ENViT database, which categorizes different forms of ethnic and nationalist violence incidents. Following Fearon and Laitin (1999), we define communal violence as “[v]iolence between members of different ethnic groups that does not directly involve arms of the state on either side” (Fearon & Laitin, 1999, p. 9). Anti-Kurdish communal violence

incidents in our database correspond to civilian forms of physical violence directed towards Kurds in the form of lynchings, beatings, riots, as well as fights and clashes. We also include violent attacks targeting homes, shops and institutions (civil society organizations, political parties, etc.) belonging to or associated with Kurds. We aggregated the data per year because other variables we will use in the analysis are available at the year level.

Figure 2.1. Histogram of Anti-Kurdish communal violence incidents



Source: ENViT database (see Appendix A).

Figure 2.1 shows the histogram of anti-Kurdish communal violence incidents. As Figure 2.1 shows our dependent variable is count data with non-negative integer values, showing properties of overdispersion. Because of this non-normal and overdispersed distribution, we will use negative binominal regression instead of the more common ordinary least squares regression

or Poisson regression analysis. In the literature, negative binomial is a preferred method for scholars working on count data of ethnic violence and social movements (Beissinger, 2002; Wilkinson, 2004). As is standard in time-series regression analysis, every independent variable - except for the election year variable- is lagged for one year.

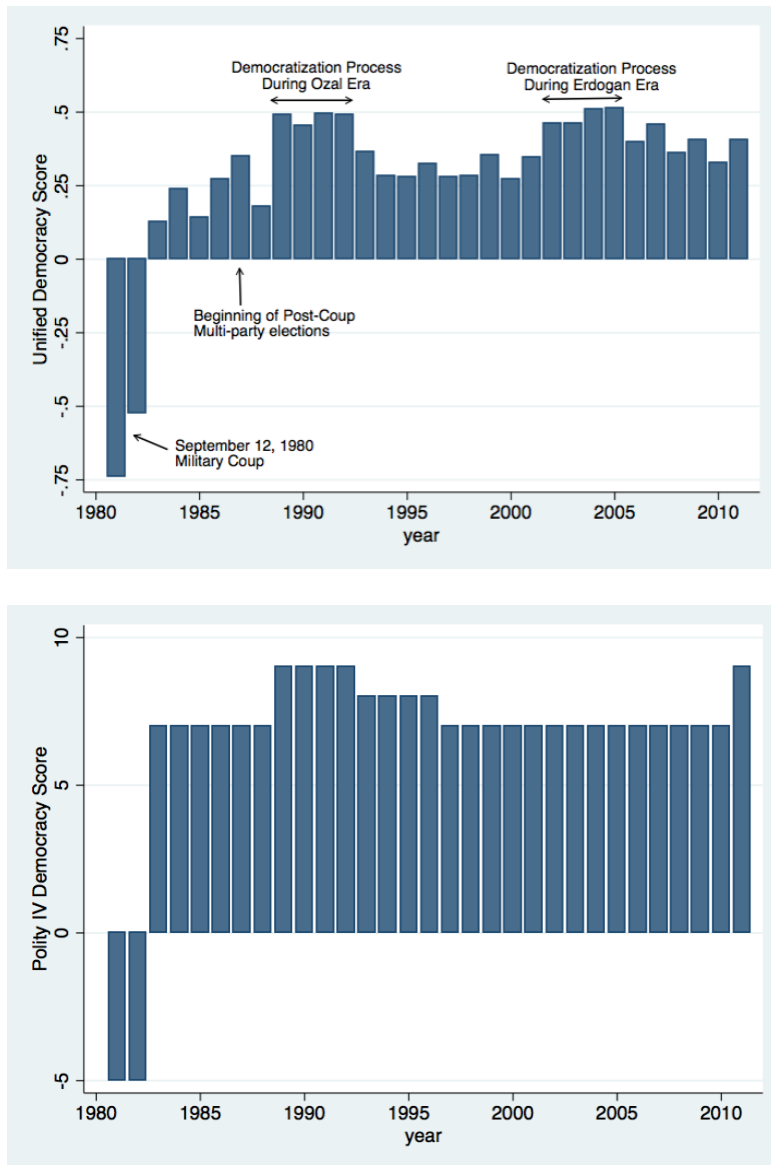
3.1. Measuring Democratization

Most quantitative studies on ethnic violence and democracy/democratization use large-n cross-national comparisons to investigate whether variation in democracy levels across countries explains variation in ethnic conflict. The current study, however, is a single case analysis that investigates the variation of communal violence over time. This difference needs to be born in mind as it has both limits and advantages for testing theories of democracy and ethnic violence.

To begin with, our analysis aims to investigate whether increasing levels of democracy/democratization deters, promotes, or does not affect communal violence when controlling for the effect of alternative explanations. For this task, I use time-series data of levels of democracy from Unified Democracy Scores (UDS) as an indicator of democratization. UDS is a measure of democracy that brings together major democracy indicators in the literature, including Polity IV data, which is the most commonly used dataset in quantitative large-n and time series analyses of democracy and democratization. I chose Unified Democracy Scores over Polity IV data mainly because it provides a better variation over years compared to the Polity IV data. Figure 2.2, below, shows the temporal variation of democratization scores of the UDS and the Polity IV data for Turkey from 1981 to 2011. As Figure 2.2 illustrates, the Polity IV scores do not capture various fluctuations in democratization of Turkey – such as the gradual transition from the 1980-1983 military junta regime to the beginning of the competitive elections in 1987, or the post-

2002 wave of democratization under the AKP, which is known as the “democratic opening process”. The historical trajectory of democratization of Turkey according to Polity IV scores is mostly flat with some ruptures. These fluctuations are better captured by UDS estimates.

Figure 2.2. Comparison of Two Democracy Indicators, Turkey, 1981-2011



The Unified Democracy Scores (UDS), however, does not capture the complexity of the democratization processes in Turkey we want to address in this study. For this purpose, I will use

additional democracy/democratization estimates to take into account additional dimensions of democratization, which will also help us assess the validity of the different theories discussed in Section 1 of this chapter.

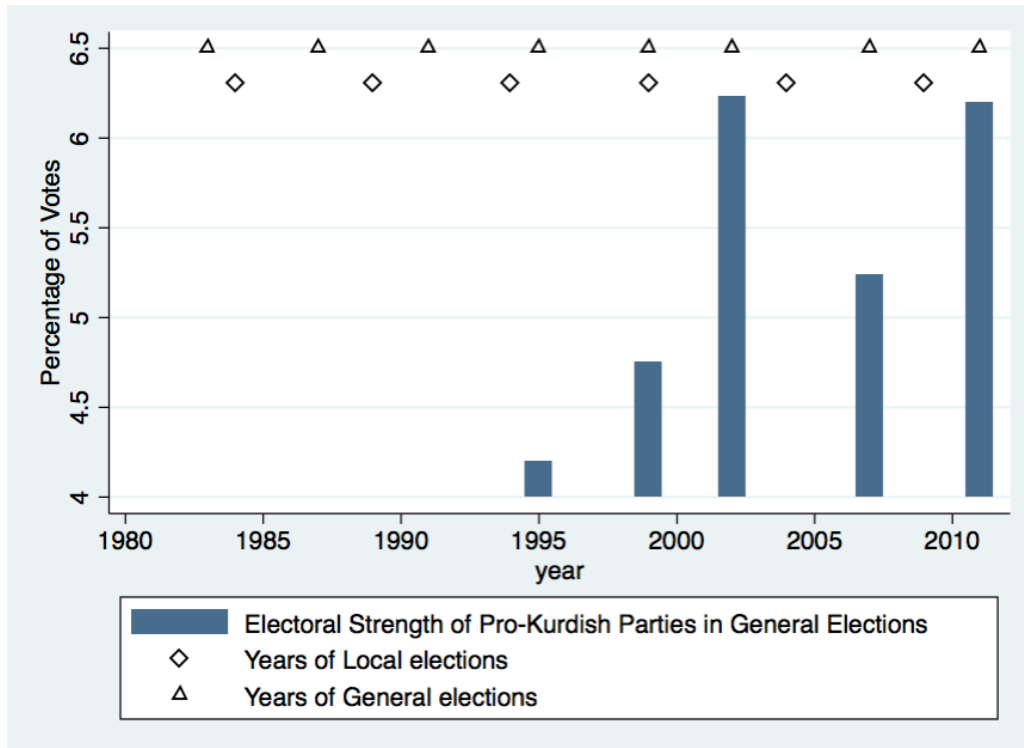
Transition theories emphasizing how early democratic transition from non-democratic regimes to parliamentary democracies - which generally corresponds to periods of regime change - are not relevant to the time-period we are examining. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the transition to parliamentary democracy took place after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution. While the newly established Republic of Turkey had single party rule from 1924 to 1946, after 1946 the transition to a multiparty parliamentary regime was completed. Hence, there is no need and no way to assess the validity of transition theories in the case of Turkey¹². If “transition” in these theories can also be extended to incorporate the transition from temporary interruptions of this multiparty parliamentary regimes due to military coups, these transitions are captured by the UDS index as seen in Figure 2.2.

To assess the validity of “democratic/electoral competition theories”, we use two different indicators. The first indicator is a dummy variable of whether there is an upcoming election in the next year or not (Olzak, 1990; Wilkinson, 2004). If communal violence increases (a) due to increasing electoral competition between elites as Wilkinson (2004) suggests; or (b) when superiority of the dominant ethnic majority is challenged by the electoral power of minorities as Olzak (1990) argues, then these tensions should increase during election times. The election year

¹² Such an assessment is viable and undertaken by large-n studies that analyze cross-national variation in institutional arrangements on ethnic violence/peace (see Wimmer 2013).

variable aims to capture this particular effect. The triangles and diamonds in Figure 2.3, below, show both local (municipal) elections and general (parliamentary) election years, respectively.

Figure 2.3. Election Years and Votes of Pro-Kurdish parties in General Elections



The second variable we will use in this regard is the percentage of votes pro-Kurdish parties receive in national elections. This variable specifically aims to measure the electoral challenge from pro-Kurdish political parties (also see Olzak 1990). It is not easy to determine the percentage of votes gained by pro-Kurdish parties in Turkey because these parties often do not participate in the national elections “as a party”. Because of the 10 percent national electoral threshold, established after the 1980 military coup, mostly to exclude Kurds from the parliament, pro-Kurdish parties use a wide variety of strategies ranging from entering elections through independent candidates or making coalitions with other social-democratic, left wing parties. Figure 2.3 above

presents an estimate of electoral power of pro-Kurdish parties in national elections. Appendix B will explain the procedure through which this estimation was made.

As standard in the literature, I use linear interpolation/extrapolation method to produce a continuous series over the years. If t_0 and t_1 stands for the years closest to the year t when a general election in which pro-Kurdish parties participated through independent candidates or via a coalition - satisfying the temporal order $t_0 < t < t_1$ - electoral power of pro-Kurdish parties at the year t is estimated using the following method.

$$Vote(t) = Vote(t_0) + \frac{Vote(t_1) - Vote(t_0)}{t_1 - t_0} (t - t_0)$$

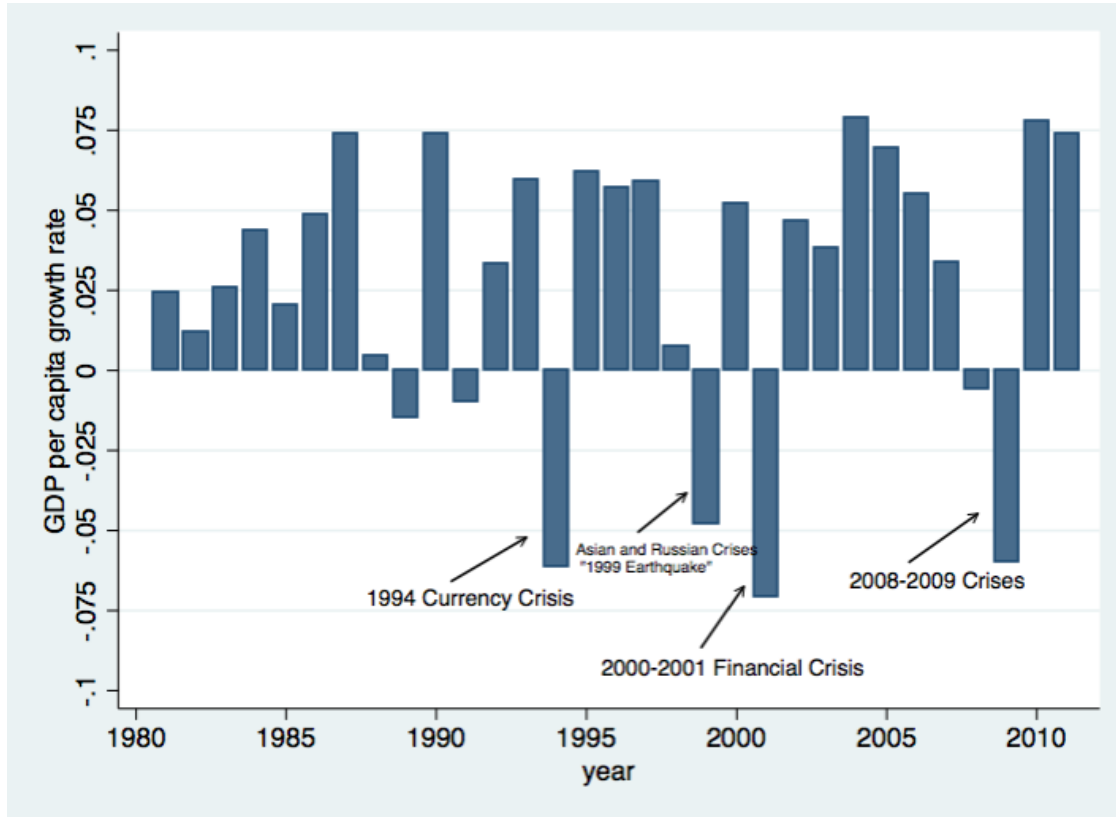
We also extrapolated the data before 1995, not to produce missing values, by assuming that electoral power of pro-Kurdish parties in the year 1980 was zero.

3.2. Testing Alternative Explanations

Socioeconomic deprivation and ethnic competition. To assess the viability of *socioeconomic deprivation and ethnic competition* theories, I used one-year lagged values of annual gross domestic product per capita levels, yearly changes in the unemployment level, and average wages in the manufacturing sector¹³. In the literature, while all three measures are widely used to assess the level of socioeconomic deprivation, the unemployment level and annual wages of industrial laborers are commonly used to measure the effects of ethnic competition.

¹³ In the preliminary analysis, I also considered rate of unemployment, number of forced Kurdish immigrants to Western cities and percentage of Kurdish population in internal migration in Turkey as possible alternative measures. The findings were not robust and they did not alter the existing findings, hence I did not use these variables.

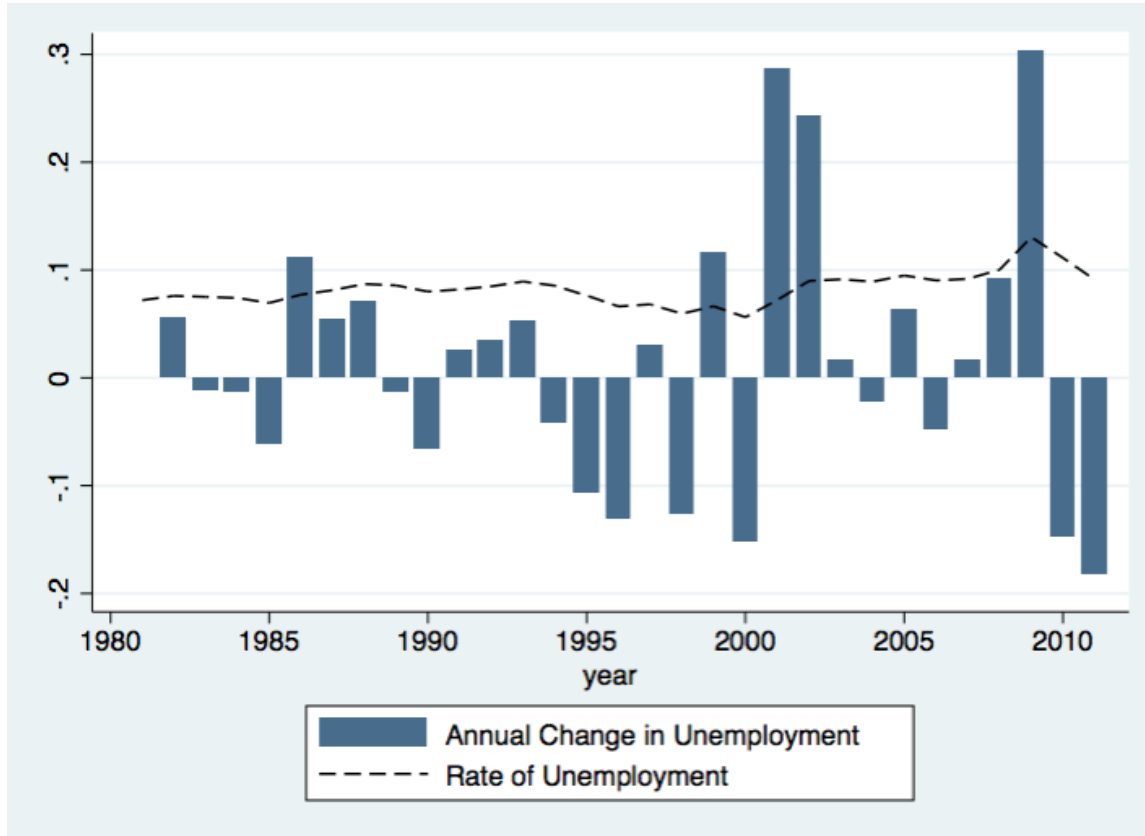
Figure 2.4. Annual GDP per Capita Growth Rate, Turkey, 1981-2011



Source: World Bank

Figure 2.4 shows the annual GDP per capita growth rate of Turkey from 1981 to 2011. As the Figure 2.4 shows there were four major crisis periods in Turkey in this period, three of which took place in the 1991-2001 period. The first of these major crisis periods is the 1994 currency crisis; the second is the 1999 period during which Turkey was affected by the Asian and Russian crises as well as the 1999 Earthquake which hit one of the main industrial regions, Kocaeli; the third of these periods is the 2000-2001 period; and the fourth one is the 2008-2009 crisis. According to socio-economic competition and deprivation theories, these diverse forms of crisis have the potential to escalate ethnic and communal violence by shrinking existing material resources and creating socio-economic deprivation. Likewise, periods with high levels of growth are more likely to contain these inter-ethnic antagonisms and violence.

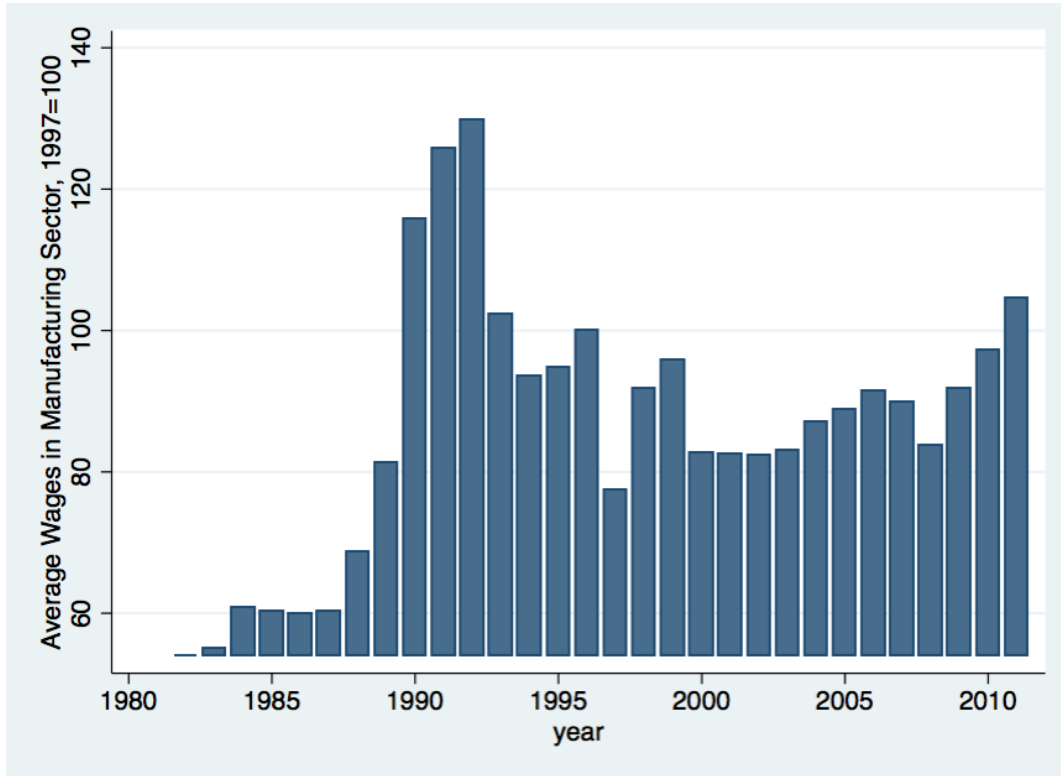
Figure 2.5. Rate and Annual Change in Unemployment, Turkey, 1981-2011



Source: International Monetary Fund database

Figure 2.5, above, shows the annual rate of unemployment and annual change in the unemployment rate in Turkey from 1981 to 2011. There is no consensus in the literature regarding which indicator of unemployment –rate of unemployment or annual change in the rate of unemployment – is more suitable for analyzing ethnic and communal violence from the perspective of socio-economic competition theories. Most scholars, however, opt for using annual change in the rate of unemployment since it captures rapid changes in unemployment more effectively. As Figure 2.5 shows, there is a major increase in annual change in the rate of unemployment in the post-crisis periods such as in 1999, 2001-2, and 2007-8. We will follow in the footsteps of this scholarship and use the annual change in unemployment as our main unemployment variable.

Figure 2.6. Average Wages in Manufacturing Sector, Turkey, 1981-2011 (1997=100)



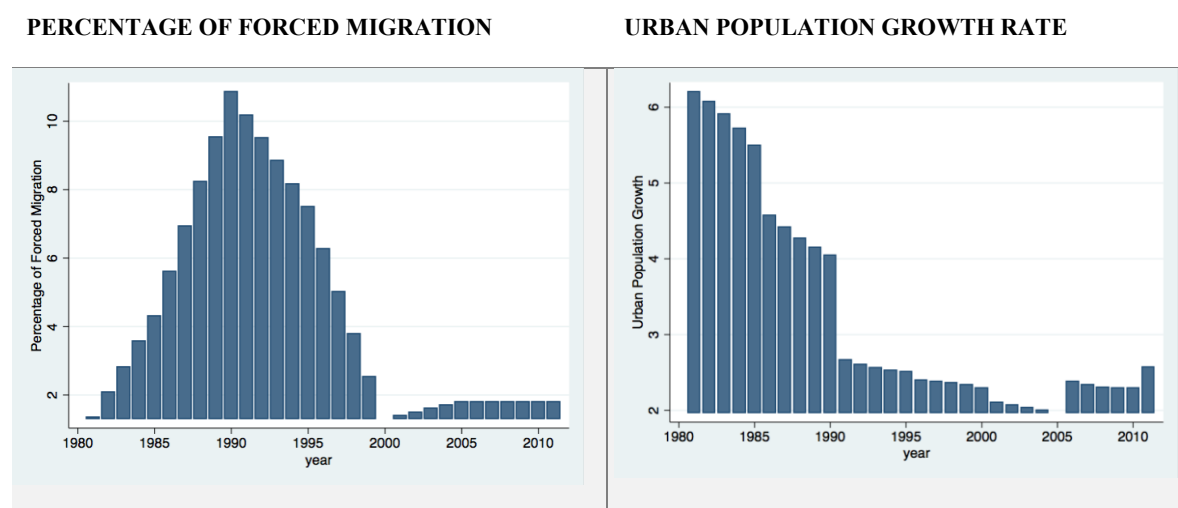
Source: Author's calculations from TUIK.

Figure 2.6 above shows average real wages in manufacturing sector from 1981 to 2011. As Figure 2.6 shows there was a rapid increase in real wages in the manufacturing sector in the 1987-1992 period, which then declined in the course of the 1990s, and started to rise again after 2004. According to socio-economic competition theories, real wages in manufacturing plays a dual role. First, declining real wages operate as another measure of socio-economic deprivation. Second, declining real wages is an indirect measure of the effect of the flow of migration and migrant laborers into industrial sectors, which would lower wages by increasing unemployment and intensifying competition over jobs.

This brings us to the issue of migration and immigration (Olzak, 1990). Measures of migration and immigration are also commonly used as indicators for ethnic competition theories,

since the influx of immigrants results in a desegregation process and increases the demand for existing jobs and scarce resources, and lowers wages. Since the forced migration of Kurds produced a significant demographic shift in Turkey, I used forced migrants as a percentage of all migrants as a proxy for Kurdish forced migration. It is important to note that migration data in Turkey does not have ethnic categories. This is because ethnic categorizations (such as “Kurds”) in the census and other demographic data have not been used by the Turkish state since 1960. Hence, I use the rate of forced migration as an indicator of Kurdish migration to Western cities and towns. In addition, I use the urban population growth rate since as a proxy for competition for scarce resources as well as jobs (Goldstone, 2002, p. 5) (see Figure 2.7 below).

Figure 2.7. Percentage of Forced Migration and Urban Growth Rate

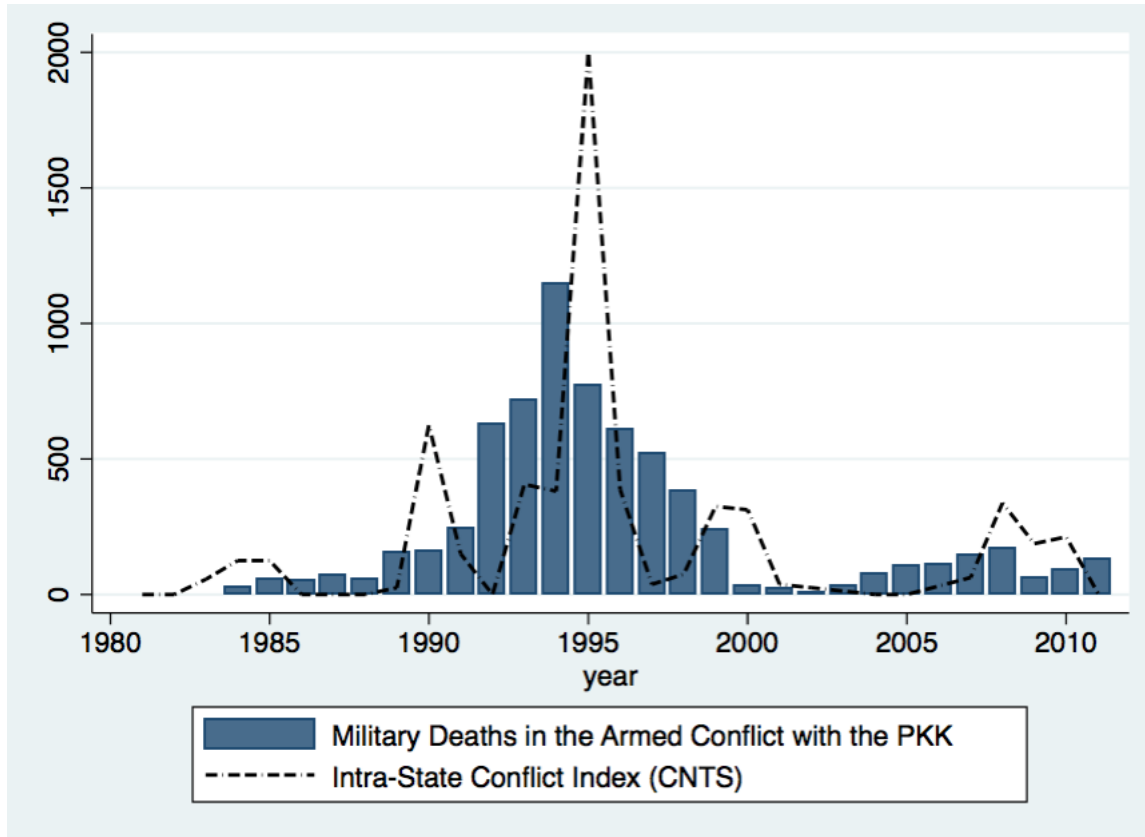


Source: TYGONA Report; TUIK

State weakness and political instability. I use two indicators to assess the validity of *state weakness* arguments. The first one is the political instability variable from the CNTS dataset, which is a weighted conflict index including assassinations, general strikes, guerilla warfare, government crises, purges and anti-government demonstrations. The second indicator aims to capture the intensity of armed conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK since armed conflict

is tends to increase state fragility and decrease state repressive capacity. As an indicator of the intensity of armed conflict, I use the number of battle deaths due to armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces.

Figure 2.8. Political Instability Index and Military Deaths in the Armed Conflict with the PKK, 1981-2011



Retribution and Security Fear. The two indicators of state weakness, used above, also help us test theories of retribution and security fear as well. This is due to two reasons. First of all, state weakness and collapse is an important intermediate variable that increases a particular group’s fear for physical security (Posen, 1993). The intensity of armed conflict is utilized as an actual proxy for the existence of group security. The number of battle deaths due to armed conflict between the

PKK and the Turkish Army is also used as an intermediate variable increasing the likelihood of retributive violence.

Control variables - All models presented below also include communal violence lagged one year as a control variable.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 2.2 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables used in the analysis. Table 2.3 shows negative binomial regression coefficients from different models that address existing theoretical debates on the rise of ethnic violence. Model 1 addresses theories expecting ethnic violence to increase with economic decline/crisis and competition, and tests effects of various economic indicators on levels of communal violence. Effects of economic indicators on communal violence are decidedly mixed. Results suggest that economic growth - rather than decline - increases the levels of communal violence, contrary to the scholarly expectation that economic crisis and contraction promote ethnic violence. Likewise, despite expectations of economic competition theories, wages in manufacturing do not have a significant impact on communal violence. Among economic indicators, only unemployment seems to have a meaningful and significant impact. In accordance with economic competition and deprivation theories as well as Polanyian approaches, communal violence seems to increase with levels of unemployment. The impact of unemployment, however, disappears once controlled with other political variables (see Model 8).

Table 2.2. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Selected Variables

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]	[12]
[1] Communal Violence against Kurds	1											
[2] Existence of Military Junta	-0.4	1										
[3] Annual GDP per capita Growth	0.03	0.1	1									
[4] Annual Change in Unemployment	0.1	0.02	-0.52	1								
[5] Wages in Manufacturing Sector	0.27	-0.77	0.01	-0.16	1							
[6] Urban Population Growth Rate	-0.5	0.89	0.02	-0.06	-0.68	1						
[7] Percentage of Kurdish Forced Migrants	-0.5	-0.11	0	-0.15	0.39	0.11	1					
[8] Military Deaths in the Armed Struggle with the PKK	-0.18	-0.37	-0.1	-0.25	0.47	-0.34	0.54	1				
[9] Political Instability Index (CNTS)	-0.15	-0.22	0.09	-0.26	0.26	-0.17	0.3	0.5	1			
[10] Votes of Kurdish Parties in General Elections	0.69	-0.73	0.05	0.11	0.43	-0.87	-0.5	-0.05	-0.02	1		
[11] Democratization Index (Unified Democracy Score)	0.32	-0.63	0.09	0.05	0.61	-0.7	0.22	0.17	0.07	0.57	1	
[12] Election Year	0.04	-0.24	-0.21	0.13	0.24	-0.27	0.1	0.15	0.19	0.23	0.32	1

Table 2.3. Coefficients of Negative Binomial Regression Analysis of Annual Frequency of Communal Violence Against Kurdish Population

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Number of Communal Violence Incidents (<i>t-1</i>)	0.103*** (0.03)	0.061** (0.02)	0.103** (0.03)	0.090*** (0.03)	0.109** (0.03)	0.056* (0.03)	0.059* (0.03)	0.056* (0.02)
Annual GDP per capita Growth (<i>t-1</i>)	17.759* (7.00)							5.218 (6.30)
Annual Change in Unemployment (<i>t-1</i>)	5.240* (2.63)							0.83 (2.39)
Wages in Manufacturing Sector 1997=100 (<i>t-1</i>)	0.033 (0.02)							0.025 (0.02)
Urban Population Growth Rate (<i>t-1</i>)		-1.651** (0.59)						
Percentage of Kurdish Forced Migrants (<i>t-1</i>)		-0.037 (0.09)						
Military Deaths in the Armed Struggle with the PKK (<i>t-1</i>)			-0.34e ⁻³ (0.001)				0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Political Instability Index (CNTS) (<i>t-1</i>)			-0.29e ⁻⁴ (0.075e ⁻³)				-0.01e ⁻³ 0.05e ^{-e}	-0.02e ⁻³ 0.05e ⁻³
Democracy Indicator from Unified Democracy Scores Dataset (<i>t-1</i>)				5.903* (2.30)	5.116* (2.28)	2.464 (1.97)	2.415 (2.15)	-0.211 (2.44)
Is this an election year? 1=yes 0=no (<i>t-1</i>)					-0.617 (0.57)	-0.615 (0.44)	-0.623 (0.44)	-0.608 (0.43)
Votes of Kurds in General Elections (<i>t-1</i>)						0.956*** (0.25)	1.069*** (0.28)	1.180*** (0.33)
Constant	-2.824 (1.64)	5.406*** (1.25)	0.942* (0.44)	-1.298 (0.87)	-0.916 (0.89)	-4.225*** (1.25)	-4.983** (1.60)	-6.885** (2.35)
Ln(alpha)	0.191 (0.40)	-0.683 (0.49)	0.56 (0.38)	0.12 (0.42)	0.079 (0.42)	-0.721 (0.50)	-0.773 (0.51)	-0.826 (0.51)
McFadden's adjusted R-Square	0.042	0.163	0.003	0.072	0.067	0.146	0.128	0.106
N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

These findings also resonate with the secondary literature on economic transformations in Turkey in the last three decades. The intensity of anti-Kurdish communal violence rises particularly in the 2000s, which is actually a period characterized by “[g]ood growth coupled with single digit inflation for the first time in several decades” (Onis, 2010, p. 55).

Table 2.4. Economic Performance and Type of Government in Three Decades

Period	Type of Government	Economic Performance
1983-1991	Motherland Party	Reasonably good growth based on an export boom
1991-2002	Seven governments, the duration of the longest three and a half years	Weak performance; significant instability
2002-2010 and beyond	The Justice and Development Party	Good growth coupled with single digit inflation for the first time in several decades

Source: Onis & Guven, 2011, p. 55

Overall, compared to previous decades, the economic performance of Turkey significantly improved in the first decade of the 21st century (see Table 2.4 above). According to the OECD, it was “an unprecedented period of high growth” with clear indications of “sustained convergence” for the Turkish economy (Hale & Ozbudun, 2010, p. 115).¹⁴ The major economic problem in this period was that rapid growth and the rise in exports were not matched with a desired level of increase in jobs (Yeldan, 2013, p. 123), which is in accordance with the results of the regression analysis which suggests the rise of communal violence with unemployment. Yet this was

¹⁴ This picture remained largely unchanged despite the 2008 global financial crisis. While the 2008 crisis resulted in declining growth rates and rising unemployment in Turkey, the losses were lower compared to European economies and the recovery was relatively fast (Aydin, 2013, p. 101). This fast recovery may not be a sign for long-term economic stability. As Onis & Guven (2011) notes: “The relatively fast recovery of the first half of 2010 has been fully based on the rebooting of Turkey’s foreign inflow-dependent growth machine, with the current account deficit quadrupling since 2009. The return to this pattern, the social as well as economic sustainability of which is at best questionable, as discussed already, indicates that Turkish policymakers did indeed ‘let the crisis go to waste’ rather than using it as a window of opportunity to tackle the structural challenges of Turkish development.” (Onis & Guven, 2011, p. 604). Also, the slow response of government to the crisis is criticized extensively by scholars, see (Aydin, 2013), (Onis & Guven, 2011)

counterbalanced by increasing welfare provisions which resulted in declining levels of income inequality in this decade (Karatasli, 2015).

Table 2.3 also shows that the impact of demographic indicators including urban population growth and Kurdish migration to Western cities did not have an immediate impact on communal violence (see Model 2). In other words, the desegregation of Kurdish and Turkish populations as a result of the large migration wave of internally displaced Kurds did not have an immediate impact on communal violence levels as ethnic competition theorists would expect. The results also suggest that the urban population growth rate has a significant and negative impact on communal violence, which is contrary to the expectations that demographic change promotes competition (Goldstone, 2002).

These findings are also in accordance with the secondary literature on Turkey, which shows that the wave of Kurdish migration reached its height due to the internal displacement of Kurds by the Turkish state in the early to mid-1990s, and thus, the process of ‘ethnic desegregation’ was underway primarily in the 1990s (Ayata & Yüksek, 2005). Moreover, the ethnic competition approach cannot explain why Kurdish workers/migrants/residents are the primary targets of violence even in neighborhoods that have other sizeable minorities (i.e. Arabs, Kazakhs)¹⁵. In addition, Turkish and Kurdish workers in western cities mostly operate in a dual labor market system where Kurdish migrant workers mostly participate in the most precarious sectors with lowest pay, longest work-hours and no security (e.g., construction workers, dock workers, seasonal workers etc.), which local residents (“Turkish” workers) do not compete for.

15 The Roma population is an exception among these minorities. There were major incidents of collective violence against the Roma population as well. Although certain aspects of violence against the Roma population has significant similarities with the violence against the Kurds, there are major quantitative and qualitative difference between the two phenomena.

I must note at the outset that my interviews also suggest that socioeconomic competition theories have limited explanatory power. As my interview questions in Appendix A show, I asked every respondent about their perceptions about socioeconomic status and competition between local residents and migrant populations as well as about their perception of the reasons behind communal violence incidents in their regions. Among all 77 interviews, only 3 respondents expressed economic hostility toward Kurdish migrants as a possible explanation for emerging violent incidents.

Model 3 addresses theories of state weakness as well as theories that underline the role of fear and retribution in the face of actual or potential threats to physical security. This model tests the impact of political instability and intensity of armed conflict on communal violence. Contrary to expectations by theories drawing attention to retributive violence and security fear, findings show that the intensity of ethnic armed conflict with the PKK does not have any statistically significant impact on communal violence. Furthermore, levels of political instability do not have a statistically significant impact on communal violence.

These findings are not accidental but they resonate with the secondary literature on Turkey. First of all, it would be erroneous to classify Turkey as a “Weberian weak state,” let alone a failed state in the post-Cold War period. Various scholars of Turkish politics have underlined that Turkey inherited a ‘strong state’ tradition from the Ottoman Empire (Heper, 2005; Mardin, 1973)¹⁶. While armed rebellion in the Kurdish region led some analysts to categorize Turkey among the “states to watch” (Rice & Patrick, 2008), characterized by “moderate state fragility” (State Fragility Index, 2010), the communal violence erupted in the 2000s when the armed conflict started to wane.

¹⁶This is also considered as an impediment to successful democratic consolidation (Heper 2005; Mardin 1973).

Despite the high level of armed conflict with large numbers of casualties in the 1990s, communal violence targeting Kurds only erupted in the 2000s¹⁷, when the scale of armed conflict, casualties and hence, actual threats to security and state integrity, declined. Thus, while the Kurdish demand for separate statehood, the armed conflict and the high number of casualties aggravated Turkish nationalist sentiments to an unprecedented level since 1984, it cannot explain the huge difference in levels of communal violence targeting Kurdish civilians in 1990s and 2000s.

Models 4-8 incorporate the impact of democracy measures on ethnic violence. Model 4 shows that increasing levels of democracy do not prevent communal violence. On the contrary, intensity of communal violence increases with democratization. Adding “election year” in Model 5 does not change the positive and significant impact of democracy level on communal violence, and election year does not have a significant impact. When electoral power of pro-Kurdish parties are added in Model 6, the impact of democracy levels on communal violence disappears. In this model, electoral power of pro-Kurdish parties is the only variable with a significant and positive impact on communal violence. Among all other measures of democracy, this is the only significant indicator. Put differently, electoral challenge and empowerment of Kurdish parties increase levels of communal violence, which broadly resonates with theories of political competition that draw attention to electoral challenge posed by racial and ethnic minorities (Olzak, 1990).

In Model 7, impacts of three democracy measures are controlled with indicators of armed conflict and political instability. The impact of votes for Kurdish parties in general elections is the only indicator that has a positive and significant impact on communal violence. Model 8 includes economic indicators as control variables and the picture remains unchanged. While the finding on

¹⁷ There are certain incidents that took place during 1990s. However, both in terms of its quantitative and qualitative significance, this form of violence has escalated in the 2000s.

the significance of votes for Kurdish parties remains robust, the positive and significant impact of unemployment in Model 1 disappears when controlled with other variables in this final model. Since urban population growth had very high correlations with other variables, it was not included in these models.

In sum, in the most comprehensive model that includes indicators of economic decline, competition, political instability, armed conflict, and democracy, only democratic/electoral challenge by Kurdish parties produces statistically significant results. The results are also in accordance with the socio-political context of Turkey in which communal violence erupted. Communal violence events mainly erupted in the 2000s, the period in which the PKK gave up arms and the Kurdish movement started to embrace electoral politics and social movement mobilization on the ground. Pro-Kurdish political parties in the 2000s (DTP, BDP, HDP) became central actors in Turkish politics and gradually increased their electoral power and presence in the parliament.

What is not evident from the regression analysis is that the electoral challenge that the Kurdish political parties posed in this period had a strong social movement component. In this period, various western cities had become important centers of social and electoral mobilization, thanks to the sizeable Kurdish forced migrant population in these cities. This social movement aspect of this political challenge is best captured by a more detailed analysis of targets and contexts of violence.

5. Targets and Reported Causes of Anti-Kurdish Communal Violence

In this section, we will take a closer look at the targets and reported causes of anti-Kurdish communal violence. Table 2.5 below presents the distribution of reported causes and targets of

events in the ENViT database. As Table 2.5 shows, the majority of incidents are related to political contentions and are directed against political contenders. More precisely, around 50% of the incidents are precipitated by incidents like protests, political party gatherings, electoral campaigns, and political controversies; and around 45% of the targets are protestors or people attending political gatherings or events.

Table 2.5. Causes and Targets of Collective Violence Events

Causes of Violence	%	Targets of Violence	%
Political Contention (e.g., protests)	49.67	Protestors	44.53
Military Clash with the PKK	14.57	Workers	16.79
Unidentified	11.26	Individuals	11.68
Speaking Kurdish in Public	6.62	Institutions (e.g., political party buildings)	9.49
Criminal Events	10.6	Students	2.92
Nationalist Hatred/Identity Related	3.97	Generalized Violence	9.49
Nationalist Hatred/Economic Reasons	3.31	Other	5.11

Source: Ethnic and Nationalist Violence Dataset in Turkey (ENViT)

Put differently, the anti-communal violence is characterized by *violence that is directed against politicized civilians in the context of contentious politics*. They take place in a context where an actor or a group of actors are in the process of political claim-making, such as demonstrating, marching, distributing leaflets, or in more individual-level cases, engaging in political discussions in the public sphere (e.g., coffee shops). This echoes Tilly’s remark that “a significant share of public violence occurs in the course of *organized social processes that are not in themselves intrinsically violent*” in democracies in the twentieth century (Talbot, 2000, pp. 196-200).

This does not mean that alternative explanations do not have any explanatory power. For instance, our analysis of the triggers of the events in the *ENViT* also shows that 14.57% of these events emerged as a nationalist response to the clashes between the PKK and the Turkish army (particularly in armed clashes where large numbers of Turkish soldiers are killed). For instance, in 2001, the PKK's attack in Diyarbakir resulted in a series of simultaneous nationalist demonstrations in different cities. Some of these demonstrations turned into attacks and raids against the BDP (major Kurdish political party) buildings, and the party activists in cities including Istanbul (Tarlabasi), Adana, and Mersin. Thousands of people attacked the party buildings and as in the case of Mersin and Istanbul, party activists. The incident in Istanbul turned into a large scale clash between the attackers and the Kurdish activists. This military clash was also the background of the outburst of large scale riots against the Kurds (not necessarily against the Kurdish activists but Kurds in general) in Zeytinburnu, Istanbul.

Besides the country-wide impact of major military clashes with a large number of casualties, there are more localized incidents in the form of retributive violence against armed conflict. An important example of such a localized incident took place in Hatay/Dortyol in 2010, which was precipitated by the murder of four policemen by the PKK. A rumor that PKK members were arrested was disseminated in the town, which precipitated a lynching attempt against the suspects. As the lynch mob grew bigger, the incident transformed into an ethnic riot against the whole Kurdish population in the town. Although these and similar incidents are more visible than the ones triggered by economic reasons, overall they only make up the 15% of the incidents in our database.

The table also suggests that only 3.31 % of instances of violence were triggered by economic disputes. This is the case even though 17% of targets were reported as workers. Most of the contentions involving “Kurdish workers” were not economically driven disputes but they are primarily political in nature. There were, however, instances whereby economic disputes involving Kurdish workers gave way to ethnic violence. For instance, in 2009, Kurdish seasonal farm workers who were in the Kiraztepe village, Ordu, for picking hazelnuts demanded their unpaid wages, which resulted in a violent attack against the workers by the villagers. In a similar incident in Southern Turkey, 150 Kurdish workers who came to Tepekoy village in Mersin to pick peaches were attacked by the villagers shouting “damn the PKK”. The lynching attempt was triggered by a dispute over daily wages of the workers. A dispute over cherry picking turned into an attack against Kurdish seasonal farm workers in central Anatolia (Eskisehir, Omerkoy) in 2011. 300 village dwellers attacked the workers, singing the national anthem and opening a large Turkish flag, and injuring 6 workers (TIHV). In 2005, an economic dispute between [something missing] ended up with an ethnic clash between Kurdish and Turkish residents in town.

All these examples point to the partial relevance of economic contentions and nationalist backlash against the armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish army in the emergence of ethnic collective violence in the 21st century. Overall, however, the distribution of targets and precipitating causes of incidents supports and complements the findings of the regression analysis, which points to the importance of democratic contention in the form of electoral challenge coming from Kurdish political parties. The analysis of targets and causes also draws our attention to the role played by social movement mobilization.

6. Patterns of Violence and Emerging Puzzles

Two overarching conclusions emerge from the analyses presented in this chapter. First and foremost, the findings from the negative binomial regression analysis suggest that theories of socio-economic competition and deprivation, state weakness and political instability, security fear and retributive violence, and lack of democracy, fail to explain the rise of communal violence in Turkey. Increasing democratic/electoral competition from Kurdish political parties provides a better explanation for the increasing levels of anti-Kurdish communal violence. Secondly, our analysis of the causes and targets of violent incidents indicates that the majority of communal violence is directed against politicized civilians in the context of democratic claim-making processes.

Together, these findings point towards an emergent puzzle: why do two major mechanisms associated with democracy--that is, elections and social movements -- become key factors to understand rising communal violence in the 21st century. How are these processes related to changing relations between ethnic groups so that they give way to violence? In order to answer these questions, the next chapter goes to the ground and focuses on transformation of ethnic relations in districts with high levels of communal violence. We will explain how the democratic mobilization of Kurdish populations through collective action and social movements has transformed ethnic boundaries between the Kurdish migrant population and Turkish residents in Western cities and towns in Turkey, and established the preconditions for violent ethnic relations.

Chapter 3

Contested Boundaries: Democratization-from-below and Violence

In Chapter 2, we presented the temporal patterning of anti-Kurdish communal violence and tested the viability of competing explanations. A major finding of Chapter 2 was that democratic challenge from the Kurdish population in the form of rising electoral power and social movement mobilization is closely associated with the eruption of anti-Kurdish communal violence. To explain *how* social movement mobilization by Kurds and popular electoral support for pro-Kurdish parties relates to anti-Kurdish violence, this current chapter turns the gaze to changing communal relations and the transformation of ethnic boundaries between the Kurdish forced migrant population and local residents at the societal level. Using data from interviews conducted in locations with high levels of ethnic violence against Kurdish civilians, this chapter highlights the role played by ordinary people in the emergence of communal violence. It shows that, in the Turkish context, communal ethnic violence against Kurds did not arise because of the introduction of democracy in a multi-ethnic society, as suggested by the Millian scholarship on ethnic violence or merely as part of elite manipulation of masses in the course of electoral competition.

This chapter focuses on how *social movement driven democratization processes*, which I refer to as democratization-from-below, creates the conditions for violent ethnic mobilizations. Drawing insights from boundary-making approaches in ethnic relations and the literature on democratization, social movements, and contentious politics, I argue that social movements of ethnic minorities aiming to extend their democratic rights and liberties play a key role in the transformation of “us-them” boundaries at the societal level, and helps produce the societal preconditions for violent ethnic relations. More specifically, I maintain that mass mobilization of

a minority reproduces ethnicity as a politically salient cleavage because collective-claim making and public assertions of collective power increases the political visibility of an ethnic group in the public sphere, constitutes ethnicity as a contentious political identity, and establishes the minority ethnic group as a political threat at the societal level for the majority population. These transformations produce contentious social relations on the ground, creating a potential 'mass base' for violent ethnic mobilizations.

The analysis presented in this chapter shows that despite two decades of ethnic conflict in the Kurdish region, "Kurds" were still conceptualized as part of the 'in-group', a segment of the "Turkish" nation, when they first migrated to Western cities and towns in the 1990s. In the post-conflict democratization period of the 2000s, however, these migrant populations became perceived and described by Turkish residents no longer as "Eastern citizens" but as "rebellious Kurds." The chapter suggests that the primary factor in the changing perception is the push for democratization from below by the Kurdish migrant population through increasing social movement mobilization and claims to identity. More specifically, collective action from below (e.g. protests, rallies and electoral campaigns) by Kurdish migrants and symbolic identity claims in their daily lives have transformed ethnic relations and "us-them" boundaries on the local level throughout the 2000s. Transformation of boundaries in turn, challenged monopolies of power and privileges by dominant groups and was marked by acute uncertainty regarding which segments of the Kurdish migrant population still belongs to 'us.' The dominant population responded to this transformation of boundaries with violent strategies to enforce old boundaries/categories and to reduce emerging uncertainties across boundaries.

1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework: Collective Action, Democratization and Transformation of Ethnic Boundaries

1.1. *Ethnic Boundaries*

In contrast to classical and contemporary perspectives which see ethnic movements as expressions of rigid primordial and biologically-linked entities (Van der Berghe, 1997; Geertz, 1972; Roosens, 1994; Hirschfeld, 1996), the perspective adopted in this chapter sees ethnicities as historically constructed identities which have been shaped and transformed by a wide spectrum of historical, social, political and economic forces. Following in the footsteps of Max Weber (Weber, [1922] 1985, p. 237) and the constructivist tradition in ethnicity studies, I define ethnicity as a *subjective feeling* of belonging based on the belief of shared culture and common ancestry. Building upon and extending the research agenda put forward by Fredrik Barth (1969), various scholars have utilized the concept of “boundary” to show the situational and relational nature of ethnicity and to explicate how ethnic boundaries have been made, activated, reproduced, and transformed through everyday interactions of individuals, state policies, social, political and economic forces (Wimmer, 2013; Zolberg & Woon, 1999; Nagata, 1981; Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Baubock & Rundell, 1998; Bail, 2008; Lichterman, 2008; Nagel, 1995; Lyman & Douglas, 1973; Olzak, *Global Dynamics of Racial and Ethnic Mobilization*, 2006).

Following Wimmer (2008), I argue that ethnic boundaries emerge when there is an overlap between (a) social classifications and collective representations regarding ethnic groups that differentiate subjective feelings of belonging (us versus them) and (b) everyday networks of relationships that result from individual acts of connecting and distancing (Wimmer, 2008, p. 975). According to this conceptualization, transformations of ethnic boundaries occur when there is a

change both in the social ethnic markers differentiating “us and them” and everyday networks, relationships and behaviors that differentiate different social groups in their daily lives. The concept of ethnic boundary not only captures the transformation and stability of meanings attached to the category of ethnicity (Özgen, 2014) but also helps us analyze how social meanings and behaviors attached to ethnicity are actually made and perceived by social actors involved in the process (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Furthermore, as we will further elaborate below, because it draws attention to the issues surrounding power and prestige, it helps us study struggles over boundary formation and transformation (Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 2000; Wimmer, 2013, p. 4).

1.2. Democratization, Social Movements and Transformation of Ethnic Boundaries

The effects of democratization on ethnic boundaries is an understudied topic in the literature. In order to see how democratization can transform ethnic boundaries, we must depart from formalist and institutionalist definitions of democratization and turn our attention to the role of social movements from below in democratization processes. As briefly discussed in the introduction, the role of social movements in democratization has long been underlined by scholars of social movements, contentious politics and democracy (Collier & Mahoney, 1997; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, & Stephens, 1992; Collier, 1999; Stroschein, 2012; Tilly, 2003). The push from working classes for the extension of suffrage was central in the final construction of modern democracies (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, & Stephens, 1992; Eley, *The Social Construction of Democracy in Germany*, 1995) and the incorporation of large masses in the definition of ‘nation’ (Carr, 1945). Political consciousness of working classes and world-wide labor movements played a major part in democratic transitions in different parts of the world (Collier, 1999; Rueschemeyer,

Stephens, & Stephens, 1992; Bunce, 2003; Silver, *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870*, 2003).

Likewise, popular mobilization of excluded and oppressed populations - including women, ethnic groups, and the *poor* - have also been critical in the extension and deepening of democracy in Western liberal societies, and in the democratic transition and consolidation processes in non-Western societies (Stroschein, 2012, pp. 6-7; Bunce, 2003; Ekiert & Kubik, 1999; Wood, 2001; Beissinger, 2008; Cadena-Roa, 2003). Such a conceptualization of democratization, which sees “the crowd as an enduring political force” (Tambiah, 1996, pp. 260-261), enables a more grounded analysis of why democratization processes are susceptible to violent struggles between civilians without relying on elite-centric approaches to ethnic violence, static/rigid definitions of ethnicity, or formalist conceptualizations of democratization.

Social movements become key in linking democratization with boundary-transformation and violence. Put differently, social movements and mobilization on the ground, which play fundamental roles in democratization also become an integral part of ethnic-boundary formation/transformation processes. Conventionally, the existence of a common identity has been presumed as a precondition for collective mobilization. However, as scholars of class formation (Katznelson, 1986; Thompson, 1959), social movements (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007, p. 9; Olzak, 2006) and ethnic group formation (Barth, 1969; Wimmer, 2013) have shown, collective organization and action itself is also an integral part of group and identity formation processes.

Social movements by unrecognized, excluded or marginalized populations can transform ethnic boundaries in two interrelated ways. First of all, in mass democracies, *collective action* (i.e. social movements, popular mobilization) (1) increases the social and political visibility and

salience of a particular group in the public sphere, and (2) demonstrates their collective power. Collective action, according to Tilly, entails the “public assertion that a group or a constituency it represents is **worthy, united, numerous, and committed (WUNC)**” (Tilly, 2003, p. 197). There are various manifestations of WUNC, including

[m]arches, demonstrations, mass meetings, occupations of plants or public buildings, vigils, and hunger strikes. Even when the means they adopt are currently legal, all such assertions entail implicit threats to direct WUNC energy toward disruptive action, implicit claims to recognition as valid political actors, and implicit devaluation of other political actors within the same issue area (Tilly, 2003, p. 197).

Hence, successful and sustained mobilization of an ethnic minority through social movements and collective action increases the social and political visibility and salience of the group and entails assertions of *collective power* in the public sphere. Various aspects of collective mobilization of a group, including mass gatherings, demonstrations, distribution of leaflets, mass election campaigns, inevitably bring questions like extending the rights of a minority and recognizing their distinct identity to the *public sphere and everyday interactions*. In this process, members of the dominant ethnic group, daily and even personally, become exposed to collective and sustained claim-making by ethnic minorities. This sustained exposure to contentious claims and a powerful collective *constitutes a challenge to the political hegemony of the dominant group* (Blalock, 1967). In other words, claims and demands expressed through social movements and political mobilization not only challenge the state and pressure political elites for political change; but they also contest socially accepted boundaries by dominant groups.

Secondly, identity formation at the collective level also has impacts on everyday relations between ethnic groups. Collective action empowers members of minority groups, reinforces their

self-esteem and opens a space for symbolic resistance in their daily lives. Hence in the course of sustained collective action, ethnic groups may more easily speak their own languages in the public sphere, use their cultural and political symbols in their daily lives (e.g. colors they choose to use in their dresses may reflect colors of their flags), organize their social activities and daily interactions (e.g. weddings, funerals) in a way that would reflect their own ethnic markers. These multilayered activities in daily life also transform us-them boundaries, shape social interactions and challenge social and cultural hegemony of dominant ethnic groups.

1.3. Struggle over Ethnic Boundaries and Ethnic Violence

In most cases, transformation of ethnic boundaries does not automatically produce ethnic violence. Dominant perspectives in social and political science argue that to produce violent outcomes, the boundary transformation process must be mediated through a variety of mechanisms including economic competition, political competition, and elite intervention. There is an emerging literature which examines the causal relations linking ethnic boundary formation and identity construction to the eruption of ethnic violence (Olzak, 1992; Wilkinson, 2012; Fearon & Laitin, 2000).

While these explanations are important for portraying how various factors and mechanisms link boundary formation with violent outcomes, they do not focus on cases in which boundary transformation itself can become an arena of violent power struggles between civilian populations. The foundations of this latter perspective can be found in Pierre Bourdieu, who draws attention to how struggle over ethnic boundaries embody an inherent struggle over monopoly of power:

“Struggles over ethnic or regional identity...are a particular case of the *different struggles over classifications*, struggles over the *monopoly of the power to make people see and believe*, to get

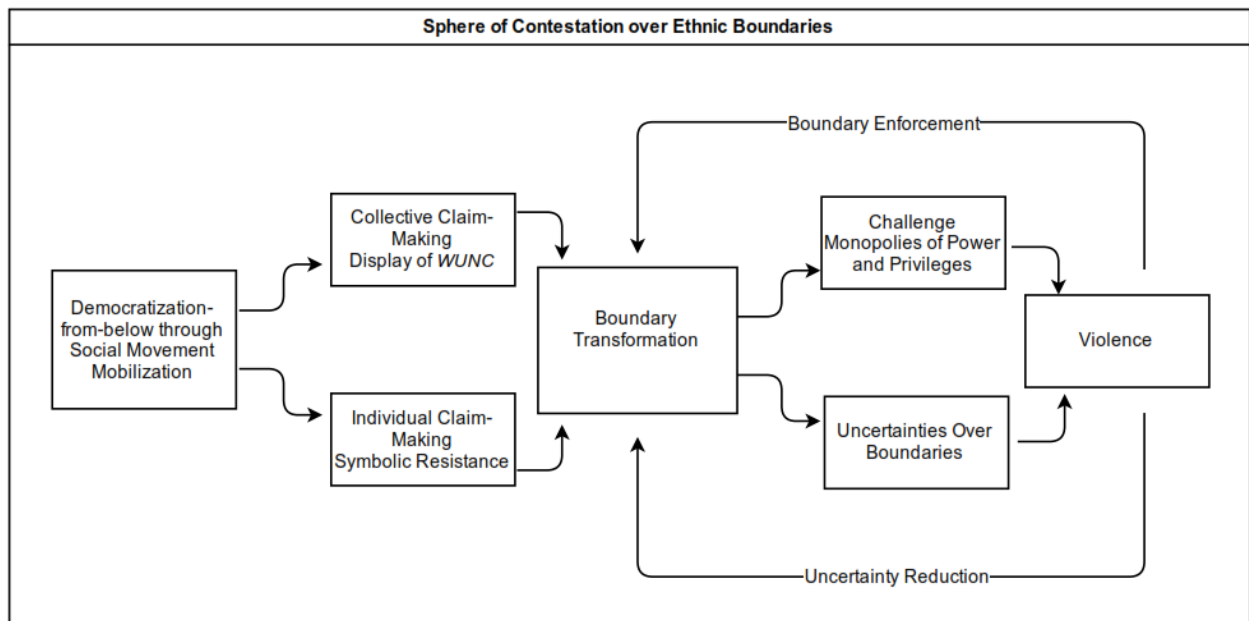
them to *know and recognize, to impose the legitimate definition of the divisions of the social world* and, thereby, to *make and unmake groups.*” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 221, *emphasis mine*)

From this perspective, when minorities use *social movement mobilization* as a means of boundary making, dominant groups – whose “monopoly of the power...to impose the legitimate definition of the divisions of the social world” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 221) are challenged— can resort to violence as a “strategy of boundary enforcement” (Wimmer, 2013, pp. 71-72). Put differently, when minorities contest (loudly or individually) widely accepted categories, these “*efforts to change boundaries* may lead to violent strategies by those who have an interest in the previously accepted boundaries” (Fearon & Laitin, 2000, p. 856; *emphasis mine*). In the literature, it has been observed that dominant ethnic groups often resort to violence when old boundaries and privileges attached to these boundaries are challenged by oppressed, excluded and repressed groups. A historical example of this is the rise of lynchings of blacks by white mobs in the American South during Reconstruction (Tolnay & Beck, 1995, p. 66) and the Populist challenge (Olzak, 1990) when old boundaries, categories and privileges of racial domination were radically challenged by rising political and social mobilization.

To conceptualize violence as part of *struggles over boundaries* also helps us capture the role played by *uncertainties over boundaries* in the eruption of violence emphasized by scholars of collective violence and ethnic/religious conflict (Appadurai, 1998; Tilly, 2003; Sidel, 2006). After all, boundary transformation processes do not automatically produce new boundaries but they do create *uncertainties* regarding the future of boundaries as well as the position of actors in the struggle. To borrow from Tilly (2003), “[v]iolence generally increases and becomes more salient in situations of rising uncertainty across the boundary...because people *respond to threats against weighty social arrangements they have built on such boundaries.*” (Tilly, 2003, pp. 77-78;

emphasis mine). Hence, heightened uncertainty regarding boundaries is critical to understand the relation between violence and the transformation of ethnic boundaries because violence often emerges as part of an attempt to reduce these uncertainties. Violent response to uncertainties, in turn, creates a “macabre form of certainty and [violence] can become a brutal technique (or folk discovery-procedure) about ‘them’ and, therefore, about ‘us.’” (Appadurai, 1998, p. 14).

Figure 3.1. Theoretical Frame: Democratization-from-below, Contestation over Ethnic Boundaries and Violence



In sum, violence becomes a way to intervene against minority-promoted boundary-making, in order to (1) reestablish former boundaries and preserve established meanings and privileges attached to these old classifications/boundaries, and (2) eliminate uncertainties created by the process of boundary transformation. In this conceptualization, violence does not emerge merely as an *outcome*, but as a *response* to and as an alternative means of boundary making.

2. Conflict, Migration and Ethnic Boundaries in Turkey

Kurds are the largest minority ethnic group in Turkey, comprising approximately 15-20 percent of the population (Gunter, 1997; KONDA Araştırma, 2011) and are predominantly concentrated in Eastern and Southeastern provinces. As part of the grand modernist project of transforming the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire into a “homogenous Turkish nation-state”, official nationalism has long denied the existence of ethnic and cultural diversity in Turkey (Kirişçi, 2006, p. 1). To achieve this goal of constructing a homogeneous Turkish nation within the state borders through eradicating existing ethno-religious boundaries, top-down assimilation and cultural integration was adopted (Özgen, 2014; Çağaptay, 2006). The seemingly ‘civic’ aspect of Turkish nationalism, which in theory “guarantees civic rights to all its citizens, including the minorities...[in] practice reveals the hegemony of the dominant Turkish ethnic majority” (Göçek, 2007, p. 172). Hence, despite its sizeable population, distinct language, territorial concentration, and even historically prominent nationalist movements, Kurds of Turkey have never been officially recognized as a distinct ethnic or minority group (Yeğen, 1999) and various bans and restraints were put on the usage of the Kurdish language and clothes (Robins, 1993, p. 661). In both official and popular discourses, Kurds have been referred to as “Mountain Turks” (Secor, 2004, p. 355), “the Easterners” (*Doğulu*) or “of Eastern origin”, while the Kurdish language was considered an “Eastern dialect” (Bayir, 2013, pp. 137-138) of Turkish.

As explained in earlier chapters, a major secessionist ethnic conflict, led by the PKK, started in this region in 1984 and continued until 1999. When the armed conflict escalated in the early 1990s, Kurdish villages were evacuated by the state and hundreds of thousands of displaced people eventually migrated to western, northern and southern cities of Turkey (Ayata & Yüксеker, 2005). In line with the official approach, Kurdish forced migrants were not considered as ‘Kurds’ by local residents when they first arrived to Western metropolises. Local residents largely viewed

Kurdish migrants as “Eastern Turks,” an indispensable part of *us*, i.e. the Turkish nation, who were forced to migrate by the PKK rather than the state. That is probably why in the 1990s, despite sudden population movements, significant economic instabilities, and an ongoing armed conflict, relations between Kurdish migrants and local residents were characterized by relative peace (Saraçoğlu, 2009). This perception was radically altered in the post-conflict democratization period.

3. Analysis

3.1. Collective Action and Increasing Political Visibility of Kurds in the 2000s

As noted before, towards the end of the 1990s, the Kurdish movement started to give up arms and engage in non-violent forms of claim making, including electoral politics and social movement mobilization. One of the most striking aspects of this process was the constitution of Kurdish migrants in Western cities and towns as a politically active population. Despite the differences in levels of mobilization, participation and strength of the movement in different locations, interviews reveal that over the last decade, the increasing political mobilization and visibility of the Kurdish migrant population has been vital in the emergence of politically defined ethnic cleavages *on the ground*.

Durusu was a major destination point of Kurdish forced migrants throughout the 1990s, and recently also attracted a sizeable Afghan and Khazhak migrant population. In *Durusu*, Kurds from all walks of life participate in mass protests, electoral meetings/marches, and have become involved with newly established civil society organizations. Interviews with Kurdish political activists also reveal that the Kurdish population has been increasingly politically active particularly

since 2004. In this process, Kurds in Durusu have come to be seen by local residents as a ‘united and numerous’ group:

They have a unity among themselves. They have stronger networks and communication compared to others in the neighborhood. They have the ability to show collective reflex to particular incidents and problems. For instance, if they want to gather in Kazlıcesme [a political demonstration/meeting venue in the city], they can gather together instantaneously. Especially the young people have a very strong communication with each other. They seem to have found a way to hold themselves together to be able to live here (Representative of Republican People’s Party in Durusu)

The level of political mobilization among the ordinary Kurdish people and their ability to organize and act collectively marks a sharp contrast with the rest of the population, whose relation to politics is generally limited to voting in elections. A local resident reveals her surprise as well as concern about the increasing political mobilization of the Kurdish population with ‘rural backgrounds’ by stating that “every one of them - even those that stay at home [*she mainly refers to women here*] - are learning how to conduct politics now!” When I asked why she is concerned about this, she replies by saying that “now they will demand to have their own *mukhtars* [*i.e., elected officials at the neighborhood level*], mayors and MPs!”. Hence, local residents perceive collective mobilization as an indication of local, and even national-level political empowerment of the Kurdish population, and hence a possible change in the “*ethnic balance of power*” (cf. Lake and Rothchild 1996). Kurdish political activists seem to be aware of this perception:

People in Durusu are apolitical. The fact that Kurds are being organized, express their rights and demands, that women actively engage in collective action, organize these events themselves, join political demonstrations with their children surprises local residents.

The level of collective mobilization of Kurdish civilians varies in different locations. Nevertheless, one common aspect of all districts and towns where I conducted interviews was that increasing collective mobilization of the Kurdish population is a relatively new phenomenon, starting in the 2000s. Even in Karatepe where extreme right political parties have historically been organizationally very strong and the conservative Justice and Development Party receives a very high number of votes, Kurdish migrants have been increasingly politically active in the 2000s. Even under very ‘unfavorable conditions’, Kurds in 2000s are described as being more politically visible, active, engaging in electoral politics, according to a member of a civil society organization. Fatma, who works for a human rights organization in the city describes the transformation of Kurds in Karatepe as follows:

Kurds seem to have overcome the wall of fear. They demand their rights and liberties through active resistance. When HADEP [*People’s Democracy Party, i.e. pro-Kurdish political party that was active in the 1990s*], was established in 1990s, they were very nervous and relatively inactive; but now they act and speak more freely.

Hence, even in Karatepe, where Kurds need to be careful not to “provoke” the local residents, thousands gather together on Newroz day. Newroz is the single most important display of *WUNC* for Kurds all around Turkey. Despite being a cultural tradition for celebrating the coming of spring, over the years, Newroz has gained the status of a Kurdish national day. During Newroz gatherings, Kurdish men, women and children gather together, most of them wearing their traditional clothes, displaying yellow-red-green colored banners of the Kurdish national movement. The largest Newroz gathering in the non-Kurdish region takes place in Istanbul, where approximately 500,000 Kurds attend every year. Durusu is in close proximity to the Newroz

gathering area and thousands of Kurds living in the district march through the neighborhood to attend it every year. An elderly local resident of the district reveals the anxiety felt on Newroz day:

Every year, there is this march to the Newroz meeting area. Here is on that route. Some local residents feel anxious about this. The slogans, the colors and banners disturb people. Among them (i.e., the Kurds), there are those who want political gain, but non militant people who just want to celebrate the coming of spring also join...like people who come with their babies, elderly citizens, etc.

While displays of WUNC like Newroz have created concerns on the side of local residents and provides settings for counter-mobilization, this overall trend in politicization and collective action has a more subtle but powerful impact on ethnic relations in these locales. More specifically, collective empowerment is reflected as an increased self-confidence of the Kurds in their daily encounters with local residents. *Senkoy* has been one of the most popular destinations of Kurdish forced migrants due to its favorable climate and lower cost of livelihood. Emin is working in a migration institute, primarily focusing on the Kurdish forced migrants in *Senkoy*. He underscores that while most of these migrants had been apolitical in their villages, they became politically more active in the ‘urban setting.’ This political mobilization, then, gave way to increased self-esteem on the side of the Kurds. Accounts of Saziye, a young Kurdish forced migrant who came to *Senkoy* during 1990s as a child, support this observation:

Back then [i.e., in the 1990s], you could speak in Kurdish in the street [i.e., in the public sphere] only if you could face the risk of being killed...But Kurds have changed now; and this is an outcome of the political struggle. Kurds are politically more active now.

In varying degrees, visibility of a distinct Kurdish identity has been a part of daily life in all localities. Speaking in Kurdish and openly expressing their Kurdishness are the most common

practices that develop the individual level political visibility of Kurds. On the one hand, language is one of the most significant aspects that differentiate Kurds as a group with a separate history and culture. On the other hand, one of the central demands of the Kurdish movement is the right to have education in Kurdish. Hence, speaking in Kurdish is not only a reflection of collective power of Kurds, but also becomes a form of claim making at a more symbolic and individual level. A Kurdish political activist in Isler states that

Previously, it was not quite possible to have a ‘Kurdish wedding’ in the street. It has been frequent in the last five-six years though. But I have to admit that this is being done aggressively. I mean, our people [Kurds] dance the traditional dances in such a way as if they say “I am here, accept me in this way” to the local residents. Even the weddings of the Kurds have transformed to have a national language/theme.

From free expression of identity in regular conversations to the *color* of clothing, from speaking in Kurdish to style of dancing in wedding ceremonies, local residents encounter a population claiming their distinct identity on a daily basis. These various forms of identity claims on more symbolic and individual levels become a form of ‘collective behavior’ since they actually constitute an important aspect of ‘ordinary human traffic’ in these neighborhoods (see Goffman 1963:4). Interestingly, the overall relation between collective action and these ‘symbolic and everyday’ forms of collective behavior in this setting suggests that the latter appears not as a weapon of the weak but as a weapon of the *empowered*. In an interview in Isler, a working class district, a thirty-year dock worker/union organizer states:

Previously, workers sometimes spoke in Kurdish at the work-site. But back then, others would not react to this. Today, it becomes a problem because the Kurd that speaks in Kurdish actually says “I am Kurdish”. It’s this claim which is *hard to swallow*.

Overall, various localities in Turkey have been marked by democratic mobilization of Kurds on the ground. Parallel to this rise in collective mobilization and displays of WUNC, Kurds have increasingly engaged in symbolic and personal level identity claiming during their daily encounters with local residents. A significant outcome of this process of collective empowerment and symbolic/everyday identity claims is the transformation of existing perceptions and boundaries on the local level.

3.2. Transformation of Existing Boundaries: From ‘Humble Easterners’ to ‘Rebellious Separatist Kurds’

In this process of collective mobilization and increasing political visibility at both collective and individual levels, old perceptions towards Kurdish migrants has been giving way to new ones. Historically, local residents adhered to the official Turkish nationalist discourse which described and viewed Kurds as “Easterner Turks”. Even when the armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish armed forces reached its peak, the general wisdom was that *Southeastern and Eastern citizens* were being terrorized by the PKK. Kurdish forced migrants, whose villages were burnt and evacuated by the state were thought to have escaped from the PKK terror and migrated to the western cities. In this overall conceptualization, the demarcation line was clear: Eastern citizens belonged to “us” while the PKK, with its militant guerillas, was the enemy.

When a large number of forced migrants came to Western cities, the most common view towards them was in accordance with this established perception. In time, however, with the increasing political mobilization and visibility of the migrant population, differentiation between the Easterners and the PKK started to fade away. In other words, as the Kurdish migrant population became politically active and visible, *humble Eastern migrants* of the 1990s have come to be

perceived as *rebellious and separatist Kurds*. This perception is largely visible in daily encounters of civilians. A Kurdish resident of Karatepe, explains how she encounters this perception on a daily basis:

I have neighbors who are not Kurds. They look at us as if we are the PKK. When they give social aid, for instance, they discriminate against us. As if we came from the mountains [*she refers to the Kurdish guerilla fighters*], as if we are the PKK. I feel this every time I buy something from local shops. It was not like this when we first came here; but it has increased recently.

This ‘enmity’ is most clearly seen when there is a clash between the PKK and Turkish armed forces. Nationalist demonstrations after news of deadly armed clashes in the Kurdish region have been commonplace since 1990s. However, the ‘target’ of those demonstrations have changed dramatically since then. Referring to a recent nationalist demonstration after news of an armed clash in the Kurdish region, a representative of a large non-Kurdish political party (Republican People’s Party) in Karatepe stated that “People marched with flags here, for three days... However, the demonstration was not against the ‘terror’ as it used to be. This time, it was against the Kurds”. Similarly, a Kurdish political activist states that while previously, people saw a war against the state and the PKK, local residents increasingly think that Kurdish civilians are to blame for any act of discord or violence. He goes on to describe an incident, whereby local residents attempted to lynch two students who were hanging a poster of a historically prominent socialist leader, mistakenly thinking that the students were Kurdish and hanging a poster of the PKK leader. According to him, this is an example that even acts of mobilization, political activism of Turkish left, etc. are being attributed to the Kurds.

Development of this new us-them boundary, through which Kurds are increasingly perceived as ‘enemies within’ (Appadurai, 1998), goes hand in hand with certain behavioral

expectations from the Kurds. More specifically, Kurds are not only regarded as supporting the PKK but also being rebellious, quarrelsome and excessively free –having a potential for disruptive action. While they were described as being humble in the 1990s, in this new period, they are described as being increasingly threatening, impertinent, rebellious, and pugnacious. Interviews suggest that this behavioral expectation is related to the displays of WUNC by the Kurds and their everyday identity claims. The ‘collective stance’ of Kurds become so disturbing that even non-political gatherings of Kurds make local residents feel threatened or challenged:

As a matter of fact, Kurds do not cause any harm. But, you know, they have a peculiar attitude, which annoys people. When five-six of them come together, we feel anxious. The fact that they stand ‘collectively’ frightens people. (A Turkish local resident, Durusu)

This became a problem in Kirazli as well, where thousands of temporary/seasonal workers from Kurdish cities come to work in villages during chestnut harvesting season. These workers stay in camps on the chestnut orchards, and during weekends, they go to the town center for shopping. A chestnut orchard owner gave an interesting account of how seasonal workers are perceived by local residents. Accordingly, residents of Kirazli complained about Kurdish workers shopping in crowds, speaking Kurdish loudly, which was perceived as an ‘implicit challenge’ to the town dwellers. Since the incident when a mob composed of thousands of people attempted to lynch two Kurdish workers, farm owners no longer let Kurdish workers go to town in crowds:

When they come to the town center, they shop in crowds, speaking loudly. It perturbs people, who wonder whether this is a *display of power*. So, when they shop in crowds and speak in Kurdish, local people become anxious. Actually, they [*Kurds*] do not seem to be intending to cause anxiety, but locals say that they implicitly do so (Turkish local resident, Kirazli).

This perception of ‘being challenged’ is also visible in the individual level interactions between Kurds and local residents. In an interview, a high ranking politician in Durusu described to me his conversation with a young Kurdish waiter. This story is quite interesting in showing the increasing self-esteem of Kurds on the one hand, and how this is perceived by local residents, on the other. One day, he went to a restaurant in the neighborhood and asked the waiter where he was from. In Turkey, asking one’s city of origin is *the question* that opens up a dialogue between strangers. However, the waiter’s answer was not what the mayor expected: “I am from Mardin [*a major Kurdish city*]. Why are you asking? Don’t you already know it is only the Kurds who become servants here?” After recounting the story, the politician concluded that “their [i.e., Kurds’] ‘callous and impertinent’ behavior bothers and perturbs *the other side*”. The waiter’s answer is unexpected and perceived as impertinent not only because he expresses his Kurdishness in this conversation. He tells the truth blatantly by underlining his Kurdishness and class position (and of course, their relation). In doing so, the waiter overcomes the class and status boundaries by making such a remark to a man in this position and does not behave as a ‘regular waiter’ should. This answer, then, becomes the ‘ideal example’ for the mayor for describing the callousness of Kurds in the district.

In various interviews, such behaviors were juxtaposed with the attitudes of Kurds in the 1990s. A member of the ruling Justice and Development Party in Senkoy stated that when Kurds first arrived in 1990s, they were ‘modest and humble’, but they have changed *now*. A strikingly similar remark was made by one *mukhtar* I interviewed in Durusu, who linked Kurds’ increasing aggressiveness with the expressiveness of their Kurdish identity:

When they first came here, they were more humble. Back then, they were meeker, and they were not quarrelsome. Today, they have become more aggressive even as neighbors...But you know,

they were not like this before. Today, when they come to my office, and cannot get what they want, they hit the table with their fists saying ‘You know who I am? I am from Diyarbakir [*i.e.*, *largest Kurdish city in Turkey*], you cannot treat me like this!’

Hence, politically salient us-them boundaries between migrant Kurds and local residents in these non-Kurdish cities emerged in a period of collective mobilization on the ground. In this overall process, Kurdish civilians that live in Western cities have come to be perceived as being on the “other side” of the 30 year-old armed conflict between Turkish armed forces and the PKK guerillas. As the boundary that was drawn between the PKK and ‘ordinary Kurdish citizens’ faded away in the process of democratic mobilization of Kurds, the boundary between Kurdish and Turkish civilians –the latter including different ethnic groups in various localities— became more salient. In other words, districts of Western cities increasingly became a potential and symbolic front-line of the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces in the Kurdish region.

3.3. Changing Boundaries and Emergent Uncertainties: Good Kurds, Bad Kurds

Another common tendency that I observed in all localities was the attempt of local residents to distinguish *good Kurds* from *bad Kurds*. The primary basis of this differentiation also draws attention to the political nature of the boundary transformation process. The interviews suggest that for the local residents, politically mobilized or vocal Kurds belong to the *bad Kurd* category, while the other Kurds are considered to belong to ‘us’. For instance, a young extreme right activist in Senkoy stated how he does not consider all Kurds as enemies and explained how he differentiated ‘good Kurds’ from the ‘bad’ ones:

My best friend has Kurdish origins... However, his political alignment does not go to the PKK. It is okay if someone [Kurd] supports the AKP or other parties, but since the BDP is an extension of the PKK, those that support the BDP also support Öcalan [i.e., the leader of the PKK]. We do not befriend those people... For instance, we have a friend here at the *Ocak* [i.e., ultranationalist youth organization], he always speaks in Kurdish with his mother on the phone. We are fine with this. But you know, there is Kurdish and *there is Kurdish*... Some people at the school [high school] listen to Kurdish music. They listen to Rojin [i.e., a famous singer that openly claims her Kurdish identity], and some songs that refer to Öcalan, autonomy, etc. These things cannot be tolerated.

While differentiating good Kurds from bad Kurds in terms of their political alignments, this young extreme right activist also differentiates between ‘acceptable’ and ‘non-acceptable’ usage of Kurdish language. In other words, speaking Kurdish in the form of explicit or implicit claim-making is considered a sign of being a *bad Kurd*. Furthermore, differentiation between good and bad Kurds along political lines often coincides with other distinctions between different groups of Kurdish residents of a certain locality. The most common differentiation is held between *old and new Kurds*. In nearly all localities I have been to, there was a group of Kurds who settled in the town/neighborhood decades ago, as part of the economic migration of 1960s. Most of the time, local residents stated how they actually like those ‘old Kurds’ while they have problems with Kurds that have migrated more recently. For instance, in Kirazli, there is a group of Kurdish residents that migrated over fifty years ago due to economic reasons, and a relatively small group of Kurds that came recently. A local resident states that

Those that came here in the last ten years and that migrated fifty years ago are very different from each other. The new ones are more *Kurdist*¹⁸. If we have any problem with Kurds in this

¹⁸*Kürtçü* is a term often used referring to Kurdish nationalists

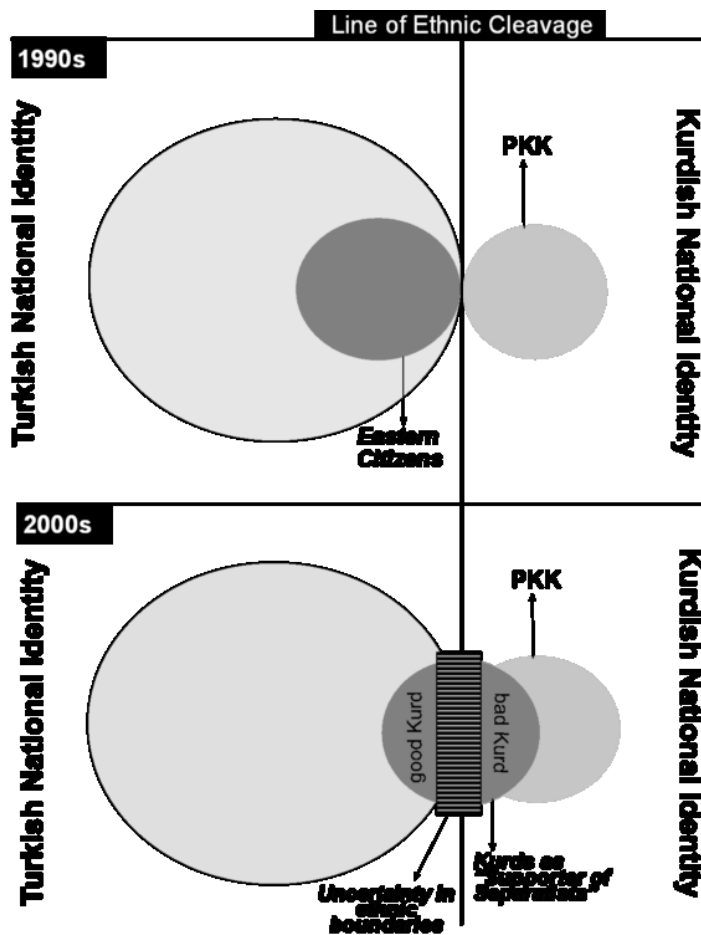
town, it is with those new Kurds, not with the old ones. They [new comers] very easily make remarks like “We are Kurdish, we support the BDP”. For instance, during election times, the BDP supporters had a political parade here. While local residents were booing and hissing at them; new Kurds actually showed support! (Turkish local resident, Kirazli)

In order to support the viability of this differentiation, local residents and officials maintain that even old Kurds dislike the new Kurds. For instance, during an interview an elected government official in Durusu told me that people that migrated thirty years ago from the Southeast [i.e., the Kurdish region] are also bothered by the new comers. In certain cases, when *old Kurds* start to be politically active and openly support the pro-Kurdish political parties, the good-bad Kurd distinction is shaken. For instance, a Kurdish political activist –who is among the ‘old Kurds’— tells how his old friends are taken aback by his new political activism:

I’ve lived here all my life. My childhood friends tell me “You are a good person. Why do you stand with the BDP, those separatists?” We cannot get over those issues with my 30-year-long friends... One of them, for instance, is an immigrant from Bulgaria; he is a *Pomak*, speaking in *Pomak*.. Yet still, he claims that we are separatists. When I ask ‘what does separatist refer to?’, he cannot answer (Kurdish political activist, Durusu)

In sum, transformation of ethnic boundaries on the ground incorporates contradictory, yet relational, tendencies explained above. During the period of democratic mobilization of Kurdish migrants, the boundary between Kurds and the ‘PKK terrorists’ is being blurred in the eyes of local residents on the one hand; while new boundaries between ‘good Kurds’ and ‘bad Kurds’ are developed on the other hand. This dual process has an inherently ambiguous character and is characterized by uncertainty.

Figure 3.2. Transformation of Ethnic Boundaries and Uncertainty Across Boundaries



One aspect of this uncertainty resides with the difficulty in determining whether one’s neighbor is actually a good or a bad Kurd. This uncertainty is unsettling for the local residents, who start to be suspicious towards the ‘aim’ of the newly arriving Kurds coming to their neighborhoods. In Kirazli, a local resident reveals his suspicion towards the new families that migrate to the neighborhood because people can never be sure whether these families come to the neighborhood “just to settle down here, or to create discord”. Not surprisingly, creating discord refers to the increasing political activity of pro-Kurdish parties.

This is particularly related to the question regarding how to understand whether a *seemingly* ‘good Kurd’ is *actually/implicitly* a ‘bad Kurd’. Echoing Appadurai (1998), this “uncertainty is about whether a particular person really is what they claim or appear to be or to have historically been” (908). In Karatepe, where good Kurd-bad Kurd differentiation corresponds to old Kurds-new Kurds differentiation, a local resident states that “If they start to publicly support the BDP, *local [old] Kurds* would also be openly isolated from the community.” This is an important remark, revealing the idea that *old Kurds* may actually be supporting/voting for the BDP even though they do not openly declare it. This indicates an ongoing suspicion on the side of the local residents towards the “hidden” political alignments of the seemingly *good* Kurds. An interesting example of this suspicion towards ‘hidden followers’ of Kurdish social and political movements is a post-election headline of a local newspaper in Karatepe. When the pro-Kurdish BDP received 3000 votes in general elections in the town, the newspaper provocatively declared that that one in every hundred people in the town is a PKK member.

One strategy used on the ground to relieve these uncertainties is to put implicit or explicit pressures on Kurds to show their overt commitment to Turkish nationalism. Kurds are expected to hang Turkish flags on shop windows, participate in nationalist demonstrations, boo at the BDP to show that they are not *enemies*. Failure to act as an avowed Turkish nationalist implies that Kurds might secretly be supporting the BDP or even the PKK:

During nationalist holidays, or when there are news of martyrs, everybody hangs Turkish flags.

The fact that they [Kurds] do not hang Turkish flag on such occasions is very annoying. What is the purpose of the flag? To show that there is no separatism/discrimination...Alas, they do not hang it! (A Turkish local resident, Durusu)

In certain cases, this expectation is expressed more blatantly and even violently. In Isler, a Kurdish shop owner explained how they were criticized, and even threatened by their neighbors when they do not hang Turkish flags when everybody else does, during national holidays. In this context, symbolic manifestations of banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) become tools used by Turkish residents for overcoming uncertainties of newly emerging ethnic boundaries in these neighborhoods. In certain cases, this process involves actual violence, as in the case when a group of Kurdish high school students in the same neighborhood were beaten when they did not attend a nationalist demonstration.

3.4. Violence as Struggle over Boundaries

This process of boundary-transformation, which has especially been driven by social and political mobilization of the forced migrant population, has not gone unchallenged. In all localities, both the number and salience of communal violence has increased over time. The fact that violence becomes a significant aspect of local ethnic relations in these locations actually reflects two interrelated processes delineated above: (1) the formation of politically salient ethnic boundaries between Kurds and Turks and the classification of all Kurds as part of the ‘enemy/other’; and (2) the uncertain and contested character of this boundary formation process.

On the one hand, incidents of violence reflect the sharpening of us-them boundaries between Kurds and Turks in these neighborhoods whereby all Kurdish civilians are increasingly categorized as the *enemy*. This is particularly important since this violence increasingly takes the form of riots, whereby ordinary Kurdish civilians are targeted mainly based on their “group membership” (Horowitz, 2000). In this scheme of things, an ‘exogenous shock’ (Varshey, 2001) such as armed clashes in the Kurdish region or a neighborhood-level trigger such as a personal

fight may precipitate generalized violence that targets all Kurds in a particular district/neighborhood. This was the case in Karatepe, where Kurdish civilians were attacked by an angry mob after a military clash in the Kurdish region. The target of the vengeful mob was Kurdish civilians mainly composed of women, children and the elderly, convening at a solidarity event organized by the BDP. The angry mob attacked the meeting venue, throwing stones, attempting to burn down the building, and to lynch those that left the building. People were trapped in the building and an elderly person died due to a heart attack – mainly because he was unable to receive medical help. A Kurdish resident who attended the event that evening recalls the crowd’s hateful slogan: “we lost two people today, so we’ll get four from you!” Clearly, the tone of the mob was vengeful, seeking “retribution” (see Brass, 2003).

In this example, although the target was a large group of ‘Kurdish civilians’, in the eyes of the perpetrators, they belonged to the ‘bad Kurd’ category, since they were attending an event hosted by the BDP. Sometimes, all Kurdish civilians living in a certain neighborhood become targets of communal violence. It was the case in Senkoy, where a rather peculiar event gave way to generalized violence against the Kurds. An activist of the pro-Kurdish BDP party, who was an ethnic Turk, engaged in a fight with a Kurdish member of the MHP, a Turkish ultra-nationalist party. In the course of this personal conflict, a rumor “Kurds attacked Turks” was spread in the town. Shortly after this rumor, a mob attacked and plundered the shops of Kurdish residents in the town (Interview with the Director of Migration Institute in Senkoy). Even though the initial conflict between the BDP and MHP members was drawn along political lines, which did not

correspond to ascriptive aspects of ethnicity¹⁹, the nature of the rumor and the selection of targets reflect the sharpening of ethnic cleavages on the ground.

Although violence is increasingly directed against all Kurdish civilians with ‘vengeful’ discourses, it would be erroneous to reach a quick conclusion that hatred drove civilians towards such violence, or that they want to ‘get rid of Kurds’ altogether²⁰. Rather, incidents of violence reflect the uncertain and contested character of boundary formation process. Despite the existence of hateful discourses, it appears that violence becomes a tool to discipline the *rebellious* Kurds in order to reinforce old boundaries/categories, rather than removing Kurds from the neighborhood altogether. This was the case in Durusu, where shops and homes of Kurds were attacked by a large nationalist crowd during a riot that spilled over a week. Doruk, a Turkish civilian in his early forties who participated in the riots stated that although the riot was a regrettable²¹ event, the neighborhood was more *peaceful* after the riots. For him, riots changed the ethnic balance of power in the neighborhood:

Since they are more crowded, the Kurds thought that we [non-Kurdish residents of the neighborhood] were weak/toothless. They respect us now. The people who did not greet us before have started to say ‘hello’ since then...But to be honest, since they did not fight back, we think better of them now.

With this statement, Doruk directs attention to the process we described before: the role of increasing empowerment of Kurds through collective action in the emergence of ethnic riots. More

¹⁹ It was a clash between a *good Kurd* and a ‘*bad Turk*’, who was ‘allying with the separatists’.

²⁰ In certain cases, mob violence ended with the out-migration of Kurds from certain towns/neighborhoods/villages.

²¹ One of my observations regarding the local Turkish population after the event was how this event produced a general horror even among the perpetrators of violence. It echoes other cases where ordinary folks engage in horrendous violence, like a Montenegrin attack on the local Muslim population, which “produced general horror, even among most of those who carried it out” (Petersen, 2002, pp. 4-5).

specifically, when he says that Kurds were more ‘crowded’, he refers to the collective mobilization of Kurds [or their WUNC characteristic], because population-wise, Kurds do not constitute the majority in the neighborhood. Thus, riots in Durusu had the characteristic of a counter-display of collective power towards a group which has increasingly been empowered locally through collective action.

Doruk was not alone in this view. A female garment worker in her mid-50s explained how riots made Kurds know their ‘limits’. As she states, not long before the riot, she was annoyed by the owners of the grocery store she had been shopping at for twenty years, due to their increasing expressiveness regarding their Kurdish identity: “They had so much self-esteem... They were saying that I am from Mardin [a major Kurdish city], I am Kurdish, I am free to do what I want...I stopped going to that store just because of these remarks. *But after the incidents [riots], they cannot speak in that way!*”. Another worker makes a similar remark by quoting an old Turkish saying, “One misfortune is better than a thousand advices”. Of course, it is scientifically hard to call *disciplining* as a rational strategy that was embraced by the “ordinary folks” (c.f. Fearon and Laitin 2000) that joined the mob. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to note that once the riots were over, they interpreted the functional utility of the riot as disciplining the Kurds in the district.

This violent episode was not merely an outcome of boundary transformation on the ground. The accounts of people suggest that violence has also deepened us-them boundaries in the district. This was particularly visible in the account of Riza, whose coffee shop was plundered twice by a mob in Durusu. It was Rezzan, a *mukhtar*, who introduced me to this young man. Stating that the owners of the coffee-shop were ‘supporting the PKK’, Rezzan insisted on taking me there herself to make sure that I would be *safe*. Despite my insistence that I would be fine, she took me to the

coffee-shop and introduced me to Riza, who was a young Kurdish male in his late 20s. To my surprise, she was rather friendly with the man. But then, I remembered her remarks during our interview earlier: “When we are together with Kurds, there is no problem at all. But when we are by ourselves, people start saying ‘these Kurds are responsible for all the problems here. There is no peace since they came here...*the best Kurd is a dead Kurd*’”.

After introducing us, the *mukhtar* made sure that I stop by her office after the interview – again, to see that I would be safe. At the beginning of our interview, the owner of the coffee-shop started a little stiff, then he went on to explain the attacks. Most of the details he gave were in accordance with accounts of violence in other localities: people used nationalist slogans, hung Turkish flags and sang the national anthem while attacking the coffeeshop; the police did not intervene²²; the mob was predominantly composed of young people, and included not only Turks but also people from various ethnic groups, such as Afghan and Khazak immigrants. However, one of his statements was particularly striking. Local [non-Kurdish] people, who used to be frequent customers, stopped coming to his coffee-shop after the riots. He said that some people even stopped using this particular ‘street’ to avoid them. He was surprised by this reaction of the local people since he was the victim of violence. This interesting account shows that violence also contributes to the very formation of ethnic boundaries especially through its effect on “individual acts of connecting and distancing” (Wimmer, 2008, p. 975). In this particular case, this episode of communal violence marked and isolated this particular ‘coffee-shop’ (like many other places that were attacked) as a *space* belonging to the *bad Kurds*.

²² For the role of police/government inaction in the occurrence of ethnic/religious riots see Wilkinson 2004 and Brass 2003a.

4. Conclusion

The analysis presented above suggests that, in the Turkish context, communal ethnic violence against Kurds did not arise because of the introduction of democracy in a multi-ethnic society, as suggested by the Millian scholarship on ethnic violence or merely as part of elite manipulation of masses in the course of electoral competition. On the contrary, the origins of anti-Kurdish communal violence lie in the transformation of ethnic boundaries on the ground in the course of democratic mobilization and collective action of the Kurdish population.

In turning attention to the role of social movements and collective action from below in democratization processes, this chapter highlighted the role played by ordinary people in the emergence of communal violence. On the one hand, findings show that increasing collective action of the Kurdish migrants challenged and transformed already-existing ethnic boundaries and prepared the preconditions for violent ethnic relations on the ground. My findings also illustrate that ethnic violence directed against the Kurdish population is also an integral part of the ongoing societal contestation over ethnic-boundaries. Taken as a whole, these results suggest that the emergence of violent ethnic relations is very much related to the emerging “uncertainties” of ethnic boundaries (Tilly, 2003; Appadurai, 1998; Sidel, 2006) and the struggle over how to shape these boundaries (Bourdieu, 2000; Wimmer, 2013).

While the analysis presented in this chapter is critical for explaining the societal preconditions for violent ethnic and communal relations, it cannot adequately explain the emergence of incidents of anti-Kurdish communal violence. After all, these riots and lynching attempts are not simply the spontaneous upsurges of the masses. Rather, ultranationalist elites

played a major role in their production. In order to provide a fuller picture, the next chapter will focus on the role played by extreme right nationalist actors in these processes.

Chapter 4

Extreme Right Mobilization: Elections and the Production of Violence

In Chapter 3, we examined the societal preconditions of anti-Kurdish communal violence in Turkey. While the transformation of ethnic boundaries at the societal level is a necessary precondition for the emergence of communal violence, it is not a sufficient one. After all, the transformation of ethnic boundaries does not automatically generate violent outcomes. This is because, unlike what is widely assumed, communal violence incidents - such as ethnic riots or lynching attempts - are not “spontaneous” incidents but are mediated by elite intervention by extreme right political groups. In the case of anti-Kurdish violence in Turkey, this role is played by the *ülküci* (*idealist*) movement, led by ultranationalist *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party, MHP).

This chapter has a dual purpose. First, it aims to flesh out the role played by the ultranationalist *ülküci* militants in the emergence of anti-Kurdish violence. Second, however, it aims to debunk a major theoretical fallacy regarding the relationship between democracy, violence and extreme right political actors. This fallacy is the belief that as extreme right movements participate in elections, they give up using political violence. Hence before we explain the role *ülküci* militants play in the emergence of anti-Kurdish violence (in *Section 4* of this Chapter, and in Chapter 5), we will first focus on this assumed dualism between electoral participation and utilization of violence.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the belief regarding the elections-violence dualism had a strong empirical basis in Europe where the electoral success of extreme right parties was highest where extreme right violence was low (Koopmans, 1996). This correlation strengthened the assumption

that violence and electoral success were largely incompatible strategies of extreme right political action. In this context many scholars believed that “[w]hile political extremism of all stripes may generate violence and hatred, it tends not to make large electoral inroads. Skinheads do not win political campaigns” (Berezin, 2009, p. 10).

A similar tendency of treating violent and non-violent forms of collective action largely as mutually exclusive and incompatible action *repertoires* (or sometimes as alternatives to each other) can also be found in the contemporary social movement literature. A number of studies in this broader literature maintain that social movements tend to radicalize and use violence as they start to lose power and demobilize (Sanchez-Quenca & Aguilar, 2009; della Porta & Tarrow, 1986; Beissinger, 2002; Tarrow, 1989). Some scholars provide movement-level explanations for this shift in strategy, suggesting that reliance on organized violence is largely adopted to “compensate for the loss of overt support” (Sanchez-Quenca & Aguilar, 2009; della Porta & Tarrow, 1986). It has also been suggested that the negative association between use of violence and popular support is mediated by state repression. According to many social movement scholars social and political movements that rely on non-violent strategies might switch to violent strategies if they face state repression (Moore, 1998; Lichbach, 1987). Other scholars suggest a more dynamic relationship by arguing that use of violence by social and political movements would also trigger state repression and would further marginalize these movements (Koopmans, 1993, p. 655).

The assumed dualism between elections and violence can also be observed in scholarly or journalistic analysis of extreme right politics associated with the *ülküçü* movement and the MHP in Turkey. After being closed down in the aftermath of the 1980 *military coup*, the MHP rose from its ashes with a more popular face in the 1990s, consolidated this position by gaining the

largest share of votes in its history and becoming the third largest party in Turkey since then. Because of the high levels of electoral support the MHP received in the post-1990 period, this ‘new chapter²³’ of extreme right politics in Turkey is often described as the opposite of the extreme right politics of the 1970s, which was primarily characterized by high levels of violence and low levels of electoral support. That’s why, the burgeoning literature on the resurgence of the extreme right in Turkey turned its attention mostly to the surprising electoral success of the MHP, a success that was interpreted within the electoral politics-violence dualism framework that dominates European extreme right literature. More specifically, studies that analyze various aspects of the MHP’s popularization and transformation (of its leadership, ideology, policy/discourse and/or organizational structure), implicitly or explicitly point to the increasingly moderate image of the party. In the existing literature, the predominant story describes the MHP’s transformation from extremism to moderation and periphery to center of the political spectrum (Yavuz, 2002; Aras & Bacık, 2007; Canefe & Bora, 2003; Çınar & Arıkan, 2002; Öniş, *Globalization, Democratization and the Far Right: Turkey’s Nationalist Action Party in Critical Perspective*, 2003).

Interestingly, however, none of these existing studies have undertaken a systematic analysis of the trajectory of violence associated with the MHP and *ülkücü* movement in this so-called “moderation” period. Did *ülkücü* violence really disappear in this new epoch? Does electoral success of the MHP necessarily indicate the moderation of the party and the movement? More generally, are electoral politics and political violence totally incompatible and antithetical forms of political action/strategy? These questions have not been properly answered. Because of these

²³ As Landau (1982) noted: “The Nationalist Action Party (MHP) was closed down and dissolved in 1981. This, however, concludes only one chapter in the history of the extreme right in Turkish politics—which will most probably seek new political expression once civilian government is restored in Turkey.” (Landau, 1982, p. 600)

unanswered questions, the role *ülküçü* militants play in the emergent anti-Kurdish riots could not be captured.

Our investigation of the *ülküçü* movement in this chapter has broader implications. Theories and frameworks that rely on elections-violence dualism cannot properly explain the contemporary rise of far right parties and groups around the world who have managed to gain major electoral successes despite their explicit use of political violence on the streets²⁴. After the 2008/9 crisis, for instance, the *Golden Dawn*, a fringe party in Greece with neo-fascist characteristics, managed to make inroads into parliament despite its openly violent political record (Ellinas, 2013; Koronaiau, Lagos, Sakellariou, Kymionis, & Chiotaki-Poulou, 2015). In the same period, the British National Party - which recruits members from skinhead groups and promotes racist violence - secured a seat in the London Assembly in 2008 and gained two seats in the European parliament in 2009 European elections. Outside Europe, India's latest elections also witnessed the historic success of the BJP, a right-wing Hindu-nationalist party which has been involved in various incidents of communal violence against the Muslim community (Brass, 2003;

²⁴ The rise of extreme right parties and movements in European democracies in recent decades has been recognized as one of the most alarming political developments. Once coined as “shadows over Europe” (Schain, Zolberg and Hossay 2002), extreme right parties managed to get “durable electoral support” (Arzheimer 2013:75) in many European countries, showing that they are not ephemeral actors in European politics. In various countries, including France, Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, Italy, Norway, Hungary, Austria and Bulgaria, extreme right parties have become significant challengers of mainstream parties (see Betz 1994; Carter 2005; Kitschelt 1995; Muddle 2000; Norris 2005). The flood of European Parliament with Euroskeptic parties after the recent elections has also been a clear indicator of the rise of the extreme right. ‘Outright neo-Nazi parties’ including the *Golden Dawn* of Greece (Ellinas 2013; Koronaiau *et al* 2015), *Jobbik* of Hungary (LeBor 2008) and the *German National Democratic Party* even succeeded in gaining seats in the European Parliament (Isal 2014). Parallel to the electoral success of extreme right parties, extreme right violence has also escalated in the European socio-political scene, as indicated by recent extreme right mobs against refugees, attacks in Norway and Odessa, violent Islamophobic actions utilized by extreme right organizations -such English Defense League in United Kingdom (Johns 2014), and high levels of anti-minority and racist violence in various European countries. While both utilization of violence and electoral success is part of the resurgence of new extreme right movements in Europe in recent decades, the general tendency in the literature has been to analyze these developments almost as two separate trends and to give primacy to the resurgence of extreme right political parties in the electoral arena (Hainsworth 2008: 2; Giugni *et al* 2005: 146).

Dhattiwala & Biggs, 2012; Wilkinson, 2004). These and many other examples of extreme right groups around the world which have been gaining electoral successes while sustaining their use of violence, (i) challenge perspectives which perceive electoral popularization and use of violence as mutually exclusive political action *repertoires* and (ii) open up new puzzling questions for social and political scientists studying extreme right movements and violent social mobilizations. How do extreme right wing groups maintain their popular support while sustaining their use of violence? How do they avoid state repression and further marginalization? Why do they continue to use violence while participating in electoral politics?

This chapter shows that far right parties resembling classical fascist parties in terms of their ideology and organizational structure – such as the *ülkücü* movement and the MHP in Turkey - do not perceive violence and electoral strategies as alternatives to each other, but as complementary forms of politics. Furthermore, these far right movements can avoid marginalization and state repression if they (a) strategically target groups which are increasingly perceived by the state and the larger electorate as an “internal threat” to the nation (such as *Kurds* in Turkey), (b) frame their violent actions in a way that would not appear extreme or irrational to the general electorate but as responsible and rational, (c) are careful not to act as an isolated fringe/extremist group but to act within a *larger crowd*, allowing them to present violent incidents as reactions of larger masses, and (d) do not engage in acts that would destabilize the state and challenge state institutions. Hence electoral popularization does not automatically produce a decline in the utilization of violence but it is contingent on political contexts as well as tactics and strategies used by far right groups.

1. Challenging Elections-Violence Dualism

In the existing literature, there are varying explanations for how far right electoral popularization and utilization of violence can simultaneously escalate. A first set of explanations focuses on the impact of socio-economic crises in the rise of fascism and right-wing movements (Ellinas, 2013; Eley, 1983; Morgan, 2003). This explanation is widespread in accounts of the recent European experience, and focuses on the effects of economic crisis, austerity-politics, poverty, and rising youth unemployment in the production of anti-immigrant/xenophobic sentiments as well as alienation of the general electorate from mainstream parties. These processes create a fertile environment for fascist/neo-fascist parties to gain electoral successes *and* to use violence against immigrants more easily thanks to the growing anti-immigrant/xenophobic sentiments in the society. Hence, electoral popularization and violence are two distinct consequences of the same socio-political and socio-economic transformations. These perspectives resonate with Karl Polanyi's ([1944] 2001) explanation of the rise of fascism during the interwar period, socioeconomic deprivation theories of radical right violence (Krell, Nicklas, & Ostermann, 1996; McLaren, 1999) as well as ethnic competition theories (Barth, 1969; Olzak, 1992). However, they fail to explain electoral popularization (as well as violent mobilization) of far right parties in regions which were not heavily affected by crisis/austerity politics or characterized by declining wages due to increases in immigration. This problem becomes a critical one especially when examining the rise of the far right in new zones of material expansion of trade and production in the global South such as in India or Turkey.

A second set of explanations focuses on how violence against ethnic minorities can be used as a political tool by far right elites to reshape and activate ethnic boundaries before elections in order to increase their share of votes. Mostly derived from the experience of the BJP/RSS in India - but also extended to cases such as Ireland, Malaysia and Romania - these explanations establish

a causal relationship between the rise of ethnic violence and electoral success of far right parties (Wilkinson, 2004). According to these explanations, ethnic riots or other forms of far right violence are used as a deliberate political strategy designed by the elites to produce ethnic divisions/boundaries that will move people to vote in line with their ethnic preferences, hence help far right elites increase their votes in the upcoming elections. While filling an important gap in the literature by showing how violence can be used as a tool to gain votes, these perspectives do not examine the reverse relationship: whether or not increasing electoral strength and popularization can also be used to produce, justify and normalize violence by far right parties.

The third set of explanations focus on the ideology, political agenda and organizational structure of fascist parties. In classical fascism, as illustrated by the historical Italian and German cases, electoral participation and violence were not seen as two alternative sets of action repertoires, but as complementary forms of politics to be used in advancing and protecting a nation from its internal and external enemies. Today, many far right parties also follow in the footsteps of these classical fascist parties in terms of their ideologies, political agenda and organizational structure. In the case of the rise of Golden Dawn, for instance, Koronaïou *et al* (2015) show that Golden Dawn's young voters and supporters cannot be reduced to angry youth with "an emotional reaction to the [economic] crisis" but they have "wider ideological and political affinities and links [with fascism] that have been building over the previous two or three decades" (Koronaïau, Lagos, Sakellariou, Kymionis, & Chiotaki-Poulou, 2015, p. 231). While these perspectives point out that electoral participation and the use of violence have never been mutually exclusive strategies for fascist parties, they do not pay sufficient attention to the changing strategies and tactics of these parties over time. For instance, when fascist parties fail to gain control over the state and face state repression, they often embrace a strategic discourse of moderation to avoid

repression. Then, it becomes very difficult for them to openly use violence. How, then, do they manage to reconcile their moderate image/discourse and their use of violence? This question has not been properly answered in the literature.

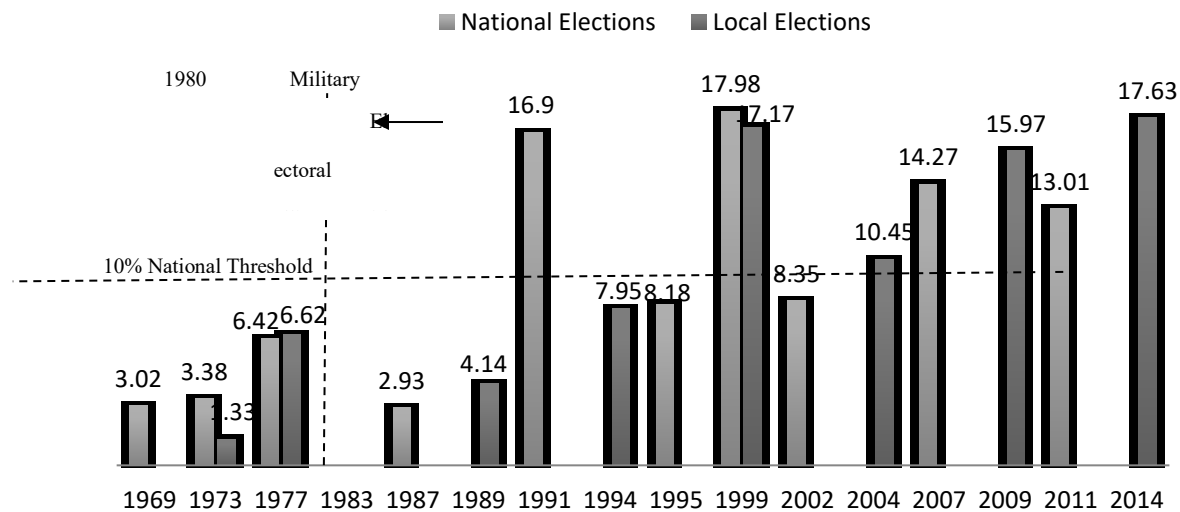
1.1. The Ülkücü Movement and the Nationalist Action Party (the MHP)

In order to bring some light to these questions and debates in the literature, this chapter will examine the case of the *ülkücü* (idealist) movement in Turkey - led by *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party, MHP) – from 1981 to present, with a focus on the relationship between electoral participation and utilization of violence²⁵. Officially founded in 1969, the MHP is a Turkish ultranationalist party, which has been compared to classical fascist parties in terms of its political program and strategy (Ahmad, 1993, p. 144), its organizational structure (Landau, 1982, p. 597), and its ability to openly lead “paramilitary organizations fighting on the streets” (Poulton, 1997, p. 60). Like fascist parties of interwar Europe, which established and maintained close ties with civil society organizations in their rise to power (Riley, 2010), the MHP also established and preserved informal but very tight organic ties with various civil society organizations. The most well-known, widespread, and important of these were youth organizations called *Ülkü Ocakları* (Hearth of Idealists) (Landau, 1982, pp. 594-595; Yeniçeri, 2010). *Ülkü Ocakları* activists were not formally linked with the party but openly embraced the party’s ideology, program and leadership. In the 1970s, the *ülkücü* activists were primarily known for their

²⁵ The negative case of Turkish far right advances our understanding of the relationship between electoral popularization of far right movements and their use of violence in three different ways: (1) Criticizing elections-violence dualism in the literature, it presents an understudied negative case whereby electoral popularization of a far right party does not necessarily result in a decline in use of violence; but violence and electoral popularization can reinforce each other under certain conditions. (2) It illustrates how the dual rise of the far right votes and violence can take place in a new zone of material expansion of trade and production, where socioeconomic misfortunes or crisis do not have much explanatory power. (3) It also exemplifies how an ultranationalist far right party can change strategy upon state repression, start using a moderation discourse to avoid repression once again, and manage to reconcile this new moderate image with its use of violence.

nationalist propaganda among the youth and their infamous association with political violence against the leftist movement (Öniş, 2003; Çınar & Arıkan, 2002). In late 1970s, on average 22 people died a day because of political violence, the majority in clashes between the *ülküücü* militants and leftists (Ersel, Kuyaş, Oktay, & Tuncay, 2002, p. 10). This intensification of political violence and increasing instabilities paved the way for the military coup on September 12, 1980.

Figure 4.1. Votes for the MHP in National and Local Elections, 1969-2014



Source: Turkish Institute of Statistics

After the 1980 military *coup*, together with other political parties and organizations, the MHP was banned and activities of *ülkü ocakları* were suppressed by the military *junta* regime. With the gradual lift of these bans in the course of the 1980s, however, the *ülküücü* movement started to re-organize. From the 1990s onwards it rose from its ashes, started to gain major successes in both national and municipal elections, and became the third largest party in Turkey. Because of the high levels of electoral support that the MHP started to receive beginning in the 1990s (see Figure 4.1), this new chapter of extreme right politics in Turkey has widely been seen

as the exact opposite of the 1970s, with its high levels of violence but low levels of electoral support.

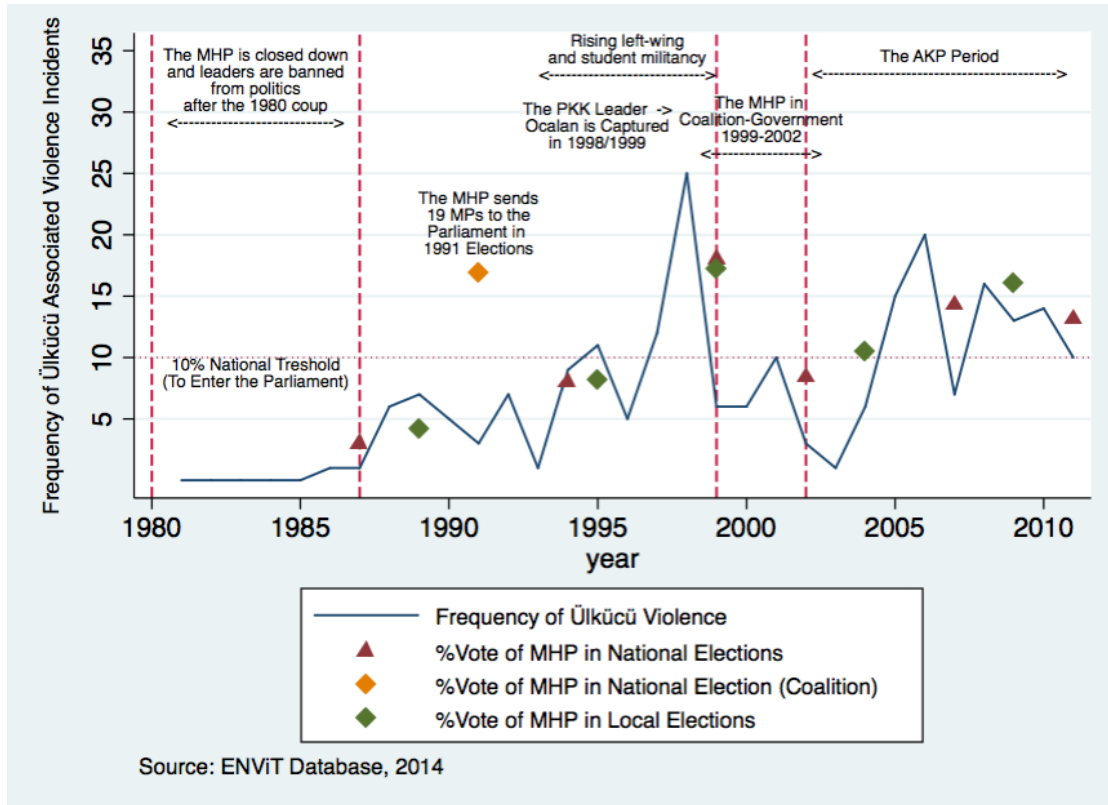
Parallel to this post-coup electoral popularization, the MHP and the *ülkücü* movement embraced “discursive moderation”. In their public speeches and declarations, they put an emphasis on ‘refraining from violence’. Contrary to what has widely been assumed, this discursive transformation did not start with the new leadership under Devlet Bahçeli, but started in the early 1990s when the movement was still led by its historic leader, Alparslan Türkeş. In line with the party leadership, *ülkücü* activists started to publicly declare that they did not wish to turn back to the 1970s and embraced a discourse of moderation.

At first sight, the MHP’s “electoral turn” in the 1990s and its “moderation” was in line with the expectations of social movement scholars, who maintain that violent movements switch to non-violent strategies in response to state repression. The bulk of the scholarship on the electoral popularization of the MHP also echoes this explanation, emphasizing the transformation of this once extremist movement to a centrist/moderate party in the post-coup period (Yavuz, 2002; Aras & Bacık, 2007; Canefe & Bora, 2003; Çınar & Arıkan, 2002; Öniş, 2003). While most of these analyses are based on the transformation of MHP’s public discourse, almost no scientific study so far has provided an analysis of violence associated with the *ülkücü* movement in this so-called “moderation” period.

Through a systematic analysis of news reports of *ülkücü* associated violence and in-depth interviews conducted in districts with high levels of communal violence, my research shows that electoral popularization of the MHP in the 1990s period was accompanied by increasing utilization of political violence by the movement. While violent events associated with the *ülkücü* movement

were very low during the military junta regime in the early 1980s, these violent events rose dramatically in the course of 1990s, temporarily declined between 1999 and 2002, and accelerated rapidly after 2002 (see Figure 4.2).

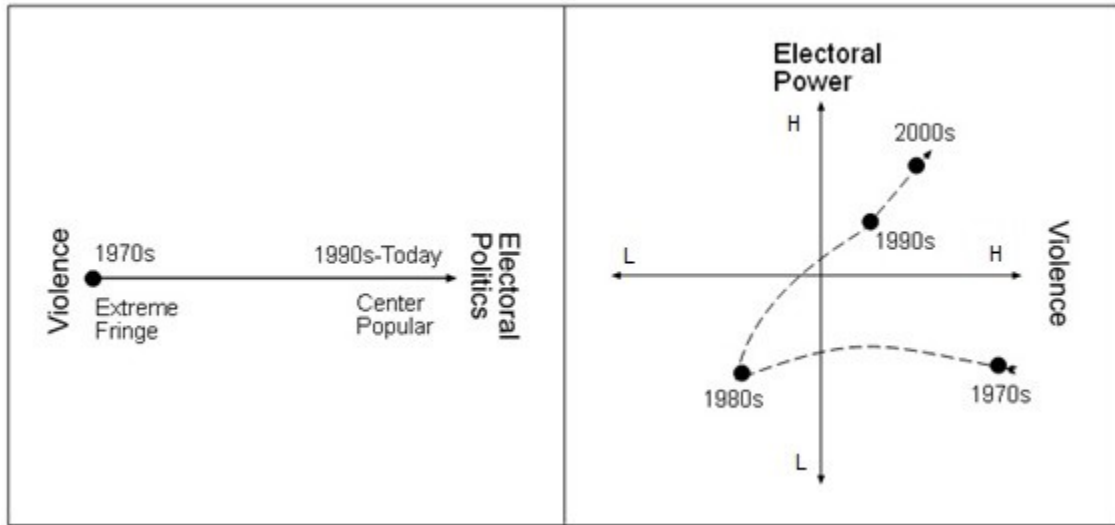
Figure 4.2. Electoral Strength of the MHP and Frequency of Violent Events Associated with the Ülkücü Movement



Precisely for this reason, it would not be accurate to describe the historical trajectory of the *ülküçü* movement as a story of moderation, moving from an extremist-fringe movement heavily relying on political violence to a centrist, popular force with major electoral successes as illustrated in Figure 4.3. Instead, my analysis suggests that recovering from the suppression of the 1980 *coup d'état*, the *ülküçü* movement managed to position itself as a movement that receives popular support and gains major electoral successes while maintaining its use of violence in the streets.

This trajectory is also illustrated in Figure 4.3, which does not conceptualize the relationship between elections and violence on a singular axis but on two independent different axes.

Figure 4.3. Historical Trajectory of Far Right in Turkey: Two Perspectives



This particular trajectory of the far right in Turkey from 1980 to the present opens up important questions that are relevant for existing discussions in the literature: (1) What is the relationship between *ülküücü*-associated violence and electoral popularization of the MHP in the post-coup era? (2) Which factors contribute to the dual rise of electoral power and violent mobilization of the Turkish far right? (3) How does the *ülküücü* movement manage to avoid marginalization from society as well as state repression despite its use of violence?

I argue that in the Turkish case, electoral popularization of the MHP and violence used by the *ülkü ocakları* have a mutually reinforcing relationship. What created this reinforcing relationship, however, is not the effect of the economic crisis or austerity politics, but a unique political climate shaped by the rising Kurdish problem in Turkey. In the course of the recovery from the suppression of the military coup, the *ülküücü* movement managed to use the escalation of

the Kurdish problem to propagate the idea that “internal enemies” are getting stronger and the idea that both in the parliament and in the streets the *ülküci* movement is protecting the motherland. To avoid state repression, both the MHP and the *ülküci* movement embraced discursive moderation. They publicly announced that they have changed and they do not want to turn back to the civil-war like environment of the 1970s. Yet, when they used violence, they framed it in a way to make these events appear less violent than they really were, offering justifications for the use of violence – e.g. “internal enemies (i.e. the PKK and its allies) are getting stronger” -- that resonated with potential electoral constituents as well as with the political concerns of the existing governments. The MHP’s growing electoral strength also helped the *ülküci* movement present itself in the eyes of the larger masses not as a fringe/extremist movement but as a “responsible” political movement doing what it takes to protect the motherland. Furthermore, the *ülküci* movement avoided state repression by paying specific attention to (1) acting within a larger crowd in these violence episodes, (2) not targeting state institutions, and (3) avoiding situations that would destabilize the state.

2. Data and Methods

To assess the validity of my explanation in comparison to existing alternative explanations, I utilize a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods based on (1) a new major database I compiled from newspaper sources (the ENViT database) and (2) in-depth interviews conducted in four cities in Turkey with high levels of incidents of communal violence. Utilization of a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis has increasingly been used in studies of communal and ethnic violence in order to be able to address different interrelated segments of the same research problem (Wilkinson, 2004).

2.1. Quantitative Analysis: Variables and Hypotheses

2.1.1. Dependent Variables

We have two dependent variables that we use in two distinct sets of regression analyses: (1) The number of right-wing nationalist and collective violence incidents associated with the *ülkücü* movement, as an indicator of *ülkücü*-associated violence and (2) the electoral strength of the MHP, as an indicator of electoral popularization of the MHP.

The first dependent variable is filtered from the ENViT database, which includes diverse forms of instances of *ülkücü associated right-wing nationalist and collective violence originating at the societal level* in Turkey from 1980 to 2012. More specifically, it covers instances of collective violence associated with *ülkücü* political actors, and/or nationalist mobs/vigilantes directed against vulnerable minorities including Kurds, Alawites, Armenians, Greeks, and the Roma population.

My definition of *collective* violence includes a wide spectrum of violent actions including riots, lynchings, raids, violent attacks and clashes, beatings, bombings and arsons. This definition includes (a) instances of violence perpetrated by a *group* towards other individuals or groups; (b) clashes between two or more groups; or (c) violence perpetrated by a group towards buildings like homes and institutions associated with particular groups like minorities or rival political groups. This means that violent incidents that only involve a single individual are excluded from the definition. Likewise, my definition of *violence* captures actual physical attacks or destruction of property but excludes instances that involve discursive or symbolic forms of violence (such as

booing and cursing) as well as group violence that is directed against objects (like graveyards, monuments) since I consider them as being symbolic forms of violence.

For this variable, I filtered *ülkücü*-associated violence from the whole dataset and aggregated the frequency by year. I defined a violence incident as “*ülkücü*” violence if it was conducted by right wing nationalist actors associated with the *ülkücü* movement and the MHP or by groups that use right wing nationalist symbols such as the “bozkurt (greywolf) sign” – the sign of the *ülkücü* movement - or slogans that refer to the *ülkücü* movement. The emphasis on *societal* level in this definition indicates that I exclude violence perpetrated by the state/government towards minorities from the scope of our analysis and focus on violence perpetrated by non-state actors.

The second dependent variable is the electoral strength of the MHP, calculated as the percentage of votes MHP gained in national and local elections. For years in between elections the vote percentages were interpolated. I use the average of interpolated national and local elections results as the second dependent variable.

2.1.2. Operationalization and Hypotheses

Measures of socioeconomic deprivation and ethnic competition: I used one-year lagged values of annual gross domestic product per capita levels, yearly changes in the unemployment level, and average wages in the manufacturing sector²⁶. In the literature, while all three measures

²⁶ Unemployment data is from IMF estimates. All other economic variables and the data on general and local elections come from TUIK (<http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr>). Data on military deaths due to armed conflict is from (Şener, 2010) and (Sardan, 2012). In the preliminary analysis, I also considered rate of unemployment, number of forced Kurdish immigrants to Western cities and percentage of Kurdish population in internal migration in Turkey as possible alternative measures. The findings were not robust and they did not alter the existing findings, hence I did not use these variables.

are widely used to assess the level of socioeconomic deprivation; unemployment level, and annual wages of industrial laborers are also used to measure the effects of ethnic competition. The hypothesis derived from these theories argues that both the frequency of far right nationalist violence and electoral strength of far right parties increases as GDP per capita and wage levels decrease, and the unemployment level increases.

Moderation Thesis -- When using the level of *ülkücü*-associated violence as the dependent variable, I used electoral strength of the MHP (lagged one year) as one of the independent variables. Likewise, when using electoral strength of the MHP as the dependent variable, I used the level of *ülkücü*-associated violence (lagged one year) as one of the independent variables. According to the “moderation thesis” and the existing elections-violence dualism literature, as the electoral strength of the MHP increases, the level of *ülkücü*-associated violence should decrease; and as *ülkücü*-associated violence increases, votes for the MHP should decrease.

According to critics of dualism approach, this should not be true. Theories which emphasize that violence can be used as a strategic tool to increase far right votes (Wilkinson, 2004; Brass, 2003; Dhattiwala & Biggs, 2012) expect that electoral strength of the MHP to increase as *ülkücü*-associated violence rises. But these theories do not necessarily expect the inverse relationship. In my analysis I tested both relationships. In addition, I also included a dummy variable measuring whether or not there is an election next year to check whether an upcoming election increases the level of *ülkücü*-associated violence.

Measures of perceived Kurdish threat -- I use the number of battle deaths during the armed conflict between the Turkish army and the PKK as an indicator of the level of ethnic secessionist warfare. Explanations which associate the dual rise of far right votes and violence in Turkey with

the escalation of the Kurdish secessionist armed conflict / guerilla warfare expect both of these variables to increase as the number of battle deaths increase. I also use electoral strength of the pro-Kurdish parties as an indicator of the electoral mobilization of the Kurdish population, which is another dimension of the perceived Kurdish threat. This hypothesis argues that both *ülküci*-associated violence and the electoral strength of the MHP increase as the electoral strength of the pro-Kurdish parties increase. The logic behind this hypothesis is that increasing support for the Kurdish parties provides an opportunity for the far right movements to propagate the idea that the threat of internal enemies is growing, and thereby to increase both their electoral appeal and their capacity to use violence against these internal enemies and their allies in order to protect the nation.

*Control variables*²⁷ -- There are two additional control variables I used when using *ülküci*-associated violence as a dependent variable. The first is a dummy variable showing whether or not the MHP is in the government that year. Many studies have shown that the level of extra-institutional protests tends to decrease when movements have their representatives or allies in the government (Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, & Giugni, 1995; Koopmans & Olzak, 2004, p. 211). The second - which I also used in models assessing the electoral strength of the MHP - is a dummy variable looking at the effect of military rule. This variable has a value of 1 in years when there is a military junta in power (hence no participatory elections) and a value of 0 in years when there is no military rule.

²⁷ In preliminary analysis I also considered the natural logarithm of population as a control variable. Since the dependent variable is a count of *ülküci*-associated violent events, it is likely to depend on the population size that year. While the addition of the control variable did **not** alter the results presented in this article, addition of this control variable created multicollinearity problem because of its high correlation with the Kurdish electoral success variable.

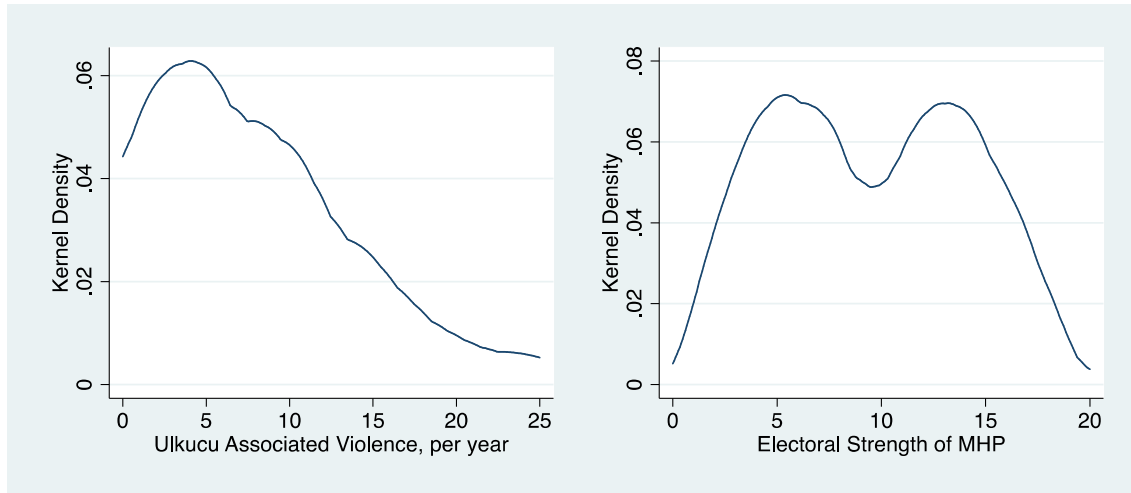
Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

	N	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>1- Ülkücü Associated Violence</i>	31	7.09	6.37	1.00									
<i>2- Electoral Strength of the MHP</i>	31	9.56	4.47	0.66	1.00								
<i>3- Junta Period Dummy</i>	31	0.22	0.42	-0.59	-0.61	1.00							
<i>4- MHP Government Dummy</i>	31	0.12	0.34	-0.05	0.40	-0.21	1.00						
<i>5- Years with Elections</i>	31	0.38	0.59	-0.03	0.21	-0.24	0.25	1.00					
<i>6- Electoral Strength of the pro-Kurdish Parties</i>	31	4.37	1.26	0.56	0.83	-0.73	0.35	0.22	1.00				
<i>7- Number of Battle Deaths in Conflict with the PKK</i>	31	219	282.61	0.20	0.02	-0.37	-0.20	0.14	-0.05	1.00			
<i>8- GDP per capita annual growth rate</i>	31	0.02	0.04	-0.10	-0.10	0.10	-0.30	-0.28	0.05	-0.10	1.00		
<i>9- Wage Level (1997=100)</i>	31	85.37	19.8	0.36	0.33	-0.77	0.01	0.24	0.43	0.47	0.01	1.00	
<i>10- Unemployment Level</i>	31	8.27	1.49	-0.12	-0.01	0.02	0.36	0.17	0.11	-0.25	-0.52	-0.16	1.00

2.1.3. Negative Binomial and Quantile Regression Analysis

The first dependent variable of my quantitative analysis, number of right-wing nationalist and collective violence associated with the *ülküci* movement, is count data with non-negative integer values, showing properties of over-dispersion ($\mu=7.09$; $\sigma^2=40.62$). Hence in this first step, I used negative binomial regression analysis to estimate the regression coefficients.

Figure 4.4. Kernel Density Graphs of *Ülkücü*-Associated Violence and Electoral Strength of the MHP variables



The second dependent variable is the percentage of votes the MHP receives in each election (interpolated between years). As Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of this variable is bimodal: the first mode is around 4-6 percent of the vote (corresponding to MHP's votes during the late 1980s and the early 1990s), the second mode is around 12-15 percent of the vote (corresponding to MHP's votes after the mid-1990s and the 2000s). We cannot rely on conventional regression models (such as OLS regression) to provide unbiased regression estimates of this bimodal distribution. Thus, I chose instead to use quantile regression analysis and to estimate regression coefficients for two modes (broadly corresponding to 0.25th and 0.75th quantiles), respectively.

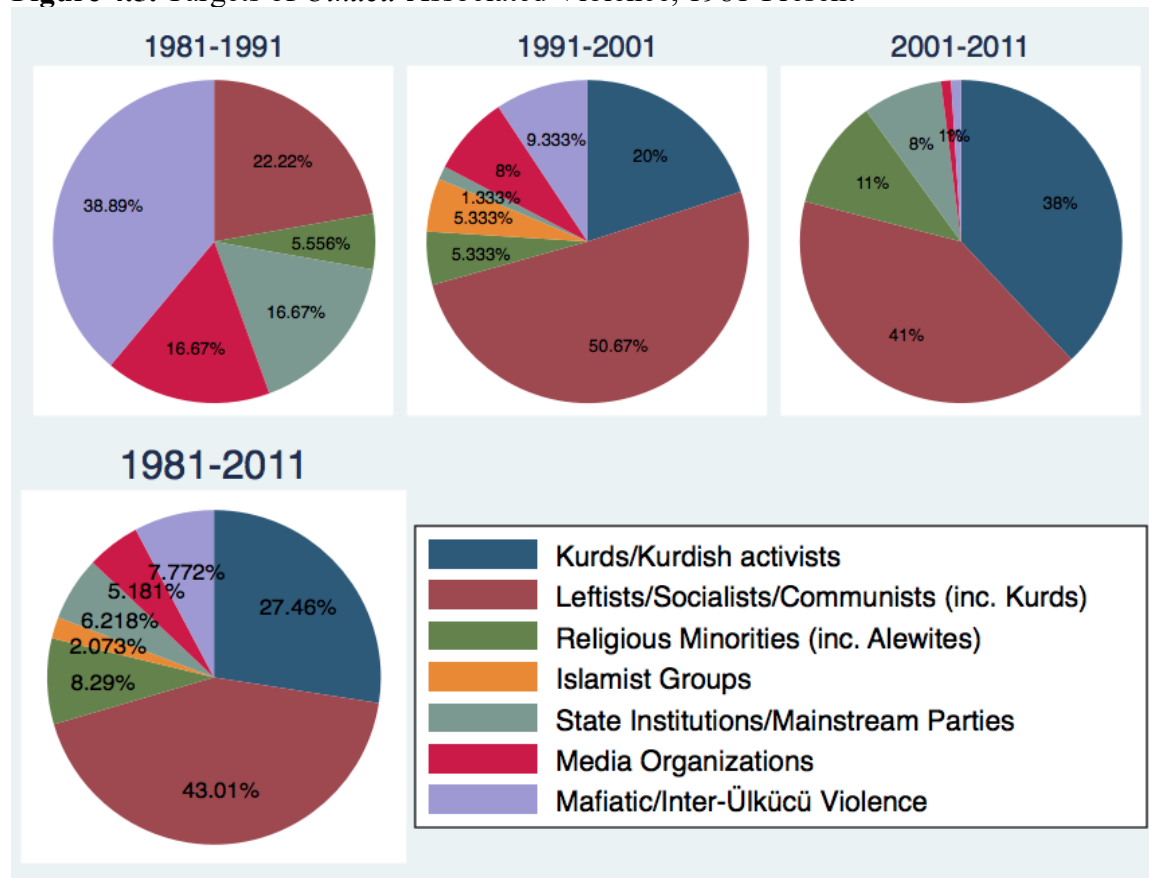
3. Findings

3.1. Overview of the Post-1980 Trajectory of the *Ülkücü* Movement: “Kurds are the New Left”

Figure 2 illustrates the patterning of the electoral strength of the MHP and violent incidents associated with the *ülküçü* movement from 1980 to 2010. As Figure 2 shows, political violence has not ceased to be a part of the action *repertoire* of the *ülküçü* movement after the 1980s. On the contrary, the number of violent incidents associated with the *ülküçü* movement increased with the transition from the military junta regime to democratization, accompanying the electoral popularization and “discursive moderation” of the MHP. This rising trend of *ülküçü*-associated political violence came to a peak in 1998²⁸. Interestingly, the rising trend of *ülküçü* violence was reversed in 1999, when the MHP experienced its historic electoral success (both in national and local elections) and joined the coalition government. Between 1999 and 2002, when the MHP was a coalition partner of the government, the number of violent incidents associated with the *ülküçü* movement remained low. While there was a brief decline in levels of violence in the early 2000s, *ülküçü* violence started to rise once again during the AKP era and has followed a consistently rising trend – with higher absolute levels compared to any other period in the post-1980 era of extreme right politics.

²⁸ This was an unusual period whereby three simultaneous developments coincided: First, there was rising left-wing militancy in the 1995-1999 period which started with the Gazi uprising of 1995 and the historic May-Day of 1996, marking the revival of the socialist movements in the post-coup period. This revival was mostly felt in university campuses and intensified the clashes between the *ülküçü* students and leftists (including left wing Kurdish youth) in university campuses. Secondly, in July 1998, an explosion in the historic Spice Bazaar (*Mısır Çarşısı*) in Istanbul, started a serious of lynching attempts to “suspects” of the trial (including the sociologist Pinar Selek) all of whom were thought to be linked with the PKK. Thirdly, in November 1999, Turkish government pressured Syria to force Öcalan to leave the country and started a process of chasing and capturing Öcalan. In this 1998-1999 period, clashes and fights between *ülküçü* militants and the Kurds radically intensified.

Figure 4.5. Targets of *Ülkücü*-Associated Violence, 1981-Present

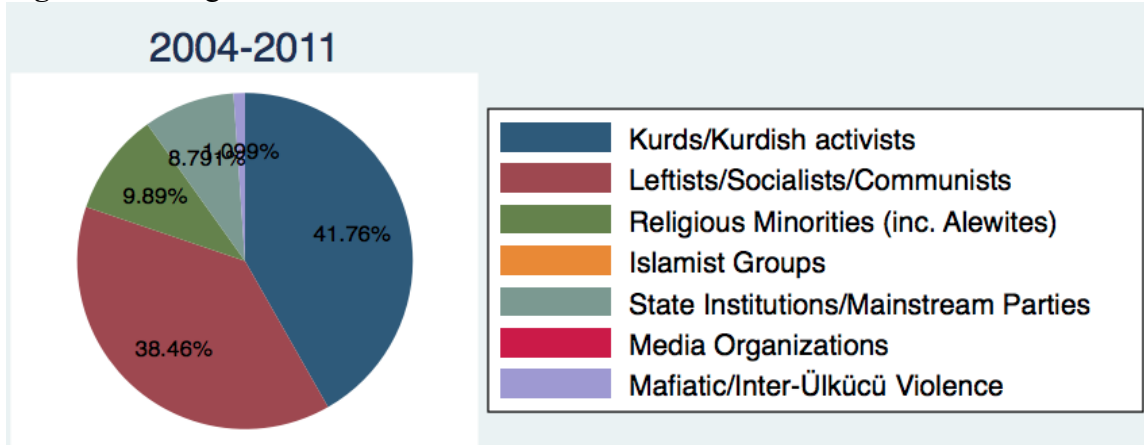


Source: ENViT Database

The dramatic rise of *ülküçü* violence at the turn of the 21st century is not independent from the escalation of the Kurdish movement in the same period. Actually, one of the interesting aspects of the post-1980 trajectory of *ülküçü* violence is the change in its targets over time. As a whole, from 1981 to 2011, 43 percent of all *ülküçü* violence is directed against leftist groups (which includes socialists, communists as well as Kurds who are perceived as leftists), and 27 percent is directed against Kurds and Kurdish activists. While violence directed against leftists groups is a continuation of the pre-1980 period, violence against the Kurds is a novelty of this new era. As Figure 4.5 shows, in every decade, violence against Kurds gradually increased: It increased from 0 percent in 1981-1991 period to 20 percent in 1991-2001 period, and to 38% in the 2001-2011

period. As Figure 4.6 shows, in the post-2004 period, the era of the Kurdish opening, the frequency of violence directed against Kurds (41 percent) had already surpassed violence directed at leftist groups (36.46 percent).

Figure 4.6. Targets of *Ülkücü*-Associated Violence, 2004-Present



Source: ENViT Database

It is not coincidental that in the same period, the MHP also made the Kurdish problem its primary political propaganda. In the parliament, the MHP represented itself as the only political party that will not make any concession to Kurdish political actors (neither the PKK nor legal pro-Kurdish parties) but will fight against these internal enemies at whatever cost.

3.2. The Relation Between Far Right Violence and Electoral Strength

There is quantitative evidence for a mutually reinforcing relationship between electoral popularization of the MHP and the use of violence by the *ülküçü* movement in post-1980 Turkey. Table 2 shows negative binomial coefficients from the regression analysis of the number of *ülküçü*-associated violent incidents on selected variables, including economic variables (e.g. unemployment level, wage level and GDP per capita growth of that year), electoral strength of the MHP, electoral strength of existing Kurdish parties, frequency of military deaths due to armed

conflict with the PKK, and the effects of the MHP being the governing party, a military junta regime being in power and an election year.

Table 4.2. Negative Binomial Coefficients from the Regression of the Number of *Ülkücü* Associated Violent Incidents on Selected Variables, Turkey, 1981-2011

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Ülkücü</i> Associated Violence ($t-1$)	0.0313 (1.19)	-0.0298 (-1.47)	0.0249 (1.01)	-0.0324 (-1.70)	-0.031 (-1.67)
Military Junta Regime (1980-1983) ($t-1$)	-1.806*** (-3.63)	-1.143* (-2.49)	-2.397*** (-3.81)	-1.697** (-3.19)	-1.643** (-2.88)
Electoral Strength of MHP ($t-1$)		0.129*** (3.80)		0.119*** (3.75)	0.122** (2.76)
MHP in Government (1999-2002) ($t-1$)		-1.317*** (-3.89)		-1.324*** (-4.06)	-1.266*** (-3.88)
Upcoming Election Year ($t+1$)		0.378** (2.69)		0.352* (2.49)	0.301+ (1.76)
GDP Per Capita Growth ($t-1$)			4.663 (1.46)	-0.093 (-0.04)	0.834 (0.29)
Change in Unemployment Level ($t-1$)			0.627 (0.48)	-0.546 (-0.059)	-0.129 (-0.11)
Wages ($t-1$)			-0.0136 (-1.25)	-0.013 (-1.81)	-0.015* (-1.97)
Electoral Strength of Kurdish Parties ($t-1$)					0.0005 (0.00)
Frequency of Military Deaths in Armed Conflict with the PKK ($t-1$)					0.0003 (0.79)
Constant	1.926*** (6.87)	1.024*** (3.35)	3.095** (2.81)	2.404** (3.04)	2.411* (2.28)

Ln(alpha)	-1.057*	-2.727**	-1.289**	-3.386*	-3.630*
	(-2.56)	(-2.90)	(-2.83)	(-2.26)	(-1.97)
Log-Likelihood	-81.851	-71.260	-79.894	-69.546	-69.206
McFadden's Adj. R Square	0.063	0.146	0.051	0.132	0.114
Number of Cases	30	30	30	30	30

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard error; e⁻ⁿ indicates that regression coefficient or standard error should be multiplied times 10⁻ⁿ.

+p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001 (two tailed tests)

Results suggest that the MHP's electoral strength and popularization does not reduce violent events associated with the *ülkücü* movement, controlling for other variables. On the contrary, the effect of the MHP's electoral strength and popularization (lagged one year) on *ülkücü*-associated violence is positive and significant in all models where this variable is included. Table 4.2 shows that there is a statistically significant and positive effect of upcoming elections on *ülkücü* violence as expected by theorists of electoral violence (Wilkinson 2004; Brass 2003), but the statistical significance of this effect gradually weakens when controls for other socio-economic and political variables are included. Interestingly, other variables that have an effect on *ülkücü*-violence are also directly or indirectly associated with the MHP. The MHP being a government partner decreases the level of *ülkücü*-associated violence. All models also show that state repression (measured as existence of a military junta) decreases *ülkücü*-associated violence. The negative binomial regression results also show that economic variables such as GDP per capita growth rate and change in unemployment do not have explanatory power (see Models 3, 4 and 5). Wages seem to have a negative effect on instances of *ülkücü*-associated violence, as expected by socioeconomic economic and deprivation theories, but this effect only emerges when it is controlled by other political indicators (see Model 5).

Using quantile regression analysis at 0.25th and 0.75th quantiles, Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 below use similar models to examine the effect of selected variables on the electoral popularization

of the MHP. There are two robust findings: First is the positive and significant effect of *ülküçü*-associated violence (lagged one year) on MHP's electoral strength in all models in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4. Second is the positive and significant effect of the frequency of military deaths in the armed conflict with the PKK in Model 5 in both tables. These two findings suggest that the electoral popularization of the MHP was not only related to the escalation of the armed conflict between the Turkish armed forces and the PKK in the Southeastern region, which pushed the general Turkish electorate to vote more on (ultra)nationalist lines, but also to the increasing militancy of the *ülküçü* movement. As a whole, Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 show that the relationship between the MHP's electoral popularization and *ülküçü*-associated violence is not a negative one; but violence and electoral strength seem to reinforce each other – even controlling for alternative explanations - in the case of *ülküçü* movement-MHP relationship.

Table 4.3. Quantile Regression Coefficients from the Regression of the Electoral Strength of the MHP on Selected Variables, Turkey, 1981-2011 (Quantile=0.25)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Electoral Strength of MHP (<i>t-1</i>)	0.879*** (9.73)	0.752*** (7.52)	0.851*** (10.04)	0.807*** (12.97)	0.903*** (11.50)
Military Junta Regime (1980-1983) (<i>t-1</i>)	-0.968 (-1.04)	-0.329 (-0.35)	-0.932 (-0.72)	0.411 (0.47)	-0.321 (-0.33)
<i>Ülkücü</i> Associated Violence (<i>t-1</i>)		0.161* (2.40)		0.153** (3.72)	0.153*** (4.12)
GDP Per Capita Growth (<i>t-1</i>)			11.77 (1.55)	3.204 (0.64)	12.06* (2.29)
Wages (<i>t-1</i>)			0.00645 (0.27)	0.0103 (0.67)	-0.0151 (-1.04)
Change in Unemployment Level (<i>t-1</i>)			-1.514 (-0.52)	-0.506 (-0.26)	-0.314 (-0.15)
Frequency of Military Deaths in Armed Conflict with the PKK (<i>t-1</i>)					0.00223** (2.96)
Electoral Strength of Kurdish Parties (<i>t-1</i>)					-0.373 (-1.06)
Constant	1.209 (1.16)	1.118 (1.10)	0.461 (0.17)	-0.576 (-0.33)	1.817 (0.91)
Pseudo R Square	0.780	0.816	0.814	0.837	0.876
Number of Cases	30	30	30	30	30

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard error; e^{-n} indicates that regression coefficient or standard error should be multiplied times 10^{-n} .

+ $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two tailed tests)

Table 4.4. Quantile Regression Coefficients from the Regression of the Electoral Strength of the MHP on Selected Variables, Turkey, 1981-2011 (Quantile=0.75)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Electoral Strength of MHP (<i>t-1</i>)	1.071*** (15.03)	0.885*** (11.03)	1.077*** (24.56)	0.847*** (17.34)	1.019*** (22.58)
Military Junta Regime (1980-1983) (<i>t-1</i>)	-0.957 (-1.30)	-0.942 (-1.24)	-0.531 (-0.79)	-1.406+ (-2.06)	-0.874 (-1.59)
Ülkücü Associated Violence (<i>t-1</i>)		0.105+ (1.95)		0.120** (3.72)	0.0580* (2.73)
GDP Per Capita Growth (<i>t-1</i>)			2.426 (0.62)	4.136 (1.05)	9.616** (3.18)
Wages (<i>t-1</i>)			0.00120 (0.10)	-0.00964 (-0.80)	0.00180 (0.22)
Change in Unemployment Level (<i>t-1</i>)			-4.403** (-2.95)	-2.139 (-1.41)	0.343 (0.29)
Frequency of Military Deaths in Armed Conflict with the PKK (<i>t-1</i>)					0.00166*** (3.84)
Electoral Strength of Kurdish Parties (<i>t-1</i>)					-0.327 (-1.62)
Constant	0.394 (0.48)	1.286 (1.58)	0.240 (0.17)	2.503+ (1.83)	1.058 (0.92)
Pseudo R Square	0.800	0.825	0.844	0.857	0.893
Number of Cases	30	30	30	30	30

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard error; e⁻ⁿ indicates that regression coefficient or standard error should be multiplied times 10⁻ⁿ.

+p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001 (two tailed tests)

4. Framing It Like An *Ülkücü*: Roles *Ülkücüs* Play in the Anti-Kurdish Violence

These quantitative findings do not explain properly how the *ülkücü* movement manages to reconcile its use of political violence with the electoral popularization of the MHP or how the MHP manages to maintain its popular support despite the use of violence by the *ülkücü* movement. Neither do they explain how the MHP and the *ülkücü* movement avoid state repression in this context. To explicate these processes, we will have a closer look at how *ülkücü* activists frame their use of violence to avoid marginalization and state repression using my interview data that focuses on anti-Kurdish violence in the 2000s. This analysis will also analyze the role played by the *ülkücü* movement in the anti-Kurdish communal violence.

4. 1. Understanding Discursive Moderation: “We fight only once when we need to fight five times”

As mentioned earlier, in their declarations and public speeches both the MHP and the *ülkücü* movement are very careful not to be associated with the extremism of the 1970s²⁹. My interviews, however, suggest that this discursive moderation does not mean that the *ülkücü* movement has renounced the use of violence in the post-1980 era. In an interview, an *ülkücü* activist explained to me how they follow their leader Devlet Bahçeli’s call for non-violent politics, and refrain from fighting with the Kurds as follows:

Q: What is your attitude towards violence against the Kurds in the city?

²⁹ Today Devlet Bahçeli’s response to *ülkücü* militants shouting “we will kill if you command; we will die if you command!” is “Wait! Its time will come!”.

A: There is a tension in the city. We tell our activists not to be provoked. I assure you *we fight only once when we need to fight five times*. Our president [*Devlet Bahçeli*] tells us to sell the guns and buy laptops. We saw that it is a useful strategy.

Q: So, there is not much violence despite these tensions you mentioned.

A: Of course, there are fights...especially in the schools [high schools]. In the city, *ocaks* are organized in all high schools. We are there, because there is no peace there, because the PKK sympathizers are there. What we say is simple: You stop supporting the PKK, and we stop establishing the *ocaks*. Let us all abandon politics...The only thing that we – the *ülküçüs* - want is peace... (Author's interview with a member of *Ülkü Ocağı*, Male)

A closer investigation of this conversation helps us understand how *ülküçü* activists perceive and explain their movement's tendency towards 'non-violence' in this new era. For one thing, this young activist does not denounce violence altogether but he expresses that they are only involved in violence when it is 'necessary'. According to his explanation, it is not their extremism but the very existence of internal enemies [the PKK sympathizers as he puts it] which pushes the *ülküçü* activists to engage in these fights. He maintains that the *ülküçü* 'politics' [which, as we understand from the context, is a violent one] could immediately stop if the support for the PKK comes to an end. When this young activist declares that they engage in various 'fights' in schools, he still emphasizes their non-violent tendency by underscoring that they 'fight only once when they need[ed] to fight five times'. For him, the fact that the *ülküçü* militants 'hold themselves back' from fighting in some instances is proof of their desire for peace and non-violence. Hence, violence becomes a 'last resort.'

Put differently, *ülkücü* militants I interviewed consistently presented themselves to me as *patient* and *responsible* actors (in contrast to *irrational*, *fringe*, *extremist* ones) who desire peace but are pushed to ‘fight’ and protect the nation’s unity because of the growing support for internal enemies. However, the definition of who were the “internal enemies” and “Kurdish separatists” was very broad for the *ülkücü* movement. Not only was supporting the pro-Kurdish parties a sign, but even speaking Kurdish out loud in public space was seen as evidence of being a separatist, hence a threat to the unity of the nation. One young *ülkücü*, in a working class neighborhood in İşler, explained to me how they kicked Kurdish workers out from their neighborhood because they were “speaking Kurdish as if they [were] bragging”:

It was two years ago - there were ‘bachelor homes’ where Kurdish workers lived together. They were speaking Kurdish very loudly. Women could not walk safely in the neighborhood... One evening, we raided their residences with our 300 *brothers* [*i.e.*, *senior members of the movement*]. Our *brothers* made a decision and they [Kurdish workers] were dispelled from the neighborhood... Yes, they can speak Kurdish, but they can’t do it as if they are bragging. (Author’s interview with a member of *Ülkü Ocağı*, Male)

Since they considered the existence of a large group of young Kurdish bachelor workers - speaking Kurdish out loud and not intimidated by the *ülkücü* warnings -- as a threat to the neighborhood, senior members of the movement ‘decided’ and carried out this action, which ‘successfully’ expelled Kurdish workers. Another young *ülkücü* activist, who was ‘in charge’ of the local *Ocak* in İşler, told me about another very similar incident, while simultaneously complaining about how only the *ülküçüs* were held accountable for instances beyond their control:

Q: What is your attitude towards violence against the Kurds in the neighborhood?

A: We are cautious not to get involved in violent incidents. We want to work with the masses...Unfortunately, we are held responsible for the things beyond our control. During [nationalist] demonstrations, for instance, people supporting the AKP and the CHP [*the two largest political parties in Turkey*] also make ‘greywolf [bozkurt] signs’ [i.e., the hand-sign of the *ülküçü* movement]; consequently when there is an attack against the BDP [*pro-Kurdish party*], we are held accountable.

Q: So you are totally against these violence incidents then...

A: Sometimes, mmmh, throwing stones at the BDP buildings, etc....these kinds of things are done when *necessary*... After all, we are fighting for our homeland [*vatan*]... Sometime ago, for instance, there was a fight with Kurdish construction workers. They were speaking Kurdish and some of our friends warned them to stop speaking in Kurdish. Kurdish workers continued and made the ‘victory sign’ in return. Then, we gathered together and went to their ‘tents’ [he refers to the camp of the construction workers, who were temporary migrant workers], there was fifteen of us and sixty of them. There was a fight and I was stabbed. In the end, these workers were sent away from the neighborhood.

This is a quintessential example of the contemporary *ülküçü* attitude towards violence, and a key to understanding the notion of discursive moderation. On the one hand, *ülküçü* activists no longer want to be associated with their historic ‘violent’ image. Hence, they engage in community work in various working class neighborhoods and they try to build a large network of nationalist youth. They also consistently emphasize their inclination towards non-violent politics. On the other hand, they give many accounts of their actual involvement in violence when it becomes *necessary* to defend the *motherland*, by (a) providing detailed *justifications* for why it was necessary to do so and (b) presenting violence as a tool that was used as a *last resort*. For instance, in both examples above, *ülküçü* militants emphasized that they *warned* these workers not to speak Kurdish out-loud before the expulsion, but the Kurds did not listen.

4. 2. *The Crowd and Violence Specialists: “It was not only us, it was the masses”*

Another interesting point in the quotation above is *ülküçü* militant’s emphasis on the existence of people supporting other parties – such as the AKP or the CHP - in the violent events using *ülküçü* symbols. A common theme of my interviews with *ülküçü* is their emphasis on the participation of other people (i.e. those who are not official members of the *Ülkü Ocakları* or the MHP, such as ordinary residents of the town and people that vote for other conservative-nationalist or mainstream parties) in these violent events.

For instance, when talking about the 2006 lynching attempts in Kirazli, where 7-8 thousand people tried to lynch four Kurdish seasonal workers, an MHP member in Kirazli also ‘complained’ to me about how *ülküçüs* had to bear responsibility for incidents that were beyond their control:

Whenever such an incident [e.g. lynching attempt] takes place, *ülküçüs* are held accountable. For instance, during the [2006] incidents here, I saw a kid supporting the Felicity Party [*Refah Partisi*, an Islamist Party], who was making the *bozkurt sign* [i.e., the hand-sign of the *ülküçü* movement, representing being an *ülküçü*]. When I asked him why he was doing it, he just smiled.

The MHP representative did not really seem to be bothered about these people who had no organizational links with their movement making the *bozkurt* hand-sign. Rather than being distressed, he was smiling and seemed content about this hand gesture. This is not surprising because one of the key mobilizational tools within the action *repertoire* of the *ülküçü* movement is leading people to make *bozkurt* signs while singing the national anthem or shouting nationalist slogans during nationalist demonstrations and actions. Larger masses making the *bozkurt* hand-signs and shouting *ülküçü* slogans has historically been a matter of pride and success for the *ülküçü* movement, which symbolizes their capacity to lead the masses beyond their formal organizational

links. Historically, these kinds of mobilizations have been critical tools for *ülküçü* militants who aim to extend the scope of support for the *ülküçü* movement, to transform people's perceptions of existing enemies and threats against the motherland, and even to influence the electoral choices of these nationalist-conservative masses who vote for other nationalist or Islamist parties by showing that these parties do not do anything to deal with this threat, neither in the streets nor in the parliament.

However, there is another meaning that *ülküçüs* attach to this broader participation. For *ülküçü* militants, participation of larger masses in these violent incidents – especially participation by people supporting other parties – is evidence that (1) the *ülküçü* movement - alone - cannot not be held accountable for these violent events and (2) these events are legitimate – as opposed to being extremist or fringe - because they reflect popular reactions of the Turkish nation as a whole. In direct contrast to the 1970s, where *ülküçü* militants almost always emphasized their leading role in nationalist violence used against communists, today *ülküçü* militants are more inclined to show themselves more as a part of this larger crowd, like everyone else, who attacked Kurds in these neighborhoods. This tendency not only fits nicely into the discursive moderation of the movement as a whole, but also helps them displace the blame upon “other actors”, including the “crowd” and the “masses”.

Other people participating in these violent episodes, however, gave various vivid examples of the complex roles *ülküçü* militants have played in processes. One such role is the production and dissemination of rumors. The role played by *ülküçü* activists in rumor production appears to be very similar to the one suggested by Brass (2003, pp. 32-33) in the case of riots in India (also see (Bora, 2008; Gambetti, 2007). In most cases, people in these neighborhoods gathered together

upon rumors such as “Kurds are attacking Turks”, “Kurds harassed our women”, “Kurds hung a PKK flag”, “Kurds burnt the Turkish flag” etc. Ordinary people explaining to me how they ended up participating in nationalist attacks against Kurds in their neighborhoods often stated that they heard about these instances – i.e. rumors about Kurds’ provocations - from the young *ülküçü*s. Sometimes they just mentioned them as *gençler* (“the youth”), but people from different civil society organizations confirmed that they belonged to the *ülküçü* youth.

The nature of these rumors differs in time and space. Sometimes, they include a distorted or selected part of the truth. In Senkoy, for instance, mob violence against the Kurdish residents in town started upon a rumor that “Kurds attacked Turks”. Interestingly, the incident started with a personal discussion between a Kurdish member of the MHP and a Turkish member of the pro-Kurdish party BDP (Interview with the Representative of Human Rights Association, M.). Sometimes, however, these rumors seem to be completely fabricated. It is surprising to see how many mobs and lynching attempts seem to originate out of ordinary, daily discussions such as speaking Kurdish in public, listening to Kurdish music, wearing Ahmet Kaya (a political Kurdish musician) t-shirts etc. These sorts of daily discussions by themselves rarely create collective raids and lynching attempts against the Kurds. These discussions seem to radicalize and bring together a larger crowd upon rumors linking these Kurds’ identities and their activities with the PKK.

Another key role played by *ülküçü* militants in these larger events is leading the ‘crowd’ for basic tasks in the course of the protest such as where to go and what to do. People who participated in these incidents often mentioned that they originally went out to the street to “protest” the PKK but followed the rest of the coordinated youth [the *ülküçü* youth], who led them to shout slogans, sing national anthems, make *bozkurt* signs, and later throw stones at buildings

and to raid shops. Put differently, *ülkücü* militants manage to convert a non-violent political protest into a violent one in the course of the demonstrations. This role also has similarities with the role played by “conversion specialists” in Brass’s (2003:33) study of riots in India, who convert local incidents or public issues into violent ones by stone throwing, stabbing, and arson. In Durusu, a *mukhtar* told me about events that occurred in 2011, where thousands of people raided shops of Kurdish residents and started a riot, as follows:

Of course at the very front of the events was the MHP. But people were also there. Women etc. they all joined the events. The youth of the MHP started throwing stones at the buildings [of Kurdish residents] and shouted, “Here is Turkey!” [not Kurdistan]. People did not react to the Turkish nationalists. They reacted to the Kurds.

Participation of a crowd – consisting of women and the elderly - beyond the organizational links of the MHP was also confirmed by local residents, *mukhtars*³⁰ and representatives of other main political parties (AKP and CHP) whom I interviewed. In addition to ethnic Turks, residents of Laz origin, Kazakh and Afghan immigrants also participated in the anti-Kurdish protests. Some local residents interpreted this wider participation by the crowd as evidence that these events were beyond the control of *Ülkü Ocakları* and the MHP.

According to some (Turkish) residents who personally participated in the incidents - and local shop owners in the neighborhood who witnessed the incidents - it was the young *ülkücü* nationalists – teenagers - who first started throwing stones at Kurdish shops and soon everyone followed. A Kurdish coffee shop owner, whose shop was attacked by the nationalist crowd, also mentions the leadership of the *ülkücü* youth within the crowd.

³⁰ Elected neighborhood/village headman. *Mukhtars* has a unique position in the governing structure of Turkey, providing the link between citizens in neighborhoods with the state.

My windows are broken yet people started clapping and chanting *İstiklal Marşı* [the national anthem]. They were led by an *ülküci* group, a group that calls themselves as idealists. It was a young group composed of teenagers. They even shouted as *takbir* when breaking windows. They were supposed to be Muslims. Even Kazakh and Afghan people followed them. (Kurdish Coffee-Shop Owner, Durusu)

All these remarks suggest a complex relationship between the “crowd” and the *ülküci* militants in this age of “discursive moderation”, which also resonates with the existing literature. In contrast to the 1970s, today the *ülküci* movement seems to avoid marginalized confrontations with their “enemies” without the participation of a larger “crowd”. As Wilkinson notes on communal violence in India “[i]f one demonstrator throws a stone, it is interpreted as ‘the crowd’ throwing stones” (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 24). Hence, mobilizing crowds for violence increases the popular legitimacy for violence while displacing responsibility at the same time. They seem to specialize in bringing together a protesting crowd through production and dissemination of rumors and in converting non-violent protests into violent ones using mechanisms such as rumors and processions similar to those described in India (Brass, 2003).

4.3. Double Movement of Gathering and Dispersing a Lynch Mob: “No one besides us cooperated with the police to stop the lynching”

The *ülküci* violence in the post-coup period dramatically differs from the anti-leftist *ülküci* violence of the 1970s, whose indirect aim was to destabilize the state (also see Mann 2004) and which encroached upon the state’s monopoly over the use of violence. Interviews suggest that the more recent *ülküci* movement is very careful not to disrupt public order in a way that would create a backlash and trigger police/state intervention. That’s why, in some of these instances, they play a significant dual role by simultaneously triggering the event as well as stopping it. To give an example of this dynamic, we can have a closer look at one such case that occurred in Kirazli in 2006. That year, a discussion between four young Kurdish seasonal workers and a local resident

of Turkish origin (who was known to be an *ülküci*, according to my interviews and reports by human rights organizations describing the incident) in a grocery store suddenly sparked a large-scale lynching attempt in which thousands of people participated.

The nature of the discussion was about speaking Kurdish out loud in the grocery store. After the discussion, to gather a lynch mob, *ülküci* activists spread a rumor in a nearby park, saying that Kurds opened the PKK flag and fired guns. Upon the spread of the rumor in the town, thousands of people gathered together to punish the ‘PKK militants’. To escape the gathering crowd, Kurdish workers took refuge in the police station. The crowd came in front of the station, and got bigger as people from neighboring villages and towns also joined. Around 7-8 thousand people stayed in front of the police station until 3 am, shouting that they will take the Kurdish boys away from the police and punish them. Interviewees who witnessed the events in the town emphasized the existence and leadership of the *ülküci* activists within the crowd, which was in accordance with some human rights reports on the events. The MHP representatives I interviewed also mentioned the existence of young *ülküci* activists in the events but they emphasized how they actually tried to disperse these young *ülküci*s and to placate the masses. As one MHP representative explained to me:

There were 10-15 people in front of the police station in the beginning [of the events]. When I went there, I saw 2-3 kids from the *ocaks* [he refers to young members of the *Ülkü Ocakları*]. When the police told me to disperse the kids, I warned them. But soon, a larger crowd started to gather in front of the station... And the people who were there were not merely *ülküci*s, they were conservative-nationalist masses. In order to stop the event [lynch mob], we started to sing the national anthem and sang it five times... No one besides us cooperated with the police. We [together with the police] stopped people from entering the police station.

The seemingly contradictory explanations about the role *ülkücü* militants played in these kinds of mobs and lynching attempts – both starting and dispersing the movement - suggest the existence of an implicit form of division of labor between young *ülkücü* activists and senior MHP members. While young *ülkücü* activists mobilize masses for the protection of their neighborhoods, villages and cities from “separatists” on the street, the senior MHP members emerge as responsible leaders of the crowd who make sure that these events do not go out of control and do not trigger repression by the police. In the conversation mentioned above, it was noteworthy to observe the MHP representative’s sensitivity towards acting in accordance with the police, trying to disperse the young *ülküçüs* when police asked him to and his emphasis on cooperating with the police to stop the ‘people’ from lynching the Kurds.

Put differently, while young *ülkücü* activists emerge as representatives and mobilizers of “nationalist sentiments” of the Turkish nation in the eyes of the nationalist conservative masses, who warn them of and mobilize them against agitations of “internal enemies”, the MHP members present themselves as rational, patient and responsible actors in the eyes of the state institutions who understand and share the ‘nationalist’ sensitivities of these people but choose to cooperate with the state so as not to create chaos upon their request. Through this double strategy, *the broader* movement expands its mobilizing, organizing and leadership capacity over the nationalist-conservative masses in these neighborhoods without triggering state repression.

5. Conclusion

While dominant perspectives in the literature on far right movements and social movements point out the incompatibility between the use of violence and electoral popularization, our findings shed some light on the political contexts and strategies, including framing of

movement violence, that help far right movements avoid state repression and marginalization despite their use of violence, and produce a mutually reinforcing relationship between strategic use of violence and electoral popularization.

Our analysis shows that both the political context and movement strategies matter. Electoral popularization of the MHP and increasing use of violence by the *ülküci* movement occurred in an unusual political context. The 1980 coup, which suppressed the *ülküci* movement, had a profound impact on *ülküci* leaders and militants. Although the *ülküci* movement never abandoned their ideological commitment to their ultranationalist cause, they were more careful than before about openly using violence on the streets against “the internal enemies of the state and the nation”. In the post-coup democratization period, they started to use a discourse of moderation, gained seats in the parliament and began to use political violence carefully and strategically: More and more, they targeted a group (i.e. the Kurds) which were perceived by the state and the general electorate as a growing internal threat. Both in the parliament and in the streets, they presented their movement as the sole protector of the nation and the state. In doing so, they managed to produce a reinforcing relationship between electoral popularization and the strategic use of violence. The MHP’s becoming the second largest opposition party in the parliament helped the *ülküci* movement not be seen as an extremist/fringe movement despite their violent activities on the streets. *Ülküci* militants’ activities in neighborhoods and their image as protector of the nation against growing internal enemies in neighborhoods, increased the credibility of the MHP’s discourse and helped its electoral popularization.

Our analysis also pointed out that the *ülküci* movement managed to avoid repression and marginalization (1) by framing their violent actions in a way that would not appear extreme or

irrational to the general electorate but as responsible and rational (e.g. using a discourse of moderation, and legitimizing violence as a ‘last resort’), (2) by giving special attention not to act as a fringe group but to act within a larger crowd (e.g. converting non-violent demonstrations into violent ones), (3) by not directly challenging state institutions, not destabilizing the state, and cooperating with police forces when necessary. These strategies have played a critical role in the emergence of anti-Kurdish communal violence. To explain how, we need to show how findings from Chapter 3 (transformation of us-them boundaries on the ground and emerging societal tensions) and Chapter 4 (the efforts of an extreme right movement carefully operating within masses) play out in the context of actual incidents of anti-Kurdish communal violence. The next chapter will explain the interactions between societal preconditions and elite intervention in the context of specific concrete events of violence.

Chapter 5

How Do Anti-Kurdish Riots Erupt? An Event Structure Analysis

Previous chapters discussed (1) how the recent wave of anti-Kurdish communal violence erupted in a period of democratization in Turkey; (2) how ethnic boundaries between local residents and Kurdish migrants have transformed in the course of democratization and created pre-conditions for violent ethnic mobilizations at the societal level; (3) how the largest extreme right political movement (*ülküci* movement), with a strong electoral presence, engaged in violent mobilization against the Kurds in the 2000s. This chapter builds upon these findings but extends them in a new direction by analyzing how these different causal processes come together in the emergence and development of a particular incident of communal violence. Through an event structure analysis of the eruption of the 2008 anti-Kurdish riots in Altınova, briefly mentioned in the Introduction, this chapter brings light to processes operating at the event-time level that have been crucial for the eruption of anti-Kurdish riots and explains how various actors (local residents, Kurdish residents, extreme right politicians and activists, and the state) – closely interlinked to each other – were involved in these processes.

The event structure analysis of Altınova riots presented in this chapter aims to flesh out the roles played by ordinary civilians, extreme right political activists (as violence specialists), and the state actors in the eruption of anti-Kurdish riots in Turkey. We chose Altınova riots as our case because it demonstrates the common patterns of anti-Kurdish riots in western Turkey during the heydays of the democratic opening process.

The event structure analysis presented in this chapter, first of all, brings light to the question of *whether the riots erupted spontaneously or were produced by elites?* The analysis demonstrates that extreme right political actors played a key role in converting non-violent gatherings into violent events when a triggering incident inflamed emergent ethnic tensions on the ground. Hence, while our analysis shows that the riots were produced by political elites, their production did not merely depend on the political will of these elites. Extreme right elites seized the opportunity of mass tension and mobilization, and transformed non-violent gatherings/mobilization into riotous violence.

The analysis also demonstrates the key role that the state played in this process. More specifically, I will show that the *failure of security forces* to stop the mob played a fundamental role in the escalation of violence and its reproduction. This non-intervention - or “state inaction” – not only created a major political opportunity for extreme right violent mobilization but also legitimizes and normalizes violent practice of ordinary civilians. As we will see, however, state non-intervention does not mean that the state unconditionally supported activities of extreme right elites. On the contrary, while the state did not interfere with the mob before and during violence in order not to confront the “civilians”, it engaged in “selective repression” by arresting the extreme right actors who led the mob once the crowd dissipated. Hence, while the state and the extreme right seem to be “on the same side” during the riots, our analysis points to the existence of political contention between the governing and the extreme right *ülkücü* movement.

Finally, our analysis illustrates *how violence is related to the ethnic boundary transformation process*. Violence is both a consequence of ethnic boundary transformation processes as well as an integral part of the contestation over changing boundaries. More specifically, the event structure analysis presented in this chapter will show how violence can (1)

become a tool to *enforce old ethnic boundaries* on Kurdish residents by making them conform to dominant Turkish identity on the one hand, and (2) *solidify ethnic divisions*, by geographically displacing “bad Kurds” from the town, on the other hand.

1. Event Structure Analysis

This chapter will rely on event structure analysis, which is a computer-assisted method of analysis to interpret qualitative narrative sequences (Griffin, 1993). Based on the original narrative of riots in Altinova --an outline of the temporal sequence of actions before and after the riots -- I developed a “causal diagram of the logical structure of action” that demonstrates how I (as the analyst) interpret the causal connectedness of the events in this temporal sequence (Griffin, 1993, p. 1107). The strength of event structure analysis as a method is its ability to link “event time” with the larger macro-historical context. Put differently, while demonstrating the significance of purposive action and contingency, event structure analysis takes into account how purposive action ultimately depends upon certain structural (both historical and contextual) factors. Furthermore, conclusions reached are replicable through the production of a “generalized event structure.”

However, the event structure analysis procedures utilized in this chapter depart from established strategies in a couple of important ways. While established event structure analysis methods have significant benefits for the study of ethnic riots, they also have certain limitations. One of the first problems pertains to defining the limits of “an event” in the case of “riots”. That is because riots are the culmination of an interconnected *chain of events* that is spread over various days. Hence, rather than a singular *event* that starts with a specific action and ends in a specific way, riots resemble a protest *wave* which rises, culminates, and wanes over time.

Secondly, as I will elaborate in the following sections, riotous violence shows ‘cyclical patterns’. For instance, there are multiple attacks during riots - which I call “attack cycles” - whose resurgence depends upon how the previous attack cycle unfolded. For this reason, unlike conventional event structure analyses, we do not derive information only based on the temporal sequence of actions but we will also trace recurrent and evolving patterns in a chain of events in order to provide a causal interpretation of riot development.

In order to illustrate this strategy, I will first present my construction of separate event structures for the first two days of riots in Altinova. The event structures also reveal the resurgence of violence in the form of different attack cycles that took place on each day. Then, I will present the generalized event structure for both days and discuss the key theoretical insights that emerge from the comparison of both days. In the conclusion of the chapter, I will present a general scheme of the “riot wave” in Altinova which shows some general findings based on the comparison of different attack cycles while preserving the logic of the temporal sequence.

Thirdly, I depart from conventional event structure methods in the way that I produce the narratives. Since riots are massive incidents that spill over a couple of days, it is hard to find reliable “original narratives” of the events. Likewise, there is not a single but a number of competing narratives about how these events occurred. Hence, I used and triangulated various sources to construct the original narrative that I use as my “raw narrative”. This narrative is constructed based on reports on the Altinova riots by two different human rights associations and twenty news articles from different newspapers (both mainstream, right-wing (nationalist and Islamist), and left-wing newspapers). Based on this triangulation, I developed a coherent temporal sequence of events. To strengthen reliability, I did not add an event to the sequence unless it was reported on by two independent sources.

2. The Narrative and The Context of the 2008 Altinova Riots

2.1. The Narrative

In the fall of 2008, Altinova, a small rural town on the Aegean coast of Turkey, was torn by anti-Kurdish communal violence. On September 30, the first day of *Ramadan*, a verbal exchange between Kurdish and Turkish residents turned into a fight, where two Turkish people were killed and six were injured. The verbal exchange involved a personal dispute: Oguz Dortkardes, a local resident was warned by some Kurdish residents who were disturbed by loud music coming from his car. The discussion turned into a fight with the involvement of nearby local and Kurdish residents. Murat Aksu (a Kurdish resident) heard about the fight, came to the fight scene with his van and drove his van into the crowd. Oguz Dortkardesler died on the spot. Ezer Kircali, another town resident died in the hospital.

As Murat Aksu was being arrested by the gendarmerie, the news spread in town. Shortly afterwards, vengeful residents formed a mob and attacked homes and shops of Kurdish residents in town. Kurds, who had nothing to do with the original fight, locked themselves in their homes and called the security forces for help. The response by security forces was late and insufficient in size. The angry mob did not calm down until additional security forces came from neighboring towns. Later in the evening, once again, 200-300 people started to march with anti-Kurdish slogans in neighborhoods where Kurds reside. The electricity in those neighborhoods were cut off, which was immediately followed by attacks targeting homes and shops of Kurds. While asking the group to disperse, the gendarmerie mainly watched the attacks and recorded the incidents with video cameras. Later in the evening, officials (the governor and the captain of the gendarmerie forces)

came to the town. The attacks continued throughout the night and then waned. Fifteen people who were identified as ‘leading’ the attacks were arrested later.

The next day, October 1, events further escalated. It was the day of funeral ceremonies for the two local residents killed on September 30. Early in the day, the whole town hung Turkish flags in their windows. Fearing a resurgence of the attacks, some Kurdish residents also hung Turkish flags as a protection. Oguz Dortkardesler’s funeral took place early in the day in a neighboring town called Kucukkoy without any incidents. Ezer Kircali’s funeral prayer ceremony took place in the afternoon in Altinova’s local mosque, with the attendance of 3500-4000 people --including people who came from neighboring towns. The funeral procession from the mosque to the cemetery turned into a nationalist march. Carrying large Turkish flags and shouting anti-Kurdish slogans “Altinova is and will remain ours,” and “Martyrs don’t die, homeland won’t divide”, the crowd changed its route to pass through neighborhoods where Kurds reside. The mob started attacking homes and shops of Kurds once again; the gendarmarie forces did not intervene. When the crowd reached the cemetery for the burial ceremony, a parliament member from the ultra-nationalist *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party, MHP), called on “the people of Altinova” to resist the attempts of “those groups [i.e. Kurds] to dominate the town”. The crowd then blocked the highway and marched to the town center while continuing their attacks on the homes and shops of Kurds. When the mob reached the town center, a smaller group demanded the release of friends who had been arrested. Then, they were dispersed by the gendarmarie into smaller groups. Once the events waned, those who ‘led’ the events were arrested.

2.2. Local Context

Altinova is a rural district of Ayvalik, a touristic town on the Aegean coast of Turkey. The town is home to an approximate population of 10,000 people, most of whom make a living from potato crops, small shop ownership, construction business, as well as touristic commerce and services in the summer season. There are two sizeable minority ethnic groups living in Altinova: a Roma population that dwells on the outskirts of the district, and Kurds who primarily migrated to the town throughout the 1990s and 2000s. As of 2010, 8.68% of the Altinova population were estimated to be Kurdish migrants. Some areas of the district are densely populated by Kurds and referred to as “Kurdish neighborhoods” by local residents.

Human rights reports point towards increasing tension between Kurds and local residents in town prior to the riots. Local residents were reportedly discontent with Kurds not conforming to the norms of Turkish national identity (e.g., not hanging Turkish flags in their windows), speaking Kurdish ‘loudly’ in the public sphere, carrying colors of the Kurdish national flag in weddings and their increasing ‘dominance’ in town. There were also rumors about the involvement of Kurds in clandestine (i.e. mafia-type) economic activities, which often implies a connection with the PKK. Some victims also pointed out possible economic resentment of some town residents towards the enrichment of some Kurdish families (İHD, 2008; Mazlum-Der, 2008)ç Some “Kurdish” children interviewed by Human rights organizations also made note that other children at school did not talk to them after news of deadly clashes between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces (Mazlum-Der 2008). While these accounts suggest preexisting tensions on the ground, there were no attempted lynchings or other visible hate crimes in the district prior to the 2008 riots.³¹

³¹ Except for an incident, when the shop of a Kurdish resident was attack one month before the riots. (<http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/altinovada-etnik-gerilim-buyuyor-901292/>).

2.3. Historical Context

The Altinova riots erupted during the heyday of the democratic opening process initiated by the AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*) government. The AKP received a record-high number of votes from the Kurdish population in the July 2007 general elections due to its pre-election promise to resolve the Kurdish issue by extending democracy and welfare. Shortly after the elections, in June 2008, the parliament passed a bill for a Kurdish-channel on official state television as an overture to its Kurdish electoral base. Furthermore, in September 2008, the same month as the riots in Altinova, the “first direct meetings with the Turkish state and insurgent leadership (i.e. the PKK)” took place in Oslo (Tezcür, 2014, p. 180).

The democratic opening process and peace negotiations was indicative of heightened political competition on two fronts. On the one hand, it was a period of political empowerment for the pro-Kurdish political party, Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi, DTP). The riots erupted in a period when the pro-Kurdish DTP – in collaboration with a web of socialist organizations and social movements - gained a significant presence in Turkish politics with 22 members in the parliament. This was a historically significant turning point in the history of Turkish politics. Kurds, who were excluded from political power since the Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923, were able to become a significant opposition bloc within the existing political system. Furthermore, before and after the elections, the Kurdish-leftist bloc had engaged in a vibrant campaign of grassroots mobilization in various Western cities and towns in Turkey.

Altinova was not immune from this competitive political environment. The bloc joined elections in Balıkesir (the city of Altinova) and received 3.2% of votes in Altinova. This meant that less than half of the Kurdish residents in Altinova supported the pro-Kurdish political party,

DTP. Not surprisingly, a post-riot interview points out how some residents distinguished between Kurds who supported the PKK and those who did not (Mazlum-Der, 2008). The distinction between the good and bad Kurds, which I observed in my fieldwork in all districts and discussed in Chapter 3, was also present in Altinova.

On the other hand, however, there was also a growing nationalist challenge led by extreme right nationalist parties against the governing party – the AKP - and its democratic opening process. While the government endorsed its commitment to the democratic opening process, the extreme-right Nationalist and Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) raised its opposition to any form of democratic resolution of the Kurdish conflict and extension of cultural rights of Kurds (including the use of Kurdish language) as discussed in Chapter 4. The central message of MHP's electoral campaign was full-fledged opposition to the Kurdish opening (aka democratic opening) process. Capitalizing on this nationalist challenge, the MHP managed to increase its votes by 5.9% country-wide in 2007 general elections. The MHP's rise was more pronounced in Altinova, where it increased its vote share from 17% in 2002 elections to 26% in 2007 elections.

3. Event Structure Analysis of Altinova Riots

How did the Altinova riots occur? To explain these processes, below I present and discuss two concrete event structures for two days of riots in Altinova: September 30, 2008 (Day 1) and October 1, 2008 (Day 2). These concrete event structures are developed using the original narratives (temporal sequence of actions), which are presented in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 as event chronologies³². Each event structure will be discussed separately.

³² This chronology is the raw data that used as an input for ETHNO.

3.1. Concrete Event Structure of Altinova Riots, Day 1: September 30, 2008

We will start our discussion of event structure from the gathering of local residents (Gat) after the news of the fight and killings spread in town (Spr). As shown in Figure 1 below, there is a causal link between these two events (linking Spr to Gat) because the spread of news in a particular way was crucial for a crowd of local residents to gather at the site of the original fight. This gathering, then, became critical factor in the further development of riots.

Table 5.1. Chronology of Riots in Altinova, September 30, 2008 - Day 1

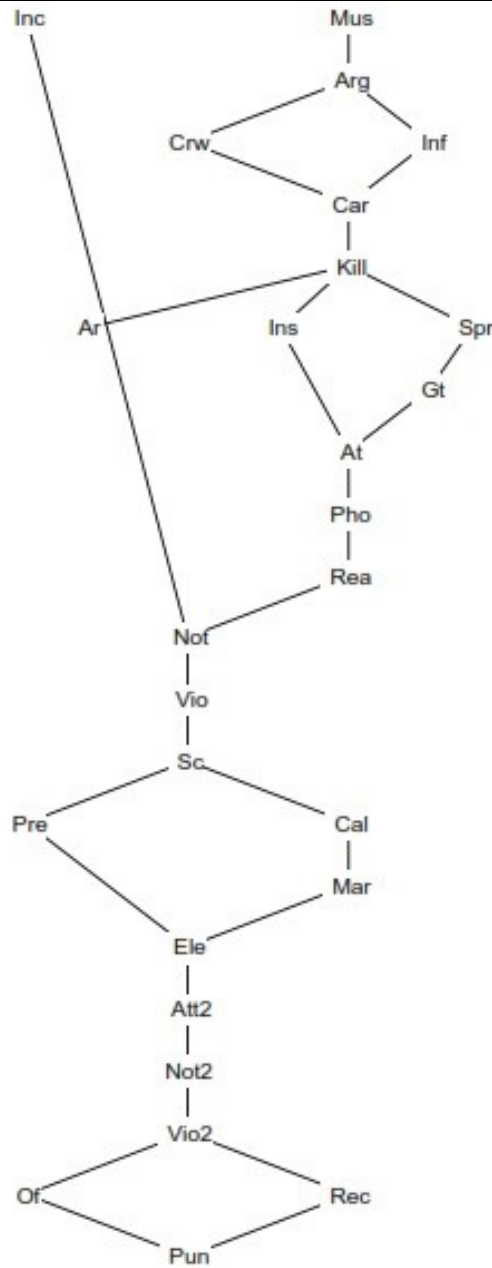
ETHNO Abbreviation for Action	Order of Action in Chronology	Description of Action
Mus	1	O. Dortkardes listened to loud music in his car
Arg	2	An argument broke out between Dortkardes and a Kurdish shopkeeper
Crw	3	Some local residents gathered
Inf	4	Kurdish residents informed M. Aksu, a Kurdish resident, who had a previous resentment with Dortkardes
Car	5	M. Aksu drove his car on the crowd
Kil	6	Dortkardes died on the scene, Ezer Kircali died in hospital
Arr	7	Aksu was arrested by the gendarmerie
Spr	8	News of the event spread in town
Gat	9	Local residents gathered
Ins	10	Some people incited the gathering crowd
Att	11	The crowd attacked shops and homes of the Kurds
Pho	12	Kurds called the gendarmerie to intervene
Rea	13	Commander did not take the call seriously
Inc	14	There were not enough security personnel in the town
Not	15	The gendarmerie did not intervene sufficiently
Vio	16	Violence continued
Sec	17	Additional security personnel came to the town
Cal	18	Local residents ‘calmed down’
Pre	19	Security forces took precautions in the areas where Kurdish residents largely reside
Mar	20	Later in the evening, 200-300 marched
Ele	21	Electricity in Kurdish neighborhoods were shut down
Att2	22	The crowd attacked the Kurdish shops and homes again

Not2	23	The gendarmerie told the group to disperse but did not intervene effectively
Vio2	24	The group continued their attack throughout the evening
Rec	25	The gendarmerie recorded the events
Off	26	The city mayor and the gendarmerie captain came late
Pun	27	15 people who were ‘leading’ the events were arrested

3.1.1. From “Angry Crowd” to “Violent Mob”: Violence Specialists, Instigation and “Production of Violence”

The gathering of an angry crowd in the site of the murder was a critical first step for the formation of a violent mob. Accounts of officials and victims underline the role of a group of ‘instigators’ that led the crowd toward violence. While this ‘instigation’, which we will discuss below, was important for the production of violence, it could not have happened without the gathering of this angry crowd. That’s why, in the construction of the event structure of the first day of the Altinova riots, I put a causal link between gathering of town residents (Gat) and instigation of right wing actors (Ins). On the one hand, this is based on the idea that political actors cannot produce social unrest any time at their will. On the other hand, the extreme right movement in Turkey in the post-1980 era has been very careful not to trigger state repression and to avoid marginalization. As we discussed in Chapter 4, in the case of violent mobilizations, the crowd provided ‘legitimacy’ to the actions of the political actors that utilized political violence as one of their action repertoires. After all, as Wilkinson observed in the case of anti-Muslim riots in India, “if one demonstrator throws a stone, it is interpreted as “the crowd” throwing stones...” (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 24). Hence, gathering of a large crowd is a crucial first step for the later production of the riots in Altinova.

Figure 5.1. Concrete Event Structure, September 30, 2008 (Day 1)



Abbreviations:

- Arg: An argument broke out between Dortkardes and a Kurdish shopkeeper
- Arr: Aksu was arrested by the gendarmerie
- Att: The crowd attacked shops and homes of the Kurds
- Att2: The crowd attacked the Kurdish shops and homes again
- Cal: Local residents ‘calmed down’
- Car: M. Aksu drove his car on the crowd
- Crw: Some local residents gathered as they heard about the argument
- Ele: Electricity in Kurdish neighborhoods were shut down
- Gat: Local residents gathered
- Inc: There were not enough security personnel in the town
- Inf: Kurdish residents informed M. Aksu, a Kurdish resident, who had a previous resentment with Dortkardes
- Ins: Some people instigated the gathering crowd
- Kil: Dortkardes died on the scene, Ezer Kircali died in hospital and six others injured
- Mar: Later in the evening, 200-300 started to march with slogans again
- Mus: O. Dortkardes, a local resident, listened to loud music in his car
- Not: The gendarmerie did not intervene sufficiently
- Not2: The gendarmerie told the group to disperse but did not intervene effectively
- Off: The city mayor and the gendarmerie captain came later in the evening.
- Pho: Kurds called the gendarmerie to intervene
- Pre: Security forces took precautions in the areas where Kurdish residents largely reside
- Pun: 5 people who were ‘leading’ the events were arrested
- Rea: Commander did not take the call seriously and told him that things are not serious
- Rec: The gendarmerie did not intervene (mainly watched) and shoot videos of the event

Sec: Additional security personnel came to the town from neighboring towns and the city
Spr: News of the event spread in town
Vio: Violence continued
Vio2: The group continued their attack throughout the evening

The attack against homes and shops of Kurds in town started (Att) after the gathering crowd was instigated (incited to action) by a particular group (Ins). I put a causal link between Ins and Att using ETHNO. Was it really necessary for a group of people to ‘instigate’ the gathering crowd for the initiation of violence? For instance, in the case of ethnic violence in Eastern Europe, Petersen (2002) discuss how without any leaders, ordinary people formed a mob and committed atrocious violence against their neighbors. For Petersen (2002), the violence was spontaneous and it was *emotions* that led the crowd (4) -- not ultranationalists, not elites, not the state, and not a vague ‘particular group of people.’ So, why should we not assume that people, who were furious with the killing of two and the injury of six townspeople, engaged in spontaneous violence as revenge? The reason I consider instigation of the crowd as a causal prerequisite for violent attacks depends on contextual/empirical and theoretical information.

The narrative of the event, whereby official and victim’s accounts of the incidents point towards the leadership and intimidation by a particular group of people, is supported by the fact that the town neither had a history of ethnic violence targeting Kurds nor instances of vigilante violence towards criminals of any ethnic background. Furthermore, unlike typical lynching cases in the US South, where forming search parties to track the ‘black criminal’ had come to be a common practice, in most riots, the initial gathering does not have the purpose of generalized violence towards a particular person or a group.

In our case, the gathering of the townspeople after the spread of the news does not clearly suggest the formation of a mob for vengeance. In the context of a small town, despite existing ethnic tensions on the ground, it is still reasonable to expect that people gathered after hearing the news and were trying to understand what happened since six local residents were also injured on the scene. Furthermore, and in line with studies of ethnic riots and collective violence, the mediation of particular actors – i.e., ‘violence specialists’ (Tilly 2003), ‘riot specialists’ (Brass 2003), and ‘rumor-mongers’, those who direct and organize violence (Tambiah 1996) - was crucial in translating the gathering of enraged townspeople in Altinova into anti-Kurdish violence. In Altinova, these specialists in violence were successful in converting (1) a non-violent gathering into a violent one, (2) a rage against a particular ‘Kurdish’ resident who killed two people into a large-scale action against all Kurds in the town. As we will see the role of extreme right activists as violent specialists is also demonstrated in other episodes of Altinova riots as well. Actually, this conversion and leadership role played by extreme right political actors was also visible in other instances of communal violence against Kurds. My interview data on the large scale riots in Durusu and the lynching attempt of Kurdish workers in Kirazli all point towards the critical role that *ülküçü* activists play in leading the crowd and/or doing the bulk of the “violent” work.

3.1.2. State Inaction and Escalation of Violence

When violent attacks started (Att), Kurds called the gendarmerie on the phone and asked them to intervene to protect them from the violent crowd (Pho). Despite the call for help, there was no intervention on the part of security forces to stop the violent mob (Not). But why did the security forces not intervene? The reason why security forces did not intervene is open to different interpretations. The fact that the state did not intervene to stop the attackers could have two possible explanations. Security forces were either *unable* (i.e. insufficient) to stop the rioters or

they were *unwilling* to do so. These two different explanations also echo debates in the literature regarding whether state inaction demonstrates *absence of state capacity* or *lack of state autonomy* (*i.e. impartiality*). One group of scholars has underlined that decline or absence of state capacity creates a power vacuum and makes states unable to respond or contain societal violence (Kohli, 1990). Some authors have contested this view showing that the absence of state autonomy, not capacity, is critical in ethnic riots (Wilkinson 2004).

This debate is critical since it represents two competing narratives of the same event in Altinova. The governor admits that security forces did not stop the violence when it first started because there was not enough security personnel in the town. The mayor also holds this view. The victims, on the other hand, maintain that gendarmerie did not intervene on purpose but told them (the victims being attacked) that mob violence was not a big deal and it would dissipate by itself (IHD 2008; Mazlum-Der 2008). In line with victim reports, the governor also admitted in one of his interviews that they hesitated to use force against the crowd which was “upset” due to the murder of two local residents. Hence, while absence of state autonomy and impartiality – meaning purposeful decision for not intervening to the crowd – seems to be a more viable explanation in this case, since we do not have clear evidence of this, I provided a causal link from *both* security officer’s not taking the events seriously (Rea) *and* absence of sufficient security forces (Inc) to state non-intervention (Not), thus taking into account the effects of both of these two processes.

State non-intervention towards initial attacks led the violence to further escalate (Vio). The causal link I put between state non-intervention (Not) and riots (Vio) (see Figure 1) is in line with the extensive research on ethnic riots, communal violence, and lynchings, which suggests how effective intervention of security forces to stop the incidents is critical in determining whether or not early stages of mob formation escalate into violence (*i.e.* riots, lynchings) (see Griffin 1993;

Wilkinson 2004; Brass 2003; also see Petersen 2002).³³ As violence continued, additional security personnel came from neighboring towns and cities (Sec). While there is no evidence in any of the narratives that additional security personnel utilized force or repression against the crowd, the crowd nonetheless calmed down and dissipated after their arrival (Cal). Nevertheless, I put a causal link between arrival of additional security in town (Sec) and calming down of the crowd (Cal) because the arrival of additional security gave the signal to the crowd that the previous inaction on the side of the state has ended, which probably led to fears of arrest and repression. After the crowd calmed down, the police and gendarmerie stayed in the neighborhood as a precaution (Pre) in case a mob gathers for violence again.

3.1.3. Re-production of Violence

Another episode of violence started in the late evening of this first day. The structure of this new episode, which I call “reproduction of violence,” bears certain resemblances with the previous episode. After the mob calmed down (Cal), later in the evening, a smaller group of approximately 300 people started to march with nationalist and anti-Kurdish slogans in the areas that Kurds dwelled (Mar). As seen in figure 5.1. above, there is a causal link between state non-intervention (Not) and this second nationalist march (Mar). The non-intervention of security forces when the mob violence started in the early evening probably gave assurance to this smaller group to re-launch another attack in the evening. However, since the police and gendarmerie were already in the neighborhood as a precaution (Pre), the attackers cut the electricity in the places where Kurds dwelled. Then, the mob started attacking homes and shops of Kurdish residents once again. The

³³ Recounting a particular story on Montenegrin attack of Muslim neighborhoods in an ethnically heterogeneous village, Petersen (2002) notes how violence stopped once the regular army came to the scene (5).

fact that electricity in these neighborhoods was shut down points towards the planned nature of these attacks, resembling the launch of the Rwandan genocide (see Section IV).

3.1.4. State Inaction and Selective Repression

The gendarmerie told the group to disperse but did not intervene in the mob (Not2). Unlike the accounts of the governor and mayor who explain the initial non-intervention with the insufficiency of security forces, this time, despite the arrival and presence of additional police and gendarmerie, the security forces did not stop the mob violence. When a victim asked a gendarmerie why they were just ‘watching’ the events, he calmly responded ‘not to worry’ since ‘no one was killed or injured’ and assured him that they were ‘recording’ (Rec) the events (IHD 2008). This non-intervention gives further strength to the ‘state unwilling’ explanation relative to the ‘incapacity’ explanation. The events continued throughout the evening and eventually dissipated. Later in the evening, the governor and commander of the gendarmerie came to the town. Furthermore, the people that were identified as leading the crowd were arrested (Pun). Here, the arrests were linked to recording because the ‘leaders’ were identified through the recordings (Rec) and the arrival of military and political officials to the town (Off).

3.2. Concrete Event Structure of Altinova Riots, Day 2: October 1, 2008

On October 1, 2008, the riots further escalated. It also produced patterns similar to the development of riots on Day 1. For the sake of space and to avoid repetition, in analyzing the event-structure of this second day, we will pay less attention to the logic of causal links between the concrete action patterns already described in Day 1 (such as the role of the crowd, instigators, non-intervention and selective repression by the state), but highlight those aspects of riot formation that are different.

The second day of the riots started with a symbolic demonstration of nationalism by the local residents of Altinova. People hung Turkish flags in their windows (Fla). Then, at the afternoon prayer, Ezer Kircali's funeral ceremony took place in a local mosque with the gathering of four thousand people (Mem). After the prayer, the crowd started walking to the cemetery as part of the funeral procession. The procession suddenly turned into a nationalist demonstration whereby the crowd was shouting nationalist and anti-Kurdish slogans while waving a huge Turkish flag in their hands (Mar). The crowd of the nationalist march was a product of (1) the funeral prayer, which was a reason why people gathered in the first instance (Mem), (2) the rising nationalist feelings in the populace that demonstrated it in the form of hanging nationalist flags by residents in the town (Fla) and (3) *ülküçü* activists most of whom came from neighboring towns for the funeral (Ulk).

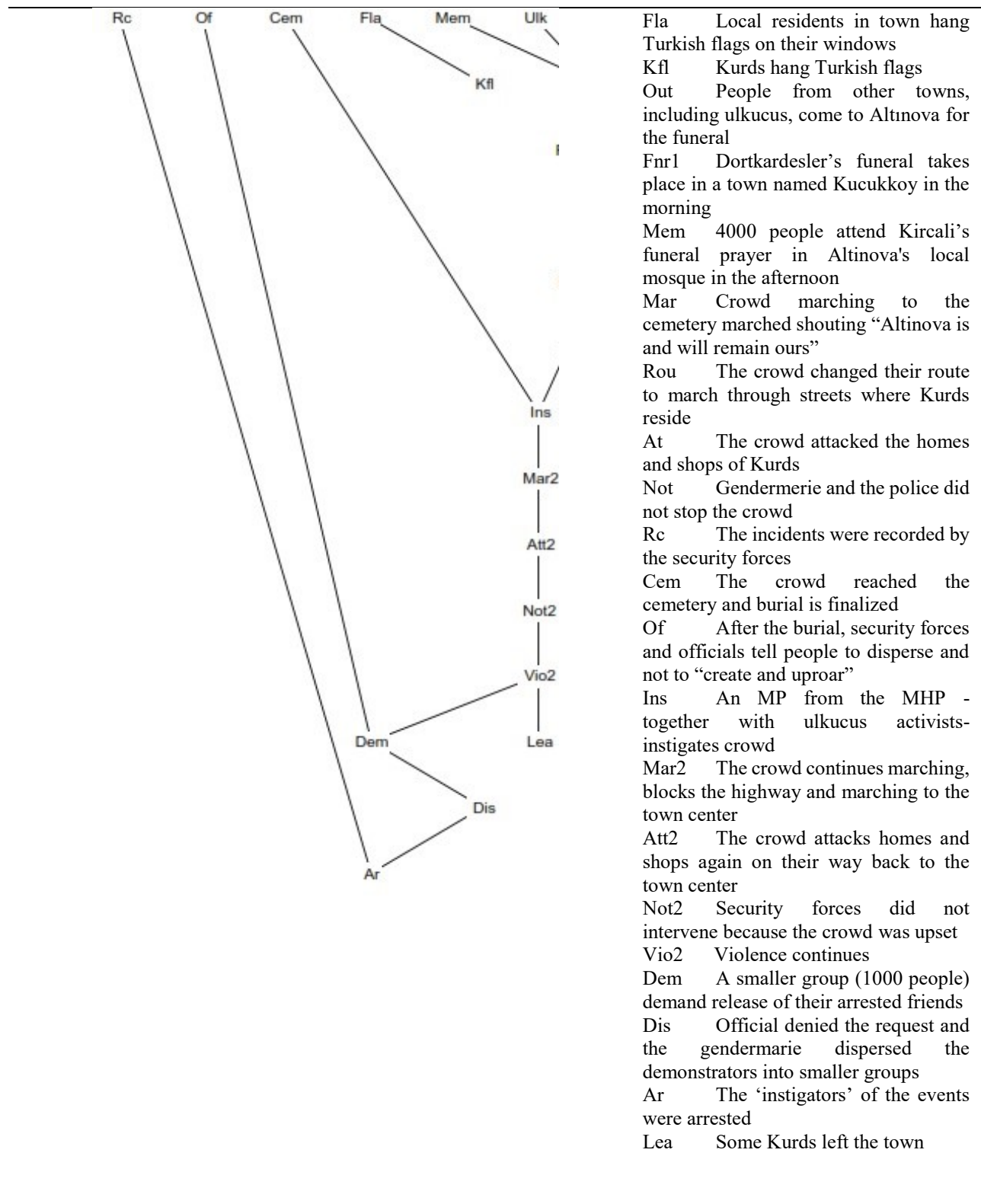
Table 5.2. Chronology of Riots in Altinova, October 1, 2008 - Day 2

ETHNO	Abbreviation for Action	Order of Action in Chronology	Description of Action
	Fla	1	Local residents in town hang Turkish flags in their windows
	Ulk	2	People from other towns, including ulkucus, come to Altinova for the funeral
	Fun	3	Dortkardesler's funeral takes place in a town named Kucukkoy in the morning
	Mem	4	4000 people attend Kircali's funeral prayer in Altinova's local mosque in the afternoon
	Mar	5	Crowd marching to the cemetery shouting "Altinova is and will remain ours"
	Rou	6	The crowd changed its route to march through streets where Kurds reside
	Att	7	The crowd attacked the homes and shops of Kurds
	Not	8	Gendermerie and the police did not stop the crowd
	Vio	9	Violence continued
	Rc	10	The incidents were recorded by the security forces
	Cem	11	The crowd reached the cemetery and burial is finalized

Of	.....	12	After the burial, security forces and officials tell people to disperse and not to “create an uproar”
Ins	.....	13	An MP from the MHP -together with ulkucus activists- instigates crowd
Mar2	.....	14	The crowd continues marching, blocks the highway and marching to the town center
Att2	.....	15	The crowd attacks homes and shops again on their way back to the town center
Not2	.....	16	Security forces did not intervene because the crowd was upset
Vio2	.....	17	Violence continued
Dem	.....	18	A smaller group (1000 people) demand release of their arrested friends
Dis	.....	19	Officials denied the request and the gendarmarie dispersed the demonstrators into smaller groups
Arr	.....	20	The ‘instigators’ of the events were arrested

Instead of following the regular route to the cemetery, the crowd walked through the areas of the town where Kurdish residents dwelled (Rou). This resembles how religious processions go through the neighborhood of minorities in India for provoking violence (Brass 2003). While passing through these neighborhoods, the attacks started once again (Att). Victim accounts suggest that the attacks were generally undertaken by 200-300 people in the crowd (IHD 2008). Of course, this does not mean that this “specialized group” was totally independent from the “ordinary folks.” However, the overall story suggests that a specialized group was active in the conversion of the nationalist march into a violent riot. Similar to the attacks on day 1, the police and gendarmerie did not intervene or stop the attacks even though they were present (Not). Later on, the governor stated that they did not stop and tolerated “incidents” since “people were upset” because of the funerals (IHD 2008). The attacks continued and the crowd eventually reached the cemetery.

Figure 5.2. Concrete Event Structure, October 1, 2008 (Day 2)



After the burial was finalized in the cemetery (Cem) the officials told the crowd to disperse peacefully (Off). However, a parliamentary member from the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP) gave an instigating speech to the crowd (Ins) whereby he called on “the people of Altinova” to resist the attempts of “those groups [i.e. Kurds] to dominate the town.” People also recount that the MP was escorted by a group of young *ülküçü* activists some of whom attended the funeral from other towns (IHD 2008). Afterwards, another nationalist march started by a group that attended the funeral (Mar2). The group first blocked the highway and then started another attack against Kurdish homes and shops while marching back to the town center (Att). The security forces did not intervene because they viewed the group as being “upset” (Not) and the group continued their violent demonstration.

3.2.1. Challenging the State

After the group reached the town center, a smaller group of around one thousand people demanded the release of 15 people that were arrested after the nationalist attacks on September 30 (Day 1) (Dem). They threatened the security forces that they would not disperse – and would continue with their protests – unless their “friends” were released. The officials refused the demand, security forces intervened and dispersed this group (Dis).

There are two interrelated reasons why I see a causal link between the group’s demand for the release of arrested people (Dem) and the intervention of security to disperse the group (Dis). First, while demanding the “release of their friends”, the group – for the first time since the beginning of the riots - signals an open challenge to state authority. Secondly, this smaller group, “demanding the release of their friends” were a more homogeneous group - mainly comprised of extreme right political actors, activists and their sympathizers – alienated from the crowd. Hence, while the state authorities were hesitant to intervene against the crowd in the course of the riots,

they were less hesitant to intervene against these numerically small, less heterogeneous claim-making group. After dispersing the group, additional people who were “leading the crowd” were arrested (Ar). This echoes the findings of chapter 4, which showed that evading state repression was a crucial tool for *ülküçü* movement for its use of violence as an action repertoire. In this case, suspending the strategy of evading state repression by not ‘directly targeting and challenging the state’, resulted in direct repression of the movement.

4. What Do the Altinova Riots Show? Violent Events and General Theory

What is the general story that emerges from the discussion of the causal links among the distinct actions in the Altinova riots? In this concluding section, I present the generalized event structure of two days of riots in Altinova. This is a generalized model of concepts/mechanisms that correspond to key actions within the concrete event structures. In the construction of the generalized event structure, I followed a procedure that is similar to the construction of concrete event structures. The generalized event structure is also bound by and cannot contradict the temporality and causal links provided by actual actions in the concrete event structure. Henceforth, I will discuss the generalized event structure with a primary focus on its relation to three conceptual debates.

4.1. Elites or Masses: Are riots produced?

Our event structure analysis of the Altinova riots demonstrated the centrality of the role played by “violent specialists” in the emergence of riots. The centrality of the role that extreme right activists play is in line with the literature which argues that riots are produced (Brass 2003; Wilkinson 2004) rather than being spontaneous eruptions of mass anger. However, the current analysis extends existing analyses by showing that forms of mob violence in terms of mass

involvement and extreme right planning are not uniform throughout the riot cycle. Generalized event structures in Figure 5.3 demonstrate that in both days (Day 1 and Day 2), initial episodes of violence had more of a mass character while the violent mobilizations that followed the initial mob violence are more planned and more militant based.

In the initial phase of “**mass riots**”, the crowd/gathering precedes extreme right instigation/incitement. The role that extreme right activists play is in the “conversion” of an angry crowd into a violent mob, rather than planning riots from the beginning. This has important theoretical implications by suggesting that extreme right elites and political actors cannot produce the initial mob violence at their own will. A triggering event or a gathering that elevates existing tensions among “ordinary folks” is necessary. As we have seen, when alienated by this crowd and ordinary folks, extreme right groups are more easily suppressed by state actors. Hence, what extreme right actors do must be conceived as “seizing the opportunity” to lead the masses once these tensions resurface through random incidents (like criminal events).

While organized political actors play a fundamental role in seizing the opportunity for converting mass eruptions of initial anger into riotous violence, they also engage in re-production of violence once the initial violence fades away. In these “**organized riots**”, extreme right actors play a more direct role in gathering the initial crowd and planning violence in advance. However, it is noteworthy to underline that these more organized violent attacks included more extreme right militants (and fewer ordinary civilians), were less crowded, and were much more violent.

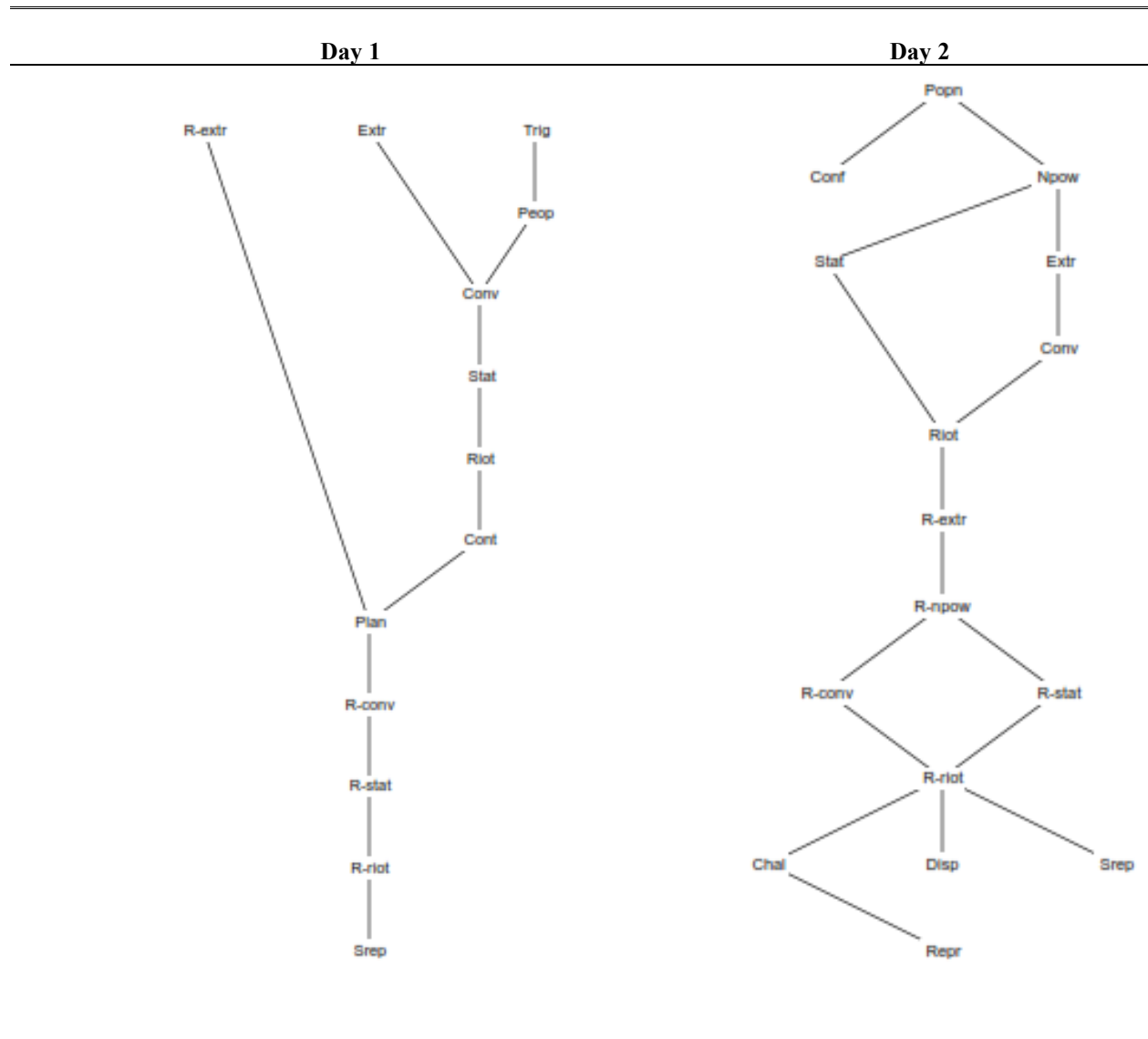
Table 5.3. Concrete Actions and Their General Meaning, Altinova Riots, Day 1

Concrete Action	General Meaning
O.Dortkardes and E. Kircali were killed by a Kurdish resident (Kill)	Triggering event reinforcing ethnic conceptions (Trig)
Local residents gathered (Gat)	Crowd formation by ordinary people (Peop)
Some people instigated the gathering crowd (Ins)	Right wing/fascist organization (Extr)
The crowd attacked shops and homes of the Kurds (Att)	Conversion of protest into violence (Conv)
Commander did not take the call seriously and told him that things are not serious (Rea)	State support/consent for nationalist violence (Stat)
The gendarmerie did not intervene sufficiently (Not)	State support/consent for nationalist violence (Riot)
Violence continued (Vio)	Riotous violence
Additional security personnel came to the town (Sec)	State containment of riots (Cont)
Later in the evening, 200-300 started to march with slogans (Mar)	Right wing/fascist organization (R-extr)
Electricity in Kurdish neighborhoods were shut down (Ele)	Violence planning (Plan)
The crowd attacked the Kurdish shops and homes again (Att2)	Conversion of protest into violence (R-conv)
The gendarmerie told the group to disperse but did not intervene effectively (Not2)	State support/consent for nationalist violence (R-stat)
The group continued their attack throughout the evening (Vio2)	Riotous violence (R-riot)
15 people who were ‘leading’ the events were arrested (Pun)	Selective "repression" (Srep)

Table 5.4. Concrete Actions and Their General Meaning, Altinova Riots, Day 2

Concrete Action	General Meaning
Local residents in town hang Turkish flags on their windows (Fla)	Symbolic display of popular nationalism (Popn)
Kurds hang Turkish flags (Kfl)	Kurds confirming to Turkish nationalism (Conf)
People from other towns, including ulkucus, come to Altinova for the funeral (Out)	Right wing/fascist organization (Extr)
Crowd marching to the cemetery marched shouting "Altinova is and will remain ours" (Mar)	Display of ethnic/national power through collective action (Npow)
The crowd attacked the homes and shops of Kurds (Att)	Conversion of protest into violence (Conv)
Gendermerie and the police did not stop the crowd (Not)	State support/consent for nationalist violence (Cons)
Violence continued (Vio)	Riotous violence (Riot)
An MP from the extreme right party instigates crowd (Ins)	Right wing/fascist organization (R-extr)
The crowd continues marching, blocks the highway and marching to the town center (Mar2)	Display of ethnic/national power through collective action (R-npow)
The crowd attacks homes and shops again on their way back to the town center (Att2)	Conversion of protest into violence (R-conv)
Security forces did not intervene because the crowd was upset (Not2)	State support/consent for nationalist violence (R-cons)
Violence continued (Vio2)	Riotous violence (Riot2)
A smaller group (1000 people) demand release of their arrested friends (Dem)	Right-wing challenge of state authority (Chal)
Official denied the request and the gendermarie dispersed the demonstrators into smaller groups (Dis)	State repression/control of protest/violence (Repe)
The 'instigators' of the events were arrested (Arr)	Selective "repression" (Srep)
Some Kurds left the town (Lea)	Displacement of "bad Kurds" (Disp)

Figure 5.3. Generalized Event Structures, Day 1 and Day 2

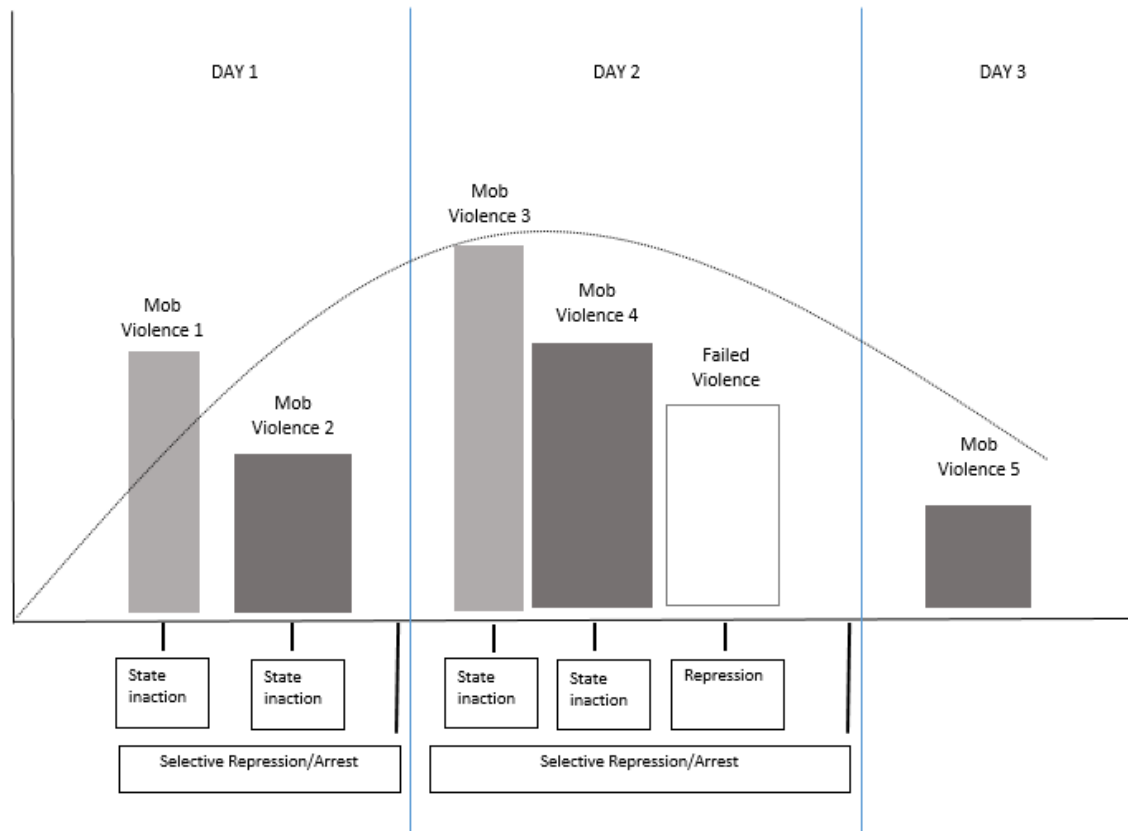


4.2. State: Compliance and Containment

Figure 5.3 also demonstrates how riots escalate when initial attacks are not stopped by the state’s security forces. Furthermore, this ‘inaction’ was a result of the state's decision not to repress

the rioters, rather than its inability or lack of capacity on the part of local governments to stop the incidents (see Brass 2003; Wilkinson 2004)³⁴.

Figure 5.4. Riot Escalation Scheme



However, state response to rioters in general and violence specialists in particular was far more complicated. While the state did not repress rioters, which led to a further escalation of riots, it also tried to gain control of the process through using *selective repression*. While security forces did not use repression against the violent crowd, leaders of violent attacks were arrested on both evenings once violence was over (see Figure 5.4). Put differently, the overall state response to riots was to give consent to violence and unrest when it was attended by the *crowd*; and use strategic

³⁴ The official approach of not intervening with the riots were presented in more detail in concrete event structure discussions.

repression towards extreme right activists who were trying to ‘*lead the crowd.*’ The first critical factor in determining the state's response was the level of participation by the masses.

Furthermore, the state used repression against protestors only when “a particular group” directly challenged the state at the end of the second day. Both the demands (release of leaders of riots or continuation of violence) and the smaller size of the group revealed that it was mainly composed of extreme right political actors or their followers. It was the only time when security forces used repression against protestors and the cycle of violent mobilization was broken (Figure 4: Failed Violence, Day 2). Hence, another important factor that determined the overall state response was whether the state was directly challenged by the riots or not.

4.3. Boundary Transformation and Violence

The unfolding of the riots in Altinova also demonstrate how violence and ethnic boundary transformation processes are related. Since this chapter focuses on the “event time” level, concrete event structure does not give us any information regarding the historical process of ethnic boundary formation in the town that precedes the riots. However, the fact that a criminal event (killing of two town residents by a Kurdish resident) sparked anti-Kurdish nationalist demonstrations, which culminated into generalized ethnic violence against all Kurdish residents in town, indicates that there were already existing ethnic tensions on the ground as discussed in Chapter 3. As seen in the generalized event structure, a triggering event that conforms to emerging “us-them boundaries” – e.g. ethnic conceptions towards Kurds such as potential disruptive action; unconstrained display of power - links the boundary transformation process with actual eruption of violence.

Furthermore, the event clearly demonstrates the impact of violence on ethnic boundaries. There were two major impacts of the violence on Kurds living in Altinova. After the riots on day

1, Kurds in Altinova also hung Turkish flags (along with other residents in town) to show that they belong to the “*us*” category openly demonstrating that they were conforming to the established Turkish national identity. This was an example of how ethnic violence was utilized as a tool of “*boundary enforcement*” by local residents. Violence also *reduced uncertainty around boundaries* (i.e. who belonged to them or to us) by activating ethnic divisions between Turks vis-à-vis all Kurds in town. For instance, most of the victims were particularly nervous about how to return to normal life and interact with the local residents after the riots. Even sending their kids to schools became a major concern among the Kurdish residents (Mazlum-Der 2008). This fear led some Kurdish families to leave the town after the riots. The eventual displacement of some Kurdish residents from town due to their fear to interact with the local residents demonstrates how violence actually heightened divisions between Kurdish and local residents.

Chapter 6

The AKP's Double Movement: Limits of Democratization as a Hegemony-Building Strategy

As we have seen in the previous chapter, state inaction played a key role in the emergence and further escalation of anti-Kurdish violence. This finding, however, leads to an important question: Why did state institutions (e.g. governors, security forces) or elected officials (e.g. mayors) choose not to repress emerging anti-Kurdish riots? This question becomes more interesting when we also consider that, especially since 2015, state institutions and the Turkish government started themselves to repress Kurdish civilians as part of a so-called “terrorist hunt”, to emulate extreme right wing strategies, combining communal violence from below with state-led violence from above, and to turn a blind eye to deadly attacks by ISIS in Turkey. These contentious processes, which still continue as of 2016, have been escalating and transforming existing forms of violence in Turkey once again. The massive popular support behind this violence often shocks observers and commentators.

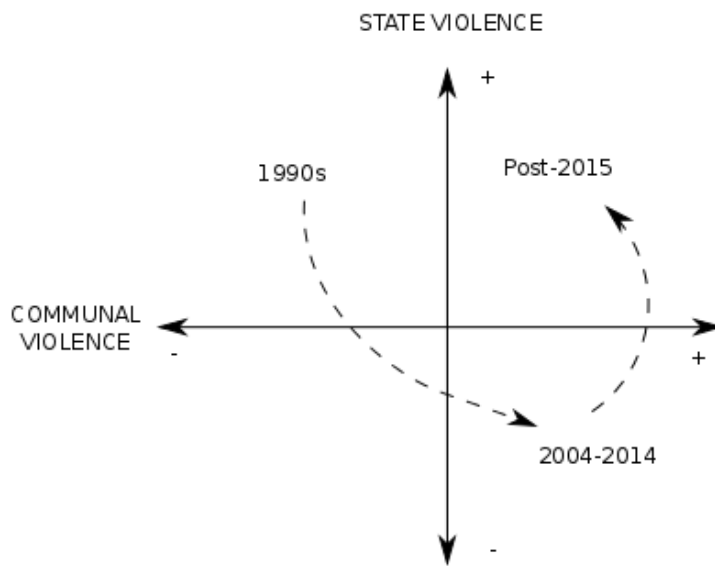
To be able to explain these processes, we need to (1) move from the *event-time* level to the *conjuncture* level, (2) incorporate into our analysis a third major actor that has been shaping Turkish politics since 2002: the AKP, and (3) take into consideration broader geopolitical forces that have been shaping and transforming AKP policies. This chapter retells the story of the escalation of anti-Kurdish violence in a period of democratization (and afterwards), this time with a focus on the role of the governing party and its relationship with broader dynamics. In doing so, in this chapter, I will extend existing findings in two new directions.

First, incorporation of the AKP into the analysis presented in the previous chapters will provide us with a fuller and a more nuanced understanding of the emergence of anti-Kurdish riots in the 2000s. I argue that the AKP's democratic opening process in the 2000s was based on a contradictory double movement: (1) an attempt to co-opt the Kurdish masses through partial extension of democratic rights and liberties, and (2) a full-fledged suppression of the other main contenders for this hegemony-building project: the Kurdish democratic movements. This double movement of democratization, in return, had two major consequences for the development of anti-Kurdish communal violence. On the one hand, it further polarized ethnic division by providing a space for both Kurdish social movements and ultranationalists to mobilize. On the hand, it made it easier for the government to turn a blind eye to the emerging popular anti-Kurdish riots, which helped discipline "bad Kurds". Put differently, state inaction during these riots was a consequence of the AKP's efforts to establish its hegemony over the Kurdish population without directly using force itself. This policy, however, gradually led to the *normalization* and *institutionalization* of riots. As we have shown in previous chapters, Kurdish civilians, pro-Kurdish political parties, shops and civil society organizations increasingly became targets of nationalist mobs during the AKP's "democratic opening". While initial cases of anti-Kurdish mob violence in the early 2000s were met with shock and fear by commentators and society in general, as of 2015, they were perceived and largely accepted as *business as usual*. In short, in the course of the AKP's rule, extremist politics in Turkey was gradually normalized.

Secondly, this chapter will extend the scope of our analysis by explaining the further escalation and radical transformation of anti-Kurdish violence since 2015. The post-2015 era marks a new chapter in the history of anti-Kurdish violence in Turkey. As Figure 6.1 illustrates, the 1990s had been characterized by a high-level of armed conflict (between the Turkish armed

forces and the PKK in South-Eastern Kurdish cities of Turkey) but a low level of communal violence. The 2000s have been characterized by a low level of armed conflict but a high level of communal violence against Kurds in Western cities. Since 2015, we have been observing a third era characterized by high levels of armed conflict and communal violence, which takes place both in Kurdish cities as well as in the Western cities of Turkey .

Figure 6.1. Trajectory of Forms of Anti-Kurdish Violence, 1990-2016



The post-2015 escalation of violence against Kurds can partly be conceived as Erdogan’s efforts to avert his fall from power and his plan to ride an emergent tide of nationalism toward electoral success after the majestic defeat of the June 2015 elections. It is true that this anti-Kurdish societal violence reached a peak in the tumultuous political environment corresponding to the AKP’s hegemonic crisis, and rising authoritarianism. Yet, this explanation does not take into account that the popular anti-Kurdish riots had already emerged and become widespread in mid-2000s, when the AKP was still perceived as the ‘champion’ of the democratic resolution of Turkey’s long lasting Kurdish conflict and had the full support of the U.S. Hence in order to

explain what has changed properly, we also need to explain why did the AKP and the Erdogan regime suddenly shifted from democratization to authoritarianism.

The final section of this chapter focuses on this problem. I argue that these transformations are results of simultaneous crises at two levels: at the national level, we see a crisis of the AKP's efforts to establish its hegemony over the Kurdish population through the "democratic opening" process; at the international level, we see the effects of the escalation of a rising geopolitical crisis in the Middle East especially in the aftermath of the Syrian War, which is linked to the crisis of the US world hegemony. This chapter will show that these two crises – operating at two different levels – are ultimately interlinked.

The theoretical foundations of this argument can be found in Silver and Slater's (1999) research on "The Social Origins of World Hegemonies". In their macro-comparative analysis of the rise and fall of world hegemonies, Silver and Slater (1999) argue that during world hegemonies, excluded social groups grow in size and disruptive power and play a key role in destabilizing the social foundations of a world-hegemonic order, which starts to unravel with increasing inter-elite conflict and inter-state rivalry on national and global levels. The emergence of a new world hegemony depends on the capacity of the hegemonic power and its allies to bring social conflict under control by co-opting rising social groups (Silver & Slater, 1999, p. 152). The analysis presented in this chapter builds upon and extends this finding by showing (1) how the AKP-led Kurdish opening process was linked to efforts of the declining world hegemonic power (the United States) to contain the Kurdish conflict in the Middle East and (2) how the escalation of the geopolitical crisis in the Middle East – a manifestation of rising inter-state and intra-state conflicts during the crisis of US world hegemony - became an obstacle for the AKP in its efforts to co-opt the Kurdish movement and pushed the AKP (a) to give up its efforts to contain the Kurdish

problem through democratization – as suggested by the USA – and to instead (b) to use authoritarian forms of coercion.

1. The AKP's Double Movement of Democratization

When the AKP first came to power in 2012, it promised a change in official policy toward the long-lasting Kurdish conflict and a move away from a security-military focus. Erdoğan became the first political leader to refer to the “*Kurdish Problem*” since Turgut Özal. This heralded the beginning of a decade marked by democratic opening, which was by no means a straightforward process. Instead of simply extending the rights and liberties of the Kurds, the AKP's strategy for democratic resolution of the conflict was characterized by a double movement: From the very start, it simultaneously pursued partial democratization and increasing repression.

Liberal commentators tend to emphasize only one side of this double movement, focusing on the AKP's democratization moves. Shortly after the November 2002 elections that brought the AKP to power, Prime Minister Abdullah Gül showed the new government's commitment to democratic resolution of the Kurdish conflict by declaring that they would ‘take steps that will shock the E.U.’³⁵ In his famous *Diyarbakir Speech* in 2005, Prime Minister Erdoğan admitted the past mistakes of the state, declared the existence of a ‘Kurdish problem’ in Turkey, and promised to solve this problem through extending democracy and welfare.³⁶ This change in political attitude was formalized when the National Security Council declared in June 2007 that the “fight against terrorism would be carried out ‘on the basis of democracy and rule of law’” (Karaosmanoglu 2011). The *democratic initiative* was confirmed in a public declaration by the Minister of Interior

³⁵ *The New York Times*, ‘Turkey Allows Broadcasting Of Kurdish-Language Shows’, November 21, 2002. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/21/world/turkey-allows-broadcasting-of-kurdish-language-shows.html>)

³⁶ Erdoğan, Recep T., *1 Haziran Diyarbakir Konusmasinin Tam Metni*, 2005. Retrieved from: <https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/1-haziran-diyarbakir-mitingi-konusmasinin-tam-metni/8230#1>

in 2009, widely known as the *Kurdish Opening*, and which started a process, that included the extension of the ‘rights and freedoms of the Kurds’ in the spheres of education, culture and media. The Kurdish problem began to be discussed publicly in ‘the media, civil society, and universities’ and the state ‘started to negotiate with the PKK and its captured leader, Abdullah Ocalan, to disarm the question’ (Keyman 2012:474-5).

Those that attribute these changes to the AKP’s *initial* commitment to democracy, however, ignore that the democratic turn in the state’s attitude towards the Kurdish conflict was above all a pragmatic attempt of the government to establish its hegemony over the Kurdish population. This policy was also supported by the U.S., which needed to contain the Kurdish rebellion in the Middle East as part of its neo-imperialist ambitions. In order not to further lose its repressive ‘state capacity’ and escape the fate of being a ‘weakly Weberian state’ (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998) by prolonging the armed rebellion, the Turkish state chose to increase its consent-making capacity upon the recommendations of U.S. policy makers.

Many forget the “Kurdish Opening” process is not an invention of the AKP government. Efforts at democratization-from-above actually predated the AKP era. In early 1990s, during the height of the Gulf War, Turgut Özal – in collaboration with George Bush - made a similar overture, which did not have any actual political outcomes (Karatasli, 2015). Furthermore, as part of the EU accession negotiations, the coalition government before the AKP had also initiated various reforms such as lifting the ban on broadcasting in Kurdish and imposing a ban on the death penalty in 2002. When the AKP came to power in 2002, it promised the continuation and extension of this policy, as indicated by Abdullah Gul’s aforementioned remarks.

What was distinctive about the AKP was its desire, will and potential to become a counter-hegemonic force, which could replace the secular Kemalist republican tradition, ideology and institutions, whose hegemony was rapidly declining in the face of rising Kurdish and Islamic movements. Through various discursive, legal, and executive moves towards democratic resolution of the Kurdish conflict described above, the AKP hoped to establish its hegemony over the Kurdish population. The success of this strategy also meant enormous electoral benefits for the AKP, which were realized in the first half of AKP's rule. Erdoğan's Kurdish overture especially paid off in the 2007 elections, when the AKP received 53.2% of the vote in the Kurdish region. The AKP also received significant electoral support from the Kurdish population in Western metropolises such as Istanbul. With this substantial electoral support from Kurds, Erdoğan even declared the AKP as the main political 'representative' of the Kurdish population in Turkey. Despite this seemingly over-confident declaration, Erdoğan was aware that the AKP had a major contender to this hegemony-building project: the pro-Kurdish political parties and social movement mobilization led by a broader left-wing coalition. Hence, the AKP's quest for hegemony over the Kurdish masses through partial extension of their rights and liberties also was accompanied by attempts to delegitimize any competitor for democratic representation of the Kurds.

1.1. The Rise of AKP's Democratic Contenders

The AKP's plan to assert its hegemony over the Kurdish population did not go as smoothly as planned because the Kurdish movement did not fade away from the political scene. As discussed in Chapter 2, pro-Kurdish political parties started to become a significant social and political actor in the arena of electoral politics in the 2000s. While pro-Kurdish political parties of the 1990s were largely seen as only 'secondary' to the PKK, pro-Kurdish political parties in the

2000s (e.g. DTP, BDP, HDP) became central actors in Turkish politics. On the one hand, pro-Kurdish political parties engaged in a massive social movement mobilization especially among the Kurdish forced migrant population in various Western cities of Turkey. They substantially grew in strength both organizationally and politically. They established bureaus in various Western cities and towns, and Kurdish civil society organizations mushroomed throughout the country. They also established a major alliance with a wide spectrum of socialist organizations for electoral campaigns and for social movement mobilization.

Concomitant with grassroots mobilizations, the electoral power and political visibility of Kurdish parties have increased significantly. Especially starting with 2004, pro-Kurdish parties (or independent candidates) gradually increased their votes among the Kurdish population. In the Kurdish region, the pro-Kurdish parties received 18% in 2007, 26% in 2009, 27% in 2011, 30% in 2014, 34% in 2014 (Presidential Elections) and 46% in the 2015 elections.³⁷ The increase in the political power of the pro-Kurdish political parties is much more significant than what is captured by this gradual increase in votes. In 2007, the pro-Kurdish political party DTP joined elections with independent candidates (rather than as a political party), and in combination secured 22 seats in parliament, thereby by-passing the 10% national threshold. The 2007 election inaugurated a period in which pro-Kurdish parties were no longer extra-parliamentary political actors but instead became a major parliamentary opposition to the AKP; and sparked a debate about ‘who is the political representative of the Kurds’. After this point, the parliamentary seats of pro-Kurdish parties secularly increased as well. In the 2011 elections, 36 independent candidates of the Kurdish-socialist alliance (Labor, Democracy and Freedom Bloc) were elected to the parliament.

³⁷ Halil Bayhan, ‘7 Haziran Seçimleri: HDP ve Kürtlerin Dönüşümü’, *Birikim Dergisi*, Temmuz 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.birikimdergisi.com/guncel/7-haziran-secimleri-hdp-ve-kurtlerin-donusumu>

This gradual increase of electoral power was the first step towards the HDP overcoming the 10% threshold on its own (as a political party) in the June 2015 elections.

Overall, pro-Kurdish parties established three things at the same time. They increased their electoral support from the Kurdish masses, increased their political visibility and significance by gradually becoming a major opposition party in the parliament, and further strengthened an alliance with the Turkish left. The pro-Kurdish parties increasingly became the strongest left party articulating the problems of the most exploited and oppressed sections of the society including the working classes, the Kurds, and the LGBT community. It not only became a major competitor of the AKP in its quest to establish its hegemony over the Kurdish masses, but also extended its sphere of influence over a larger group of oppressed and excluded populations.

1.2. The AKP's Efforts to Repress and Delegitimize the Contenders

The active participation of pro-Kurdish parties in national electoral politics marks a fundamental difference between the democratic resolution process in Turkey and how these processes played out in Spain (with the ETA) and in the United Kingdom (with the IRA). One must note that it was not the AKP, or the Turkish state for that matter, that had been pushing the Kurdish movement to participate in electoral politics. On the contrary, it is the Kurdish movement which has been struggling for electoral participation as a part of its mobilization strategy. Turkish political actors have long been trying to exclude the Kurdish movement from parliament. This difference might help explain why a state-led “democratic opening” process cannot be successful as a hegemonic strategy without also countering pro-Kurdish democracy forces.

Precisely for this reason, a significant aspect of the AKP's democratic opening process was delegitimization and repression of pro-Kurdish democracy forces. This revealed itself in a number

of ways.³⁸ First of all, pro-Kurdish political parties faced constant legal attacks by the state through party bans and detainment of party and movement activists in this period. Shortly after the victory of independent candidates in the 2007 general elections, the pro-Kurdish party DTP faced a closure case, which included provisions to put political bans on eight members of the parliament. Interestingly, most of those MPs were known to be the moderates of the party (“the doves”) rather than the figures closer to the PKK (“the hawks”). The party faced a similar legal attack shortly after its electoral success in March 2009. In December, the DTP was banned by the constitutional court, and its leaders--Ahmet Türk and Aysel Tuğluk--had their positions as MPs revoked. Starting in April 2009, thousands of party members, members of mass democratic organizations and activists were detained as part of operations against the KCK (Kurdish Communities Union), also known as the urban wing of the PKK. The anti-KCK operations continued in May as members and representatives of Turkey’s largest union of public employees (KESK) were detained. Electoral success of the pro-Kurdish party in the June 2011 elections unleashed two other major operations against the party cadres. Between 2009 and the end of 2011, approximately 7748 people were arrested.³⁹ Moreover, most of those who were arrested endured years in prison without any trial. The number of political prisoners in the AKP decade surpassed those figures during the 1980 military coup.

One objective of the mass detainments was repression of the Kurdish movement and undermining its organizational strength and activities. Another aim of the large-scale KCK operations was to delegitimize the party and its activists, who were increasingly becoming central

³⁸ While the AKP was able to increase its votes in the Kurdish region in 2007 elections, the 2007 elections was not marked by AKP’s success but BDP’s challenge. Shortly after elections, Erdogan declared that “AKP was the true representative of the Kurdish people”, openly showing his disturbance by BDP’s challenge.

³⁹ *Bianet*, 6 October 2011. Retrieved from: <http://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/133216-30-ayda-kckden-7748-gozalti-3895-tutuklama>

figures in parliamentary politics. In this quest to delegitimize the mass movement that utilizes democratic means of claim-making, the state extensively exercised its power over the ‘discourse on public order.’⁴⁰ Through various acts that include party bans, arrests of activists of pro-Kurdish party and civil society organizations and obstructing protest actions, the AKP government continuously framed these institutions, actors, and claims as ones that allegedly ‘disturb the public order’. For instance, during the KCK operations, the photos of handcuffed party representatives and elected officials reached millions through the news media. The Prime Minister – and even President --were constantly questioning the legitimacy of the pro-Kurdish parties and MPs in the parliament through hostile public declarations. Ironically, while the government was negotiating with the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan, they were continuously forcing pro-Kurdish parties to publicly denounce Öcalan and the PKK. State repression had an impact on public opinion at the local level as well. In some districts, representatives of the pro-Kurdish BDP complained about the negative impact of large-scale police presence during their public announcements and protests, arguing that the police presence prevented their messages from being heard by the larger masses and made them appear like criminals to bystanders.⁴¹

Consequently, the AKP’s double movement, combining simultaneously cooptation and repression, has created a contentious space in which the Kurdish movement increasingly utilizes democratic means (electoral politics and social movement mobilizations), while the state/government delegitimizes this mobilization, casting its goals and leaders as enemies of public order (i.e. criminals, terrorists, etc.). Most important of all, this contention was not confined to the higher echelons of elite politics. It has also taken place in the public space. The “Turkish majority

⁴⁰ On the question of ‘disturbing the public peace’, see (della Porta, *Social Movements and the State: Thoughts on the Policing of Protest*, 1996).

⁴¹ Author’s interviews with BDP representatives, 2012.

population” became witnesses, and later, active participants in this contention. In the 2000s, this participation was mediated by far right nationalists.

2. Fascists Riding the Tide of AKP’s Double Movement

In Chapter 4 and 5, we analyzed the role played by extreme right nationalist groups (the *ülkücü* movement and the MHP) in the emergence of anti-Kurdish riots. These ultranationalists could not have been successful without the AKP’s double movement of ‘cooptation and repression’ of the Kurds throughout the 2000s. After all, they were riding the tide of discontent against the democratization process and exploiting its contradictions.

The MHP emerged as the political actor that put forth the most consistent opposition to the democratic/Kurdish opening process throughout the 2000s. As the Kemalists in the army and various state institutions were gradually liquidated, and as the Kemalist CHP (Republican People’s Party) took very ambiguous and inconsistent positions with respect to the “democratic opening” process, the MHP emerged as the only remaining representative of the ‘security oriented/militarist’ approach to the Kurdish problem on the Turkish political scene. This stance enabled the MHP to hold a unique position as the AKP’s major contender for representing the conservative-nationalist portion of the electorate that was unsympathetic to any form of negotiations with the Kurdish movement. The rise of the pro-Kurdish political parties has further increased the salience of the MHP’s opposition to the democratic opening process. The leader of the MHP consistently opposed the pro-Kurdish parties’ presence in parliament, and declared that he does not even ‘recognize’ their existence. Various nationalist demonstrations by *ülkücü* activists adhered to the following political message: “We don’t want the PKK in the parliament”. Hence, the MHP constantly criticized the AKP for the Kurdish Opening process, for negotiating with the PKK, and for

allowing pro-Kurdish parties, which they call PKK's extensions, to be in the parliament. They embarked upon this dual opposition to the strengthening of pro-Kurdish parties on the one hand, and to the AKP government on the other.⁴²

In the 2000s, the AKP's double movement created opportunities for the MHP not only to find popular support for its nationalist political agenda on the electoral scene but also to popularize anti-Kurdish and extreme right violence at the societal level. Legal attacks and continuous attempts by the government to delegitimize Kurdish democratic mobilization, parties, and civil society organizations created a legitimate sphere for *non-state violence* (both actual and symbolic) towards pro-Kurdish parties and Kurdish civilians. The *Ülkücü* movement made extensive use of this sphere. Throughout the 'decade of democratization', nationalist mobs, often led by the *ülkücü* movement, have attacked Kurdish political parties, activists, and their supporters, which they openly denote as the nation's enemies. As argued in previous chapters, *ülkücü* militants played a key role in the emergence of communal riots against Kurds.

In sum, the extreme right greatly benefited from the contradictions of the democratic opening process. In the 1990s the *ülkücü* movement organized 'anti-terror' nationalist demonstrations on the one hand and utilized political violence against socialists on the other; however, they were not able to mobilize the masses for violence. In the 2000s, for the first time in its long history marked by militant and paramilitary violence, the *ülkücü* movement found a space to lead and mobilize *civilian masses* for violence. In turn, the mass character of violence enabled the movement to enjoy a high level of popular legitimacy and to avoid being seen as a marginal or radical political actor.

⁴² Inter-electoral violence targeting Kurds was also an attempt by the AKP to change MHP's monopoly over nationalism.

2.1. The AKP's Role in the Institutionalization of Riots

In the course of the 2000s, the AKP government not only created opportunities for the popularization of nationalist violence, but it also helped *institutionalize* this violence by legitimizing the actions of nationalist mobs during and after riots (see Bora 2008; Gambetti 2007). As Chapter 5 illustrated, government inaction was the key factor facilitating violent acts in Turkey. The state further legitimized riot behavior by not punishing the perpetrators afterwards. One such case was a lynching attempt in İzmir in 2005. The incident started when five residents from Diyarbakir had a traffic-related discussion with a military officer, which gave way to a false rumor that ‘Kurds are attacking the soldiers’, which in turn sparked mob violence. Eventually, only one of the attackers was put on trial, and he was found not guilty by the court. On the other hand, two of the lynching victims were found guilty of ‘resistance to a public officer’ by the court (Çalışlar, 2009).

Likewise, five leftist university students in Trabzon, who became targets of a lynching mob in 2005 while distributing political pamphlets, were arrested by the police after the incident. During an episode of the Zeytinburnu riots in 2011, to give another example, when a nationalist mob was confronted by a Kurdish group, the police were reported to have gently asked the nationalist mob to leave saying “friends please disperse. We [the police] are more than enough for them [the Kurds].” (İnsan Hakları Derneği, 2011). Another interesting detail in the report shows the position of the state: while the arrested Kurds were taken to the “anti-terror branch,” nationalists were taken to “public security branch” of the police.

State inaction and failure to punish the rioters was further reinforced by the supportive post-riot remarks of government officials. In most of these remarks, riots and attacks were

generally referred to as ‘incidents’ and rioters were called ‘angry masses’ or ‘citizens’. When thousands of people attempted to lynch five socialist students in Trabzon, who were mistaken for Kurds, Prime Minister Erdogan emphasized “the importance of the ‘sensitivity’ of the public” for the outbreak of the ‘events’. His discursive support for the vigilantes increased further in time. After a nationalist attack in 2008, he interpreted the event as a case of ‘self-defense’: “I advise my people to have patience. Yet of course, until when should one have patience? If you break the glasses of their shops, threaten their lives, then citizens would choose the path of self-defense if they have the means and opportunity to do so.” (Saymaz, 2010).

Even though riots actually constitute a breach of the state’s monopoly over violence, as long as they did not have the aim or potential to debilitate state authority, they were not repressed—as any other non-state collective violence would have been. Hence, the riots become an interesting showcase to see the organic link between the political society and the civil society. Anti-Kurdish riots provided a two-way legitimization: while the state produced and institutionalized the legitimate sphere for civilian violence, mob violence against the Kurds provided a popular legitimacy for the AKP’s disciplinary repression of the Kurdish mass movement.

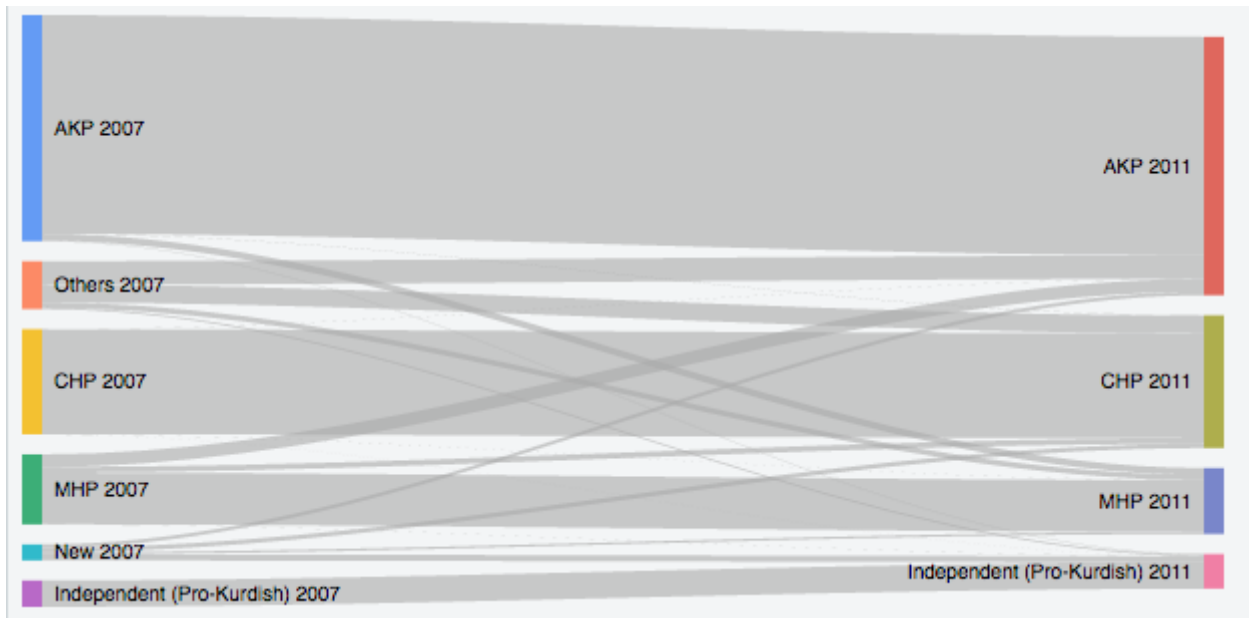
3. Changing Dynamics of Ethnic Violence After 2015

Since 2015, however, the role played by the government and state institutions is longer confined to turning a blind eye to riots, legitimizing and normalizing violence against Kurds. The government and state institutions themselves have started full-fledged deadly attacks against the Kurdish population.

It is reasonable to suggest that the qualitative shift occurred after the June 7, 2015 elections. Until June 2015 elections, the AKP managed to increase its votes in every election: From 34.28%

in 2002 to 46.58% in 2007, and to 49.83% in 2011. As Figure 6.2 shows, from 2007 to 2011, the AKP managed to receive votes from the MHP as well as other center right and Islamic parties. In addition, the AKP did not lose significant votes to the Pro-Kurdish coalition.

Figure 6.2. Shifts in Electoral Preferences from July 2007 to June 2011 General Elections

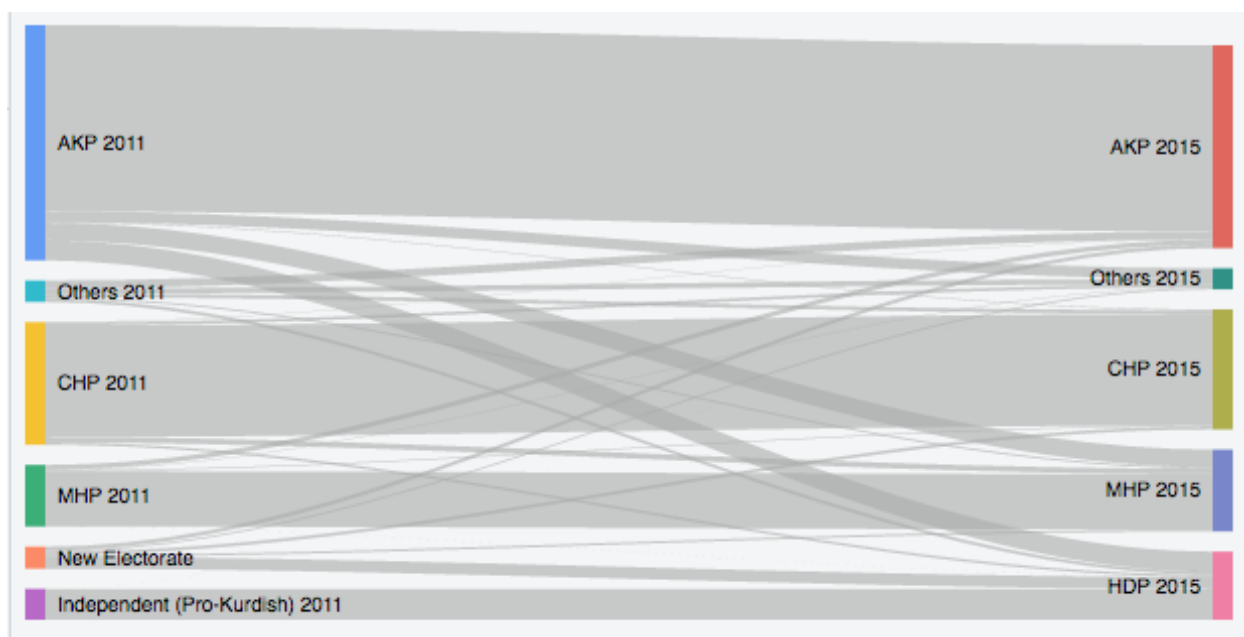


Source: Author’s calculations using the changes in the percentages of votes at the district level. Width of bars and lines shows the relative size of votes.

After 2011, however, this pattern started to gradually change. The massive anti-government protests in the summer of 2013 – the biggest anti-government protest in the history of modern Turkey - were clear evidence that discontent against Erdogan’s regime was rapidly escalating. While Erdogan was re-elected in the 2014 presidential elections with 51.79% of the votes, his hopes to become a president in a “presidential system” waned with the defeat of the AKP in the June 2015 elections. Election results showed that the AKP lost its parliamentary majority. The AKP’s electoral support declined from 49.83% (in the June 2011 general elections) to 40.8% (in the June 2015 elections). As Figure 6.3 shows, the AKP lost its votes mainly to two groups, both of which were riding the tide of the democratization process, albeit in two opposite ways: (1)

the pro-Kurdish party (HDP) and (2) to the ultranationalist MHP. Around 8.49% of the AKP supporters in the 2011 elections supported the Kurdish party in the 2015 elections; and 7.48% of the AKP supporters in the 2011 elections supported the ultranationalist MHP in 2015.

Figure 6.3. Shifts in Electoral Preferences from June 2011 to June 2015 General Elections



Source: Author’s calculations using the changes in the percentages of votes at the district level. Width of bars and lines shows the relative size of votes.

The most important feature of the June 2015 elections was the rise of the HDP. For the first time in Turkish history, a pro-Kurdish party (i.e. the HDP) entered into parliamentary elections *not through an independent candidate strategy but as a party*, and managed to pass the 10 percent national threshold by receiving 13 percent of all votes. The success of the HDP mostly rested in its ability to forge a broad left-wing and social-democratic coalition, to win some of the “good” Kurds back from the AKP, to attract a new “young” electorate who were politicized during the 2013 anti-government protests (aka the Gezi uprising), and to mobilize these segments against the AKP and Erdoğan based on a highly effective motto: “we will not make you President [in a Presidential system]”.

After the June 7, 2015 electoral defeat, President Erdoğan's plan to replace Turkey's parliamentary political system with a presidential system was temporarily blocked by the opposition. In response, Erdoğan blocked any possibility for a coalition government. Since a coalition government between the Kemalists (CHP), ultranationalists (MHP) and the pro-Kurdish parties (HDP) was not possible, the only remaining option was to call for another round of elections. As Onis (2016) put it,

[D]espite all the incentives that seemed to line up in favor coalition-building, liberal hopes for a new era of cross-party cooperation leading to better governance were cruelly dashed soon after the June election. Erdoğan used all the power at his disposal to delay coalition talks and the formation of a new government. It quickly became obvious that he would try to force an early election, with plans to make it a vehicle for the AKP's comeback and the revitalization of his own presidential ambitions in the context of a new constitution (Öniş, 2016, p. 149).

Erdoğan promoted a bloody campaign for the early November elections. The campaign was based on a simple slogan: "Without AKP rule, there is only chaos for Turkey." Curiously, that's exactly what happened. The period after the AKP's electoral defeat in the June 2015 elections became the most violent and tumultuous period in the history of Turkey. In the inter-election period, armed clashes between the PKK and the state re-emerged, and violence and repression resumed in the Kurdish region. The town of *Cizre* came under fierce state attack and Kurdish civilians were massacred in their homes by the army in what was presented in the mainstream media as a "terrorist hunt". The state resurrected emergency rule in Kurdish cities by establishing various 'provisional security zones' weeks before the November 1 elections.

This period also coincided with two suicide bombings targeting Kurds and socialist groups allying with the Kurdish movement. The first blast killed 33 socialists in Suruç that were on their

way to help reconstruct *Kobane*. The other took place in the heart of the capital, during a peace rally organized by the pro-Kurdish HDP and leftist parties and unions, killing 102 people. This bombing attack “was the most devastating terrorist assault in the history of the Turkish Republic” (Onis, 2016:150). While ISIS was the perpetrator of these bombings, the AKP, Prime Minister Davutoglu and President Erdogan utilized the suicide bombings as propaganda against the HDP and the PKK. For instance, in the days following the Suruç operation, around 1300 people were detained. While only 150 of them were related to ISIS, the rest were members of the Kurdish movement and the revolutionary left in Turkey (Zirngast, 2015). Turning ISIS terror into an anti-Kurdish campaign was possible because,

for the average citizen, the originator of terror—whether ISIS or the PKK—seemed irrelevant, even though there were charges that state institutions bore a measure of responsibility by virtue of having let ISIS terrorists live unobstructed. In this kind of environment, it was easy to paint dissent as a threat to stability and public order (Öniş, 2016, pp. 150-151)

This violence came to a peak just before the November 2015 elections. In September 2015, the death of sixteen soldiers at the *Dağlica* military outpost sparked nationalist fervor throughout the country and nationalist demonstrations organized by right wing nationalists turned into violent attacks against Kurdish civilians and offices of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP). Within two days, HDP offices were attacked in various cities and some were set on fire by demonstrators; Kurdish workers became targets of lynch mobs; Kurdish civilians were beaten to death by their neighbors; passenger buses traveling to Kurdish cities were attacked by nationalists blocking highways.

Turkey entered into the November 1 elections in this chaotic context. If there was anytime when elites tried to use ethnic violence in order to gain nationalist votes, it was probably in this period. The eventual success of Erdoğan's bloody electoral campaign - where the AKP managed to increase its votes from %40.8 to %49.50 in four months - and popular support for violence shocked both his opponents and observers. The November 1 electoral victory also implied that nearly 50% of the citizens gave their implicit support for this inter-election violence. As disturbing as this civilian support for anti-Kurdish violence might be, it was far from shocking. After all, as we have discussed in previous chapters, the popular support for anti-Kurdish violence was already visible before the elections. Civilians were not only supporters of state-led anti-Kurdish violence in Southeastern Turkey, but also their main perpetrators in Western cities.

The rise of the AKP-led anti-Kurdish violence, however, cannot merely be understood as Erdoğan's response to electoral defeat. Good evidence for this fact is the continuation of repression and violence even after the elections, despite the AKP victory. The AKP's electoral defeat in the June elections was preceded by a hegemonic challenge that the AKP faced from the Kurdish mass movement. While the AKP recovered its votes by attracting the nationalist votes, it was not able to liquidate this hegemonic challenge.

What we have been observing since 2015, then, is not a mere replica of the previous forms of violence. We have been observing a major transformation in the form of anti-Kurdish violence today. Below, I will note four major and inter-related aspects of this new era that is marked by Erdoğan's and the AKP's hegemonic crisis at the national level and geopolitical crisis at the international level.

3.1. The Sudden Death of the "Democratic Opening Process"

First of all, after it became apparent that the Kurdish movement would not support Erdoğan's presidential system, the AKP's "democratic opening" (as we knew it) was put on the back burner. In this new era, we have been witnessing a shift towards "domination without hegemony" in the AKP's attitude towards the Kurds, after a decade-long attempt at hegemony-building. Dialogue between the state and the PKK's imprisoned leader, Abdullah Öcalan, has halted. The ceasefire between Turkey and the PKK that was in effect since 2013 gave way to military clashes after the June elections. As the 'hegemony building' strategy comes to an end, Erdoğan the armed conflict has resumed despite the PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire in October 2015.⁴³ With the collapse of the democratic opening process, the AKP government has started to emulate the old hardline nationalist approach to the Kurdish problem and to frame all of these movements as part of terrorist activities, including justifying the repression and killing of civilians in Kurdish towns or the imprisonment of Kurdish activists in Western cities as part of a "terrorist hunt".

Even non-Kurdish activists or intellectuals (e.g. Turkish academics) are not immune from this treatment. A good example of this is the way Erdoğan and the AKP government responded to the "Academics for Peace" petition signed in January 2016 by thousands of academics in Turkey and all over the world⁴⁴. In this petition the academics denounced the AKP government and Turkish state for their role in the resurgence of the armed conflict in the Kurdish towns and cities in Southeast Turkey, pointed out ongoing human rights violations - such as the killings and collective punishment of civilians trapped in Kurdish towns during the curfew, destruction of homes and livelihoods of these people, and the displacement of thousands of Kurds⁴⁵ - and

⁴³ *Al Jazeera*, 'PKK ateşkes ilan etti', 10/10/2015

⁴⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/03/16/turkey-academics-jailed-signing-petition>

⁴⁵ <http://www.france24.com/en/20160422-turkish-academics-released-pending-propaganda-trial>

demanded that those responsible for these violations should be held accountable and punished⁴⁶. President Erdoğan immediately publicly denounced all petition signers as terrorists and started an investigation – through legal prosecutors or through universities - against all petition signers. Many academics have been dismissed or suspended from their jobs for signing the petition; some were put in pretrial detention and jail⁴⁷. The legal charges against these academics were “making propaganda of terrorism” and “association with the PKK”. In his speeches, President Erdoğan repeatedly explained why these activities in the social sphere must be seen as acts of terrorism. As he put it, right after the Ankara bombing,

One can be an academic, a journalist or head of a civil society organization ... This does not change the fact that this person is a terrorist. It might be the terrorist who pulls the trigger and detonates the bomb, but it is these people who allow that attack to achieve its goal. Being a politician, academic, writer, journalist or head of a civil society group doesn't change the fact that this individual is a terrorist⁴⁸

As a part of their combat against terrorism, the AKP – with the support of both the ultranationalist MHP and the Kemalist CHP – even proposed a law aiming to lift the immunity of Kurdish MPs in the parliament on May 2016⁴⁹. This wide perception of terrorism is not alien to ultranationalist conception of Kurds as “enemies within”. As we have shown, it was also already

⁴⁶ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/margaret-owen/to-demand-peace-is-not-crime-turkish-academics-on-trial>

⁴⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/03/16/turkey-academics-jailed-signing-petition>

⁴⁸ <http://www.nature.com/news/turkish-academics-jailed-for-making-terrorism-propaganda-1.19586>;
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/turkey-s-president-erdogan-wants-definition-of-terrorist-to-include-journalists-as-three-academics-a6933881.html>

⁴⁹ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-parliament-backs-immunity-bill-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=99322&NewsCatID=338>; <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hdp-faces-uncertain-future-turkish-parties-approve-bill-strip-mps-immunity-650754078>

visible in the AKP's selective repression of the dissidents. What we have been observing, however, is the melding of these two conceptions into each other.

As we have seen in the course of the 2000s, different political and social actors had different conceptions about the future of ethnic boundaries in Turkey. While the Kurdish movement - through social movement mobilization from below – struggled for full recognition of Kurdish identity, rights and liberties in social, political and constitutional areas, the ultranationalists aimed to constitute and impose old “us-them” boundaries where the Kurds were unrecognized, excluded, subordinated and defined as “terrorists”. In the course of the “democratic opening process”, the AKP represented a third, highly pragmatic position where Kurdish rights and liberties are partly recognized, but only to the extent that they do not support the pro-Kurdish parties and do not challenge the AKP in the political sphere. Now, as the AKP's hopes to coopt the rest of the Kurds are dashed, and since it started to lose even some of the “good Kurds”, the AKP has started to emulate the nationalist approach with a nuanced twist. They claim that all rights and liberties of Kurds have already been recognized and whoever tries to push further are terrorists who want to divide and separate the society. As Erdoğan himself put it in January 2016, “There is no Kurdish problem in Turkey any more. We only have a terrorism problem”⁵⁰.

3.2. The AKP's Emulation of the Fascist Strategies

One of the major reasons why Erdoğan and the AKP shifted their position is the failure of their hegemony-building project. Having failed to coopt the Kurds, Erdoğan has been trying to ride the tide of nationalism. Indeed, today the MHP voters are the main group supporting the AKP

⁵⁰ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/theres-no-kurdish-issue-in-turkey-just-terrorism-erdogan.aspx?pageID=238&nID=93511&NewsCatID=338>

against the Kurds. To maintain and further increase this support, Erdoğan is using a dual strategy. First, he is playing with fire by provoking the PKK and a resurgence of the armed conflict, to make the “rise of terrorism” argument more plausible. While the PKK has not yet taken up arms, other rival armed Kurdish groups such as the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons - Teyrêbazê Azadiya Kurdistan (TAK), which is a splinter of the PKK - have started bombing attacks, one of which killed 37 people in the capital (Ankara) on March 13 to avenge the 300 Kurds killed in *Cizre*. President Erdoğan and the AKP government have been using these incidents to further justify a full-fledged attack against terrorism and their supporters.

It is important to note that the resurgence of armed conflict -- in a context where riots are institutionalized -- would have significant repercussions for ethnic violence, which would quickly go out of control. This process will definitely not be a return back to the 1990s where the armed conflict was confined to fighting between the Turkish armed forces and the PKK. As we have seen in previous chapters, even sporadic armed clashes between the PKK and the Turkish Armed forces during the democratic opening period triggered various major riots on the societal sphere. Likewise, the trigger for the recent anti-Kurdish riots in September 2015 was the resurgence of armed conflict in the Kurdish region, i.e. the death of sixteen soldiers in Dağlica. Hence, unlike the 1990s when armed conflict in the Kurdish region did not lead to riots outside the war zone, the escalation of armed conflict in today’s conditions has the potential to further intensify deadly ethnic riots with massive popular support.

Secondly, going beyond legitimizing and institutionalizing riots throughout the 2000s, Erdoğan’s AKP has started to emulate the fascist strategy, by directing horizontal violence against mass movements that challenge his authority. This was visible during the 2013 Gezi uprising, when Erdoğan embraced shopkeepers who attacked the protestors as ‘the *police*, the *soldier*, the

guardian of the neighborhood, when necessary'.⁵¹ Youth branches of the AKP attacked and/or intimidated protestors in various cities. Utilizing the 'riot strategy' was particularly visible in recent post-election anti-Kurdish riots in September 2015. In his quest for constituting the 'masses' as active nationalist subjects through activating anti-Kurdish [and anti-HDP] hostility before the elections, riot production became another tool in the hands of Erdoğan.

In various cities, the violence was led by a relatively new organization called *Osmanlı Ocakları* (*Hearts of the Ottoman*) formed in 2009, which has organic links with the AKP and considers its members to be "soldiers of Recep T. Erdoğan." Emulating this fascist strategy of utilizing horizontal violence against the Kurds, which also seems to be a successful electoral strategy in different contexts like India, Erdoğan hoped to increase nationalist fervor and emerge as the main representative for the nationalist electorate.⁵² Furthermore, the increasing salience of this new paramilitary organization, which bears a remarkable resemblance to *ülkü ocakları* (*Hearth of Idealists*), also indicates how Erdoğan has started to copy fascist organizational forms as well - -which worked well for the electoral fortunes of the MHP throughout the 2000s-- in a quest to compete with them.

3.3. Rise of the Geopolitical Crisis: The Kobane Effect

A third related process was that state and non-state violence against the Kurds has increasingly melded into each other in the face of rising geopolitical crises. Especially the *Battle of Kobane* - where the Kurdish militia in the Rojava region of Syria and ISIS fought - became a

⁵¹*Cumhuriyet*, 'Erdoğan vicdansızlığını bir kez daha gösterdi', 2014. Retrieved from:

http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/video/150283/Erdoğan_vicdansizligini_bir_kez_daha_gosterdi.html

⁵² Erdoğan's strategy also became obvious to the MHP soon after the eruption of recent riots. After the initial fervor of mobilizing nationalist demonstrations, *ülkü movement* made an announcement to praise 'peace' to its activists and followers and pointing fingers to AKP as the instigator of the recent riots, saying: "those who follow AKP's lead cannot be an *ulkucu*."

critical turning point in that regard. To explain how this dynamic played out we need to introduce some of the relational links between the *Rojava* movement and the Kurdish movement in southeast and Western Turkey.

As part of the Syrian conflict, which has turned into an internationalized civil war, Kurds managed to establish their de-facto autonomy in the *Rojava* region on the border of Turkey. Paradoxically, the “democratic opening process” in Turkey played an interesting role in the strengthening of the *Rojava* movement. The Kurdish armed forces who left Turkey as part of the bilateral peace negotiations between the Turkish state and the PKK went to *Rojava* and concentrated their power in Western Syria at the Turkish border. Using the opportunities produced by the Syrian Arab Spring protests, the Kurdish militants gained their *de facto* autonomy and declared self-rule in their cantons. The Kurdish movement in *Rojava* has also started to gain some degree of legitimacy and partial international support due to their successful resistance and fight against ISIS during and after the *Battle of Kobane*.

The AKP government was very keen to gain US support for a military operation in Syria, for the purpose of defeating the Kurdish movement in *Rojava*. Yet, the United States – after the disastrous consequences of the War in Afghanistan and the War in Iraq – was not willing to lead such an operation or to help Turkey in this regard. Having failed to gain US support, the AKP government decided to use a dual strategy: On the one hand, they provided implicit support to ISIS militants who were fighting the Kurds in *Rojava*. They also stopped Kurds who wanted to join the fight against ISIS during *Battle of Kobane* from crossing into Syria from Turkey, while they allowed ISIS militants to pass the border more freely⁵³. When the United States and Western

⁵³ <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21643200-dance-kurds-seeking-autonomy-government-wanting-support-dreams-self-rule>

Allies pushed Turkey to play an active role in the coalition against ISIS, Erdogan did his best to use this occasion “to attack the PKK as part of the all-around campaign against terror groups” (Öniş, 2016, p. 150).

On the other hand, they started to use a military repression strategy in Kurdish regions of Southeast Turkey, where the Turkish armed forces have never been successful due to the strong presence of the PKK in the region. In response to increasing state intervention - and also riding the tide of self-confidence generated from *Kobane* - the Kurdish youth self-defense organization (YDG-H) in Southeastern Kurdish cities of Turkey – which was set up for “young Kurds who didn't want to join the PKK but who could organize and resist the state from their cities⁵⁴” - took up arms, started to fight against security forces and proclaimed autonomy in the form of self-defense neighborhoods.

The autonomy of the Syrian Kurds, their ongoing fight with ISIS and escalation of violence in southeast Turkey, in return, had various repercussions for the intensification of anti-Kurdish violence in Western cities. For one thing, the Turkish government’s implicit support for ISIS at the expense of the Kurdish defense during the battle of *Kobane* in the fall of 2014 gave way to a series of anti-ISIS and anti-government protests by Kurds and leftists in various Kurdish and western cities of Turkey in October 2014. Police responded brutally to the protests. Pro-ISIS groups and extreme-right nationalists also organized counter-demonstrations in various cities, which turned into violent attacks in riot-prone locations such as the *Zeytinburnu* district of Istanbul. In addition, pro-ISIS Islamists attacked Kurdish protestors and party buildings. 46 people were killed in the course of the protests. This episode of violence was critical since the state,

⁵⁴ <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/kurdish-neighbourhoods-take-arms-they-declare-autonomy-198443852>

paramilitaries and ‘rioters’ joined together in attacking the Kurds; raising fears of the possibility of murderous ethnic cleansing.

3.4. Emergence of ISIS as a New Actor

As is clear from these examples, a final fundamental novelty of this new chapter of violence is the addition of ISIS as a new actor in this conflict. In the last couple of years ISIS and pro-ISIS groups engaged in various forms of violence against the Kurds, including paramilitary violence and suicide bombings. During the massive anti-ISIS protests in October 2014 mentioned above, Islamist groups in both Kurdish and non-Kurdish regions attacked protestors and Kurdish party buildings. Pro-ISIS groups and mobs fired guns at protestors and engaged in lynching attempts in various non-Kurdish cities like Adana and Istanbul, whereas attacks by Islamist groups⁵⁵ against Kurdish protestors gave way to deadly clashes in the Kurdish region.⁵⁶ ISIS was also responsible for a series of bombings targeting HDP buildings in Mersin and Adana, and targeting the HDP’s electoral rally in Diyarbakir before the June 2015 election. In the post-election period, ISIS attacks became much more violent. The blast in Suruç targeted the press declaration of young Turkish socialists who were on their way to help rebuild Kobane. The second one targeted a peace rally in Ankara organized by the HDP and mass democratic organizations, killing 102 people.

Not surprisingly, the state has largely tolerated Islamist violence targeting Kurds, creating a legitimate sphere of action for ISIS in Turkey. This process is analogous to state inaction – and

⁵⁵ Including Huda-Par, which is a legal Islamist political party, and the Turkish *Hizbullah*.

⁵⁶ For more information on the list of state and non-state violence against *Kobane* protests in Turkey, see the special report by Human Rights Association, *Kobanê Direnişi ile Dayanışma Kapsamında Yapılan Eylem ve Etkinliklere Müdahale Sonucu Meydana Gelen Hak İhlalleri Raporu*, 14/10/2014

turning a blind eye - during ultranationalist mobilization of the 2000s, discussed in chapter 5. Yet this time, violence escalates conflict to a much higher and radical level.

As in the case of violence of the 2000s, there is also a surprising level of mass support behind these violent attacks. This support was particularly visible after the blast in Ankara that killed 102 people. After the bombings, in Konya, thousands of spectators at the Turkey-Iceland football match shouted *Allahu Akbar* during the moment of silence for victims of the Ankara blast. Hence, while the decade of democratization institutionalized fascist violence, the current period of chaos seems to be legitimizing violence by Islamist extremists. We are witnessing the substantive rise of ISIS's legitimacy and sphere of influence in Turkey, facilitated by Erdoğan. Yet fascists - and its Islamo-fascist variants for that matter - are not the 'right hand' of the state. They are independent actors with a significant degree of autonomy. It remains an open question whether Erdoğan will manage to 'control' fascism-from-below today as Franco and the Japanese state/military (Paxton, 2005, pp. 198-199) did in interwar Spain and Japan; or will fail to do so as happened in interwar Germany and Italy.

4. Conclusion: On the Eve of a Deadly Ethnic Violence?

While the AKP received 49.48% of the votes in November 2015 elections, its hegemonic crisis is far from over. Despite a minor decline in votes, the HDP managed to overcome the threshold and will have a much stronger presence in the parliament, which means that it will probably pose a significant barrier to the AKP's proposed constitutional reforms. More importantly, it seems that the democratic resolution process regarding the Kurdish conflict is unlikely to resume in the short run. After the elections, Erdoğan stated that the 'one nation, one flag, one homeland, one state' policy will continue, suggesting that the inter-election nationalist

agenda will be preserved. This turn toward a security-oriented approach by the state may also force the PKK to end the ceasefire and result in the resurgence of armed rebellion. Finally, the conflict in Syria shows few signs of winding down in the near future.

Michael Mann (2005: 198-199) shows how factionalization and radicalization of states in the face of mounting political and geopolitical instabilities may pave the way for murderous ethnic cleansing. In line with this observation, anti-Kurdish riots that emerged and became institutionalized in the period of contentious democratization have the potential to escalate into a deadlier forms of ethnic cleansing in the face of current political and geopolitical instability. Rising authoritarianism, regional conflict, increasing polarization, increasing salience of paramilitary groups and the possible resumption of Kurdish armed rebellion, in a context where civilians have already become perpetrators and targets of violence, point towards the gloomy possibility of deadly ethnic violence in Turkey's future.

Conclusion

Democratization, Communal Violence, and Authoritarianism

In the Introduction, borrowing from Charles Tilly, we used the metaphor of a *river* to describe the analysis presented in the dissertation. What is seen from upstream is the processes and dynamics of anti-Kurdish communal violence in Turkey. What is seen from downstream is the dynamics of contentious democratization, which can be violence-prone in the face of power struggles between different social and political actors. The totality of our analysis, or *the river*, aimed to unpack the complex relationship between contentious democratization and ethnic violence. In this conclusion, I would like to highlight critical findings of our analysis and discuss their implications.

Democracy is not a magic wand that immediately resolves ethnic conflict. The analysis presented in the dissertation showed that democracy is not a magical tool that resolves ethnic or other forms of civil conflicts once and for all, as espoused by US foreign policy makers throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Our analysis showed that a new form of violence – i.e. anti-Kurdish communal violence - erupted when democratization was adopted to resolve secessionist ethnic conflict in Turkey by both parties of the conflict (i.e. the Kurdish secessionist party PKK and the Turkish state) in the 2000s. More specifically, as social movement mobilization and electoral politics replaced the militarized conflict of the 1990s, ethnic violence did not disappear. It rather changed its form by assuming a *civic* and *popular* form. As militarized conflict waned, the arena

of civilian politics has gradually become more violent. Hence, in the course of democratization, *violence is democratized*.

Reactions against democratization-from-below-- not old and deep ethnic divisions-- promote violence. The case at hand also showed that, contrary to what is widely assumed in the literature, the emergence of ethnic violence in post-conflict democratization processes is not necessarily due to deep ethnic divisions emanating from a history of ethnic warfare. On the contrary, actual demands for further democratization (in the form of cultural recognition and political inclusion) and means of democratic contention (social movement and electoral mobilization) were much more critical in the deepening of ethnic divisions between civilian populations than prior armed conflict. While the armed ethnic rebellion in the 1980s and 1990s claimed thousands of lives, people in western Turkey were observers of a conflict that was taking place in a faraway region. Social movement and electoral mobilization of Kurdish migrants in western cities and towns in the 2000s, however, brought this contention, in the form of democratic mobilization, to their neighborhoods, their streets, and their schools.

What mattered was not only the changing geography of contention but also its content. Social movement mobilization of Kurdish immigrants and their collective action shattered an ideology that constituted us-them boundaries since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. This ideology denied the existence of Kurds and saw people residing in Eastern Turkey as Eastern Turks, Mountain Turks or as Turkey's Eastern citizens. This perception was not changed by the armed struggle between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces in 1983-1999; nor was it changed by the mass migration of Kurds to Western cities and towns in the 1990s. This perception started to change when Kurdish migrants began to mobilize in the democratic sphere for their

rights and liberties. This democratic mobilization and collective action from below, however, not only shattered the official ideology that had denied the existence of Kurds but also all forms of power and privilege that came along with the ethnic “us-them” boundaries that were established in relation to this ideology.

Democratic contention is multi-layered and relational. Communal ethnic violence is neither merely a construct of elites, nor is it a spontaneous upsurge of mass grievances. It is an outcome of an existing power configuration between a number of different actors in a society, who have varying attitudes towards transformation of ethnic boundaries and have different stakes in the democratization process. Thus, instead of proposing an inter-elite electoral competition model or a basic model of ethnic/political competition between ethnic groups, in different chapters of the dissertation, we unpacked multiple layers of contention including (1) contention between Kurdish migrants, local residents, the government, and right-wing activists on the meaning and future of ethnic boundaries; (2) contention between the Kurdish movement and the government regarding the limits and the course of the democratization project/process; (3) contention between the governing party (AKP) and right wing political parties and movements on how to manage the conservative-nationalist base during the democratic opening process. It was the interaction of intra-elite, intra-group, and elite-mass contention that produced and institutionalized anti-Kurdish communal violence throughout the 2000s.

Turkey’s recent authoritarian turn is not as recent as it seems. On the contrary, seeds of authoritarianism were planted during the contentious democratization process led by the AKP government in the 2000s, when it was being supported by the U.S and its western allies. In order to establish its hegemony over the Kurdish population, during the democratic opening process, the

AKP government aimed to extend rights and liberties to the Kurdish masses but consistently used coercion against Kurdish civil society organizations organizing in neighborhoods, Kurdish activists mobilizing in the streets, Kurdish MPs in the Turkish parliament. While the AKP government could not use brute force against Kurdish civilians themselves, they overlooked violent actions by extreme right militants and ended up normalizing violence against “bad Kurds”, who did not act in accordance with their interests. What changed recently was that in the course of this struggle, (1) Erdogan and his AKP lost all hope that they would successfully co-opt pro-Kurdish parties and receive their support, (2) the geopolitical crisis in Syria helped Kurds to establish de facto autonomy in Rojava, and (3) Erdogan realized that the AKP needs to (a) emulate the strategies used by extreme right wing parties, which successfully used the contradictions of the democratic opening to mobilize, and (b) use state power to contain the Kurdish threat using brute force.

In short, the analysis presented in the dissertation shows that there is a rather thin line between contentious democratization and authoritarianism, whose coordinates are determined by power struggles. Transformations of the balance of power between different actors (i.e. Kurdish migrants, local residents, the AKP government, extreme-right nationalists and external geopolitical dynamics) have played a key role in both the democratization of the 2000s and de-democratization (authoritarianism) of the post-2015 period. Hence, instead of presenting a static relation between democratization and communal violence (where democratization is an independent variable and communal violence is merely an outcome), the dissertation showed how contentious democratization, combined with geopolitical crisis in the Middle East, has played a major role in the AKP government’s recent authoritarian turn and its recent launch of *murderous ethnic cleansing* against Kurds. Put differently, this dissertation uncovered the democratic origins

of not only anti-Kurdish communal violence but also of the recent rise of authoritarianism in Turkey.

Is post-conflict democratization doomed to produce violence? While our analysis shows how contentious democratization processes can be susceptible to communal violence, it does not suggest that all democratization processes automatically - and necessarily - produce ethnic and communal violence. How this process unfolds largely depends on how different actors react to emerging tensions and especially to earlier episodes of violence. For instance, one of the main findings of the dissertation is the role that the government's *failure to act to stop violence* plays in the institutionalization and normalization of violence. This suggests that emerging tensions might be contained if the government had not tolerated incidents of popular violence in earlier stages. Moreover, our findings show that both the extent of democratization and the level of violence it can trigger actually depends upon the strength of social mobilization (of excluded, marginalized and oppressed groups) from below. In the case at hand, while social movement mobilization of Kurds for extension of democratic rights and liberties was crucial for pushing the democratization process forward, “too much” empowerment of the Kurdish movement (both in the streets, in the public sphere, in the Turkish parliament, and in Rojava) made it a competitor of the government rather than an ally, which, in turn, triggered government repression.

This finding is very similar to the relationship between working class mobilization and democracy in modern world history. As Rueschmeyer *et al* (1992) show, while working class mobilization has always been the primary motor of democratization processes, too strong or too radical mobilization brought about repression, hence, produced authoritarianism. Turning back to

our case, the strength and success of democratic mobilization of the Kurds has proven to be critical in making the process violent.

This is by no means to suggest that for successful democratization, movements for democratization by excluded or oppressed populations need to limit their demands and levels of mobilization not to go too far. This conception is in contradiction with our power-configuration model and the processual understanding of democratization presented in this research. For successful democratization, sustained mobilization from below is necessary. Like all movements for democracy, successful mobilization of excluded, unrecognized and marginalized groups for extension of their rights and liberties end up challenging the power and privileges of dominant groups. This might trigger repression and violence. Yet, the only way to reverse this de-democratization route is to sustain social movement mobilization in the face of increased repression and authoritarianism, and to normalize the emerging changes in power relationships.

APPENDIX A

ETHNIC AND NATIONALIST VIOLENCE IN TURKEY (ENVIT) DATABASE

Unfortunately, there is no reliable indicator of communal ethnic violence and right-wing political violence in Turkey. For this purpose, I compiled a dataset of right-wing nationalist violence incidents in Turkey - the Ethnic and Nationalist Violence in Turkey (ENViT) dataset – using historical archives of *Milliyet* daily newspaper, which was later complemented with a wide range of reports by human rights associations and institutions. The ENViT database documents nationwide incidents of ethnic and nationalist collective violence from 1980 to 2012; and distinguishes (i) types of collective violence, (ii) reported perpetrators, (iii) victims, (iv) location of these events, (v) the number of people who participated in the incidents, (vi) number of people who were killed or injured in the incidents; (vii) reported causes of events, (viii) attitudes of the state and government institutions, and (ix) roles of other political organizations (extreme right groups, left-wing organizations *etc.*) in the events.

The major source for the ENViT was *Milliyet's* historical news archives. Using news reports to analyze diverse forms of social unrest is a common and respected strategy in the social movements literature (Paige 1975; Snyder and Tilly 1972; Tilly 1978; Silver 2003; Korzeniewicz 1989; Kriesi et. al. 1995; Koopmans 1993; Franzosi 1995; della Porta et. al. 2012); literature on ethnic/racial conflict and communal violence (Olzak 1989; Wilkinson 2004; Varshney, Tadjoeeddin and Panggabean 2008) as well as literature on radical right-wing and racist violence (Koopmans 1997; Koopmans and Olzak 2004; della Porta et. al. 2012). For scholars studying social movements, sometimes, newspapers are the only possible choice due to the lack of official or alternative statistics on many types of social movements. Even in cases where official statistics

exist, various scholars have suggested that newspaper sources can be more reliable than official statistics in measuring different forms of social unrest (Silver 2003). Likewise, in the literature analyzing ethnic and communal conflicts, newspapers are often preferred over other methods of gathering quantitative data such as household surveys (Varshney *et al* 2008: 148; Wilkinson 2004).

Ethnic and Nationalist Collective Violence

The database includes instances of ethnic and nationalist collective violence – such as nationalist mob/vigilante violence directed against vulnerable minorities including Kurds, Alawites, Armenians, Greeks, and the Roma population; and instances of violence associated with far right nationalist political actors (the *ülküücü* movement) towards societal actors (i.e., horizontal violence). The emphasis on the *societal* level in this definition indicates that I exclude acts of violence perpetrated by the state/government towards minorities from the database and focus on violence perpetrated by non-state actors. I defined a violent incident as “*ülküücü*” violence if it is conducted by right wing nationalist actors associated with the *ülküücü* movement and the MHP or by groups which use right wing nationalist symbols such as the “bozkurt (greywolf) sign” – the sign of the *ülküücü* movement - or slogans that refer to the *ülküücü* movement.

I defined an incident as *communal* violence if perpetrators and victims of violence were primarily civilians. My definition of *collective* violence includes a wide spectrum of violent actions including riots, lynchings, raids, violent attacks and clashes, beatings, bombings and arsons. This definition includes (a) instances of violence perpetrated by a group towards other individuals or groups; (b) clashes between two or more groups; or (c) violence perpetrated by a group towards buildings like homes, institutions associated with particular groups like minorities or rival political groups. This means that incidents of violence that only involve a single individual

are excluded from the definition. Likewise, my definition of *violence* captures actual physical attacks or destruction of property but excludes instances that involve discursive or symbolic forms of violence (such as booing and cursing) as well as group violence that is directed against objects (like graveyards, monuments).

Potential Biases Associated with Newspaper Data

Data collection strategies that rely on news reports, however, are not without limitations. On the contrary, one must be very careful while analyzing social movements through news reports, especially with respect to potential biases such as (1) “selection bias” due to newspapers not reporting all events or reporting them selectively with a systematic bias over space and time, (2) “description bias” due to missing or incorrect information in news reports, and (3) “data collection bias” due to systematic biases that emerge because of data collection schemes employed (see Oliver and Maney 2000; Earl *et al.* 2004). As long as the researchers are aware of these possible biases, however, they can implement strategies to minimize their effects. For instance, in a study that focuses on far right nationalist movements, a tendency to associate most attacks against laborers or ethnic minorities with extreme right political actors without much evidence (a tendency of most of the left-wing newspapers) or a tendency of not reporting extreme-right wing violent incidents or the political identities of the perpetrators of these events (a tendency of extreme right-wing newspapers) may affect findings.

While it is not possible to completely eliminate these selection and description biases, one can minimize their effects by selecting news sources whose biases are minimal (or much less compared to existing alternatives) and consistent across time and space (see Silver 2003). Likewise, reliance on low quality search engines of the online versions of newspapers that tend to

produce more results for recent years also introduce systematic “data collection bias” to the research. This bias can also be minimized through using newspaper archives that use higher quality historical archives.

Logic of Source Selection

In the construction of the ENViT database, I selected *Milliyet* as the main source because of its balanced coverage of the subject matter of interest and higher quality historical archives. Preliminary research showed that compared to *Milliyet*, other major national newspapers like *Radikal* or *Cumhuriyet* had wider coverage of right-wing nationalist violence. Yet in these center-left wing newspapers there was a higher tendency to use the terms “fascists” and “ülküücü” as generic terms for perpetrators of any kind of incidence of violence against workers and ethnic/religious minorities. Hence, these center-left oriented newspapers are not preferred in order to minimize selection and description biases (see Oliver and Maney 2000; Earl et. al. 2004). While the selection of *Milliyet* as the main source resulted in a more conservative estimate of the total number of incidents, its coverage of extreme right violence incidents is high enough to capture most major events, and this coverage does not have a systematic bias across time.

Reliability studies based on a comparison of the ENViT database – using *Milliyet* as its main source – to the existing secondary literature (Bora 2008) and Human Rights Association reports (see <http://ihd.org>) show that the ENViT database does not miss any of the major incidents and it does not have a systematic temporal bias. Finally, compared to *Hürriyet*, which is the other major mainstream newspaper, *Milliyet* was preferable because of its higher quality digital historical archive, which helped minimize “data collection bias”.

APPENDIX B.

INTERVIEW DATA

Figure B.1. Interview Locations on Map

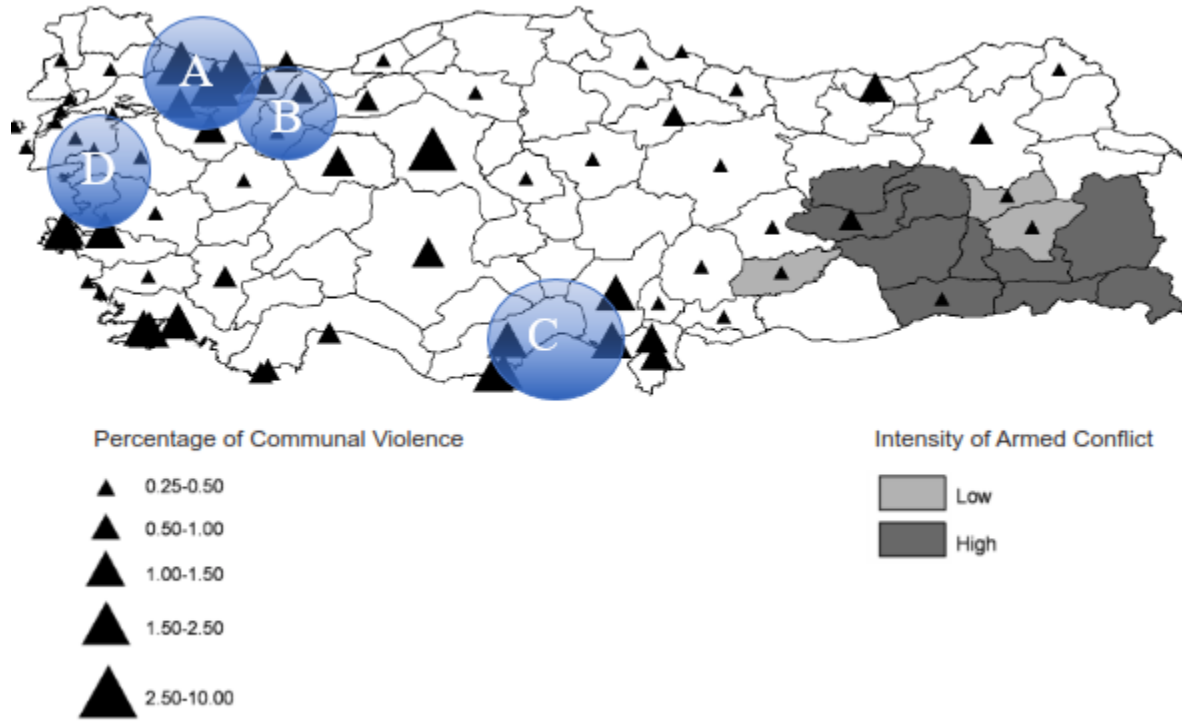


Table B.1. Population, Estimated Percentage of Kurdish Population, and Unemployment Levels of the districts where interviews were conducted

City	A		B		C		D
Districts (Pseudonyms)	Isler	Durusu	Karatepe	Kirazli	Senkoy	Bayramlı	Ferte
Percentage of Kurds (Estimated)*	24.71	26.54	6.57	2.02	37.64	29.98	8.68
Total Population*	167,717	270,951	238,502	82,980	279,142	33,401	63,312
Unemployment (2010)**	14.3	14.3	11.4	11.4	14.1	14.1	8.0
	Urban District	Urban District	Urban District	Rural Town	Urban District	Rural Town	Rural Town

Sources: *ADNKS 2010, Turkish Institute of Statistics; **Household Workforce Statistics 2010, Turkish Institute of Statistics

Interview Questions:

Interviews were semi-structured, and questions were formulated as open-ended. Interview questions for officials and party/NGO representatives were not identical to questions formulated for interviews with local residents. Below, there are several examples of the types of questions asked to these different groups.

Note: The initial question asks about the relations between migrants from ‘East and Southeastern Regions’ rather than ‘Kurdish residents in the district’. There are two main inter-related reasons for this choice: (1) I was interested in the ‘relation’ between incoming migrants and the local residents, which could theoretically be driven by economic factors; (2) Since I did not want to lead or prime interviewees towards using a priori ethnic classifications, I did not use the term ‘Kurd’ unless it was articulated by the interviewees. This enabled me to gain more

information regarding relations with migrants/immigrants from other regions/countries as well, which made it possible to gain information on how different inter-group relations compare with each other.

The questions below were prepared before I began the fieldwork as guiding questions. The interviews were designed to include open-ended questions guided by these questions. While I made an effort to cover most of these questions/topics, since interviews were semi-structured, some of the questions were not asked/discussed in some of the interviews. Likewise, in various interviews, additional questions were asked to the interviewees based on the information gathered (1) in prior interviews, and (2) throughout that particular interview.

Questions for Officials; Political Party and NGO Representatives

1. Can you give a brief description of the demographic and economic characteristics of the district?
2. Can you say that is a destination point for migrants? Do you know where does migration primarily come from?
3. Is there a large group of migrants from Eastern and Southeastern Regions? If so, when do you think this migration wave reached its highest point?
4. According to you, what are the impacts of migration from Eastern and Southeastern Regions on the district?
5. How can you describe the relation between migrants from Eastern and Southeastern Regions and the local residents?

- a. Could you say that they live in the same neighborhoods/streets? Or do migrant population generally concentrate on specific streets/neighborhoods isolated from other residents?
 - b. What can you say about the main sectors of employment? What are the major sectors that migrants are employed in? Can you see major differences in wages between migrants and local residents?
6. Do you observe any contention, antagonism or distance between the local residents and migrants? If so, what could be the possible explanations? [This question is asked for *all* migrant groups]
7. Are migrants from Eastern and Southeastern Regions politically active?
 - a. Which political parties are they [Eastern and Southeastern Regions] close to?
 - b. Do they [migrants from Eastern and Southeastern Regions] establish their own parties, civil society organizations?
 - c. If so, do people from other backgrounds also join these organizations?
 - d. Do they [migrants from Eastern and Southeastern Regions] organize protests and events? Are they crowded events; and are they frequent?
 - e. How would you describe the change in the political alignments and mobilization of this group in time?
8. What is the attitude of local residents towards these [Kurdish] parties and protests/organizations?
9. Are there any incidents between migrants and local residents in the district?
 - a. Can you give details about these incidents?
 - b. If so, what is their frequency?

- c. Who are generally involved in incidents of violence; and who are the targets?
- d. What could be the possible reasons for this violence? [economic, political, cultural, etc.]
- e. Are there certain periods when these incidents increase in intensity?
- f. Would you say violence is targeted towards specific migrants while relations with other migrants are peaceful?

Questions for Local Residents

1. General information about
 - a. How long he/she has lived in the district?
 - b. City of origin.
 - c. Marital Status
 - d. Employment
2. Questions on the relations between migrants and local residents:
 - a. Here is a district that attracts migrants. Do you know where migrants generally come from?
 - b. Do you have any neighbors that migrated from?
 - i. How can you describe your relations with them? Is it different compared to relations with other neighbors?
 - ii. Do you think home owners in your neighborhood easily rent their houses to migrants from?
 - c. Are there any migrants from at your work?
 - i. How many?

- ii. What kind of jobs do they do? Is it different from the jobs of local residents?
 - iii. Are there any major difference in salaries between migrants from?
 - d. Do you think these migrants had a role in
 - i. Decline in wages
 - ii. Unemployment/losing jobs
 - e. What are the overall impacts of this migration on your district?
- 3. What do you think about the political activities of migrants from
- a. Do they frequently organize political protests and events? Are they crowded?
 - b. Do you find yourself distant from their organizations and parties? Why?
 - c. Do you think the frequency of political activities organized by have changed in time?
- 4. Have you ever heard of instances of violence involving migrants from
- a. How frequent?
 - b. Who took part in these instances and how did they start?
 - c. What do you think about the reasons behind these violence incidents?
 - d. How could these incidents be prevented?

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education

- Ph.D. Johns Hopkins University, Sociology (Expected 2018)
Dissertation: *Democracy and Violence: Social Origins of Anti-Kurdish Riots in Turkey*
- M.A. Johns Hopkins University, Sociology, 2009
- B.A. Koç University, Sociology and International Relations, 2006

Research Interests

Sociology of the Middle East; Ethnic Violence; Social Movements; Development; Democratization; Global Populism; Extreme Right and Fascism

Publications

- 2017 Ballots with Bullets: Elections, Violence, and the Rise of Extreme Right in Turkey. *Journal of Labor and Society* 20.2: 231-261.
- Geopolitics of Anti-Kurdish Violence in Turkey: From Riots to Ethnic Cleansing? In Albert Bergesen and Christian Suter (ed). *Return of Geopolitics*. New York: LitVerlag (*in print*)
- World Hegemonic Ascendancy and National Liberation Movements in Comparative Perspective: China, United States, United Kingdom and United Provinces. *Journal of World-Systems Research* 23(2) (with coauthor S.S. Karatasli)
- Great Convergence or the Third Great Divergence?: Changes in Global Distribution of Wealth, 1500-2008, in Patricio Korzeniewicz (ed.) *World-Systems*

as a Unit of Analysis. New York: Routledge, pp.36-49 (with coauthor S.S. Karatasli)

World Hegemonies and Global Inequalities, in Vladimir Popov & Piotr Dutkiewicz (ed.) *The Rest Beyond the West: New World Order in the XXI Century*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, pp.23-37. (with co-authors S.S. Karatasli, D. Pasciuti, and B. Silver)

2014 Hegemonic Transition, War and Opportunities for Fascist Militarism. *The Longue Durée of the Far-Right: An International Historical Sociology*, eds. Neil Davidson, Adam Fabry, Richard Saull, and Alexander Anievas. London: Routledge.

Class, Crisis and the 2011 Protest Wave: Cyclical and Secular Trends in Global Labor Unrest. *Overcoming Global Inequalities*, eds. Immanuel Wallerstein, Christopher Chase-Dunn & Christian Suter. Paradigm Publishers (with co-authors S. S. Karatasli, B. Scully and S. Upadhyay)

2013 Financialization and International (Dis)Order: A Comparative Analysis of the Perspectives of Karl Polanyi and John Hobson. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* vol. 57 (1), pp.40-72 (with co-author S.S. Karatasli)

Edited Journals

2018 Special Issue on “Empires and Nationalism.” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* (forthcoming; co-edited with Ho-Fung Hung)

Short Pieces

2017 Book Review: “Everywhere Taksim: Sowing the Seeds for a New Turkey at Gezi, by Isabel David and Kumru F. Toktamis (eds)” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*: 267-269.

2014 The Long March of Hindu Nationalism. 2014. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (Nov 5, 2014). [available online at: senjournal.co.uk/2014/11/05/the-long-march-of-hindu-nationalism/]

Academic Honors, Awards and Grants

2017 SOUL Teaching Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University

2015 “Economic and Geopolitical Crises and Waves of Social Unrest,” National Science Foundation Grant, (\$269,136 - with Beverly J. Silver)

2015 Center for Educational Resources, Johns Hopkins University, Technology Fellowship Grant (\$5,000)

2015 Doris Roberts Entwisle Graduate Teaching Fellowship Award, “Ethnic Violence in Comparative and Global Perspective” (Johns Hopkins University)

- 2011 Ford Foundation Middle East Research Competition Grant (\$10,000)
- 2010 Research Grant from PCSID (Program for Cross-National Sociology and International Development), Johns Hopkins University
- 2009 Research Fellowship from International Global Studies Center
- 2006-Today Scholarship from Johns Hopkins University for Graduate Studies
- 2002-2005 Award for Top Department Ranking in International Relations, Koç University
- 2002-2006 Award for Top Department Ranking in Sociology, Koç University
- 1999-2004 Scholarship from Koç University

Conference Presentations (partial list)

- 2017 “Author Meets Critics Session. Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789-2009, by Fatma Muge Gocek”, 2017 American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, Montreal
- “Crisis of Hegemony, Authoritarian Populism and Anti-Kurdish Riots in Turkey,” 2017 American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, Montreal
- “Global Inequality in the Face of Historical and Contemporary Periods of Globalization, 1500-Present, Section on Global and Transnational Sociology,” 2017 American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, Montreal (with Karatasli)
- “Democracy and Violence: Anti-Kurdish Communal Violence in Turkey,” 58th Annual Convention of International Studies Association (ISA), Baltimore, MD, February 22-25, 2017
- “Capitalism, Crisis and Transformation of Global Hierarchies of Wealth, 1500-2008”, 58th Annual Convention of International Studies Association (ISA), Baltimore, MD, February 22-25, 2017 (with Karatasli)
- 2016 “Democratization, Collective Action and Transformation of Ethnic Boundaries: Anti-Kurdish Communal Violence in Turkey,” Association for Studies and Ethnicity (ASN) World Convention, Columbia University, New York
- “Geopolitics of Anti-Kurdish Violence in Turkey: From Riots to Ethnic Cleansing?” The Return of Geopolitics Conference, University of Arizona, April 4-5 2016
- “Ballots with Bullets: Elections, Violence, and the Rise of Extreme Right in Turkey,” Comparative-Historical Section Regular Session, 2016 American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, Seattle
- “Dynamics of Hegemonic Crisis and the Rise of Fascism,” Chaos and Governance in the 21st Century Conference, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton

- “Global Wealth Inequality In the Longue Durée: Changes in Core-Periphery Relations, 1500-2008” (with Karatasli), The 2016 Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society, Boston
- “Four Waves of Dispossession, Proletarianization and Capital Accumulation in Turkey, 1900-present” (with Karatasli), The 2016 Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society, Boston
- 2015 Democratization, Collective Action and Transformation of Ethnic Boundaries: Origins of Anti-Kurdish Communal Violence in Turkey, 2015 American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, Chicago
- World-Hegemonic Ascendancy and National Liberation Movements in Comparative Perspective, 2015 American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, Chicago
- The Current Global Upsurge of Labor and Social Unrest in World-Historical Perspective, 40th Annual Social Science History Association Meeting, Baltimore,
- Transformations in the World Income Hierarchy, 1500-Present: Financialization, Crises, World Hegemonic Transitions, 40th Annual Social Science History Association Meeting, Baltimore
- "Financialization, Crisis and Changes in the Global Income Inequality 1820-2010" (with Karatasli), 2015 Sociology of Development conference, Brown University, March 13-15
- 2014 “Containing Peripheral Nationalism in China in the Long Twentieth Century”, International Conference on "Imagined Communities and Frontier Politics in China’s Long Twentieth Century", Baltimore, October 21-21, 2014
- "Electoral Competition and Political Violence: Comparative Analysis of Extreme Right in India and Turkey," 2014 American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, San Francisco
- "Gezi Uprising in a Macro-Comparative Perspective", XVIII International Sociological Association (ISA) World Congress of Sociology, Yokohoma, Japan, July 13-19 (with Karatasli)
- "Financialization, Crisis and Changes in the Global Income Inequality 1820-2010" (with Karatasli), XVIII International Sociological Association (ISA) World Congress of Sociology, Yokohama, Japan, July 13-19.
- “Macro-Political Limits and Prospects of China's Ascendancy: A Historical-Comparative Assessment”, Eastern Sociological Society (ESS) 2014 Annual Meeting, Baltimore (with Karatasli)
- 2013 “Democratic Origins of Ethnic Violence: Processes and Mechanisms of Ethnic Collective Violence against Kurds”, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York
- “Containing Nationalism in China”, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York (with Karatasli)

“Fascism and Semiperipheral Development”, Mini-Conference on Power and Justice in the Contemporary World-Economy, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York

“Democracy and Collective Violence in Turkey: Mechanisms of Ethnic Collective Violence against Kurds,” Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Boston

“The CCP and National Liberation Movements in China Before and After the Communist Revolution,” 23rd Annual Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN) Conference: "Nationalism and Revolution", London School of Economics, London

“War, Militarism and Far Right”, Historians against the War National Conference, Towson University, Baltimore

“Bringing Labor Back in: Workers in the Current Wave of Global Social Protest”, Annual Meeting of the Political Economy of World-Systems Section of the American Sociological Association (PEWS), Riverside (with Karatasli, Scully, Silver and Upadhyay)

2012 “Nationalism Before and After a Would-Be Eastern Hegemony”, Forecasts of an Eastern Hegemony Section of California Sociological Association Meeting, Riverside (with Karatasli)

“Hegemonic Change and the Rise of Fascism,” Longue Duree of Far Right Workshop, Queen Mary University, London

“Spatial Distribution of Extreme Right Violence and Electoral Support in Turkey,” 10th International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities, Montreal

“Extreme Right Popular Support and Violence in Turkey: A Case of Ethnic-Political Division,” British Sociological Association (BSA) Annual Meeting, Leeds

“Effects of Class, Gender and Ethnicity on University Attainment Levels in Turkey”, British Sociological Association (BSA) Annual Meeting, Leeds (with Karatasli)

2010 “Party and Violence: Turkish Extreme Right in the 21st Century,” Institute of Global Studies, Johns Hopkins University

2007 “The Unhappy Marriages and Hidden Divorces of the "Right(s) to Self-Determination” and the "Chinese Communist Party", Graduate Student Conference in Historical Social Science, State University of New York Binghamton

Teaching Experience

Instructor

- Fall 2017 Extreme Right Politics in Comparative-Historical Perspective, Johns Hopkins University
- Summer 2017 Global Populism in Comparative Perspective
- Fall 2015 Research Seminar on Global Social Protest, Johns Hopkins University
- Spring 2015 Ethnic Violence in Comparative and Global Perspective, Johns Hopkins University
- Fall 2014 Ethnic Violence in Comparative and Global Perspective, Johns Hopkins University
- Spring 2014 Global Social Protest Practicum (with Beverly J. Silver)
- 2011 History of Civilizations, Dogus University, Turkey

Teaching Assistantships

- 2012 Men and Women in Society, Johns Hopkins University
- 2012 Statistics for the Social Sciences, Johns Hopkins University
- 2010 Criminal Justice System, Johns Hopkins University
- 2009 Population, Health and Development, Johns Hopkins University
- 2008 Research Methods for the Social Sciences, Johns Hopkins University
- 2007 Statistics for the Social Sciences, Johns Hopkins University

Research Coordination and Assistantships

- 2017 Coordinator of the Global Right Wing Populism Research Working Group, Arrighi Center for Global Studies
- 2012-Current Co-Coordinator of the Global Social Protest Research Working Group, Arrighi Center for Global Studies
- 2006 RA, Prof. Beverly Silver, Johns Hopkins University
- 2004-2006 RA, Prof. Fuat Keyman, International Relations Department, Koç University
- 2004-2006 RA, Assoc. Prof. Deniz H. Yukseker, Sociology Department, Koç University
- 2005 Project & Research Assistant, TESEV

Professional Service and Memberships

Editorial Board Member – *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Summer 2014 – present)

Coordinator – *Mellon-Sawyer Seminar Series, Johns Hopkins University* (Fall 2013-Spring 2014)

Co-Coordinator – *Global Social Protest Research Working Group*, Arrighi Center for Global Studies (2012-Today)

Reviewer – *Sociological Forum*; *Sociological Focus*; *Global Labour Journal*; *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*

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