

4 State sovereignty and the politics of fear

Ethnography of political violence and the Kurdish struggle in Turkey

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Introduction

'Fear of the state' is a destructive, coercive, and insidious emotion that is widely experienced and felt in societies suffering under authoritarian regimes. In these societies, the emotion of fear is used as a control mechanism and legitimizing factor not only by the state, through myriad forms of violence and terror, but also by oppositional groups through their counter-violence and terror. The polarization of the state and oppositional groups as two enemies, where the former's oppression and violence creates the latter's counter-violence as a reaction, determines them as the dreaded objects of fear. Nevertheless, the main dynamics in the construction of a 'culture of fear' in a community under siege are manufactured mainly by the state, through various forms and strategies of violence and terror.

The focus of this chapter is to analyze how ordinary Kurdish subjects have experienced the modern Turkish nation-state as the most powerful object of fear in their lives since the war between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*, PKK) erupted in 1984. What are the dynamics of this 'fear of the state'? How is fear being manufactured in diverse ways and forms in the Kurdish community? What are the ways in which the Turkish state is using fear as a powerful instrument and a new weapon to pacify and control its citizens? The exploration of the Kurdish experience of the state in the context of the emotion of fear at both subjective and collective levels enables us to comprehend diverse dimensions of violence and trauma, as well as how this experience has reshaped 'Kurdishness' in the contemporary period. This chapter investigates the fundamental dynamics of fear of the state, and it uses the testimonials of Kurdish subjects to examine how state power operates through the implementation of various strategies and tactics in order to retain and protect state sovereignty. The primary task at hand is to investigate how ordinary Kurds have experienced and dealt with the traumatic effects of this fear at both the subjective and the collective level.¹

As an (ir)resistible phenomenon and an inherent facet of the modern nation-state, fear of the state has become an instrument to secure state sovereignty and maintain control in society through myriad state-sponsored acts of violence. In the modern era, the 'state of exception' (Agamben 2005) has become the new rule under which a state's diverse interventions and violent operations are legitimized. The use of fear and violence by the state has turned these phenomena into powerful determining factors in the making of everyday life and in one's world(s). Following Sara Ahmed (2003), I use the concept of 'world(s)' here to refer to both epistemological and ontological being and life itself. Here, I am mostly interested in the ways in which fear of the state reshapes our lives. The modern state as a sovereign power and fundamental object of fear has gained an ability to operate deeply and intervene in every aspect of personal life and the social body by utilizing diverse strategies and techniques such that juridical laws are discarded and human life is transformed into 'bare life'. The repressive and brutal policies of the state create a 'culture of fear' and terror (Sluka 1995, 2000; Carmack 1988; Corradi, Fagen, and Garretton 1992) in which the emotion of fear becomes 'a way of life' (Green 1994, 1995, 1999).

In its standard definition, the emotion of fear is a response to material or metaphysical objects or conditions that are perceived as dangerous by subjects (Bourke 2006), who experience fear subjectively and collectively in various ways under diverse conditions. Fear is experienced as a chronic human condition with pervasive and insidious effects on individuals, community, and social memory, through which fear destabilizes social relations and divides communities through the creation of distrust, suspicion, ambiguity, intimidation, and apprehension (Green 1994). In this chapter, I am talking about the lived experiences of fear that derive from state violence, terror, and the counter-violence of an oppositional group. The fact that living with 'the daily reality of violence' (De Certeau 1986) in wars and conflicts has become a very common phenomenon requires an investigation into the different objects and forms of fear. On the one hand, the state has its self-manufactured fears toward any rival power or oppositional groups/movements that are also constructed by the state as enemies. The state's need for internal and external enemies, and its self-construction as an 'endangered' entity in relation to its opponents, eventually becomes an instrument for the legitimization of violence and the suppression and elimination of those oppositional powers. On the other hand, the state, which operates with its own manufactured fears, constructs itself as the object of fear through terror and performing various forms of violence against its own citizens who are considered a threat. In other words, the state creates its own internal fears in order to legitimize its illegitimate acts, and then creates and uses fear against the constructed 'other' and 'imagined enemies' in and beyond national borders. Thus, the state becomes both the subject and the object of fear through its diverse practices.

The origins of Kurds' 'fear of the state' can be traced back to the 1920s and 1930s when the Kurdish struggle erupted due to the violence and

assimilationist policies of the modern Turkish nation-state. The violent suppression of rebellions by state forces were followed by state-sponsored massacres, the execution of rebels and their supporters, and the forced resettlement of family members, which deepened the fear of the state among many Kurds. The civilian population was terrorized by the executions of hundreds of rebels and their supporters on the gallows in town and city squares in the Kurdish region (Kaya 2003; Diken 2005; Yücel 2006; Özsoy and Eriş 2007). In many cases, the pictures of executed rebels and their bodies hanging on the gallows were displayed on the front pages of national newspapers. The capital punishment of rebels, their supporters, and families by the state evokes Michel Foucault's analyses of the display of torture in eighteenth-century France, where Foucault argues that these acts were constantly shown as a means of perpetuating the power of the King (Foucault 1979: 50). State authorities systematically used the construction of gallows at central squares, and left the bodies of executed rebels hanging for days, as a way of intimidating and pacifying the Kurdish people. The state's act of displaying the dead bodies of executed 'enemies' was seen again in the 1990s as sign of continuity and the unchanged policies of the state toward Kurds. The bloody and sometimes mutilated bodies of slain guerrillas were displayed in many town and city squares in the Kurdish region as a strategy of threatening, terrorizing, and humiliating the families of killed guerrillas and the local population.² Therefore, in this article, the life stories and testimonies of Kurdish subjects not only document the atrocities of the state in the war, they also portray various fragments of fear, humiliation, terror, and violence that affected local people in the region.

At the beginning of the 1990s, fear of the state intensified due to an increase in armed clashes, arrests, murders, disappearances, village evacuations, and other atrocities that exacerbated the circumstances in the region.³ The fact that the state was also using a wide spying network that employed many officials and Kurdish civilians generated an atmosphere of suspicion, distrust, anxiety, and intimidation, which reinforced the fear. Rumors about the existence of state agents enhanced a sense of constant surveillance and the omnipresence of the state in the community. The state as an entity has always lingered in the minds and hearts of the Kurds as an object of fear and a subject that committed acts of humiliation, assimilation, arrest, torture, murder, massacres, and other forms of violence. In her writings on the formation of state violence in Northern Ireland, anthropologist Begonia Aretxaga states that 'the state materializes not only through rules and bureaucratic routines but also through a world of fantasy thoroughly narrativized and imbued with affect, fear, and desire that make it, in fact, a plausible reality' (Aretxaga 2000: 52). Following Aretxaga, I argue that the Turkish state reproduced its hegemony not only through brutal rules, but also corporeal, psychological, and symbolic punishments. The state's 'ghostly' manners (dragging people from their beds in the middle of the night, large networks of spies in the community, the omnipresence of sudden

killings, assassinations, and arrests by civil, secret, and official state agents) in perpetuating fear were corroborated by the dispersion of created stories and rumors about violence and terror which eventually turned the state into a conceivable object of fear.

However, state violence and terror do not necessarily result in the pacification and complete control of a subjugated people. The dynamics of fear can operate conversely, producing powerful counter-reactions and resistance. People resist and cope with diverse forms of fear by taking refuge in the domain of religion, ideology, and kinship as powerful sites of resistance and healing. Religion and ideology can create unity, a sense of belonging, and thereby mobilize a suffering people for a political cause in spite of the enduring hegemony of the state and its pacifying strategies of control. Religion and ideology create a medium through which people learn how to manage this fear and to live with it, although it never disappears completely. It always lingers on with a potential to cause weakness, break resistance, and shatter a community. In the context of the Kurdish experience in Turkey, in spite of the enduring impact of the fear of the state, Kurdish men, women, and children have been involved in many political activities and joined different Kurdish resistance movements (religious, leftist, and nationalist) against state policies. A genealogical exploration of the Kurdish struggle and suffering from 1925 to the present also illustrates both the continuity of fear of the state, and the resistance to it, in the Kurdish community. Recent archival and oral history studies have provided many unheard, unspoken, and previously unrecorded stories of people and survivors, which present a broader depiction of the Kurdish struggles and suffering in the period of 1925–38 (Çamlıbel 2005; Diken 2005; Dersimi 1994, 1997; Kaya 2003; Efe 2006; Beşikçi 1990; Erenler 2007; Aras 1994; Alakom 1998; Karaca 2003; Karabekir 1994; Kalafat 2003; Kalman 1995; Kahraman 2004; Hallı 1972; Fırat 1995; Cem 1999; Avar 2004; Aydın 2006; Aygün 2009; Aydın et al 2000; Fırat 1961; Serdi 1994).

In relation to political violence, the production and reproduction of fear necessarily entails discussions about not only the state's practices, but also the counter-practices of armed oppositional group(s). The question of how the PKK movement has used strategies similar to those of the state to gain power in the Kurdish community needs to be explored; however, the focus in this work will specifically be on the state and its use of fear. First, I would like to focus on testimonials about the emergence of the PKK and the initial interactions of Kurdish villagers with state forces and guerrillas in the rural parts of the Kurdish region at the end of the 1980s. How did they perceive the guerrillas? Did their perceptions and ways of imagining change? How did the guerrillas approach the local people during their war with state forces? Then I will begin to examine the construction of the state as an object of fear through the use of different dynamics and physical and psychological forms of violence vis-à-vis the growing power of the PKK in the region. One of the destructive strategies of the state was the use of different forms of humiliation and

violation of honor during house searches, such as detention, arrest, torture, and rape. These events have often been regular tactics which has often been a regular tactic of oppressive regimes to intimidate and terrorize subjugated groups and communities. Secondly, I will look at how disappearances and unknown murders became the most insidious and frightening acts of human rights violation through the basic dynamics of a culture of fear and terror in the light of testimonial of Kurdish subjects from Kerboran/Dargeçit, Koser/Kızıltepe, and İlehe/Batman. In what follows, I will examine how terror, surveillance, the state-sponsored spying system, and the stigmatization of individuals and families, along with other forms of violence, transformed many towns and cities into insecure places and 'open prisons.' It can be claimed that the Kurdish region was turned into an open prison-like geography in the 1990s under the state of emergency rule (*Olağanüstü Hal*), which was first declared in 1987 and remained in force until 2002. The life stories and testimonies of people illustrate the cruelties and atrocities in the region, which were exacerbated by the catastrophic impact of the thousands of disappearances and unknown murders. In the concluding part, I will question the possible ways of developing different subjective and collective forms of resistance against the state-sponsored 'culture of fear'. I argue that the state has created and used this 'culture of fear' as a means of controlling and maintaining power in the region; however, the narratives of survivors confirm my argument that fear can be surpassed in different ways. Despite the destructive influences of fear on the social body, it can be transformed into anger and various forms of resistance by ordinary people.

Encountering the guerrillas: testimonials of Kurdish villagers

How did the troubles begin, and how do people, particularly villagers, remember the emergence of guerrillas in the mountains? The life stories and narratives of Kurdish villagers provide a clear picture of how the violence started, as well as how people reacted to the emerging events. In the beginning, Kurdish villagers were the first to encounter the guerrillas and witness the clashes between the state and the guerrillas. I want to consider early narratives about state violence and the PKK in order to raise questions about how they became fundamental objects of fear. Their stories document how Kurdish villagers envisioned the state forces – soldiers, special troops, and Village Guards (*Qoruciyan*) – and the guerrillas, and they indicate how the majority of villagers found themselves trapped between the state and the PKK. Despite the fact that the majority of Kurdish villagers in the early years of the conflict perceived the guerrillas as fearsome and as foreigners, the guerrillas eventually managed to convert this fear into sympathy and collaboration in many cases, thereby gaining the support of many villagers. It is important to look at the politics of fear utilized to gain power by both the state and the PKK.

During the war in the 1990s, Kurdish villagers suffered the most due to their position on the front line of the war. Narratives of fear and helplessness

therefore dominate the life stories of my interviewees who were forced to migrate from their villages to Kerboran and other cities in the region. They interpret their encounters with the guerrillas as the first sign of the beginning of the troubles (*nexweşî*), which drastically changed the direction of their lives. While narrating the stories of their villages, and of how they were burned down and forcibly evacuated by state forces and paramilitary Village Guards, I asked the interviewees about how the troubles began. My questions made them remember and relate the first rumors of armed '*telebe*' (students) in the mountains that emerged and circulated widely in the villages and towns in the late 1980s.

Halise, a 54 year-old Kurdish woman, like many other male and female interviewees, narrated how '*nexweşî*' (the troubles) started in the region. '*Wexta ku nexweşiyên dest pê kir*' (when the troubles began) was a oft-repeated phrase when interviewees narrated stories from the early phase of the conflict. Halise was forcibly displaced from her village in the early 1990s and is now living with her family in Beyoğlu, a district of Istanbul with a large Kurdish population. She talked about how she and her husband have been struggling to keep their family together in this poor district that has a very high crime rate. When she began to narrate her painful memories that she has been carrying with her from one city to another as part of her forced migration from the eastern to the western part of the country, during which fresh pains and suffering were accumulated making her burden heavier, she felt uncomfortable. Halise started to narrate the beginning of the troubles in her village, recalling her first encounter with the guerrillas:

In the village, everybody was talking about some people having guns with them and saying that they have seen them on the mountains. People were calling them '*telebeyan*' (students). We were all so frightened. We were wondering who they were and what they looked like. One day, I was at the fountain of the village talking to other women about them. While talking, we suddenly realized that there were some people behind us. They were a group of '*telebeyan*' (students) ...

The word '*telebe*' was used as a neutral label for the guerrillas. This naming was strongly related to the first groups of guerrillas and the founders of the PKK, most of whom were university graduates and students. In the later periods, this naming shifted to another word, '*heval*' (friend), among the sympathizers of the PKK. The relation developed when the villagers and guerrillas came to know each other more through the guerrillas' constant visits to the villages for their survival needs and to spread propaganda. The propaganda of establishing a free Kurdish state (Kurdistan) gained more sympathy among the villagers than the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the movement. In the early years, the Marxist/Leninist ideology of the PKK remained a serious obstacle for the movement in its attempt to convince the local people and to recruit young male and female teenagers. For these

reasons, the PKK started to recruit some teenagers by force at the end of the 1980s. This attempt aroused considerable anger and hate towards the PKK. Although the PKK ceased forcing people to join the movement in the later periods, the use of violence, fear, and threats by the PKK to gain financial and political support has continued to the present day. Through the years, the movement gained more sympathy and the discourse of villagers and local people partially changed. The spread of harsh and indiscriminate state violence toward villagers and other civilians played an important role in the augmentation of hatred and anger toward the state, and it pushed many young men and women to join the guerillas. In other words, state violence and terror strongly contributed to the transformation of the PKK into a powerful movement. In this process, the shift in the naming of the guerrillas from *telebe* (student) to *heval* (friend) can be interpreted as an indication of the development of a positive relationship between the guerrillas and significant strata of the local population.

While listening to my interviewees who joined or supported the political activities of the PKK, I observed a periodization in their naming of the guerrillas. When they talked about the events at the end of the 1980s, they referred to them as '*telebe*' (student) and sometimes '*Ev ên ser çiyân*' (those in the mountains). Later, they referred to them as '*heval*' (friend) or 'the PKK' while talking about events in the early 1990s. While talking about the events in the contemporary period, they generally used the term 'the PKK', 'the Party', or 'the guerrillas'. People that I interviewed had different socio-economic and political backgrounds. Their political background, whether socialist, pro-PKK nationalist, conservative, Islamist, or liberal, differentiated their approaches to the issue as well as their naming of the guerrillas. In this study, I define the PKK fighters as guerrillas; however, this definition is also considered a pro-PKK approach in the mainstream Turkish community and the media. Turkish people and mainstream media commonly opt for the official statist discourse and label them 'terrorists'. Different understandings of the Kurdish question and the PKK produce different discourses, analyses, and labelings of fighters. When asked to say what they thought about the current situation, they called the PKK '*heval*' (friend), or 'guerrillas', 'the PKK' or 'those in the mountains' (*Ev ên ser çiyân*). Very few switched to the statist discourse and used the concept of 'terrorist'. People's use of these concepts also changed during the interviews depending on the conditions in which they were talking, who else was present, and so on.

Hayate, a 56 year-old Kurdish woman, told me her story when asked whether she remembers how everything started. She narrated the story of her first encounter with the guerrillas:

... years back, I had a watermelon field. One day, when I went to our field, I saw peels of watermelons around. I started to wonder who it is that is eating our watermelons? Anyway, I collected ripe watermelons

and loaded them on my donkey to take them to the bazaar and sell. When I was on my way from the village to Kerboran, I saw some young men approaching ... Those in the mountains have also suffered a lot. Before seeing them I passed by a shepherd. So, when I saw them I started to call the shepherd to help me. I was afraid of them. They told me not to fear and said 'Mother, do not be scared. We are also like your sons' ... Sometimes, they were coming to the village. We were very afraid of helping them and giving them food. Because, soldiers and Village Guards of neighboring villages were always coming to our village at midnight and checking the village and surrounding and searching our houses. At these times, we were afraid of even to go out of our houses ...

After arranging a meeting, I went to the house of the 67 year-old Ahmed who had worked as a farmer and construction worker in the past. His warm welcome was followed by a conversation about my research and other daily issues. Before meeting him, I had heard that he had been detained many times and tortured while under arrest. He was accused of being a supporter of the PKK in their village. Not only Ahmed, but the majority of my interviewees, evaluated the armed conflict as the main factor that disrupted their peace and destroyed life in the village. He narrated how the nightmare began:

We had more or less a good life. We were poor but we had peace. Everyone was minding his/her own business in the village, but when these events began, there was neither peace nor ease. We were always in fear and anxious. The *hevals* came in the evening. They wanted stuff like food, clothes, blankets, etc. We had to give them these because they had guns. They disturbed everyone. After their visits, the soldiers would come in the daytime. During incursions and house searches, they humiliated and tortured many villagers. They were accusing us and warning us not to help the guerrillas. Yet, we had to; otherwise, they would kill us if we did not give them food ... The *hevals* also killed some villagers unfairly, but the soldiers were beating, torturing, and arresting people and sometimes killing at will ...

When Ahmed was narrating his life story, he used the first person pronoun 'I' while talking about his childhood, parents, experience of army service, wedding, and other life events. However, he did not present his testimonies about violence, fear, and pain as merely subjective experiences. In his narrative of the war in the region, the personal pronoun 'I' switched to 'we', then to 'villagers' and then 'the Kurds'. During the interviews, I observed that many interviewees, like Ahmed, coped with their fear by narrating their subjective experiences in a collective language, which enabled them to express their feelings and thoughts more openly. Ahmed, like many other interviewees, incorporated his subjective experiences and suffering into a collective one. While the state forces and the guerrillas were involved in conflict inside and outside

the village, he seemed to be an observer who was very afraid, narrating the impact of the events through stories, images, and rumors.

In the life stories of Vesile and Fatma, whose villagers were forcibly evacuated by the state and who now are living in poverty in Kerboran/Dargeçit with their families, the figures of violence and fear dominate their narratives. 45-year-old Vesile, whose husband works at building sites, remembered the events around a constituting role of violence, and her neighbour, 48-year-old widow Fatma, recounted her experiences of violence and fear with remarkable consistency and stunning detail, conveyed with vivid descriptions of dead bodies, body parts, and blood. Fatma narrated:

Early in the morning, I was sleeping on the roof with my kids. Suddenly I jumped out of bed upon the arrival of the soldiers to the roof. They wanted the keys of the house. They took it by force. They went in with a boy from the village. After a while, we heard the boy screaming. He was wailing. Two soldiers were waiting on the roof to prevent me from going downstairs. I could not just stand there so I went downstairs. I looked through the window. In my living room they had tied the boy's hands to the table and his legs to the chair. They were all hitting him. They broke almost all of his bones. The poor boy was an orphan and had just come from the west [the western part of Turkey] where he was working on construction sites. He was not related to the PKK and not involved in any political events ... the poor boy ...

The story of Fatma indicates how the body of the tortured boy was used to send a message to the other villagers for the purpose of spreading fear among people. The stories of systematic beatings, torture, humiliation, and intimidation dominate most of the life stories. The torture and intimidation of male villagers in front of their wives and children were common tactics used by the security forces. According to testimonies of survivors, the villagers were forced to crawl on the ground, to undress and stand in their underwear, and even sometimes forced to eat excrement (see also Kaplan 1996; and Başlangıç 2001). These humiliations were performed in the village squares. Along with these cruel treatments, threats, various forms of humiliation, and physical attacks, the state forces aimed to intimidate and to send a clear message to others not to get involved in political activities and support the guerrillas. As strategies of control, the state forces used systematic forms of violence. Fear nurtured the fear of the state, deepening feelings of insecurity, distrust, and anxiety in the community. This was the period when beatings, torture, disappearances, unknown murders, and killings began in the region. The state started to stigmatize people who were involved in any political activities, gave food to the guerrillas, or otherwise supported the PKK in any way, real or imagined.

According to villagers' accounts and testimonies, the conditions of warfare, in which both sides put pressure on them, became unbearable.

Their agonizing stories of expulsion and displacement provoked tears during interviews. While talking about how their houses and villages were burned down by the state security forces and Village Guards, the phrase '*Kezeba min dişewitî*' (my lung was burning) was repeated as an expression of their pain and emotions. Both Vesile and Fatma narrated:

... After the *hevals* kidnapped some of our teenagers, troubles intensified ... The state begun to be crueler to us. The helicopters were flying in the skies. The state was threatening and forcing us either to evacuate the village or to become Village Guards and fight against the PKK. People had already begun sending their young away from the village and just the elders and small children remained in the villages. Gradually, every body was moving to Kerboran. The majority of the surrounding villages became empty. There was great fear. People were moving to Kerboran. They burned people's houses, furniture, and barns. Many animals died in the barns. Later, they burned our gardens, vineyards and fruit trees in order to prevent villagers from returning. We had sumac trees. They even burned those that are thick in which guerrillas can hide. They burned dense forests in the mountains. They burned villages and mountains. They did not want villagers to come back ...

Villagers fled from warfare and were expelled from their villages by the state security forces and Village Guards during the counter-insurgency operations. Thousands of villages were destroyed along with the resources that had made life possible. There was a massive forced displacement of Kurds from the rural regions to the metropolitan cities in the western part of Turkey. Thousands of Kurdish villages were destroyed and approximately two million Kurds were forced to leave their villages, but these events have led to unintended consequences. In this process, displaced migrant Kurds from different regional backgrounds were integrated into more inclusive, non-territorial Kurdish networks in the western part of the country. It led to a growing sense of Kurdishness as a counter narrative to the Turkishness that displaced migrant Kurdish villagers, political activists, and their families encountered in western parts of Turkey. The emergence of the Kurds as political actors in the political, cultural, and social arena happened not only in the Kurdish region but all around the country. Therefore, this new deterritorialized political struggle and unity around a sense of Kurdishness and Kurdish nationalism may turn out to be a greater challenge to the state than the guerrilla struggles that have been limited to the Kurdish region in the past decades.

Violated self: the fear of dishonoring and humiliation

The fear of the state becomes both a resistible and an irresistible social phenomenon due to the unbearable circumstances of insecurity and acts of beating, threatening, surveillance, dehumanization, imprisonment, torture,

killing, assassination, extrajudicial executions, disappearances, and many other forms of atrocity and human rights violation in a community under fire. Every act of violence and terror frustrates people, causing trauma and permanent physical and psychological damage. Anthropologist Cynthia Keppley Mahmood discusses how 'intangibles like pride and shame are rarely part of the calculus of justice that frames most Western thinking about political order/disorder' (Mahmood 2000: 74). The state's or oppressive group's attacks toward women have been seen in many conflict and war zones such as in Bosnia, India, and Palestine. While writing about the central dynamics of state terror in India, Mahmood narrates an extreme example of protecting the honor of women in a Muslim community. She tells us a story of an old Muslim man putting his daughter to death with an axe to prevent Indian soldiers from using her to humiliate him (Mahmood 2000: 70–88). The stories of wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters who were sexually objectified, attacked, and used as an instrument to humiliate their fathers, husbands, and brothers explain the multiple forms of humiliation by the state forces. The fundamental goal of these strategies was not only to oppress a targeted oppositional group or movement but also to obliterate its members' capacity for resistance and their basic dignity. Mahmood points out that 'The fact that the Indian soldiers understood that the point of greatest vulnerability for Kashmiri Muslim men was the sexual honor of their women shows their acute awareness of the dynamics of this kind of humiliation in a campaign of terror' (Mahmood 2000:74). The severity of the destruction and trauma caused by the systematic attacks of the Turkish state forces against Kurdish female political activists and civilian women can be understood better when the highly valued and widely practiced principles of honor (*şeref*), dignity (*namûs*), and intimacy (*mahremiyet*) are considered.

During the systematic violations of human honor and dignity, Kurdish women and their bodies were the most vulnerable targets of the state security forces. In fact, not only female suspects at detention centers and prisons, but male prisoners as well, were targeted for sexual assault. One can imagine how these attacks traumatize people and create gendered fear in a community where intimacy (*mahremiyet*), dignity (*namûs*), and veiling (*tesetür*) are highly valued and widely practiced religious and cultural phenomena. During my twelve months of fieldwork in the Kurdish region, I found many stories full of fear of dishonoring and humiliation, in which survivors talked about not only the corporeal aspect of punishments, but also the systematic attacks on their honor and dignity. The ways in which the state security forces treated Kurdish people through diverse forms of humiliation in their everyday life illuminates one of the central features of state violence, which not only aims to violate human bodies, but also one's mind and honor.

I found stories of honor violations, such as stories of forcing villagers and prisoners to eat excrement, making men and women stand naked in front of others, sexual assaults on women and men during house searches, and rape

at detention centers to be the most destructive and unbearable stories to hear. In most cases, women and men who were sexually assaulted did not talk about what had happened to them, except for few cases that have appeared in the reports of human rights organizations (*İnsan Hakları Derneği* and *Mazlum-Der*) and newspapers (*Özgür Gündem*). Although there have been some cases of women that were taken by local human rights organizations in Turkey to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the majority of victims have remained silent. I argue that there are two main reasons for their silence. The first is the strong feeling of shame and the desire to conceal what happened to them in the community. Victims often do not want to let people know what happened to them or for their experiences to be publicized. Female activists and prisoners whose honor was violated were also often protected by their families. In the majority of cases they were expected not to talk about what had happened to them, and this was kept as a secret within the family. For the sexually violated, silence is seen as a way of protecting the honor of the violated person and the family. The second reason behind their silence is continuing fear of the state and that it could happen to them again. In many cases, their families kept these women away from political activities to preclude their imprisonment again.

During the interviews, personal narratives were broken off and followed by a deep silence. Their anger and resentment came to the surface through their voice, words, and gestures while remembering and talking about events. Some women talked about how soldiers searched their bodies to see whether they were hiding any weapons under their clothes. For instance, when security forces were suspicious about a woman, they would remove her headscarve and check whether she had long or short hair. The soldiers assumed that any woman with short hair had to be a guerrilla. They also often checked the shoulders of women by removing their clothes. These attacks on women's bodies were legitimized through the assumption that they might be female guerrillas, and any woman whose shoulder had an imprint of any kind would be accused of carrying weapons. Often, remembering these episodes of humiliation and intimidation provoked tears and anger, sometimes interrupting the continuation of the interview.

Hayate felt uncomfortable when she was narrating the violent events, the humiliation and what happened to her, which she claimed happened to many other Kurdish women who were involved, directly or through their family members, in political activities. According to her, the troubles began when her older son Ali joined the guerrillas, or was forced to join them, at the age of 13. When she was telling Ali's story, she switched between two forms of discourse. Sometimes, she said '*they (guerrillas) took my son*' and sometimes stated '*he joined them (guerrillas) by his own will*'. When her husband wanted to bring their son back, the guerrillas rejected his request and beat him severely. According to Hayate, her husband lost his mind for a while due to the trauma and fear that both the guerrillas and the Village Guards caused. She had no connection with her son for five years. One day, she

received news that her son was sick in Syria in one of the camps of the PKK. She immediately went to Syria. While she was trying to bring her son back home, state officials arrested him when they were passing through the border gate to Turkey. The state imprisoned him for two years and then released him. When I asked Hayate about her life story, she began to narrate her life story by summarizing stories of poverty, how they were poor in the village, and how one of her daughters died due to that poverty. Then, she narrated her first experience of state violence. While talking about the violent acts of the Village Guards in the region, she related her story about one of the attacks of Village Guards on her village during which they beat her severely. She narrated her stories with fear and grief:

We were in our village continuing our lives. Nevertheless, the soldiers came and forced us to leave our village. The Village Guards came and beat us. People of our village were resisting leaving the village. Many surrounding villages were evacuated but we were still resisting the state. My children were going to school and also going to the mosque and reading the Qur'an. One of those days, they did not come home in time, so I held my baby and went to call them to come home and eat. At the time, my older son was in the mountains with the guerrillas. While I was going to look for my children, I saw Village Guards coming and firing their guns. They were beating people and coming toward my direction. I understood that they were the Village Guards of a neighboring village. I heard that *hevals* [guerrillas] kidnapped some of their children after they agreed to become Village Guards and fight against the PKK. I immediately escaped and hid myself in one of the nearest houses, not letting them see me. I placed my daughter in the cradle in that house and waited in fear. We suddenly saw one of the guards opening the door and entering the house. He started to beat me with a thick stick and asked where their children were. I told them repeatedly that I did not know anything about them. I begged them not to beat me for the sake of Allah and said again that I really did not know what was going on ... Then he put his gun to my stomach and threatened me that he would shoot me. Then, he hit my head with that stick. I do not know how long I was unconscious. When I came to my senses, I learned that they had left our village a long time ago. I could not take care of my children during that time. They, soldiers and Village Guards, took all the men, including my husband, to the village of guards, Xalila. They imprisoned them in their barns with their animals. Most of our men lost their minds for a long time because they were beaten and tortured a lot during their stay there. In short, they did everything to us ... they did everything to us ...

Hayate repeated her last sentence, '*they [soldiers and Village Guards] did everything to us*', with a furious voice, and then moved to a deep silence, and meanwhile lowered her gaze. Her silence implied untold stories of violation

of women's honor and dignity. Her silence meant a lot for what happened to many Kurdish women and female activists in a larger context.

Azad, an exiled Kurdish man in his late 40s, told me stories that were unbearable to listen to at points during the interview. His very detailed descriptions of the tortures and cruelties that he survived in state prisons provide profound information about the unpredictable tactics and strategies of the state. He talked about how fear was becoming an irresistible state under certain conditions (torture, rape, being threatened with death, etc.). After his release, Azad mentioned his fear when he was escaping from the police and hiding in different places in different cities in order not to be arrested. He promised himself that he would commit suicide in prison if the police arrested him again. According to Azad's story, he was first arrested in 1980 and accused of being a Kurdish nationalist and separatist. The tortures and violence that he experienced for many years in prison led to him to escape from the country and accept exile in Germany as a refugee with his family. Azad told me how it was shameful and unbearable for him to watch sexual assaults on female prisoners at the prison:

... there are not enough words to explain the violence and cruelty that I have lived through. When you ask people, many do not tell you what happened to them. They feel ashamed to tell what happened to them. Those things kill people's honor ... As a prisoner, I could not bear this. I was in my cell and beating the door. That was the only thing that I could do. Somebody who had lived through something like that ... This is cruelty, and it is inhuman ...

The life stories of former male and female prisoners and survivors of torture were dominated by intense fear. The influential factors behind a generated fear of the state were the fear of sexual abuse and attack, humiliation, and violation of honor. These fears were enhanced due to rumors about these events and the circulation of stories of victimized women who suffered insidious acts of state security forces and officials in detention centers and prisons. These rumors, stories, and gossip were carried from one house to the other, thereby deepening feelings of fear of the state, insecurity, and distrust. Although the human rights conditions have improved in the Kurdish region compared to the conditions in the 1990s, during my fieldwork I witnessed the continuing deep impact of the catastrophic conflict and horrific fear of the state. Many of those I arranged interviews with cancelled our meeting due to the pervasive and enduring fear of the state in the Kurdish community. Also, I met many people who did not want to talk and remember such events that would provoke fear, pain, and trauma again. However, people who trusted me narrated their life stories generally in their home settings, which they found more secure. The fear of the state and the feeling of being under surveillance led people to choose telling particular stories, depending on the interview setting, condition, place, and time.

'Who's turn?': disappearances and unknown murders

Many modern authoritarian states have aspired to become the most powerful object and subject of fear, and thereby a fearsome political apparatus, by using paramilitary groups and illegal organizations in their strategies of 'counter-terrorism and insurgency'. The state's declaration of counter-insurgency, and its use of dreadful forms of violence and terror, deepen the 'culture of fear' which occupies the lives of all the members of the community. In this process, the state constructs emergency zones in which people's constitutional rights are denied in a state of exception, and thereby the state of exception becomes a new ruling system. Under these conditions, ordinary citizens are subjected to searches and abuses under anti-terrorist laws enforced by the police and the military (Poole and Renique 1992). Under the rule of contemporary authoritarian regimes, the fear of disappearance and unknown murders become two dreadful forms of state terror during which people feel trapped by the ghostly omnipresence of the state.

As Hannah Arendt identified in her important work *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, state-sponsored 'disappearances' as a strategy has become one of the last and most terrible phases in the evolution and degeneration of totalitarian states in the modern world (Arendt 1962). Disappearances have become one of the new forms of state terror by which a targeted society or group is terrorized and thereby controlled or destroyed. Disappearances and unknown murders have been registered as two destructive forms of state violence in Turkey. In the 1990s, there were growing reports of disappearances and unknown murders in the Kurdish region (Buldan 2003). In Turkey, the question of disappearances of hundreds of Kurdish subjects, and thousands of unknown murders conducted during the 1990s by illegal state-sponsored organizations – particularly the Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Organization (*Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele*, JİTEM), whose existence was denied for a long time by the state authorities – remain to be answered in a possible reconciliation process in the future. What happened in Kerboran in the evening of 29 September 1995 was just one of the thousands of disappearances of Kurdish political subjects and civilians in Turkey.

On the morning of 29 September 1995, the day celebrating the foundation of the Turkish Republic, there were rumors that two Turkish schoolteachers and a Kurdish local businessman accused of being a 'traitor' were kidnapped by the PKK and later executed. The whole town of Kerboran/Dargeçit was shattered by this news, and people waited with great fear for what was going to happen. People locked themselves in their houses. The next morning, news about the arrested people reached our house. In the evening of September 29, state security forces raided different houses and arrested six people whose age ranged from 12 to 21, including the 58-year-old Süleyman Seyhan. They were accused of collaborating with the guerrillas in the kidnapping of the Turkish schoolteachers. Following their arrest, their families did not receive

any further news from them. Five months later, only Süleyman Seyhan's burned body was found at the bottom of a well in a village near Kerboran. According to his son, one of the soldiers secretly gave them information about the location where his father's body had been dumped. Süleyman's body was found at the bottom of a well in an evacuated village nearby. Later, there were rumors that the soldier who leaked information to Süleyman's family was also murdered in the army battalion of the town.

On 9 March 2009, the story of one of the disappeared, 13 year-old Davut, appeared in *Today's Zaman* newspaper. Journalist Ayşe Karabat interviewed his mourning parents who migrated to Istanbul after the disappearance of their son. In the reportage, his mother Hayat Altınkaynak, who saw her son for the last time in the Kerboran/Dargeçit Battalion Command in the early November in 1995, says:

My son was suspended on a hanger [a torturing device]. He saw me. 'Mom, give me water,' he said. As she remembers the last time she saw her 13-year-old son, Davut, tears are rolling down her cheeks from her already crimson red eyes, her feeble voice turns into a cry and she lets go of the tears she has been suppressing: 'Ah ... I could not give water to my precious Davut'.

(Karabat 2009)

Mothers and families of the disappeared have not given up hope and continue to search for their loved ones. These families, called the Saturday Mothers (*Cumartesi Anneleri*), have been continually meeting and demonstrating every Saturday since May 1995 in front of Istanbul's famous Lycée de Galatasaray (Günçikan, 1996). They believe that finding even the remains of their beloved ones will lessen their sorrow and pain. In other words, the mothers and wives of victims search for a body and grave to lament and grieve. They yearn for a mourning ceremony, which could be achieved through the burial of bodies of their sons and daughters. The absence of a body causes lasting trauma among families who feel responsible and unable to do anything for the disappeared.

Ghostly state: surveillance, spying, and the transformation of settlements into open prisons

In a community shattered by state violence and terror, fear is not just inscribed on individual bodies and memories; it is inscribed in the collective forms of narrative and memory, and engraved on the social body. Being surrounded by a culture of fear in the 1990s, people dwelt in the omnipresence of death, fear, and evil as realities of everyday life. Murders on the streets by 'unknown' actors took place day and night. People were dragged from their beds in the middle of the night, taken to detention centers, and later 'disappeared'. The majority of my interviewees narrated similar stories

about their experiences of state surveillance, fear of spies, and the fear of being marked as 'terrorists' by the state or as 'traitors' by the PKK. During the interviews, memories were recalled with great fear and anxiety because of the ongoing armed conflicts.

Fatma, a mother of six, expressed the extent to which fear was pervasive and powerful in their lives, which caused great anxiety. When their village was evacuated and then burned by the soldiers, they had to migrate to Kerboran. Later, harsh economic conditions forced her and her husband to decide to migrate to Istanbul to work there. Fatma narrated:

... I trembled when soldiers were coming to the village for house searches. I had to sit somewhere because I was not able to stand on my legs due to the trembling. There was too much oppression. 'Those in the mountains' were carrying guns. When they were coming to the village, we had to open our doors for them and give them food. The next day in the morning or later, soldiers were coming and beating and arresting people. Some people were informing them [the state] about what was going on in the village. Sometimes, they were killing people under torture while in detention ... We did not know what to do. We were suffering a lot ... All Kurds suffered, but especially the villagers ...

Fatma talked about the local spies who were working for the state and about the fear of being spied on in the 1990s. The deep impact of this fear is still felt in the community. During my recent stay for fieldwork in the region, I observed a deep silence, distrust, and feeling of insecurity and fear in people's lives. People still live with these fears, feelings, and memories of their family members, relatives, friends, and neighbors who were murdered, arrested, beaten, tortured, raped, humiliated, and 'disappeared'.

The story of my hometown Kerboran/Dargeçit is very similar to stories of many other Kurdish towns and cities, which documents how local people lived under the state's counter-insurgency measures. Kerboran, one of the most mountainous districts with forests, ancient caves and deep valleys in the province of Mardin, became a strategic point for PKK guerrillas to hide and launch attacks from. As a result, it became a front line in the civil war. The state security forces and their Kurdish collaborators (Village Guards and spies) put pressure on anyone thought to be sympathizing with the PKK. The families and relatives of guerrillas themselves became targets and were systematically intimidated, interrogated, imprisoned, and tortured. Moreover, all Kurds were perceived by the state as dangerous 'citizens' and 'internal enemies' with the constant potential to sympathize with the PKK. As Cynthia Keppley Mahmood stated in her ethnographic work on India, 'the sense of being a marked person, of waiting for the violent death that can come at any moment, underlies the state's use of random terror tactics' (Mahmood 2000:75). Many of the interviewees spoke about their experiences of being marked in the community and of being under constant surveillance

by the state. They mentioned how being marked severely isolated them from other people. They talked about how even some of their relatives and friends did not want to get in touch with them because their husbands, sons, or daughters had joined the PKK. Hayate narrated how officials at local state institutions discriminated against her family. Hayate's family was one of the hundreds of families who migrated to Kerboran and suffered poverty after the evacuation of their villages in the 1990s. In those days, her husband applied for local governmental support for poor and displaced people. However, the local governor (*Kaymakam*), who considered her husband a PKK supporter, rejected his application. According to Hayate, spies informed local officials that Hayate's son was a former-guerrilla, and this was the reason they prevented her family's access to the financial benefits. Like Hayate's family, families whose sons, daughters, or any other members had joined the PKK were marked by the state, marginalized in the community, and remained under systematic police surveillance.

The fear of the state and the sense of insecurity and distrust shattered life in the town. For instance, it became a common measure to lock the door of your house at sunset and not to accept any guests in the evenings. The stories and rumors about house searches at nights contributed to the pervasive climate of fear. The state's extremely strict control of mobility as a part of the state of emergency resulted in the barricading of the entrances to the town, and the establishment of checkpoints where people were exposed to body searches, along with checking cars and luggage. There were many other checkpoints between villages, towns, and cities. In other words, these towns and cities were transformed into 'open prisons'. According to rules set at these check points, people had to get permission during certain hours at the checkpoints in order to go to their gardens and fields. People were required to bring their IDs and to give them to soldiers at the checkpoints. People who left their IDs were commanded to come back at a time arranged by the state security forces. In those days, even shepherds were required to do their herding during the established permitted hours. During clashes, nobody, including shepherds, was allowed to leave the town. According to the people of Kerboran, they practically lived in such 'open prisons' during those years.

Albert Camus, in his work *Reflections on the Guillotine* (1961), explained how such a 'purgatory state of being' itself is a form of torture in its total subversion of individual autonomy. Inspired by Camus's analysis, Mahmood argues that people who are living under military occupation are subject to a kind of death sentence. She contends that uncertainty and stress disorders proliferate under the counter-insurgency measures of the state (Mahmood 2000: 76). Following Camus and Mahmood, I argue that the counter-insurgency policy in the Kurdish region caused physical and psychological damage on the Kurdish community at both the subjective and the collective levels. Fear of the state and the sense of insecurity and distrust are the most destructive consequences of these rules which are still vigorously felt. These have various socio-political consequences. First, the enduring impact

of these policies hampered the development of positive relations between the state and the Kurds. Second, they destroyed the formation of trust, self-confidence, and security in the community. Lastly, surveillance, spying, and the notion of being marked have triggered enmity between pro-state families and the supporters and sympathizers of the PKK, causing new divisions within the community.

Today, when people are asked about the conflict, they remain reluctant to talk about the state and the PKK if they have any suspicion and feeling of distrust towards the person who asks or towards the people around them. The fact that the state hires and forces people to spy on anybody who is involved in politics has aggravated distrust and fear within the community. Thus, the whispered stories, news, gossip, and rumors about the existence of spies and stigmatized families are widely retold in the community and thereby contribute to the formation of a collective fear. I argue that the re-telling of stories, news, rumors, and gossip has two functions. On the one hand, it delivers information about the agents and strategies of state violence to ordinary Kurdish people so that they can be careful. In addition, it fuels anger and hatred directed at the persecutors and their local collaborators. On the other hand, these stories reinforce the fear of the state and empower state apparatuses and agents in various ways. They implement the idea that what happened to the person next to you could also happen to you, and zones of interpersonal silence are thereby generated. Living in a state of fear and insecurity creates a deep muteness, which can be interpreted sometimes as a silence of protection and sometimes as silence of coercion, suffering, pain, trauma, or loss. Fear plays a crucial role in the making of world(s) of people who are born into this created culture of fear. As Sara Ahmed has eloquently explained, 'the worlds we "are in" might not be of "our making", but they are made, and through being made, they "make us"' (Ahmed 2003: 378). In this 'made world', fear becomes one of the most powerful entries in narratives and memories. State surveillance, spying, stigmatization, and the marking of individuals, families, and communities have also contributed to the development of a culture of fear that made, remade, and unmade the world(s) of the Kurdish subjects. Survivors' unwillingness to talk about their suffering and pain even in their homes illustrates the deep impact of this generated fear of the state.

Conclusion

The fear of the state not only shapes the memory of individuals but also inscribes the social body, often through painful and brutal experiences. It has an invisible and silent agency of power that surrounds individuals, families, and then the whole community through acts of humiliation, arrests, disappearances, murders, torture, massacres, denunciations, and the spreading of stories and rumors about these events. Fear is registered in memories in various forms, depending on the socio-political context and the relation of

subjects with the objects of fear (the state and its diverse apparatuses). In other words, memory becomes a repertoire of secret histories of fear, terror, and violence that are available for public release at times that are more appropriate.

The question of why subjects attempt to incorporate their personal stories into a wider discourse of community has been interpreted by ethnographers in different ways. People do not comfortably speak about politics and war-related issues due to the eerie existence of the state and its visible apparatuses. It has been argued that a more collective domain helps survivors to express and interpret events and facts about their personal lives (Malkki, 1990). A collective discourse provides individuals with a sense of communality and national identity, and it creates the politics of sharing, distinctness, security, and fellowship. One of the ways in which this collectivity is formed is by desire and the tendency of survivors to share their experiences. The strategies of transforming subjective stories into collective narratives create a space from which survivors are becoming more willing to talk about what happened to them. The collective narrative as a medium enables them to talk about unspeakable matters and thus shatters their silence. Nevertheless, in this silent medium under surveillance, people develop various politics of speech, gestures, idioms, and metaphoric sayings and acts as forms of resistance and everyday communication (Aretxaga 2003; Green 1994; Seremetakis 1994; Abu-Lughod 1993). As Michael Taussig has pointed out, 'people use, not conscious ideology, but dialectics of images and story-like creations to define their world, including their politics' (Taussig 1987:367). I have argued that speaking through a collective narrative allows the victims the possibility of personal denial, if questioned in any case by the state. In this vein, people take refuge in the collective narrative and use it as a defense mechanism during their efforts to cope with their continuing fear of the state and suffering.

What survivors face in the aftermath of conflicts and war is not only longing memories and emotions, there are psychological and physical effects of lived experiences of violence, fear, and pain that continue to affect survivors and people who dwell in the conflict zone. Linda Green, based on her fieldwork in Guatemala, talks about the severe effects of the constant state of fear and terror that are infused into the bodies and dreams causing chronic illnesses such as headaches, gastritis, ulcers, weakness, diarrhea, irritability, inability to sleep, pain, depression, and nightmares (Green 1994: 231). In the same way, many interviewees talked about chronic illnesses that they have been trying to cope with for many years. Moreover, the bodies of surviving victims and witnesses, their faces and memories, become texts from which one can observe their suffering and struggle for a community or nation (Petee 1994). The bodies begin to accumulate political biographies, a multiplicity of subject positions, and become instruments of agency. In other words, fear 'work[s] to shape the "surfaces" of individual and collective bodies' (Ahmed 2004:1) and reconstructs memories, the souls of individuals,

and the mechanisms of a community. Suffering serves to connect people who share the same beliefs, ideologies, and cause, to bring them together in their hardships, and as such becomes a mechanism for social commentary and political consciousness. I agree with Linda Green's conclusion that chronic conditions of suffering, fear, terror, and pain create a commonality and a sense of sharing among survivors (Green 1994). With the repetitiveness, familiarity, and retold and shared stories of fear and suffering, subjective experiences are transformed into discourses and stories of a 'suffering nation' that can operate in the re-construction of a recoverable social memory and world. These reconstructed communal discourses and memories can be identified as strategies through which people cope with their subjective and collective traumatic experiences (Antze and Lambek 1996). Thus, the ruptures and reinventions of subjective narrative boundaries co-occur with the ruptures and reinventions of the community itself, emerging out of the sociopolitical cartography of localities.

Is there any possibility of resistance to the pervasive and destructive impact of the 'culture of fear and terror' that has become such a powerful register in the making of the world(s) in the Kurdish community? How does religion or ideology produce forms of resistance against state terror and fear? These questions are very crucial in the context of a comprehensive understanding of the impact of culture of fear in the Kurdish community. Different experiences of resistance movements around the world, and the Kurdish experience of state violence in Turkey, document how subordinated peoples transform the state of passivity into resistance and struggle. People can develop certain tactics and behaviors to cope with the pacifying impact of fear and thereby perpetuate resistance. In the process of political struggles, religion and ideology have become powerful mobilizing phenomena in the lives of political subjects and healing mediums for survivors. It has been argued that religious metaphors of suffering, literary (poetry, lament, oral stories), cultural, and ideological forms, icons, and metaphors (patriotism, heroes, martyrs) can all be used to express and mediate in these processes of social and political struggles (Aretxaga 1997:42-50; Zulaika 1988; Abu-Lughod 1993; Asad 2003:78-92; De Certeau 1986).

As I have argued above, living in a state of fear and insecurity creates a profound silence in a community caught between two sides at war. This fear of the actors and apparatuses of political violence can be interpreted sometimes as a silence of protection, and sometimes as a silence of coercion, suffering, pain, trauma, or loss at both subjective and collective levels. One needs not only words or language to reconstruct narratives and tell personal stories, but also the presence of an audience able and willing to hear, feel, and value. The families of guerrillas, the disappeared, and survivors live with strong hopes for peace, justice, and reconciliation that will help them to cope with their pain. They live with the memories, anxieties, and fears of the past which are continually provoked by the ongoing armed conflict, assassinations, threats, imprisonments, and pervasive forms of humiliation. People do

not forget what happened to them. Although the catastrophic impacts of fear remain finite, destructive, and universal human experiences, there is an urgent need to share the fears and memories of victims and survivors, and to let others know and feel in solidarity with them.

Notes

- 1 This research is based on multi-site ethnographic research implementing different techniques and approaches in the Kurdish region in Turkey. The main data (life stories, testimonials, laments, songs of grief, NGO reports, archives of newspapers, other written materials) were collected during 12 months of fieldwork in Mardin, Batman, İstanbul, Paris, and Gissen (Germany) between 2007 and 2008. During the fieldwork, nearly one-hundred male and female interviewees from different socio-political backgrounds and ages were interviewed; however, of these, just fifty-three interviewees gave permission to use a tape-recorder during the interviews.
- 2 There have been numerous reports by international and national human rights associations such as Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch, *İnsan Hakları Derneği* (İHD, Human Rights Association of Turkey) and *Mazlum-Der* (The Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People). There is also very rich data in the archives of the *Özgür Gündem* newspaper in İstanbul, which has been systematically targeted for reporting on such human rights violations. See for example 'Death wells: Ergenekon's Aceldama' by Ayşe Karabat in *Today's Zaman* (March 9, 2009).
- 3 See, for example, the following summary table of the 1994 report by the Human Rights Association on human rights violations in Turkey:

Murders by unidentified assailants: 292
 Extrajudicial executions, deaths by torture under detention: 298
 People killed in armed confrontations: 5000
 Attacks against civilians: 458 killed, 574 wounded
 Alleged disappearances under detention: 328
 People exposed to torture/alleged torture cases: 1000
 People detained: 14,473
 People jailed: 1209
 Burned down/evacuated villages/forests: 1500 villages, 31 forests
 Dismissed workers: 70,000
 Bomb attacks: 191
 Closed associations, political parties, publications: 123
 Raids to associations, political parties, publications: 119
 Confiscated publications: 450
 Requested imprisonment sentences and fines (total combined): 1081 years 6 months, TL7.233 billion.
 Executed imprisonment sentences and fines: 533 years 5 months, TL55.325 billion
 Prisoners of conscience: 100 (approx.)

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