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STATE BUILDING AND THE LIMITS OF LEGIBILITY: KINSHIP NETWORKS AND KURDISH RESISTANCE IN TURKEY

Abstract

Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the twin goals of centralizing state power and inscribing a uniform national identity on all citizens resulted in the proliferation of disciplinary practices that required changes in habits and everyday life as well as in the locus of faith, allegiance, and obedience. Nowhere were the repercussions felt as deeply as in the Kurdish regions, where the urge to create a new citizen sparked considerable resistance. This article suggests that alongside Kurdish nationalist movements, kinship networks and morality constituted an alternative reservoir of resistance to the new disciplinary practices that followed state building. By subverting state practices to make citizens legible, kinship networks, I argue, undermined the state's attempts to establish bureaucratic authority and create an exclusive identity.

On 4 May 2009, masked gunmen opened fire at a Kurdish engagement ceremony and killed forty-four men and women in Zaqirt (Bilge), a village in the district of Mardin in southeastern Turkey. According to some reports, there was a long-standing blood feud between two branches of the family, and the assailants had wanted the bride to marry another man. Following the incident, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan stated in a television broadcast that “no tradition, no custom can ever justify this massacre.” Erdoğan's implicit reference to “Kurdish traditions” was countered by Ahmet Türk and other Kurdish representatives, who insisted that the incident had nothing to do with Kurdish customs but rather was a result of state policies that empowered local clan leaders in order to contain the Kurdish national movement.¹

The murder of forty-four villagers in Zaqirt had little resemblance to a traditional blood dispute. But the war of accusations that followed it obscures a puzzle about the nature of authority in eastern Turkey: the resilience of local authority structures in the Kurdish regions despite the aggressive and often violent strategies of both the Turkish government and the Kurdish national movement to remold the loyalties of the local population along exclusively national lines. Since the establishment of the republic in 1923, the Turkish government has pursued a repressive assimilation policy to transform Kurds into Turks. This policy both denied the existence of a separate Kurdish identity and

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prohibited its expression. The denial of Kurdish identity and the drive for assimilation often went hand in hand with an effort to uproot local sources of allegiance—to tribal chiefs, religious sheikhs, and landlords—and to supplant them with exclusive allegiance to the Turkish nation. Although it has vigorously contested the state's Turkification policy, the Kurdish national movement's approach to subethnic sources of authority and allegiance has not been all that different. Since the 1960s, urban Kurdish movements have approached local loyalties rooted in kinship, religion, and landownership as an obstacle to the emergence of a unified Kurdish national movement. During the 1980s and 1990s, activists of legal Kurdish parties and the underground *Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan* (PKK, Kurdistan Workers' Party) engaged in consciousness-raising activities to make Kurdish national identity the dominant and exclusive identity of the Kurds in Turkey.² The durability of local sources of authority, allegiance, and violence in parts of eastern Turkey, then, is striking.

By "local sources of authority and allegiance," I refer to nonnational sources of power and belonging, rooted not only in kinship but also in religion and landownership. At the onset of the 20th century, large landowners and tribal groups figured prominently in the social structure of eastern Turkey.³ Although the tribal population was gradually sedentarized, patrilineal kinship has remained an important source of allegiance and self-definition for many families, especially in rural areas, where self-defense and the control of land have often reinforced kin-based authority. Historically, Sufi orders organized around particular sheikhs have also played a prominent role in regulating everyday life, resolving intertribal and interpersonal disputes and facilitating political mobilization.⁴ Numerous scholars have noted the prominent role played by *ağas* (landlords or clan leaders), sheikhs, and tribal chiefs in Kurdistan. Yet relatively little has been written on their role in the struggle over identity and authority after the suppression of the tribally based revolts in the 1920s and 1930s.⁵ Instead, the focus of recent studies has been on two actors: the state and Kurdish nationalist activists. The dominant analytic framework in these studies is that of political opportunity structure, which traces shifts in the state's response to Kurdish political mobilization in terms of the state's repressiveness, exclusiveness, and success in elite co-optation.⁶ The exclusionary and repressive nature of Turkish nationalism, it is argued, catalyzed a Kurdish nationalist challenge, which, in time, has overcome the fragmentation of tribal loyalties and mounted an integrated challenge to Turkish nation-state building. Kurdish nationalism failed in the 1920s and 1930s, according to this framework, because the tribal divisions remained dominant; it failed despite liberalization in the 1950s and 1960s because the traditional elite was co-opted and the new, urban elite was fragmented; finally, with the erosion of the power of the traditional elite, and in reaction to increasing state repression, the Kurdish national movement reemerged as a more radical, unified, and mass movement in the 1980s and 1990s.⁷

While large-scale shifts in the political opportunity structure help to explain why the Kurdish national movement was able to achieve greater unity after the 1980s, this model is less helpful for understanding the unorganized and less visible forms of resistance grounded in kinship networks, which form the focus of the present article. The existing scholarship examines local sources of authority only to the extent that these have impeded Kurdish national unification. Clan networks are thus conceived almost exclusively as instruments of the state that uniformly support its security agenda in eastern Turkey.

Without romanticizing their inegalitarian nature, my purpose in this article is to show that the role of local sources of authority—and their relationship to both the state and the Kurdish national movement—has been more variegated than the dominant explanations would suggest. Alongside Kurdish nationalist movements that have openly contested the authority of the state, kinship networks and morality, I argue, have constituted an alternative reservoir of resistance to the state-building and nation-building projects of republican Turkey. Such resistance was not always motivated by Kurdish nationalism but sometimes by the instinct for survival in the face of an increasingly interventionist and repressive state and by an ethic of reciprocity that regulated social relations.⁸ Moreover, it consisted not in organized, confrontational actions of the sort favored by the Kurdish nationalist movement but rather in what James Scott has called “everyday acts of resistance,” that is, actions that lack a clear leadership or organizational structure but that nonetheless cumulatively undermine the authority of the state or the dominant class.⁹ Although such actions are undertaken by individuals for immediate goals, they are not individualistic; they are often rooted in communally shared ideas of justice and rely on the tacit cooperation of the larger community.¹⁰ They are the “collective actions of noncollective actors.”¹¹ I argue that everyday acts of resistance embedded in kinship loyalty—at the core of which is the principle of protecting and favoring kin—cumulatively undermined the twin projects of nation building and state building while creating a third layer of authority that has coexisted with the authority of the state and of the rising Kurdish national movement.

As James Scott has argued, the 20th century witnessed the emergence of “high modernist” states that attempted wholesale transformations of their societies according to new disciplinary logics. From creating surnames to standardizing language, argues Scott, “high modernist” states have sought “huge, utopian changes in people’s work habits, living patterns, moral conduct, and worldview.”¹² An essential component of this form of statecraft, Scott suggests, is the attempt to make a society legible, “to arrange the population in ways that simplified the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion.”¹³

Scott’s focus on state practices geared to render society “legible” suggests a theory of state power that emphasizes the conceptual order imposed by state institutions.¹⁴ As Michel Foucault has similarly argued, modern governmentality is set apart from other modes of rule by its rationality, a rationality that is a product of centralization and in which knowledge plays a vital role in population management.¹⁵ This conceptual order is established through routine administrative practices, such as census taking, birth registration, the drawing of maps, and so forth. In Timothy Mitchell’s words, “[t]he state should be addressed as an effect of detailed processes of spatial organisation, temporal arrangement, functional specification, and supervision and surveillance, which create the appearance of a world fundamentally divided into state and society.”¹⁶ The state’s power, in these perspectives, lies in the ordering effects of its administrative apparatus and the minute practices of its bureaucrats.

Such a perspective is particularly relevant for understanding the implications of state-led nation-building projects for minority populations. The emerging literature on governmentality and disciplinary power, however, often imputes too much coherence and effectivity to the disciplinary power radiating from state institutions. As anthropologist Sally Falk Moore reminds us, “the making of rules and social and symbolic order is a

human industry matched only by the manipulation, circumvention, remaking, replacing, and unmaking of rules and symbols in which people seem equally engaged.”¹⁷ What I try to show in this article is that the state is not the only “center” from which order radiates.¹⁸ The conceptual order generated by the state is imposed on social segments that have their own moral order and “mental maps” of how the world is constructed.¹⁹ An exclusive focus on state practices to make a population “legible” and to transform people into national citizens underestimates the degree to which other sources of order compete with the state to shape the rules of everyday life. An analysis of order from below can shed light on the limits of the state’s disciplinary power. My argument is that kinship, both as a map of how the world is constructed and as a blueprint for moral action, undermined the order of the Turkish state in significant ways.

I examine three ways that kinship networks undermined the building of a centralized state and a homogenous nation that commanded the exclusive loyalty of its citizens. First, as the Turkish government attempted to reorder the Kurdish regions according to principles of centralized rule and bureaucratic authority, the networks of trust and reciprocity between kin groups enabled Kurds to undermine state action in important areas, such as law enforcement and border control. Second, through the agency of lower-level clerks, kinship networks and morality made inroads into the state and transformed the nature of bureaucratic authority, blurring the boundaries of where the state “ends” and other forms of authority take hold. Third, local solidarities based on kinship and reciprocity undermined the state’s project of creating an exclusive Turkish identity by creating a fluid space in which pro-state and pro-Kurdish forces could communicate with one another and enter shifting and flexible alliances.

In the first part of what follows, I outline the implications of Turkey’s nation-building project for local sources of authority in the early republic. I show that not only Kurdish national identity but also local solidarities rooted in kinship, religion, and landownership, which had regulated much of everyday life prior to the republic, were fundamentally at odds with the type of citizen that the republic sought to create. In the second part, I examine the ways that everyday acts of resistance rooted in kinship solidarity cumulatively undermined nation–state building. I start with the single-party era (1925–46) and then examine similar processes during the armed conflict of the 1980s and 1990s. These two periods exemplify opposite poles in the Turkish state’s treatment of kin-based sources of authority in Kurdistan: one characterized by an excessive concern with centralization and a crackdown on local structures of authority and the other by a softer approach to clan leaders, with a view to co-opt the local elite. By examining two periods in which the state approached local sources of authority in quite different ways, I aim to highlight enduring patterns of everyday resistance despite large-scale transformations in political space. The argument is illustrated with data I collected from the Archives of the Prime Ministry (*Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi*) and interviews I conducted in Diyarbakır, Urfa, Siverek, and Hakkari in 2006.

THE WAR ON LOCAL SOURCES OF SOLIDARITY, 1923–46

Shortly after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, a series of Kurdish uprisings in eastern Turkey led the leaders of the new republic to identify the Kurdish minority as a threat to the integrity of the state. In Mesut Yeğen’s apt description, Kurds

were considered “prospective Turks,” who could become full and equal members of the Turkish nation if they could be persuaded or, more often, forced to give up other loyalties.²⁰

The contours of the government’s Kurdish policy were shaped in the early years of the republic, following the Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925. Rooted at once in religion and in Kurdish nationalism, the revolt constituted a serious challenge to the Turkification, centralization, and secularization policies of the republic.²¹ A secret report drawn up after the revolt recommended a series of measures that have since formed the backbone of Turkey’s policy toward its Kurdish population.²² First, after noting with alarm that the Turkish population in the region was less than one-fourth of the Kurdish population, the report called for the assimilation of Kurds into Turkishness. It proposed that Muslim immigrants arriving in Turkey from former Ottoman territories be settled in eastern Turkey, while Kurds involved in the rebellions be transferred to the western provinces. Beyond this demographic engineering,²³ increased schooling, instruction in the Turkish language, and discouragement of speaking Kurdish were suggested as the fastest routes to assimilation. Cultural assimilation remained one of the core tenets of the government’s Kurdish policy until at least the 1990s.

Second, the report proposed measures to increase the presence and authority of the central government in eastern Turkey. These included building schools, hospitals, railroads, and highways; repairing government buildings; requiring all public officials to serve time in eastern Turkey while preventing the appointment of Kurdish officials to serve in their own regions; and placing the region under military control. These measures were geared to increase simultaneously the state’s coercive power in the region and what Michael Mann has called its *infrastructural power*, that is, its logistical capacity “to penetrate and centrally coordinate the activities of civil society through its own infrastructure.”²⁴ Along with cultural assimilation, centralizing state power through infrastructural and despotic means became a hallmark of the Turkish government’s policy in Kurdish areas.²⁵ The increasingly interventionist state, and its set of disciplinary practices, was a radical departure from the Ottoman era, when local affairs had been largely beyond the reach of the central state.

Third, the report urged the elimination of the influence of local authorities, such as tribal leaders, religious sheikhs, and landlords, in order to establish direct rule of the citizens by the government. Because all of the uprisings of the 1920s and 1930s had been initiated by the traditional elite of Kurdish society, the early republic looked at tribal leaders, landlords, and sheikhs with great suspicion. The campaign to transform Kurds into Turks thus went hand in hand with a crackdown on these local sources of authority.

In the two decades following the drawing up of the report, its proposals constituted the core elements of a highly repressive campaign of assimilation to be carried out by the General Inspectorates, a special administrative unit with quasi-military powers set up in 1927 to bring the Kurdish regions under control. The commitment to a thorough transformation of society, and the willingness to mobilize violence to that end, surely qualify the General Inspectorates for that “lethal” combination of utopian ideology and an authoritarian state analyzed by James Scott. Since the first two prongs of this ambitious project—the aggressive program of cultural–linguistic assimilation and the increased presence of the state and its coercive institutions in Kurdish regions—have

been studied extensively, I focus here on the third, the attempt to destroy “traditional” society in order to make a new type of citizen.²⁶

The government’s analysis in the 1920s and 1930s that Kurds were Turks who could be “reminded” of their true identity if only they could be stripped of their loyalty to exploitative local patrons is clear in the statements of the Eastern Independence Tribunal that tried Sheikh Said and his followers. In a spirit of revolution, the court stated:

The poor people of this region who, for years, have been exploited, worn out, and suffered under the pressures of sheikhs, landlords, and beys [notables], people whose property, lives, and honor have been sacrificed for the whims of sheikhs, beys, and landlords will from now on free themselves from your depravity and cruelty, and they will follow the paths of our republic which promise prosperous progress and happiness.²⁷

Such a perspective is also evident in the 1937 report of an inspector general who blamed the insurgencies on “a coterie of discontented leaders” who had “developed an interest in the continuation of insurgency in order to perpetuate their previous authority.”²⁸ The inspector’s diagnosis reflected the worldview of the republican elite, who considered pre-republican structures of authority and legitimacy as corrupt, exploitative, and backward. To eliminate the layers of authority between individuals and the state, the Settlement Law of 1934 formally abolished the tribe.²⁹ It also attempted to physically separate the traditional elite from ordinary Kurdish men and women. Without mentioning the word “Kurd,” the law authorized the government to resettle “tribes [and nomads] who are citizens of Turkey but are not loyal to the Turkish culture,” “those who are loyal to the Turkish culture but do not speak Turkish,” and “those who have previously served as tribal chiefs, beys, *ağas*, or sheikhs, or who aspire to do so.”³⁰ Based on the settlement laws, tens of thousands of Kurds were moved to western parts of Turkey while a significant “Turkish” presence was created in historically Kurdish areas by the settlement of non-Kurdish Muslim immigrants. While some of the spatial-reorganization policies reflected a concern with ethno-national difference—hence, the categorizations based on “language” and “culture”—others were designed specifically to transform the authority structure of Kurdish society and weaken the loyalties of Kurds to their landlords and their religious and tribal leaders. In one report, the inspector general recommended “the removal, from villages, of those who have been sheikhs or aspire to serve as sheikhs, and their being placed under the custody and permanent supervision of the police” and demanded that the inspectors general be authorized to resettle the families of these sheikhs.³¹ After the Sheikh Said and Ağrı revolts, the inspectors general, who exercised wide and often arbitrary power in eastern Turkey, were authorized to relocate influential families into western Turkey; around 25,000 Kurds were resettled in the 1930s.³² If the government could remove the ruling strata of Kurdish society from the region, the inspectors assumed, the local population would naturally shift its loyalties to the republican state and “return” to its original, that is, Turkish, identity.

The assumption that Kurdish rebellions resulted from the tribal-feudal structure of the region also drew the government into arenas that were previously only loosely regulated. Practices associated with tribalism and “feudalism” and over which the central government had very little control—land ownership patterns, blood feuds, and cross-border smuggling—were now viewed with suspicion and became subject to a deeper level of regulation. In order to break the link between the ruling strata and the peasants,

the government sporadically tried, without success, to confiscate the lands of the leading families and redistribute them to peasants. Another area of concern was blood feuds. A 1937 law authorized the government to forcibly remove the relatives of individuals involved in a blood dispute and to relocate them in areas at least 500 kilometers from their original dwelling places.³³ As in the arrangements with settlement, relocation was utilized as a means to discipline actions rooted in local loyalties and obligations. Although the punishment for intentional manslaughter ranged between twenty-four and thirty years, a 1953 amendment to the Criminal Code of 1926 stipulated that manslaughter with the intent to seek blood revenge would be punished by the death penalty.

Cross-border smuggling—facilitated by the tribal networks that connected Kurds in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq—was identified as a major threat to the regime. The ease with which Kurds crossed the border undermined the government's efforts to institutionalize borders as containers of discrete nations.³⁴ To be sure, smuggling was considered a serious crime everywhere. In the Kurdish border regions, however, state officials drew broader connections between smuggling and threats to regime stability. In one report to the prime minister, the inspector general wrote, "Smuggling constitutes a subject that must be treated with utmost concern from the point of view of security. The issue of smuggling is the sole vehicle for political propaganda, arms smuggling, and leadership for organizations and individuals with malicious aims."³⁵ Here, the phrases "political propaganda" and "individuals with malicious aims" can be read as code words for "Kurdish bandits and rebels," who consumed much of the energy of law enforcement forces. The officials linked smuggling with Kurdish nationalist activities in part because Kurdish society remained highly illegible to the officials, who could not always distinguish a rebel from a bandit. Smuggling was discussed in the parliament in 1937 together with the Dersim uprising and the "intransigence" of tribal leaders, revealing the connections government officials drew between tribes, Kurdish nationalism, and smuggling.³⁶

In sum, during the first two decades of state building, the government not only initiated several military campaigns against Kurdish insurgents and a massive propaganda campaign to cultivate Turkish identity in the hearts and minds of the citizenry but also was embroiled in a war of another sort, to destroy local sources of authority and allegiance so that power could be concentrated in one center, the state. To this end, populations were moved, families broken up, religious leaders placed under surveillance, land confiscated, and tribes resettled. Like the insistence that everyone identify himself or herself as Turkish, it emerged from a certain way of seeing the citizen in relation to the state, in which citizens, stripped of their parochial ties, would speak one language, obey one law, and profess one loyalty. In the next section, I examine the complications that this vision encountered at the local level.

KINSHIP NETWORKS AND EVERYDAY RESISTANCE

Engaging the Bureaucracy

As the General Inspectorates embarked on their task of transforming the fabric of everyday life in the Kurdish regions, they confronted a great deal of resistance, both overt and covert. Overt resistance included the numerous politically motivated regional

uprisings, among them the Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925, the Ağrı uprising of 1930, and the Dersim uprising of 1937 and 1938. But the General Inspectorates also faced resistance of a subtler kind in everyday acts embedded in kinship solidarity. These invisible ties of commitment and solidarity appeared to the officials as an “unorganized and unspoken conspiracy,” to borrow a phrase from Nathan Brown, and formed a “protective covering for those willing to break the law,” disrupting the form of governmentality that the officials were trying to cultivate.³⁷ In a 1931 report, the inspector general wrote that his efforts on crime prevention had failed, because

with the assistance of their tribes and families, [the rebels] find shelter in the mountains, and again with the help of their families acquire such needs as food supplies, arms and ammunition, and as a result, continue in rebellious activities. . . . Since the behavior of the families and relatives do not constitute crime per se, these [the families] do not receive punishment, yet another reason emboldening [the rebels].³⁸

The cause of the inspector’s frustration was that the rebels were embedded in networks that challenged the state’s capacity for surveillance and punishment.

Not only did kinship ties facilitate cooperation between Kurds escaping the clutches of government but also a morality of reciprocity based on kinship and familiarity began to make its way into the lower echelons of the bureaucracy. In order to centralize authority in state institutions, the government had to keep a tight rein on its own officials. Securing the obedience of public officials to orders from the top proved difficult, however, when these officials began to form links with members of the local society. To begin with, while the higher-level officials—such as judges, prosecutors, governors, and members of the gendarmerie—arrived in the region from different provinces on a rotation basis, lower-level officials were recruited from the local population. This local tie greatly bothered another inspector general, who noted in a 1937 report:

Another issue of concern is the lower-level public officials, *muhtars* [village headmen], and watchmen. This class is from the local population. These frequently have some sort of connection with one or the other beys or tribal chiefs. This makes it hard to keep the confidentiality of the measures taken by the government and facilitates the work of rebellious groups.³⁹

The inspectors were faced with a structural dilemma. Their project to transform Kurdish society required that the public officials tasked with implementation be outsiders. This principle was stressed several times in the report drawn up after the Sheikh Said Rebellion and repeated in subsequent reports.⁴⁰ At the same time, the exclusion of local society from governance made it difficult for the officials to have access to local knowledge. The intermediate category of lower-level clerks, who were drawn from the local society but part of the state bureaucracy, occupied an ambiguous position. Through their contacts in this lower echelon, Kurds were able to neutralize a great number of governmental practices.

Beyond “facilitating the work of rebellious groups,” influence over lower-level officials enabled the local society to resist the encroachments of the state, most notably, through the manipulation of state records. By strategically changing their age records, for instance, many Kurdish families escaped the clutches of the criminal law or served substantially reduced sentences. As late as the 1980s, criminal sentences in cases of murder of women by their families were lowered due to the age of the accused in nearly

a quarter of the cases in Urfa, while nearly a third of murder cases committed with the intention of “cleansing family honor” or seeking blood revenge resulted in acquittal due to the inability of law enforcement officials to penetrate through family solidarities and find sufficient evidence. By not registering female births or marriages, furthermore, many Kurdish families avoided the provisions of the civil code on marriage age, divorce rights, and inheritance.⁴¹ Hence, not only the model citizen but also the model family propagated by the republic failed to take hold in Kurdish regions.

Similarly, attempts to rationalize and reform land ownership in favor of smallholders often failed, in part because local notables were able to manipulate the records. In response to a report on the problem of landlessness in the province of Ağrı, the minister of health and social services wrote, “In all of the Eastern provinces, 80 percent of the lands under cultivation do not correspond to actual land deeds, and it is not known by which means these persons have acquired the lands under their occupancy.”⁴² An inspector from the Republican People’s Party touring Tunceli (Dersim) in the 1940s complained to the ministries of finance and agriculture that

The lands of the individuals sent to the West are being sold [to the population] through an auction. Those who have money take advantage of this and the local population remains *maraba* [landless]. . . . As we are moving to tie the peasants to the land, we need to abandon this auction method, which provides land to the rich and once again leaves the *maraba* destitute.⁴³

Here, “the individuals sent to the West” referred to influential families that had participated in the Dersim revolt. The government had hoped to end their local influence by selling their confiscated land to peasants. But it could not control who bought the auctioned land. It appears from the reports that peasants often cooperated with their former landlords (who may often have been their relatives) rather than use the state as a leverage to transform class relations locally, as the planners of the program had hoped. In sum, the landlords, through their control of peasants and their contacts in land registration offices, often succeeded in reacquiring the property confiscated from them. The resilience of landowners despite pressures from the state seems to have had a lasting effect. According to a study conducted in 1980, 11.6 percent of total households owned 59.9 percent of land, while small landowners, who constituted 56 percent of the households, owned 8.7 percent of the land.⁴⁴ In large part, such resilience depended on the *ağas*’ mediating role between the state and the peasants and their ability to provide resources and protection to their constituencies. Through their contacts in the bureaucracy, *ağas* helped peasants avoid conscription, taxation, and arrest, and they served as mediators in local disputes. Hence, the *ağa*–peasant relation was rarely experienced as pure class domination, although it certainly was a relationship based on inequality.

Beyond facilitating quotidian conspiracies against government designs, kinship morality at times absorbed the centrally appointed officials serving temporary duties in eastern Turkey into the local network of relationships. In a 1930 report, the first inspector general complained that some gendarmerie officials who stayed too long in the region and married locally began to prioritize their newly acquired family and clan concerns over their official duties.⁴⁵ In these borderlands, public officials’ loyalties were ambiguous and could shift in favor of the locals through intimate relations, unless their superiors devised techniques to prevent such “border” crossing. In order to preempt the corruption

of his officials, the inspector recommended that no gendarmerie official stay in the region for longer than three years.

A circular issued in 1939 “to abolish the problem of *kirvelik* which frequently becomes a pretext to provoke incidents in the East region” provides a colorful example of how locals employed kinship morality to redefine their relationship with the state. The governor of Kars complained that citizens approached public officials with offers to make them *kirves* or godfathers to their sons. Since becoming a *kirve* would create a lifelong obligation to protect the interests of the boy entrusted to him, the governor was concerned that his officials’ loyalties would shift from their superiors in the bureaucracy to the local families. In alarm, the governor wrote:

We cannot recognize a kinship relation contrary to the form, character, and degrees of kinship registered in the civil code, which is one of the main legislations of our secular Republic and a unique aspect of the regime. . . . I hereby declare as void the title of *kirve* that has been acquired by any of the uniformed or non-uniformed employees and public officials within the province of Kars.⁴⁶

It appears from the governor’s circular that some local families were trying to translate the command relationship between public officials and themselves into a locally intelligible relationship in which they could hold the officials accountable. The matter was apparently serious enough for the governor to send copies of the circular to the prime minister, the chief of the general staff, the Interior Ministry, and the ministries of justice and national defense.

With the transition to a multiparty regime in 1946, it became more difficult for the government to use force in its campaign of assimilation. Prior to that time, the Republican People’s Party did not have branch offices in most eastern provinces. Relations were handled through the General Inspectorates and the People’s Houses, which also opened much later in eastern Turkey. As the first competitive elections loomed on the horizon, Republican People’s Party officials understood that they would have to rethink their top-down transformation project. One party official wrote to the party secretariat in 1945, “I am personally of the opinion that the time has come to establish normal administration and to end the exiles, imprisonments and pressures in these provinces.”⁴⁷ In considering a softer approach to increase its popularity, the party also had to revise its position on local notables. A party member inspecting Urfa in 1950 wrote to the general secretariat that some of the party’s administrative principles would have to be reworked in the eastern provinces:

Previously, it was thought unnecessary, even harmful, to spread the organization [all the way to the villages and the tribes]. However . . . the compulsion to prevail over the Democrat Party has made this an exigency. . . . [I]n order to build a strong party organization in this province, it is necessary to have tribal leaders and people who own villages on our side and to preserve their status and honor. . . . With the condition that we will never tolerate the unjust abuse of the peasant by his ağa, we felt that it is necessary to adapt to the requirements of the locality.

For this reason, it has become necessary to open many nominal branches. . . . One tribal leader does not want to submit to another. Therefore, it is not possible to bring together several tribal leaders under a single district. It is necessary, instead, to treat each tribe nominally as a district

of its own and to treat the villages loyal to that tribe as subdistricts of that district, and that is the way we have gone.⁴⁸

The party member then asked the central organization for permission to open “nominal branches” corresponding to tribal areas beside the “real branches” in Urfa’s official districts. In this case, the hierarchical organizational model of the party, branching off from the capital to the provinces, and from the provinces to the districts, had to be adjusted to accommodate the segmentary logic of the tribe, in which those in closest proximity to one another had the deepest rivalries and were thus least likely to unite in a corporate unit. The foot soldiers of the “high modernist” state sometimes had to “see like a tribe” in order to bring the state to these remote outposts.⁴⁹

Kinship networks thus enabled a variety of resistant acts that cumulatively undermined the state-building project. First, they served as networks of information and trust accessible only to the locals, regularly disrupting law enforcement. Second, contacts in the lower-level bureaucracy enabled local society to manipulate crucial records on population, land ownership, and marriage, creating a problem of legibility and posing important challenges for the institutionalization of state law. Third, state officials who were sent from outside the region were occasionally absorbed in the local moral order and began to act according to local rules, favoring “kin” and ignoring the commands from above. On the ground, then, quotidian conspiracies rendered the boundary between state and society fuzzy, undermined the state’s infrastructural power, and impeded state rationality and order from deepening its hold over the imagination of citizens.

Kinship Bonds in the War over Loyalty

The rise of an armed Kurdish movement for independence during the 1980s changed the state’s approach to Kurdish society and local sources of authority in important respects. Efforts at assimilation and centralization, which formed core principles during the 1930s, continued. But the harsh treatment of the traditional elite, already softened somewhat after the transition to a multiparty regime in 1946, was abandoned in favor of a military strategy to organize clan groups into local militias that would fight guerillas of the PKK through the so-called village guard system.

The dominant perspective in Kurdish studies holds the village guard system exclusively responsible for strengthening the sway of clans in Kurdish society. This framework is in line with the postcolonial literature that often imputes the resilience of “traditional” authority in colonized societies to the designs of the colonial state.⁵⁰ My purpose here is not to deny the significance of the village guard system for rejuvenating clan networks, nor to overlook the colonial origins of such a system of governance, but rather to propose a more nuanced perspective that recognizes the limits of the state’s control of clans and considers the possibilities for resistance that kinship networks opened.

The PKK originated in 1978 under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan to liberate Kurdistan from Turkish colonialism. From the start, the PKK not only targeted what it saw as external enemies—Turkish colonialism and its foreign supporters—but also aimed at reorganizing the power structure of Kurdish society. In its manifesto, the PKK identified Turkish colonialism, foreign imperialists, and the native “feudal-compradors”

as the foremost targets of the Kurdish revolution.⁵¹ On the last of these groups, Öcalan wrote:

This class, which has only augmented, under the Turkish Republic, the servant role it played since the Middle Ages, which has daily passed on the surplus value it appropriated [from the peasants] to Turkey, which is not in the least concerned with the independence or industrialization of the homeland, and which has long planned its exit strategy to Turkey, has no place in Kurdistan.⁵²

Despite its hostility to Turkish nationalism, the Manifesto's discourse on the feudal-compradors resembled the discourse of the General Inspectorates during the 1930s. The redemption of Kurdistan required the elimination of local layers of identity and loyalty and their replacement with allegiance to an exclusive Kurdish identity.

When it started small-scale attacks in 1978, the PKK (then known as Apocular, supporters of Apo) deliberately targeted a number of influential clan leaders, especially those affiliated with right-wing political parties, to underline the class dimension of its struggle. In the Hilvan district of Urfa, which was dominated by two rival clans, Apocular received protection from the Paydaş clan and attacked their rivals, the Süleymanlar clan. Next, Apocular turned their attention to nearby Siverek, controlled by the Bucak clan. In July 1979, PKK militants unsuccessfully tried to assassinate Mehmet Celal Bucak, leader of the Bucak clan, a member of parliament from the Justice Party, and a landowner with tens of thousands of dunams under his control.⁵³ A chaotic period of violence ensued, in which the militants settled in Siverek and skirmishes occurred daily between the PKK and the Bucaks. Within three months in 1980, twenty-one people died and scores of others were wounded, while the police did not leave its headquarters.⁵⁴

In response to the increasing regional influence of the PKK, which started more large-scale operations in 1984, the government initiated the village guard system in 1985. An amendment to the Village Law of 1924 authorized provincial governors to appoint "temporary" (paid) and "voluntary" (unpaid) village guards in provinces determined by the Council of Ministers.⁵⁵ Village guards were recruited locally from among the rural Kurdish population with an official mandate to "defend" their villages from the PKK and to "assist" security forces in their duties. The government would provide their salaries, weapons, clothing, and the compensation they would receive at the end of their service. Although the bylaws stipulated that a village guard could not have a criminal record or an ongoing blood dispute with another family, in practice the offer to join the militia often came with an implicit understanding that previous crimes would not be prosecuted. Moreover, while village guards were to be supervised by the governor according to the law, in practice their appointment and training was controlled largely by the gendarmerie, a de facto arrangement that protected the guards from accountability to both citizens and the administration.⁵⁶

Recruitment into the village guards occurred not through individual applications but rather by informal deals between security officials and influential clan leaders. Clan leaders served as intermediaries who could guarantee the loyalty of large numbers of men. For the selection of these intermediaries, the state had at its disposal a list of Kurdish tribes, their alignment during previous insurgencies, and their current allegiances, compiled in the early 1970s.⁵⁷ One recruit was Tahir Adıyaman, the chief of the Jirki tribe, who reportedly commanded 5,000 men in the Şırnak-Hakkari area. Previously, the Jirki tribe had supported the Barzani movement of Iraq. Tahir Adıyaman himself had

participated in a raid in which seven Turkish soldiers and a prosecutor had been killed in 1975. Adıyaman joined the village guards in exchange for nonaction on these previous crimes. Another recruit was Sedat Bucak, the influential leader of the Bucak family in Siverek, which had suffered severe casualties from the PKK from 1978 to 1980. Bucak joined the village guards in the early 1990s, when the PKK began to pressure him to join the party.⁵⁸ According to official sources, Sedat Bucak had around 430 guards under his control.⁵⁹ In Van, Sadun Seylan of the Alan tribe, who allegedly owned twenty-six villages and controlled 500 guards, was recruited as a village guard head.⁶⁰ According to statements made by interior ministers in response to parliamentary motions in 2003 and 2005, there were nearly 60,000 village guards on the government payroll in addition to 25,000 voluntary village guards. In 2005, the monthly salary of a temporary village guard was 390 New Turkish Liras, approximately U.S. \$290, compared to a monthly GDP per capita of less than \$100 for most provinces in the region, as reported in 2001.⁶¹

Although the state benefited from this alliance, it could not always protect the village guards. In its early years, the PKK vigorously attacked village guards and their families, along with Turkish targets. For instance, in February 1987, PKK militants attacked the homes of village guards in Taşdelen village in Hakkari and killed fourteen villagers.⁶² In nearby Işıkveren village, the 25,000-strong Batuyan tribe, which owned twelve villages and fifty-two fields, lost twenty-two members in PKK attacks.⁶³ In June 1987, thirty villagers were killed in Pınarcık, a small village near Mardin that supplied eight village guards to the government's militia. PKK militants also hanged village guards on trees and stuffed their mouths with money to deter other villagers from joining the militia force.⁶⁴ According to the PKK, between 1984 and 1988, 600 village guards left their posts as a result of these operations, by surrendering to the PKK, returning their weapons to the state, or leaving the region.⁶⁵ The party justified these attacks in terms of both nationalism and class struggle, since village guards had not only betrayed the Kurdish nation but also often belonged to the networks of the "feudal-comprador class."

The state could not, however, control what the village guards did with the resources they garnered from the state or for that matter their deeper loyalties. Already in 1994, a parliamentary investigation commission protested that the village guard system was out of control:

Today, a large portion of arms and drug smuggling is still under the control of village guards. Influential persons in the region have used the village guard system as a basis for their dominion. Tribal leaders who are now village guard heads have become much more ruthless and lawless in their behavior, exerting pressure on people who don't support them. They have passed on false information on these individuals to security forces, claiming they are PKK supporters. Several village guards have killed villagers with whom they have blood feuds based on the pretext that the latter are PKK members and pressured these villagers to desert their villages.⁶⁶

The village guard system resulted in the proliferation of an illegal sphere beyond the control of the state. The security establishment's tolerance of this illegality as a necessary price for employing a divide and rule strategy created a sphere in which shifting and multiple alliances could be struck without being legible to the state. An army general stationed in Hakkari between 1993 and 1995 wrote in his memoirs that "either because of fear or faith, some [village guards] were covertly supporting the PKK with their

state-issued guns and salary. That was not enough; they were participating in the operations of the PKK against the state.”⁶⁷ According to the interior minister, the posts of 3,498 village guards were terminated from 1985 until 1997 for involvement in various crimes including aiding the PKK (1,992), homicide (217), fraud (142), abduction of women and girls (17), rape (13), drug trade (65), arms smuggling (58), animal theft (25), breaking into a house (40), and participating in intravillage and intratribal conflicts (17).⁶⁸ It appears that many village guards used their affiliation with the state to pursue local goals and that many others had become double agents, receiving salaries from the state while aiding the operations of the PKK. Enlistment in the village guards could serve as a cover for enterprising strongmen, who moved in and out of contradictory alliances while amassing local power.

In time, the PKK, too, reversed its strategy toward clan leaders and village guards. As early as 1984, the Central Committee noted the need to develop more cautious relations with clan leaders.⁶⁹ In my interviews in 2006, a number of Kurdish activists confirmed the view that the PKK’s initial attacks against clan leaders had been a “strategic mistake.”⁷⁰ As McDowall writes, “Rather than assaulting the agha class as a whole, the PKK operated with fine calculation, exploiting blood feuds where these existed, helping to create them where they did not.”⁷¹ The PKK sometimes played a mediating role comparable to those played by landlords. In a story recounted during my research, when Nuriye, a woman in her teens from Kızıltepe, ran away from home to marry a man her family objected to, her parents went to the PKK, which found and returned Nuriye to her parents.⁷² On an ideological level, the PKK maintained a Marxist-feminist discourse on women that blamed the “feudal” structure for women’s status. At the level of practice, however, it was often difficult to separate the patriarchal ideology of honor, which the PKK condemned, from the mobilization potential sustained by kinship networks, which the PKK needed.

The PKK’s softening approach toward clans was also reflected in a change of strategy toward village guards. In December 1987, at the close of a particularly violent year, the PKK reached several resolutions at its First State Conference in Botan and Serhed. First, it was decided that the organization would be more careful in its punishment of village guards and take certain background factors into consideration before executing them. Second, the organization decided that “instead of a dangerous course of action” that would pit an entire tribe against the PKK, “the right course of action is to target [only] the organizers.”⁷³

Both the government and the PKK thus sought the support of influential clans. Often, a village would be raided by the gendarmerie on one night and by PKK militants on another. Villagers had to be very careful, therefore, in expressing loyalty to one or the other of these forces. Not infrequently, clan leaders cooperated with both. One interviewee noted, for instance, that during one period the PKK reached an implicit agreement with the Jirki clan (who had become village guards) that their militias would not attack each other. It was precisely their capacity to move in and out of dual alliances with the state and the Kurdish nationalist movement—and not only their instrumental use by the state—that enabled clans to thrive.

Individuals, too, could often access both networks, especially when they had relatives in the PKK and in state employment. One interviewee, a former urban guerrilla member, said that when she was about to receive a heavy jail sentence for aiding the PKK,

one of her nineteen siblings, who was serving in the Turkish military, saw to it that her court file disappeared.⁷⁴ The brother in the army had been highly resentful of the nationalist activities of some of his family members and accused them of blocking his promotion in the army. He did, however, move the necessary levers when his sister was about to receive a jail sentence. Another interviewee recalled the time that her village guard uncle's life was spared by a female militant in a PKK ambush in which all the other village guards were killed, because the uncle had previously helped the militant's family. In this case, obligations that had been established previously between the militant's family and the village guard in his role as ağa carried over to their later encounter as enemies. Local allegiances, in other words, coexisted with national-level loyalties and, at times, surpassed them, undermining each side's project of creating its ideal national citizen.

The PKK insurgency created a new problem of "legibility" for the Turkish government, committed, at once, to the assimilation of Kurds into the Turkish nation and to the violent punishment of those who refused the republic's offer of Turkish national identity. In such a setting, the village guard system appeared to resolve an "information problem" for the government—the question of determining who was truly loyal to the republic. For the PKK, the village guards appear to have served a similar function, separating collaborators from patriotic Kurds. Yet a closer inspection reveals that enlisting as a village guard could also serve the opposite purpose—of becoming illegible. Clan leaders' access to local knowledge enabled them to know when and how to enter flexible alliances, while this information was not available to the state, which "saw" only progovernment and pro-PKK Kurds. Once they camouflaged as progovernment, village guards could engage in actions that undermined state authority and the purposes of the war. First, they could engage in illegal actions—such as smuggling or murder—with little consequence, thus amassing local power at the expense of the state's control of everyday life. However repugnant one may find the purposes of such action, as in the case of the village guards who caused the massacre in Zanqirt village, one has to note that it created a world outside the realm of state authority and law. Second, the networks of trust and reciprocity that were enabled by kinship ties challenged the state's nation-building project—and the accompanying war on identity—in more direct ways. For village guards were not always, or exclusively, "collaborators" who served the state but rather individuals who juggled multiple identities and who sometimes used the protection enabled by allegiance to one identity to support their kin on the other side of the dividing line.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined everyday forms of Kurdish resistance grounded in kinship solidarity in response to a centralizing state. As elsewhere, the attempt to create a new order based on centralized state power and national citizens in eastern Turkey was a highly violent process. The lifestyles, moral order, economic networks, and even dress forms of Kurdish society appeared deviant, if not criminal, from the lens with which state officials looked to Kurdish society, and all became subjects of regulation.⁷⁵ I have suggested in this article that beyond an oppositional Kurdish national identity, kinship bonds constituted an impressive challenge to the government's efforts to transform the Kurdish people into loyal and obedient Turkish citizens. First, local networks of

trust and reciprocity helped Kurds escape the state's despotic power and resist the encroachments of its infrastructural power by enabling Kurds to maintain an important degree of "illegibility." Second, by engaging the bureaucracy with an alternative moral logic based on kin loyalty and reciprocity, Kurds transformed the nature and meaning of state authority in the lower echelons of the bureaucracy. Third, by facilitating ties between those on opposing sides of the war for national identity, kinship networks and solidarity undermined the state's exclusivist national project.

If the statist literature of the 1980s has overemphasized the developmental and revolutionary capacities of states, the more recent literature on governmentality and the disciplinary power of state institutions has perhaps overemphasized states' capacity to define social order and transform everyday life.⁷⁶ As numerous scholars inspired by the work of Foucault have shown with fascinating case studies, the creation of social order occurs through the everyday practices of bureaucratic agencies—counting and registering people, issuing identity documents, determining the recipients of public resources, drawing maps, designing public spaces, and more. Such routine practices powerfully shape the limits of the imaginable and therefore have a "constitutive" effect.⁷⁷ One must also note, however, that state practices inevitably encounter resistance as they bump into alternative imaginations of space and peoplehood. The disproportionate stress scholars place on Weberian notions of order advanced by states obscures the ways in which subjects of disciplinary power navigate multiple moral orders and create pockets of authority and order that often operate according to radically different logics.

NOTES

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¹Şebnem Arsu, "8 Arrested in Turkish Wedding Shooting," *New York Times*, 5 May 2009; and "Cumhurbaşkanının Kürt Sorunuyla İlgili Mesajı Çok Önemli," *Radikal*, 9 May 2009.

²To be sure, Kurdish responses to Turkish nationalism have not been monolithic. For a comprehensive overview of Kurdish movements during the 1960s and 1970s, see Nicole Watts, "Routes to Ethnic Resistance: Virtual Kurdistan West and the Transformation of Kurdish Politics in Turkey" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2001), 88–130; Azat Zana Gündoğan, "The Kurdish Mobilization in the 1960s: The Case of 'The Eastern Meetings'" (PhD diss., Middle East Technical University, 2005); and David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization, and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 39–49.

³Departing from the Ottoman land tenure system (*timar*), in which the state allocated its agricultural lands to military officials during peace time on a temporary basis, in Kurdish areas the Ottoman state recognized a degree of private property and hereditary rights to land and officeholding until the centralizing reforms of the 19th century. The recognition of certain lineages as the owners and administrators of *sancaks* in Kurdistan stabilized these lineages and formed the basis of large landholdings after the full recognition of private property in the republic. The establishment of a tribal army by Sultan Abdülhamit II in 1891 (Hamidiye Light Cavalry) further increased the regional clout of particular tribes while shifting the basis of that power from the control of land to the control of security and dependence on the state. See İsmail Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolu'nun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik ve Etnik Temeller* (Ankara: Yurt-Kitap Yayın, 1992), 110–33; Zülküf Aydın, *Underdevelopment and Rural Structures in Southeastern Turkey: The Household Economy in Gilgis and Kalhana* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986), 13–21; Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992), 189–94; and Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2004), 43–67.

⁴In particular, the Naqshbandi and Qadiri orders and, more recently, the Nurcu movement have been dominant in Kurdistan. Neither sheikhs nor landlords, however, exercised political influence independent of affiliation with a particular lineage.

⁵For notable exceptions, see Hamit Bozarslan, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish Political Life: The Situation as of 1990," in *Kurdistan in Search of an Ethnic Identity*, ed. T. Atabaki and M. Dorleijn (Utrecht: University of Utrecht, 1990), 1–23; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State*; Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*; Janet Klein, "Kurdish Nationalists and Non-nationalist Kurds: Rethinking Minority Nationalism and the Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1909," *Nations and Nationalism* 13 (2007): 135–53; and Evren Balta, "Causes and Consequences of the Village Guard System in Turkey," unpublished paper (2004), <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/rbins/IUCSHA/fellows/Balta-paper.pdf> (accessed 14 December 2009).

⁶For a theoretical elaboration of the political opportunity structures framework, see Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁷Hakan Yavuz, "Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 7 (2001): 1–24; Denise Natali, *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2005); and David Romano, *Kurdish Nationalist Movement*.

⁸For a similar analysis of nonnationalist forms of Kurdish resistance against Turkish nationalism, see Mesut Yeğen, "The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity," in *Turkey, Identity, Democracy, Politics*, ed. S. Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 216–29.

⁹James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985). See also Nathan Brown, *Peasant Politics in Modern Egypt: The Struggle against the State* (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 1990).

¹⁰Brown, *Peasant Politics*.

¹¹Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press), 14.

¹²James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 5.

¹³*Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁴One can include here numerous other studies inspired by Foucault that have probed the ways in which new disciplinary logics of the nation–state have transformed political order in non-Western societies. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) and "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect*, ed. G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Ronen Shamir, "Suspended in Space: Bedouins under the Law of Israel," *Law and Society Review* 30 (1996): 231–58; James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta, "Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality," in *American Ethnologist* 29 (2002): 981–1002; and Adriana Kemp, "'Dangerous Populations,' State Territoriality and the Constitution of National Minorities," in *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. J. S. Migdal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 73–97.

¹⁵Foucault, "Governmentality," 96–97.

¹⁶Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics," *American Political Science Review* 85 (1991): 95. See also Ferguson and Gupta, "Spatializing States," for a similar analysis of how the state is made "socially effective" in the minds of citizens through routine bureaucratic practices.

¹⁷Sally Falk Moore, *Law as Process: An Anthropological Approach* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 1.

¹⁸For a more society-centered approach to the question of order, see Reşat Kasaba's analysis of the relationship between tribes and the Ottoman state, in which he argues that although nomadic tribes posed numerous challenges for the imperial bureaucracy, the Ottoman Empire also thrived on the mobility and flexibility supplied by tribes in its border regions. Kasaba, "Do States Always Favor Stasis? The Changing Status of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire," in *Boundaries and Belonging*, 27–48.

¹⁹Joel S. Migdal, "Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints: Struggles to Construct and Maintain State and Social Boundaries," in *Boundaries and Belonging*, 3–23.

²⁰Mesut Yeğen, *Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa: Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006).

²¹For an analysis of the Sheikh Said rebellion, see Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1989). For an overview of Kurdish revolts during the early republic, see Hamit Bozarslan, “Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898–2000),” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, ed. T. Bora and M. Gültekingil, vol. 4 (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları: 2002), 841–70.

²²I have not been able to locate the original of this report in the Turkish state archives. The report is reprinted in Mehmet Bayrak, *Kürtler ve Ulusal Demokratik Mücadeleleri* (Ankara: Öz-Ge Yayınları, 1993), 481–89; and idem, *Açık-Gizli / Resmî-Gayriresmî Kürdoloji Belgeleri* (Ankara: Öz-Ge Yayınları, 1994).

²³For an analysis of the use of settlement policy to transform the demographic makeup of Kurdish populated areas in eastern Turkey, see İlhan Tekeli, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndan Günümüze Nüfusun Zorunlu Yer Değiştirmesi ve İskan Sorunu,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 50 (1990): 49–71; Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki’nin Müslümanları İskân Politikası, 1913–1918* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001); Soner Çağaptay, “Crafting the Turkish Nation: Kemalism and Turkish Nationalism in the 1930s” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2003); Erol Ülker, “Assimilation of the Muslim Communities in the First Decade of the Turkish Republic, 1923–1934,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* (2007), <http://www.ejts.org/document822.html> (accessed 4 April 2010); and idem, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 7 (2008), <http://www.ejts.org/document2123.html> (accessed 4 April 2010).

²⁴Michael Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results,” *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie* 25 (1984): 185–213.

²⁵For most of the 20th century, eastern Turkey has remained under some sort of military rule. Apart from nationwide declarations of martial law, eastern Turkey has experienced region-specific instances of “extraordinary” rule between 1925 and 1927, from 1927 to 1950, and from 1987 to 2002. For a history of emergency rule in Turkey, see Zafer Üskül, “Türkiye’de Sıkıyönetim Uygulamaları Üzerine Notlar,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 42 (1988): 86.

²⁶For cultural propaganda on Turkish nationalism, see İsmail Beşikçi, “*Türk-Tarih Tezi*,” “*Güneş Dil Teorisi*” ve *Kürt Sorunu* (Ankara: Komal Yayınları, 1977); and Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London: Routledge, 2006); for the suppression of Kurdish revolts, see Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, *Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde Ayaklanmalar, 1924–1938* (Ankara: Genelkurmay, 1972); M. Nuri Dersimi, *Dersim Tarihi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayını, 1979); Olson, *Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*; and Nicole Watts, “Routes to Ethnic Resistance.”

²⁷Quoted in Ergün Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* (Izmir, Turkey: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988), 326.

²⁸“Report on the robbery incidents in the Karaköprü area of Diyarbakır and the measures that need to be taken in the areas under the First General Inspectorate,” 15 April 1937, Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi (hereafter BCA) Başbakanlık Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü Kataloğu (hereafter BMGMK) 030.10; 128.923.19.

²⁹Mesut Yeğen, “The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 34 (1999): 562.

³⁰Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (hereafter TBMM) Zabıt Ceridesi, 18 November 1935, 80–82.

³¹“The views of the First General Inspector on the changes envisioned on the judicial law,” 12 February 1931, BCA, BMGMK, 030.10, 69.455.2.

³²Tekeli, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndan Günümüze,” 64. A total of 2,774 Kurdish families were exiled to western Turkey by a special law in 1927 authorizing the government to relocate the families of individuals connected with the Sheikh Said revolt. See Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*, 86; idem, “Crafting the Turkish Nation,” 174; and Ülker, “Assimilation of Muslim Communities.” See also recently published memoirs by Şeyhmus Diken, *İsyan Sürgünleri* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005) and Ferzende Kaya, *Mezopotamya Sürgünü: Abdülmelik Fırat’ın Yaşamöyküsü* (Istanbul: Anka Yayınları, 2003) for the life stories of influential families exiled during these years.

³³This law was repealed by the Constitutional Court of Turkey in 1964 on the grounds that it constituted collective punishment and breached the principle of presumption of innocence.

³⁴See Yeğen, “Turkish State Discourse,” for an interpretation of smuggling as reflexive resistance to the imposition of a national project on an a-national space.

³⁵“Report on the robbery incidents in the Karaköprü area.”

- ³⁶TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 7 April 1937, 17–25.
- ³⁷Brown, *Peasant Politics*, 77, 98.
- ³⁸“The views of the First General Inspector on the changes envisioned on the judicial law.”
- ³⁹“Report on the robbery incidents in the Karaköprü area.”
- ⁴⁰Bayrak, *Kürtler ve Ulusal Demokratik Mücadeleleri*.
- ⁴¹Ceren Belge, “Whose Law?: Clans, Honor Killings, and State–Minority Relations in Turkey and Israel” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2008), 58, 73, 93.
- ⁴²“The report of the Ağrı representative to the Ministry of Justice,” 10 November 1943 [1 September 1945], BCA, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Kataloğu (hereafter CHPK), 490.01, 614.09.01.
- ⁴³“Report of the Elaziğ Inspector on Tunceli,” 29 January 1945, BCA, CHPK, 490.01, 513.2060.2.
- ⁴⁴Zülküf Aydın, *Underdevelopment and Rural Structures*, 59.
- ⁴⁵“Problems arising from gendarmerie officials staying too long in the areas under the First General Inspectorate,” 4 January 1930, BCA, BMGMK, 030.10, 69.454.36.
- ⁴⁶“Circular on the abolishment from the Eastern region of the institution of kirvelik which frequently causes incidents,” 19 August 1939, BCA BMGMK, 030.10, 65.435.10.
- ⁴⁷“The reports on Muş, Bitlis, Van and Diyarbakır to the General Secretariat,” 25 May 1945, BCA, CHPK, 490.01, 612.128.3.
- ⁴⁸“The complaints and demands received from the Republican People’s Party’s Provincial Administrative Council in Urfa,” 13 June 1951, BCA, CHPK, 490.01, 490.1975.01.
- ⁴⁹Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.
- ⁵⁰Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996). For a similar analysis of traditional authority in Kurdistan, see Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolu’nun Düzeni*.
- ⁵¹Abdullah Öcalan, *Kürdistan Devriminin Yolu: Manifesto*, 5th ed. (Köln, Germany: Weşanên Serxwebûn 24, 1993), 145, 183–84.
- ⁵²*Ibid.*, 145.
- ⁵³İsmet İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı, 1973–1992* (Ankara: Turkish Daily News Yayınları, 1993), 59–64; and Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 44–46.
- ⁵⁴“Siverek’ten 6 ayda 1500 aile göç etti,” *Milliyet*, 27 April 1980. According to Sedat Bucak, 140 to 150 of his men were killed in these clashes between 1978 and 1980. See TBMM Susurluk Araştırma Komisyonu, *İfade Tutanakları Susurluk Belgeleri*, ed. Veli Özdemir (Istanbul: Scala Yayıncılık, 1997).
- ⁵⁵Ertan Beşe, “Geçici Köy Korucuları,” in *Almanak Türkiye 2005: Güvenlik Sektörü ve Demokratik Gözetim* (Istanbul: TESEV yayınları, 2006), 134–43; and Balta, “Causes and Consequences,” 8–9.
- ⁵⁶*TBMM Faili Meçhul Cinayetler Araştırma Komisyonu Raporu (Taslak)* (Istanbul: Birleşik Sosyalist Parti İstanbul İl Örgütü Yayınları, 1995), 100.
- ⁵⁷*Aşiretler Raporu* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1998).
- ⁵⁸Interview with Ceren Belge in Urfa, 12 August 2006.
- ⁵⁹Others put the number closer to 10,000. TBMM Susurluk Araştırma Komisyonu, *İfade Tutanakları*, 315, 328.
- ⁶⁰David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), 422.
- ⁶¹See Balta, “Causes and Consequences”; Beşe, “Geçici Köy Korucuları,” 136; and Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, *Ulusal Hesaplar, İller İtibariyle Kişi Başına Gayri Safi Yurtiçi Hasıla; 1987–2001*, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=56&ust_id=16 (accessed 1 April 2010).
- ⁶²“PKK Vahşeti: 14 Ölü,” *Milliyet*, 24 February 1987.
- ⁶³“Korku Göçü: Şırnak ve Uludere’de Aşiretler Yurtlarını Terk ediyor,” *Milliyet*, 16 October 1987.
- ⁶⁴“Direniş Eylemlerimiz Gelişerek Sürüyor,” *Serxwebun* 60 (December 1986): 3.
- ⁶⁵“Botan ve Serhed Eyaletleri I. Konferans Kararları Yeni Dönem Pratiğimizizin Sorunlarına Işık Tutuyor,” *Serxwebun* 80 (August 1988): 20.
- ⁶⁶*TBMM Faili Meçhul Cinayetler*, 102.
- ⁶⁷Osman Pamukoğlu, *Unutulanlar Dışında Yeni Birşey Yok: Hakkari ve Kuzey Irak Dağlarında Askerler* (Istanbul: Harmoni, 2003), cited in Balta, “Causes and Consequences,” 12–13.
- ⁶⁸“Bucak’ın Korucularına 1.2 Milyar,” *Milliyet*, 14 January 1997.
- ⁶⁹İmset, *PKK*, 110.
- ⁷⁰Interview with Ceren Belge in Ankara, 10 August 2007.

⁷¹David McDowall, *Kurds: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 421.

⁷²Field notes, 13 June 2006.

⁷³“Botan ve Serhed Eyaletleri Konferans Kararları,” 20.

⁷⁴Interview with Ceren Belge in Diyarbakır, 9 March 2006.

⁷⁵For an analysis of the state’s encroachments into daily life in eastern Turkey, see Senem Aslan, “Governing Areas of Dissidence: Nation-Building and Ethnic Movements in Turkey and Morocco” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2008).

⁷⁶For an overview and critique of the statist literature see Mitchell, “Limits of the State”; and Joel S. Migdal, “Studying the State,” in *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, ed. M. I. Lichbach and A. Zuckerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 208–36.

⁷⁷Akhil Gupta, “Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State,” *American Ethnologist* 22 (1995): 375–402.