

TRANSFORMATION OF KURDISH ISLAMISTS:  
THE CASE OF FREE-CAUSE PARTY OF TURKEY

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İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 2015

TRANSFORMATION OF KURDISH ISLAMISTS:  
THE CASE OF FREE-CAUSE PARTY OF TURKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

BY

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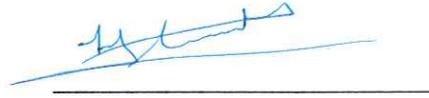
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN  
MODERN TURKISH STUDIES

FEBRUARY 2015

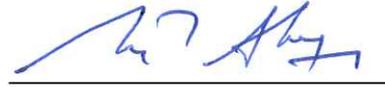
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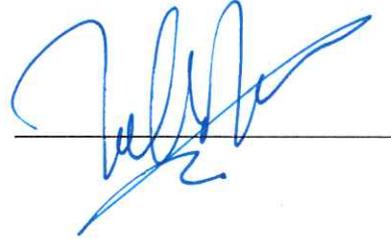
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## ABSTRACT

Transformation of Kurdish Islamism: the Case of Free-Cause Party of Turkey

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February 2015, 136 pages

Kurdish issue has been one of the most important and problematic topics in Turkish politics. Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the official policy of the state has been built on propagation of secularism and Turkish nationalism for the foundation and continuation of a homogeneous nation-state. Therefore ethnic as well as religious groups have been suppressed with both violent and nonviolent methods for decades. Kurdish Islamists have been the greatest victims of such social engineering and suppression. Until the 1990s some manifestations of Kurdish Islamists appeared time to time. Nonetheless, with Kurdish Hezbollah's operations, Kurdish Islamism's political formation emerged. Hezbollah appealed to violence and adopted armed struggle and then was abolished and went underground in the early 2000s. However, its mass base has continued to redefine and reorganize themselves with non-governmental organizations and social platforms. After the ban on the community's most important social organization *Mustazaflar Hareketi*, it decided to carry its activities to the formal political sphere. Therefore, in 2012 the Free Cause Party was established and started to manifest Kurdish peoples' problems with an Islam-centered agenda. This thesis aims to analyze Kurdish Islamists' transformation with a special reference to the moderation theory.

**Key Words:** Islamism, nationalism, political parties, the Kurdish question, moderation theory.

## ÖZ

Kürt İslamcılığının Dönüşümü: Hür Dava Partisi Örneği

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Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Hüseyin Alptekin

Şubat 2015, 136 sayfa

Kürt meselesi Türkiye siyasetinin en önemli ve bir o kadar da problemlili konularından biridir. Cumhuriyet'in kurulmasından beri devletin resmi siyaseti Türk milliyetçiliği ve sekülerliğin topluma kazandırılarak homojen bir ulus-devlet düzeninin oluşturulması ve devamıdır. Bu nedenle etnik gruplar ve öncelikli olarak inanç toplulukları uzun yıllar baskı görmüştür. Siyasi oluşumları yeni olsa da Kürt İslamcıları bu mühendislik ve baskı ortamının başlıca mağdurlarından olagelmıştır. 1990'lara kadar çeşitli şekillerde Kürt İslamcılığının tezahürleri görülse de, Hizbullah'ın etkinlikleriyle Kürt İslamcılığının siyasi oluşumu kendini gün yüzüne çıkarmış; şiddet, tehdit ve silahlı mücadele yolunu benimseyen Hizbullah, 2000'lerin başında bitirilmiş yahut yer altına inmek zorunda bırakılmıştır. Bununla beraber hitap ettiği topluluklar kendilerini STK ve platformlar üzerinden tanımlamaya ve organizasyonlarını biçimlendirmeye devam etmiştir. Bu topluluk 2012'de Hür Dava Partisi'nin (Hüda-Par) kurulmasıyla kendini siyasi olarak da ifade etmeye ve Kürt toplumunun problemlerini İslam merkezli olarak ortaya koymaya başladı. Elinizdeki tez Kürt İslamcılığı'nın dönüşümünü ılımlılaştırma teorisi üzerinden incelemeyi hedeflemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İslamcılık, milliyetçilik, siyasi partiler, Kürt meselesi, ılımlılaştırma teorisi.

*To my parents...*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work could not be accomplished without the help and support of many people. First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude and deepest appreciation to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Hüseyin Alptekin, who spent his valuable time by reading my drafts several times, commenting and guiding me for a better work. Second, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Burhanettin Duran for introducing me to the topic and guiding me for drawing the structure of this work. I also would like to thank Assist. Prof. Talha Köse and Assist. Prof. Mehmet Akif Kayapınar for their useful comments. Throughout the process, Istanbul Şehir University's Office of Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences provided me with necessary guidance and made their best for me to overcome the problems I had. I would like to express my gratitude for their work.

I owe my family a debt of gratitude for their patience and support while I was thinking, reading about and writing this thesis. They listened to me when I needed, they encouraged me when I hesitated, and they motivated me when I felt unable to think, read, and write. For the past year, they made a lot of things for me to ease the process and work comfortably. Without them, I could not have been survived the times of crisis and completed this work. Therefore, I would like to express my special thanks to my father -Asım Yaşaroğlu-, my mother –Emine Yaşaroğlu-, and my sisters Büşra and Elif Yaşaroğlu.

I would like to thank my friends Fatma Betül Acun, Cahide Nur Cünük, Elif Yardımcı, Büşra Acun, Elif Zaim, Emine Turgut, Nur Hilal Vural, Mücahide Esra Yabacıoğlu, Zehra Sarıhan, Selma Yaşa, Hadice Meryem Okumuş, Ayşe Topçu, Kamil Öz, Sinem Seval Tolun, Hanife Or, Zehra Özdil Arıkan, Abdulgani Yıldırım and Osman Şenlik for their help, support and care.

I would also like to thank Beyza Kaya, my manager at work, for letting me take leave of absence whenever I needed without a moment of hesitation and encouraging me to complete my classes and thesis.

Last but not least in importance, I would like to thank the participants in my interviews, Mr. Said Şahin, Mr. Mehmet Yavuz, Mrs. Aynur Sülün and Mr. Faruk Bildirici who gave me the opportunity to pose my questions and shared their valuable opinions with me.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	v
Öz .....	vi
Dedication .....	vii
Acknowledgements .....	viii
Table of Contents .....	ix
List of Figures .....	xi
List of Tables .....	xii
List of Abbreviations.....	xiii
CHAPTER	
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1. The Hypothesis .....	3
1.2. The Methodology .....	4
2. Moderation Literature .....	6
2.1. Definitions .....	6
2.2. Moderation Theory .....	8
2.3. Moderation in Islamist Groups .....	10
2.4. Moderation in Islamist Context in Turkey .....	13
3. Islamism and Nationalism in Turkey .....	18
3.1. Definitions of Islamism .....	18
3.2. Islamism and Nationalism in the Turn of the 20th Century .....	21
3.3. Transformation of the State and Responses of Turkish and Kurdish Nationalists and Islamists .....	24
3.3.1. Kurdish Nationalism and Its Sources .....	24
3.3.2. Transformation of the Turkish State .....	27
3.3.3. Islamism in the Republican Turkey .....	31
3.3.4. The Kurdish Issue and the Kurdish Islamism .....	37
3.4. Islamism and Kurdish Cause in Contemporary Turkey .....	41
3.5. Conclusion .....	49
4. Turkey's Hezbollah .....	50
4.1. The Ideal of Islamic State and Its Reflections on Turkey's Hezbollah .....	50
4.2. The Foundation of Turkish Hezbollah .....	55
4.3. Operations and Ideas .....	61
4.4. The Hezbollah's Valuable Loneliness .....	67

4.5. The End of Hezbollah .....	69
4.6. Conclusion .....	70
5. The Free Cause Party (Huda-Par) .....	72
5.1. The Aftermath of the Hezbollah’s Disappearance .....	73
5.2. The Foundation of the Huda-Par .....	77
5.3. Moderation Contested .....	83
5.3.1. Behavioral Moderation.....	84
5.3.1.1. 30 March 2014 Local Elections in Turkey .....	84
5.3.1.2. 6-7 October Events in Turkey .....	86
5.3.2. Ideological Moderation .....	91
5.3.2.1. Islamism & Nationalism .....	91
5.3.2.2. The Huda-Par vis-a-vis the Turkish .....	97
5.3.2.3. The Huda-Par vis-a-vis the PKK and the Kurdish Issue .....	99
5.3.2.4. The Huda-Par and Political Pragmatism .....	103
5.4. Conclusion.....	106
6. Conclusion .....	108
References .....	113
Appendices .....	118
Appendix A .....	118
Appendix B .....	122
Appendix C .....	129
Appendix D .....	134

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 4.1.: Administrative Structure of Hezbollah .....	60
Figure 5.2.: What Caused the Foundation of the Huda-Par .....	83
Figure 5.3.: Huda-Par's Ideological Location .....	96

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 5.1.: List of Organizations Related to the Huda-Par .....	76
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AKP: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)  
BDP: Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party)  
CHP: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)  
DEHAP: Demokratik Halk Partisi (Democratic People's Party)  
DEP: Demokrasi Partisi (Democracy Party)  
DP: Demokrat Parti (Democratic Party)  
DTP: Demokratik Toplum Partisi (Democratic Society Party)  
EU: the European Union  
HADEP: Halkın Demokrasi Partisi (People's Democracy Party)  
HDP: Halkların Demokratik Partisi (People's Democratic Party)  
HUDA-PAR: Hür Dava Partisi (Free Cause Party)  
ISIS: The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria  
MHP: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Action Party)  
MNP: Milli Nizam Partisi (National Order Party)  
MTTB: Milli Türk Talebe Birliği (National Turkish Student Union)  
PKK: Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers' Party)  
PUK: the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan  
PYD: Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat (Democratic Union Party)  
RP: Refah Partisi (Welfare Party)  
SHP: Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti (Social Democrat Populist Party)  
SP: Saadet Partisi (Felicity Party)



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis explains the developments in Kurdish Islamism. The central task is to examine whether there has been any moderation from a more radical and anti-system to a moderate and system friendly one among Kurdish Islamists and more specifically among the Hezbollah community. In other words to what extent has the Huda-Par moderated Kurdish Islamism and what has caused this moderation? In order to answer my main question, I will pose few secondary questions. Can we talk of a common umbrella of Kurdish Islamism? How did Kurdish Islamism evolve over time? Why did it fail to appear as a political movement until recently? What are the similarities and differences between Kurdish and Turkish Islamisms? In what ways does Kurdish Islamism differ from Kurdish nationalism with regards to Kurdish identity debates? What is the triggering event in the establishment of the Kurdish Islamist Free Cause Party (Hür Dava Partisi- Huda-Par)? What differentiates the Party from other Kurdish political movements? Is it possible to link Huda-Par with the Kurdish Hezbollah – the Party of God- that was a militant organization that existed between 1980 and the 2000s and was known for the mobilization of Kurdish Islamists for political causes? Can Huda-Par be explained with the moderation of the radical Hezbollah movement? What is the impact of the Hezbollah “era of terror” in this transformation as well as the Kurdish “opening” carried out by the Justice and Development Party (AKP – Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) government? Have the beliefs and practices of Kurdish Islamists changed over time? What processes, mechanisms, events and institutions helped the promotion of this moderation? What are the Huda-Par’s political ambitions? How does it differ from the Hezbollah’s position? With the AKP in government, has the gap between the Kurdish and the state been filled?

Islamism and the Kurdish issue have been two problematic concepts since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. One way or another, proponents of Islamism and Kurdish nationalism suffered deeply from the state’s founding principles of strong laicism and Turkish nationalism. What I am interested in is when

and where Islamism and an ethnic identity –namely the Kurdish one- have intersected and been politicized.

Since both Islamism and Kurdish nationalism were seen as threats to the survival of the newly built Republic, for decades the ideas and movements somehow related to them were suppressed and not allowed to become politically active. Squeezed between the leftist and militarist PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kürdistanî – Kurdistan Workers’ Party) and successive political parties close to the PKK’s position as well as conservative and nationalist mainstream Turkish right-wing parties, the voice of Kurdish Islamists has been marginalized over the years. Given the special importance of religion and the power of different religious orders among Kurdish people, Islam is an important binder among them. As a socially conservative government that has a history with the National Outlook Movement (which was popular among Kurdish people to some degree), Kurdish Islamists were supposedly better off with the AKP government. Despite the fact that the AKP has obtained a great sum of votes<sup>1</sup> from the Southeast region –where Kurdish people are heavily populated- in succeeding elections in addition to Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP - People’s Democratic Party), there are still groups that are not fully compatible with the AKP’S the Kurdish policy and the HDP’s approach to Islam. This thesis will place the Huda-Par as a case study of the moderation of the radical and militant Kurdish Islamists; in other words from an anti-system to a system-friendly standing.

In the second chapter, theory and methodology are explained. In the third chapter, I am going to examine the moderation literature, definitions, connotations and its applications in the Kurdish case. In the fourth chapter, the definition of Islamism, its transformation, its relationship with nationalism, and its applications in contemporary Turkey for both Kurdish and Turkish Islamists are studied. The fifth chapter is reserved for the Hezbollah. I will analyze the foundation of Hezbollah, major events related to and ideas of the movement and its tragic end or going underground. The sixth chapter is reserved for the Huda-Par and the transformation of Kurdish Islamism. The party’s foundation, the movement’s co-organizations, the party’s political orientation will be examined. In the last chapter conclusion is made.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2014 local elections, the AKP obtained %44,27 of the votes in the Southeastern Region; while in 2011 parliamentary elections the AKP had obtained %51,38 of the votes from the region.

(<http://www.haberturk.com/secim/secim2014/yerel-secim?source=aa>,  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2011/06/110612\\_election\\_results.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2011/06/110612_election_results.shtml) ).

## **1.1. The Hypothesis**

My main argument for this research is that neither the AKP nor the HDP is effective and convincing for the Kurdish Islamists in addressing the Kurdish identity problem. Throughout my research I will show empirical evidence for the AKP's inclination for Islamism fed with Turkish nationalism, and the HDP's unconvincing and artificial standing point with regards to Islam. This will lead to a hypothesis that there is a group among Kurdish people who might change the track of events in the following years, if they gain the trust of the Kurdish masses.

The main hypothesis is related to the transformation of Kurdish Islamism. This hypothesis advocates that positive changes in the social, political and economic spheres in Turkey and further democratization enabled moderation of former Hezbollah and contemporary Huda-Par in terms of their perception towards formal politics. The "Moderation theory" is used for testing this hypothesis. According to the thesis, repressive and exclusionary state policies may contribute to the radicalization of political Islamic movements, while inclusion and accommodation may have an opposite effect (Kubikova, 2009, p.139). This thesis examines Kurdish Islamists groups in Turkey to test this theory. The inclusion can be introduced through the mechanisms such as political openings, the introduction of pluralism in multiparty systems, the guaranteeing basic human rights, the conducting the fair elections, etc. In this case, what effects could such political openings have on the behavior of Kurdish Islamists will be investigated. It will also be examined whether the behavioral moderation of the group, the ideological moderation of the group, or the ideological moderation of the individuals are in the forefront of this transformation.

Although the literature on moderation is growing, Kurdish Islamism has some sui generis characteristics, which require further examination and a deeper engagement with the empirical context. Moderation theories do not explain why, in the same sociopolitical environment and geography, some Islamist groups chose to pursue violence to gain their ends, while others do not. Despite all the limitations my theory has, it provides a perspective, which can be used as a solution to the existing problems.

## 1. 2. Methodology

In addition to the review of the related literatures, I have carried out this research on the ideas of the prominent leaders of the Huda-Par. My primary data source is the interviews I conducted throughout the process. First, I have contacted the head office of the Huda-Par immediately after the 30 March 2014 local elections.

I visited the Istanbul branch to meet the Party's Istanbul chairman Mehmet Ali Gönül in the mids of March 2014. Nevertheless, Gönül refused to give an interview to me. Instead, I met with the Kağıthane district president Çetin Karakaya from whom I received very valuable and important commentaries and information regarding the Party. Karakaya also gave me the Turkish, English and Kurdish versions of the Party program, together with several magazines and newspapers of the Movement. I could also interview the Party's Spokesperson and General Secretariat Mehmet Yavuz in the party headquarters in Ankara on 29 April 2014, and the Party's Spokesperson and the Vice President Responsible for the Foreign Affairs Said Şahin, in the Istanbul office of the Party on 27 May 2014. Lastly, I made a series of email interviews with Aynur Sülün who is a member of the Party's General Management Council and Vice President responsible for Family and Social Policies. I also conducted an additional interview with Faruk Bildirici, a journalist who follows the Kurdish issue closely, on 2 December 2014, in Ankara.

I have also used newspaper and magazine interviews with the Party members, in addition to the commentaries available on the Party's website. Lastly, I carried out research on the websites such as *Hür-Seda Haber* and *Mustazaflar Cemiyeti* that are connected with the Party. The Huda-Par is not a product of recent phenomenon. Rather, it has a history and is connected to a higher and comprehensive umbrella, the Kurdish Islamism. Surely, it is not possible to conceive Kurdish Islamists as a whole and unified group. Nonetheless, Huda-Par can be considered as having the largest organizational potential –which showed itself on large-scale during the Kutlu Doğum (Holy Birth of Prophet Mohammed) activities organized by the NGOs of the Huda-Par masses- among Kurdish Islamists. Since 2012, the group has completed its legal formation and established the Party. Therefore my research period starts in 2012, after the foundation of the Huda-Par.

My hypothesis will be tested based on the answers I received from the interviews that I conducted. The test will especially be on three subjects in order to

see whether a transformation has taken place: the Party's the position vis-à-vis the regime, the position vis-à-vis the PKK, and the political pragmatism. If -at least rhetorically- the Huda-Par chooses a path of a system friendly stance vis-à-vis the regime, adopt an unarmed confrontation with the PKK, and the will to compromise for political ends, and then it can be considered that a high level of moderation has taken place. If the discourse and behaviors are developed in the opposite direction, then moderation has not taken place for the movement. If one or two factors changed, then partial moderation has taken place.

I used semi-structured interviews where I although had a list of questions to be asked, sought to be open to any kind of connotations related to the topic. During the interviews, I took small notes to recall what is said afterwards. Immediately after interviews, I returned back to the notes and added the remaining.

After gathering all the data together, I grouped them into my categories of analysis. Process tracing method which centers on causal mechanisms is deployed in order to comprehend to what extent moderation has taken place and why. Process tracing explains how an X factor results in producing a Y phenomenon. By looking upon the causal mechanisms, this process validates or invalidates a certain theory or prediction. In order to find out whether the proposition and/or hypothesis is valid for the case, interviews, historical data, and other similar documents can be used (George, 2005, p.6). In this case, whether more democracy and political opening in Turkey resulted in moderation of a radical group is tested. For this reason, I structured my questions on certain areas (the Kurdish issue, the Hezbollah, and moderation, etc.) and specifically sought to conduct interview inside the Party.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **MODERATION LITERATURE**

Islamic/Islamist fundamentalism, radicalism, and even terrorism are widely used expressions to identify the characteristics of marginal Muslim groups that might appear in the forms of a small community of people, a non-governmental organization, and also as a political party. Given the terms' mishmash and unfavorable connotations, they are used in one way or another in academic works to express what I want to explain in the Kurdish Islamists' experience of political Islam in Turkey. Though reluctantly I might appeal to all the terms heavily burdened with such orientalist sentimentalism.

Applying labels to groups such as moderate, radical or fundamental, modernist...etc. can be misleading. Labeling might result in ignoring the variations within one particular group. For instance, an Islamist group may have moderate views in regarding the participating democratic system and/or elections, but not concerning the political rights of religious minorities, or women. Thus, even though dropping weapons is a clear signal of moderation for this case, I will also look closely on three subjects in order to see whether moderation has taken place.

#### **2.1. Definitions**

Moderation in simplest terms is defined as “working within existing political system rather than trying to overthrow it” (Schwedler, 2006, p.16). In order to be considered in the context of the moderation theory, a transformation from radicalism to moderation needs to be observed for one particular group/organization. Moderation as a term is seen as directly related with individual rights, toleration, pluralism, and cooperation (Schwedler, 2011, p. 2429).

“Moderate” is a term associated with ‘peace’. However, it does not mean that, moderates do not pursue goals that conflict with others’ goals. Moderates attain their goals within the existing system of affairs. They do not seek to violate the current lines. While radicals seem to be uncompromising, moderates are more open to dialogue.

Ayoob explains the norms of moderation as being non-violent opposition, respecting for the results of free and fair elections, and willingness to give up power if voted out of office (2007, p.158). By the term “radical”, it is meant the ones who pursue their goals through an anti-system approach. In other words, a radical person/group does not bother with thinking of the sustainability of the current affair. For him/it, goals or causes are much superior to the system itself. Therefore, he/it sees every means just as long as they serve to their causes including armed struggle.

Kubikova defines moderate Islamists as “pragmatists who seek gradual societal and political reforms within the existing systems”; on the other hand “radical Islamists seek to impose radical changes through revolutionary means and often violence” (2009, p.141).

Fundamentalists on the other hand look at the Holy text for the question and derive a theology through making deductions. Contrary to the Sufi line, fundamentalists do not like to have anything between the text and themselves. The term fundamentalist is not a synonym of the term radical. Nonetheless, a group/person might well be both fundamentalist and radical.

Political inclusion means ensuring the participation of a marginal group to the formal sphere of politics through different mechanisms and institutions. Mechanisms include law making and execution. Inclusion may also be defensive in character. Governments/regimes may also face a strategic choice between limited political initiations and challenges of the radical groups. In order to avoid further marginalization, regimes might choose their inclusion, which serves as a tool to moderate challenges to the existing system. Consequently, inclusion enables the participation of the former radicals to the system. Even if a failure in elections does not mean opting out of the system, there is always the possibility of future success. Schwedler argues that even in less than democratic countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, and Turkey political actors consider incentives for participation in the political system in order to outweigh the costs (Schwedler, 2006, p.36).

## 2.2. Moderation Theory

In order to be more moderate, political actors and/or organizations need to be more amenable to the idea that other perspectives might also be valid. Moderation might be empowered through political structure changes (amendments in the political system, legalization of political expression, etc.), and changes in the existing political discursive limitations. Pressures from opposition groups, their bases and general discomfort with existing political status might lead political leaders to consider the inclusion as a means of encountering and containing the dissent. In fact, deciding on who to include and who to exclude is a sign of power. Therefore inclusion can be considered as a tool for state control over political dissent.

Despite the existence of a developed literature on democratization as well as in conflict resolution, both disciplines are insufficient to schema the stages of transformation or provide knowledge of how each and every case will likely to proceed and conclude. Each case keeps its authenticity. Schwedler points out that the democracy might not follow predictable stages or a steady line (2011, p.249).

Interestingly, an important body of scholarship argues that parties taking on “radical” positions have powerful inclinations to moderate themselves once they start to operate as vote seeking political parties (Tezcür, 2010, p.69). This moderation process will likely help the sustaining democratic consolidation in the venue state. In theory, interaction enables the introduction of multiple, divergent voices and worldviews that supposedly overcome the existing problems. *Contact hypothesis* offers that inter group interaction and communication reduce biases and encourage mutual understanding (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66).

Every dialogue and interaction might not result in moderation. First and foremost, groups might not be committed to democratic norms and even aim to benefit from the electoral processes to gain undemocratic results. On the other hand, the inclusion of deviant groups is necessary since they might represent an important segment of the society and exclusion might end in the marginalization of the group as well as the promotion of radicalism. Thus, in line with the second argument, those who are included into the democratic processes will supposedly become more moderate. From another point of view, moderation occurs because of the self-interests of the organization. According to Tezcür, opposition leaders moderate not because of an ideological transformation or learning, but because of “strategic

interests” (2010, p.72). This brings forward the idea that moderation comes after inclusion. In other words, one body, party, or organization moderate after their inclusion into the system, not vice versa.

According to Schwedler, the knowledge of how these processes might result is little. Especially in the states, where democratic institutions and practices are not yet well established, stakes of getting political inclusion is very high (2006, p.1). Another possibility is having strong democratic norms and institutions in order to reduce radical challenges to the existing political system. In that case marginal groups would eventually learn to “play by the rules of the game” (Schwedler, 2011, p.352).

Huntington suggests the ‘participation-moderation trade off’ in which marginal and radical groups moderate when they decide to play by the rules of the game in order to benefit from the institutional advantages (1991, p.165). At the same time, relying solely on democratic institutions might create an unintended outcome: the paradox of democracy. This is the idea that democratic processes might result in undemocratic consequences. A political group may rise to the political management through democratic participation. But this does not mean that they would make undemocratic calculations or rather they would not impose an undemocratic agenda. Schwedler proposes that inclusion results in moderation through different methods: turning radicals into moderates, turning fence-sitters into moderates, moderates becoming more moderate, and providing moderates more visibility and efficacy (2006, p.13).

Despite the vastness of the literature, only few in-depth case studies on the hypothesis that inclusion leads to moderation are analyzed. In fact, Schwedler argues that in many cases only success stories are told about moderate actors who were not really radical in real sense but considered to be such due to their dissent with the existing regime (2006, p.15). Thus, the theory’s applicability to each and every case study is debatable. Hence, measuring an increase in moderation as a result of political inclusion is proved to be difficult. On the other hand, whether political exclusion results in radicalization is another dimension of the theory and has mixed evidence that the exclusion results in conflict (Schwedler, 2006, p.16).

### **2.3. Moderation in Islamist Groups**

Today's Islamist groups such as Morocco's Justice and Development Party, Jordan's Islamist Action Front (IAF) and Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey's National Outlook Movement and Justice and Development Party, Tunisia's Islamic Renaissance Movement, and the Pakistani Jamaat-i Islami Party are not included in the category of radical since they do not clearly aim to bring down the existing regimes in their countries through violent means. However, Middle Eastern countries harbor a number of radical Islamist groups. Several decades' long imperial pressure, being torn as the battle ground between two super powers during the Cold War, domestic social, political and economic issues of each country, and inspiration from the 1979 Iran Islam Revolution resulted in witnessing an unprecedented increase in the number of Islamist groups in the Islamic world who sought revolutionary change through radical means in 1980s and 1990s. This resulted in a breaking point between the existing conservatives and emerging Islamic fundamentalists in the Muslim world. Fundamentalists were posing threat to the existing regimes.

With the Iranian Revolution, this perception of threat became imaginable (Schwedler, 2006, p.125). With this, political Islam included two components: moderates and radicals. Between moderate Islamists and radical Islamists division has been measured by the legitimacy on the use of violence. Ayoob challenges this argument by advocating that there are some major cases where mainstream Islamist political groups such as the Hamas in Israeli occupied Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon oscillated between violent and nonviolent methods directed to the foreign occupation (2007, p.19).

In case of Egypt, the radicalization of the Islamist groups is considered to be the result of governmental repression. Kassem suggests that the leaders of the Islamist movements came to realize in the late 1990s that the state's use of aggression baited them into retaliation where they entered into a fight that they could never win (Tezcür, 2010, p.86). This recognition leads to another realization that once the groups fight back against the state, they increasingly opt out of political activity and marginalize.

Michels suggests that two mechanisms cause radical tendencies to decline: the pursuit of votes and organizational survival (Tezcür, 2010, p.71). Party elites

make a strategic choice between their ideological thorns and large segments of electorates when they decide to join the elections. Willingly or unwillingly transformation takes place in order to stay as a political reality. In the farthest extreme, even a leftist party might incline towards the center and even conservatism, and vice versa. Thus, strategic interests might transform a radical stance towards pragmatism, vote seeking and consequently a more moderate position through behavioral change. However, this would not safeguard the existing regimes' fears. Moderate groups may also threaten the existing regimes, as radicals. For example, the Mubarak regime in Egypt had avoided the inclusion of moderate Islamists for years (Schwedler, 2006, p.18). Instead, clerics of al-Azhar were seen as the regime's trusted allies. The Muslim Brotherhood tried to be included in the national dialogue in 1994; however the government declined the official representation request. Nevertheless, the Brotherhood appealed to unofficial representation through unions. Moussalli argues that the reason for the violence in Egypt had been related to the governmental exclusion policies (1999, p.80).

As a result of exclusion from political participation, groups are compelled to turn into radicals since there remains no other option for political expression and contestation. Imposing laws such as the law against terrorism and law of emergency are among others are also other means for political exclusion. Implementation of such laws harms the expression of plurality in the political sphere and makes certain groups' participation to the political system impossible. Under these circumstances, alternative/divergent voices are compelled to hide themselves from the regime's apparatus and find other and mostly informal ways for visibility. An alternative to the exclusion and radicalism can be made available by permitting the foundation and operation of a party through which all the grievances of the fundamentalists can be expressed and therefore they can find a way to participate into the political life.

For instance, the regime's attitude towards the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt resulted in the expansion of the grievances of the people which in turn made the Brotherhood the victim and therefore popular. In a similar perspective, Tuğal argues that in the case of Turkey, decades of secular state policies resulted in the emergence of strong Islamist movements (2009, p.235).

Kemal Karpat holds a different position from his counterparts. According to him, Islam has played a key role in the democratization process in Turkey (2011,

p.116). He argues that religion itself mobilized the leaders and masses, and also benefited from the freedoms brought by the democracy.

Religion, that is, Islam, played a key role in the process of democratization. While it served as a means for the leaders' mobilization of and identification with the masses, it also became the beneficiary of the freedoms brought by democracy and economic development. In other words, both the development of democracy and democracy itself facilitated the acceptance of Islam as the basic cultural right of the individual Turk, a secular right rather than a divine ordainment.

Concentrating on defending its enhanced position may result in institutionalization and moderation as well for political organization and/ movement (Schwedler, 2006, p.12). Hamas is a good example of such kind. In order to defend its position in the Palestine issue in international platforms, it maintained and strengthened party organization institutionally.

Perhaps, one of the most important processes from radicalism towards moderation is the stage of learning. An actor and/or organization comes to a point where it understands that without some compromise, cooperation or transformation, there is no possibility of attaining the existing goals and even a chance of termination becomes explicit. At this point, the organization makes a strategic choice between moderation and further radicalization. Within any political context, an actor's perception of possibilities would shape its activities and the agenda (Schwedler, 2006, p. 150). This might be an explanation of why the Iranian Revolution in 1979 had inspired and excited the many Islamic groups to institutionalize and pursue their goals through radical means.

Kubikova argues that under inclusive and open political systems, Islamist parties are inclined to cooperate with other political players in order to accomplish their objectives (2009, p.142). She suggests that this voluntary cooperation will likely to increase tolerance among competitors, and this would gradually eliminate the possibility to use violence. Moussalli agrees against Kubikova's ideas. According to him, what distinguishes the radical views from moderate ones is the method preferred to transform the political agenda to reality (1999, p.104). However, an organization might not necessarily follow a constant and consistent line of strategies and methods to pursue its goals. In other words, the idea of terrorism exists as a fact; but not every act of fundamentalists is a terrorist activity. Therefore, rather than seeing the solution to the people's grievances in a security dilemma context, it

should be enlightening and in the long term, useful to address and problematize the underlying causes.

As mainstream Islamist political movements become moderate and integrate into the existing political systems, Ayooob argues that a number of extremist factions breakaway and appeal to the use of violence (2007, p.85). These factions do not possess large-scale popular support; however their participation to the sounding events makes them known domestically and internationally. On the other hand, getting power requires compromise, pragmatism which in turn leads to moderation.

#### **2.4. Moderation in Turkish Islamist Context**

The Huda-Par has been associated with the Hezbollah in Turkey. The Turkish Hezbollah was founded in 1979 and became publicly known with its struggle against the PKK including the use of violence and assassinations. Even though the Huda-Par officials continuously refuse the claims about their alleged ties with the Hezbollah, many of them are claimed to have some direct or indirect links to the Hezbollah case. Some of them have been tried for their membership in Hezbollah. Some of them were imprisoned for their connection to Hezbollah activities. Even the lawyer of Hezbollah suspects (Hüseyin Yılmaz) is one of the top leaders of the Huda-Par. The Huda-Par leaders' statements regarding the Hezbollah's position on different matters or defending them before the public confuses the minds. These connections created a sense that the Huda-Par is the continuation of the Hezbollah and the Party might have a hidden agenda. Nevertheless, even if we assume that the Huda-Par and its co-organizations are directly linked to the Hezbollah, this does not mean that the new initiatives are likely to appeal to violence as it was in the case of the Hezbollah.

Experts on democratic transformation argue that moderation occurs mostly in democratic, pluralist, and inclusive societies; while radicalism is observed in exclusive, repressive and authoritarian societies. The Kurdish Hezbollah's appeal to violence and marginalization had occurred starting from the late 1980s and early 1990s. The time period mentioned is considered as politically ambiguous and socio-economically devastating years of Turkey because of unsuccessful management of the economy, the high-inflation rates as well as the state's struggle with the PKK and its backlashes on the status of the Kurdish identity and cultural and political rights in

the society. In the following years, especially with 28 February 1997<sup>2</sup> and its aftermath when the pressures on Muslims in the country were intensified, the Hezbollah's activities were also restricted and in turn pulled its position into a more radical line that was to be ended in 2000 with a sudden police raid in its premise in Beykoz, Istanbul.

After two years, when the AKP came into power in Turkey, and it started its democratization program and Kurdish initiative, and it would not be wrong to argue that the Kurdish Islamists found ways to re-express themselves through different mechanisms starting from NGOs to political parties which in turn enabled them to retake a political position in the country's political structure. According to Tuğal, the AKP's victory in the 2002 elections and its formation of the government has started a transformation for Islamists from radicalism to a moderate stand. He proposes that after the AKP government, Islamists' street actions have ended. The number of people in favor of an Islamic state in Turkey declined from 20 % in the 1990s to 9 % in 2006. And former radicals, who even opposed party politics in 1980s, joined the AKP (Tuğal, 2009, p.148).

As it will be mentioned in the following chapters, all the Huda-Par leaders that were interviewed are in the same opinion that with the AKP government, the problematic gap between the Kurdish identity and state has been filled to some degree. They also think that the AKP government contributed a lot to democratization process within the country, which enabled them to consider over finding a political party to enhance their activities and represent their bases. According to Ayoob, wherever democracy has begun to appear in the Muslim world, the result has been the moderation of Islamist parties to sustain their activities (2007, p.110).

Radical or anti-system parties are defined as parties/organizations that oppose to the existing regime and consider it as illegitimate (Tezcür, 2010, p.70). Given the definition, Huda-Par is an anti-system party; since in the party program and also in

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<sup>2</sup> 28 February process is considered a post-modern coup who was made by high-level military postulates against the conservative Welfare Party government through dictating a list of decisions by the National Security Council in 28 February 1997. The list contained secular measures (abolition of religious schools, religious clothing in public spheres, etc.) to combat religious reactionary structuring. After the resignation of the government in 18 June 1997, the process continued through imposition of the decision. Years following had been painful for the Islamists of Turkey.

the statements of party leadership, it is claimed that the Party has problems with the current system of affairs:

Other goals of the movement;

- To redefine the state and the politics,
- To carry the basic principles and values of the community to the politics and to make them dominant,
- To make the system harmonious with the beliefs and values of the community, not the community with the system,
- To revive the humanly and Islamic values that are degenerated consciously or unconsciously... (the Huda-Par Party Programme, 2013, p.10)

Even though the Huda-Par openly reveals itself as an anti-system party in the party program by asserting itself with the purpose of redefining the state and politics, this does not mean that in practice it will realize the purported vision. Moussali argues that fundamentalist Islamic thought has been considered as a reaction to existing political, social and economic conditions (Moussali, 1999, p.19). In other words, the radicalization or marginalization of one particular group is directly related to the political, social, and economic environment. Considering both the Hezbollah line and the Huda-Par's stance, exclusion from the political representation of both Islam and the Kurdish ethnic identity has resulted in the marginalization and radicalization of the alienated groups. On the other hand, even an involuntary acceptance of one political organization to the political process will likely result in the moderation of the radicals. Thus, as the Hezbollah did, sooner or later the Huda-Par will likely tone down its anti-systemic principles.

Ayoob argues that Islamist movements have increasingly left the fundamentalist perspectives and leaving behind the idea of an Islamic state directed them to highlight other themes such as justice and freedom (2007, p.36). This transformation directed Islamist political movements away from the conceptions of Islamic polity and towards democratic conceptions, which replaced God's sovereignty with people's sovereignty.

Even though inclusion might be considered as a compromise made by the regime and/or political elites, in the long term the boundary drawn is a powerful authority enjoyed and benefited by the elites of the regime and/or the government itself. Restructuring participatory regulations enables the inclusion of only the targeted group and only in certain terms. Bans on ethnicity based political parties in Turkey resulted in the division of Kurdish electorate among right wing conservative parties and the PKK, and successive political parties such as the HADEP, the DEP, the BDP, the HDP, etc., which have been close to the PKK's position in the Parliament .

None of the political parties –both conservative and leftist- mentioned above has been successful in expressing and advancing Kurdish people’s interests through democratic institutions and mechanisms. And perhaps because of ideological differences with the mass base they represent, eventually they might become a burden for Kurdish people politically and socially for raising their voice for their rights and the region’s real problems. This dilemma shows how political actors control the dissenting groups through different mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion.

Tuğal, in *Passive Revolution*, implements a very different approach from its counterparts’. In his ethnographic work in Sultanbeyli (one of the poorest districts in Istanbul) with former Islamist radicals, he theorizes capitalism’s absorption of radicals into moderates. According to him, today’s moderate Islamists are not contemporaries of nineteenth century Islamists. They are rather the product of the mobilization of ‘broad sectors under the banner of radicalizing Islam, defeat of radicalism and the radicals’ strategic change after the defeat’ (Tuğal, 2009, p. 3). For him, in the case of ‘irresolvable, total crisis of the whole system’, the remaining option is building the ‘independent, non-institutional, revolutionary, uncompromising organization’ but it loses its influence and becomes radicalized and marginalized (Tuğal, 2009, p.237). In other words, the crisis of the state generates the proper conditions for the emergence of radical movements as in the early 1990s with the state-PKK struggle.

Another troublesome issue regarding moderation is the possibility of inability to manage the expectations of the masses. For instance, the WP’s Just Order program was not considered radical enough for the radical wing of the Party; and too radical and utopian for the growing capitalist wing within the Party (Tuğal, 2009, p.249). Therefore, the Party had gradually moved away from the program. When the AKP gained strength, a totally new understanding of Islamic ethics of business replaced the Just Order: preaching working hard and privatization as an integral part of religion (Tuğal, 2009, p.249). At the end, the government was taken over by the Islamists, but did not become Islamic.

Eligür argues that the Islamist social movements in Turkey show that if the political system offers political opportunity structures, social movements do not necessarily appeal to violence or carry out anti-regime social protests even if their final goal is overthrowing the existing regime (2010, p.276). She advocates that

political opportunity structures (for instance the Turkish Islam Synthesis project of military rulers after the 1980 military coup, and the presence of movement entrepreneurs etc.) make social movements reorganize politically via legal forms. Duran points out that Islamist political discourses can lean to both authoritarian/totalitarian and democratic inclinations; these formulations could provide a substantial amount of material from the tradition of Islamist political thinking (2010, p.130).

In conclusion, the moderation literature is vast source, and it is fed by multiple disciplines. However, given the few number of in-depth case study analyses as well as the authenticity of each case makes it more difficult to make generalizations. Nonetheless, moderation is considered to be connected to the inclusion and democratic openings. Radical group/party/organization is affected by surrounding political and societal conditions. These conditions with internal variables enable the group to adopt the violent and revolutionary methods. Political and societal conditions are also influential for moderate groups.

Moderates and radicals are not realities that stand alone. Even the slightest changes in the political surroundings might prompt the internal dynamics of the organization and result in an unexpected manner. The Huda-Par either as a continuation of the Hezbollah or as a new initiative is bound to the conditions of the political environment in Turkey. If democratization keeps moving in a positive direction, expectations from the Huda-Par would go in the same direction. On the contrary, if the regime in Turkey, once again, is shaken by other forces, and Kurdish people are compelled to marginalize again, there would be no guarantee of keeping things salient in terms of conducting legal forms of existence for the Huda-Par and organizations similar to it.

In this thesis, my aim is to explain the dynamics behind the observed moderation of Kurdish Islamists in Turkey. In which areas has this transformation taken place? Why did the Community end up forming a new political organization? Why did it take so long for them to get politically organized?

## CHAPTER 3

### ISLAMISM AND NATIONALISM IN TURKEY

The emergence of Islamist ideas can be traced back to the nineteenth century. After centuries, the long golden age of Muslim empires in the East, starting from the seventeenth century, material decline (e.g., economic, scientific, territorial) became the inevitable pattern in the following periods. When the Ottoman Empire was forced to pull back from the places it previously ruled, the imperial Western forces replaced it in its former territories. The Empire had to give up its territories in Europe, Africa and the Middle East and stay only in the Eastern Thrace, Anatolia and some Middle Eastern provinces, which were tied to the State on the basis of Islam and the Caliph. As an ideology Islamism was considered a way to sustain the survival of the Ottoman Empire during the traumatic dissolution process.

Even though the issues of Islam and nationalism had started to be discussed after the 1860s, with the emergence of Neo-Ottomans in the history of Turkish political thought, the foundation of the contexts of Islamism and nationalism came later in the Constitutional Period (Duran, Çetinsaya and others, 2010, p.420). Islamist movements' most important starting point is the spread of the idea "Islam is not a hindrance for progress"<sup>3</sup>. The reason for the decline is Muslims' retrieval from living upon the Islam's great spirit, justice and civilization. The Muslim world had been considered to be enslaved by unnecessary habits, superstitions and *bid'at* (innovation) (Tunaya, 2007, p.15). Based on this idea, modern Islamist thinkers had reasoned about the existing status of the Muslim world and concluded that previous generations understood and lived Islam wrongfully; as a result followers also lived (Kara, 2010, p. 36). The alleged reason of the defeat was not in Islam; but in a form of Islam that was misunderstood and wrongfully experienced.

#### 3.1. Definitions of Islamism

Because there is no agreed definition of Islamism, people or groups who have been considered as Islamists in theory, might not label themselves as Islamists in

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<sup>3</sup> In Turkish: İslamiyet mani-i terakki değildir.

practice. The reason behind this rejection is acceptance of Islamism as an ideology as liberalism, communism or nationalism by many. Some also perceive Islamism as a political project. Thus, it sometimes might be associated with a degradation of religion to an ideology, program or project and therefore this term is harshly criticized and rejected.

During the research process of this thesis, I personally had difficulty in getting the attention of the interviewees regarding the topic, since when they heard of the label Islamism they would easily attempt to reject it. Persons from the group with which I conduct interviews do not associate themselves with Islamism directly and do think that Islamism is against the Islamic values in the first place. However, when the definitions of Islamism are repeated with all connotations, we could come to a mutual understanding. Nonetheless, it is observable that Islamism as a concept is often misunderstood. As Aktaş points out, there is confusion in Turkey in terms of the self-definition of Muslims and Islamists, which she traces back to the alphabet reform and the harsh Republican policies towards Muslims in the early years of the Republic (2014, p.17).

Aktaş argues that the emergence of Islamism was related to “a consciousness” that could not cope in the Islam’s position as a religion interested only with afterlife, without important claims on life itself and is retreated in the face of Western modernization on the basis of worldly arguments (2014, p.23). She defines Islamism as a movement that is bound by time and place, without forgetting that Islam is the religion.

According to Aktay, Islamism before everything else is a movement to return to the Qur’an and Sunnah in essence (Bezci and Miş, 2012, p. 3). As a salvation ideology in the nineteenth century, Islamism is historical. However, it gets its legitimacy from its claim of returning to the text.

Bulaç defines Islamism as an intellectual, moral, societal, economic, political and inter-state movement based on the founding principles of Islam which aims to make a “new” human, society, politics/state and imagination of world, which depends on a new social organization model and universal Islamic unity (21 July 2012).

The Grand Vizier of the last years of the Ottoman Empire, Said Halim Pasha defines Islamism as follows (Tunaya, 2007, p.13):

Acknowledging Islam as a social religion which covers religion and the world, materiality and spirituality; Islamization means, according to the necessities of time and place, in a truest way, Islam's system of faith, moral, sociology and political is construed and accorded.

Hayrettin Karaman, a very important theologian and Islamist does not consider people Islamists if they live in their own world as Muslims but are not concerned with living Islam even in their own family. According to him, Islamists are those who want to spread Islam from their closest circles to the most distant places on earth, ones who care about real Islam's corruption and protect Islam from any form of decay, and those who sacrifice physically and morally for this cause (8 July 2012).

Kara's definition of Islamism is one of the most comprehensive ones. According to this definition:

Islamism is a movement emerged in the 19-20<sup>th</sup> centuries whose activists and eclectic dimensions are dominant, collection of political, intellectual and scholarly works, pursuits in order to remake Islam as a whole (belief, ritual, moral, philosophy, politics, law, education...) dominant over life and save Muslim world from the Western exploitation, from tyrants and despotic rulers, from slavery, imitation, superstition with a rationalist method, civilize, unite and develop. (13 August 2012)

In addition, Kara suggests that Islamism desires to have a state and therefore is a political movement. Since Islamism foresees the purification of Islam from superstitions and deviations from the early practices, it might be considered as a fundamentalist movement. Perhaps, in comparison to the other movements of the time (nationalism, Westernism, socialism, liberalism etc.) Islamism can be thought as traditionalist. However, Islamism although based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, in interpreting the holy texts for individuals' and societies' needs and necessities, it highlights reason and science. Certainly, it has a more religious discourse and targets a more conservative society and future. Although it is a modern movement, at the same time Islamism is a challenge to modernity. Its modernism arises from its affiliation with rationality. Bezci and Miş distinguish between conservatives and Islamists arguing that the latter follows a cause and originates from the text; people who perceive Islam as a meditation tool between the Creator and created cannot be Islamists (2012, p.7). Another distinction between Islamists and conservative people

is the former's support of the status quo, while the latter is a reaction against the status quo (Uslu, 2009, p.217).

### **3.2. Islamism and Nationalism in the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

According to Tunaya, Islamism has had a twofold mission; one is an individual plan, the other is a collective plan (2007, p.19). It aims at regulating the life of individuals in the Muslim world by having a voice in their personal lives and determining road maps. As a collective plan, it foresees for people who have not been nationalized and nations which have not freed yet, a way for salvation, constitution and development through Islamic unity and based on norms which ensure relations. In short, Islamism is considered to be a life norm for people and societies of the Muslims world.

Bulaç's categorization of Islamists is worth for further attention. He separates Islamists into three generations (23 July 2012): The first generation of Islamists between the years of 1850-1924, the second generation of Islamists between the years of 1950-2000, and the third generation of Islamists starting from the twenty first century have been on the stage. According to Bulaç, the main contextual frame of the first generation of Islamists was to return to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Their political themes and inclinations centered on the survival of the Ottoman State whose founding principles and legitimacy was based on Islam and the existence of the Caliph.

The French Revolution and the idea of nationalism affected the Ottoman Empire as it did other multiethnic empires/states of Europe at the time. Despite the secessionist movements of the Serbs, Greeks, and Albanians in the nineteenth century, the *millet* system and the existence of the Caliph had prevented most of the Muslim ethnic groups to rupture from its sphere of influence. Because of the idea of nationalism, the Empire's ethnic groups, especially non-Muslim groups had secessionist claims. Therefore the ideological initiatives such as Ottomanism did not find much acceptance among the masses. On the other hand, Islamism could be a powerful means for at least holding Muslim groups together.

According to Islamist thinkers, reforms in order to save the Empire from its decline were to be made in line with the Qur'an and Sunnah through jurisprudence.

Muslim thinkers in the nineteenth century such as Tahtawi, Nadim, Abduh identified nationalism with patriotism (Enayat, 2005, p.112). For the Muslim entities of the Ottoman Empire it did not pose a threat to the Empire's existence; on the contrary it should have been useful. Kirişçi and Winrow perceive the protection of the Sultan and the Caliph as the main factors of this patriotism (1997, p.95).

Following the end of WWI, remaining Ottoman territories were under the occupation of the Allied forces. The sultan was unable to resist the Western occupiers. However, an irregular army was brought together in Anatolia in order to defeat the Occupiers and save the Caliph; and eventually it became successful. The occupiers were defeated in Anatolia; a new state was built in 1923. Zubaida argues that the ideology and political projections of pan-Islamism advanced after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire along with pan-Islamism and the renewal of a preferably Arab caliphate (2004, p.409). Therefore in the first decades after the Ottoman Empire, many Arab thinkers did not see a contradiction between nationalism and Islam.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and emergence of the nation states in the Middle East, nationalism began to create an ideological controversy among Muslim intellectuals regarding the contradiction between Islam as a universalist message and nationalism related to a particular group's needs and wishes (Enayat, 2005, p.112). For instance, among Islamists, Islamist Turkish nationalists argue that nationalism does not contradict with Islam. They envisage a kind of federation constituted by different nationalities, a family of Islam, and a unity of Islam (Tunaya, 2005, p.73). Tunaya's ambiguous connection of Islamism and nationalism however do not reflect the realities of the Ottoman society right before its collapse. As a reaction to the nationalism in the Balkans, Turkish nationalism was on the rise. Kurdish nationalism emanated as a response to Turkish nationalism.

Tunaya poses the question of whether Islamism can consort with Turkism as follows:

Can Islamism consort with Turkism? From a political angle, nationalism's benefit is obvious in the twentieth century. Nationalism is also compliant with the sharia's requirements. Because, sharia is based on national realities and beliefs. (2007, p.74)

Enayat opposes to Tunaya's argument. He argues that the Arab nationalism's connection with Islam makes it more understandable in terms of its conformity with

Islam. On the other hand, in the case of non-Arab nationalisms of the Muslim world such as Turkish and Iranian nationalisms, there was no intrinsic link between nationalism and Islam. According to him, nationalism sometimes objected Islam (Enayat, 2005, p.115). He presents Atatürk's and Rida Shah's cultural reforms as being directed at eliminating Islam's power in Turkish and Iranian identities.

During the process of the dissolution of great empires in the early twentieth century, as states were shrinking the Islamic movements moved towards micro-nationalism (Altuntaş, 2010, p. 432). Altuntaş argues that although they retreated to national borders, Islamists still alleged to be global as in the case of Wahhabi Islam of Saudi Arabia and Shiite Islam of Iran (2010, p.432). For Islamist thinking, state/governance has an important place as it has been considered as an important supplement of religion. For instance, Eşref Edib –an important Islamist intellectual and publisher who lived between years of 1882-1971 – advocates that after the God and his prophet Muhammad, Muslims anticipated everything from their states and governments:

Because there is no spirituality in Islam, governments/rulers, not the religious scholars, have been the means between Muslims and the God. By knowing that the benefits of their world and afterworld coexist only with their state and government, Muslims consider sacrifice of their own lives for the sake of the state as the biggest deed. (Duran, Çetinsaya and others, 2010, p.132)

The emergence of nation states in the Middle East started controversies among Islamist thinkers over the contradiction of nationalism and Islam.

According to Duran, although Islamism in the first place implemented a total rejection of nationalism, in the course of time nationalism has been internalized (Duran, Çetinsaya and others, 2010, p.154). Under the new conditions of Turkey, starting from 1918, criticism towards nationalism neither in theory nor in practice is observable on the writings of Islamists (Duran, Çetinsaya and others, 2010, p.432). Collaboration between Islamists and Turkists, and the empowerment of one another had been directed towards imperialist forces during the Independence War. But after the war and with the foundation of the Republic this collaboration may have offended Kurdish Islamists who were loyal to the Islamic cause and less inclined to nationalism than their Turkish counterparts.

After WWI, Islamism lost its first position and inclined towards “Islamism united with nationalism or Islamism-Turkism” (Duran, Çetinsaya and others, 2010,

p. 436). According to Kara, Islamism in Turkey and Islamism worldwide carried chronological and contextual similarities until 1924 (Özkan, 12 August 2012). According to him, after the Lausanne Peace Treaty, Turkey broke away from the Islamic world as well as from Islamism until the end of WWII and its aftermath.

### **3.3. Transformation of the State and Responses of Turkish and Kurdish Nationalists and Islamists**

#### **3.3.1. Kurdish Nationalism and Its Sources**

Kurdish nationalism emerged earlier than the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Like the other nations of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurdish population had met with the idea of nationalism in the nineteenth century. Çevik argues that the centralist administrative reforms of the nineteenth century resulted in split between the Ottoman governance and Kurdish provincial leaders which resulted in earlier Kurdish revolts and can be seen as the first signs of nationalism among Kurdish people (2012, p.90). According to Turan, the *Tanzimat* reforms awakened Kurdish nationalism (2011, p.226). Because the reforms were equalizing the non-Muslim minorities with Muslims in legal terms, ignoring that the Sharia was a contract for Kurdish people with the State and its deactivation would mean the start of a period where there remained no binding constitution for Kurdish people (Turan, 2011, p. 226).

Turan attributes three sources of Kurdish nationalism after the Party of Union and Progress<sup>4</sup>, 1908: the Bedirhan dynasty and the Damascus school, Mullahs who became socialists for Kurdism such as the poet Cegarxwin, and the organizations such as the PKK, KUK (Kurdistan National Salvation) who used Kurdism for socialist ends after the 1960s (2011, p.365). The Bedirhan dynasty was an old Kurdish family with important figures who sought to follow a similar path to Turkish nationalism (Latinizing the alphabet, secular schooling) in order to spread and strengthen Kurdish nationalism among Kurdish people. However, Kurdish rebellions have been much more influential and sounding in bringing Kurdish nationalism to the forefront. First and greatest Kurdish revolts against the Ottoman and its successor Turkish state were championed by religious leaders such as Sayed Ubeidullah Nehri

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<sup>4</sup> İttihat Terakki Fırkası.

(in 1880), Sheikh Abdusselam Barzani (1913), Molla Selim (1914), Sheikh Said (in 1925), and Sheikh Mahmood Barzinji (in 1919, 1922, and 1931). All these rebellions were considered religious as well as nationalistic movements and suppressed violently. The Ottoman government preferred sending rebellious leaders to exile rather than giving them death sentences. Kurdish people are known to be loyal to the unity of the Ottoman state. During the years of WWI and its aftermath, moderate Kurdish leaders were in favor of autonomy of Kurdistan rather than secessionism (Özbey, 2009, p. 49).

One of the prominent leaders of the Kurds, Sayyid Abdulkadir Nehri founded the Committee of Unity and Progress<sup>5</sup> in 1908 and its founding document is important in terms of reflecting the ideas of important Kurdish figures of the time (Özbey, 2009, p. 43). For Olson, Nehri's leadership of Kurdish people marked the first stage of Kurdish nationalism (1989). Some articles from the document are important to notice:

Protection of the Constitution that is based on Sharia and the official document of the unity and security of state and people.  
Protection of the unity of the Ottoman state.  
Not having any kind of privilege of one community over another.  
(Özbey, 2009, p. 43).

The Bedirhanis left the Committee later in 1920 on the grounds of the division from Nehri's management, who opposed the independency but rather preferred autonomy under Turkish custody (Özbey, 2009, p. 50).

With the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the relations between Kurdish people and the state changed. Especially after the Sheik Said rebellion, almost all participants many of whom were sheikhs and mullahs were hanged without a proper court decision<sup>6</sup>. According to Olson (1989), the Sheikh Said rebellion was a result of the culmination of four distinct stages of Kurdish nationalism. Following the quashing of the rebellion, hundreds of Muslim, Kurdish and Turkish people were decided to be hanged by the Independence Courts (Özbey, 2009, p. 99). Immediately after the rebellion, mass deportations of Kurdish populations towards Western cities were organized. In the winter of 1926-1927, hundreds of thousands of people were deported to the Western Anatolia and hundreds of villages were burned (Özbey,

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<sup>5</sup> Teavun ve Terakki Cemiyeti that later became Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti.

<sup>6</sup> According to Özbey, 660 people were sentenced to death (129).

2009, p.105). These policies resulted in the flee of many Kurdish people to neighboring countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria as well as many small and large scale insurrections such as Ağrı Revolt (1926-1930), Şemdinli Revolt, and Dersim Revolt (1937). The groups in exile found Xoybun in 5 October 1927, which was led by Celadet Bedirhan and his brother Kamuran Bedirhan. Xoybun is considered as the first organization of Kurdish nationalism (Turan, 2001, p.367). Former members of the Society of the Rise of Kurdistan (Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti) opposed Xoybun's program and eventually left the organization; therefore Xoybun remained and maintained as a much more secular and nationalist organization (Özbey, 2009, p.144). It declared independence of Kurdistan according to Sevres' provisions and Ağrı as its temporal capital in 1927. The Ağrı Insurrection lasted long and in 1930 it could hardly be detained.

According to Turan, among Kurdish people four ideas emerged regarding the Sheikh Said rebellion and they have been represented up to the date:

1. Sheikh Said movement was a pure Islamic movement which was against the abolition of the Caliphate and Islamic law.
2. It was a nationalist movement which was a result of Cıbranlı Halil Bey and Bitlisli Yusuf Ziya's efforts in spreading the idea of Kurdish nationalism. However, the movement was led by religious leaders and therefore Islamic tone was overemphasized.
3. Sheikh Said did not accept the oppression and our ancestors also helped him.
4. Because of the movement, we lost what we previously had. It did harm the Kurdish religious life. (2011, p.184)

Turan categorizes the Kurdish political map through four distinct categories of opinions on the Sheikh Said rebellion: The first idea emerges as a pure Islamic understanding, the second idea appears as secular-nationalist movement, the third idea joins to the conservative Turkish political wing (Democrat Party and its successors) and lastly the apolitical wing (2011, p.284). According to Atasoy, the Sheikh Said rebellion's significance aroused from the ban on Sufi orders and their lodges, which created a space for the emergence of Kurdish ethnic nationalism (2009, p. 44). For Çevik, it resulted in the differentiation among Kurdish Islamists and Turkish Islamists. The latter was accepted as more conformist than its Kurdish counterparts (2012, p.90).

According to Karaman, Islamists' attitudes and reactions towards Republican reforms were different, where all of them were legitimate according to their

jurisprudence and its products (08 July 2012). He exemplifies two Saids: Sheikh Said who prefers rebellion; Said-i Nursi who prefers the spread of religion through education. Interesting enough, two Saids are embraced by the Kurdish Islamists and accepted as two important figures for their movement. Said Nursi is known for his attempts to improve Kurdish regions and educate the Kurdish society; however he was not in favor of an independent Kurdish state and was not either Kurdish nationalist (Özbey, 2009, p.89). Sheikh Said who chose activism and rebellion was an important religious figure in the Nakshibendi line and a respondent from religious schools (madrasa) of the region (Özbey, 2009, p.116). Tutar while explaining the sources and inspirers of the Hezbollah, points to the two Saids, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, struggle methods deployed in Iran before the Revolution, Mawdudi and Iqbal in Pakistan both appealing to methods of violence and education (2011, pp.159, 163).

### **3.3.2. Transformation of the Turkish State**

According to Eligür, the idea of a territorial nation state based on the Turkish nation appeared in the early days of the Independence War (2010, p.41). Ahmad argues that during the War, nationalists were forced to use Islamic propaganda in order to counter Istanbul's propaganda against them (1991, p.6). The struggle was called "national struggle", however, back at the time the word nation in Turkish "millet" was used as a religiously comprehensive meaning.

During the opening ceremony of the new Parliament in 1920, Mustafa Kemal acknowledged that the Parliament was not constituted by the representatives of Turks, Kurds, Circassians and Laz; but the members of the Islamic community that was brought together by a powerful bond (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.95). Despite the fact that the new regime founded in 1923 declared autonomy was to be granted to the Kurds, 'Kurdistan policy' of the Ministry of Council on 27 June 1921 was defined 'building a local government in the lands inhabited by Kurds' and Mustafa Kemal's acknowledgment regarding the autonomous status of Kurdish land before the public, with the constitutional change in 1924 Kurdish people's status had been changed (Yeğen, 2009, p.599).

The new constitution defined the Turkish nation in a more planned fashion. The new form was excluding the varieties of the people on the one hand, but

certainly in the idea that this formulation will give birth to a nation. Thus, it was much more a declaration of the intention and was very much shaped by Mustafa Kemal's understanding and expectation (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.100). The desire of the homogeneity of people and uniformity of the state is felt throughout this definition. Mustafa Kemal defined the nation as a group of people who is living in the same geography, governed by the same rules, shared a common language and moral; put great emphasize on the "will of living together" (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.101). The idea of Islamic community was replaced with Turkish Nation:

What is Turkish Revolution?(...) In order to maintain the existence of the nation the common bond among individuals had been changed in shape and context; in other words, instead of religious and sectarian bonds, the nation (*millet*) with the linkage of "Turkish Nation" gather individuals. (Özbey, 2009, p.92)

With the foundation of the Republic, Atatürk's concept of Turkish nationalism became one of the most important state ideologies of the Republic. During Atatürk's presidency, "the glorious past of the Turks since their earliest origins" started to be studied (Eligür, 2010, p.41). Secularism was the other pillar of the newly built Republic. Islamism was marginalized (Hanioglu, 9 July 2012). From this time onward, Kurdish people were denied of collective rights. There was no more an ethnic population that demands their political rights, but a group of Turkish citizens who got involved in reactionary politics, tribal problems, and underdevelopment issues.

Sarigil adds that the state's official position over the Kurdish issue is that there is no ethno-political problem in Turkey but rather a problem of socio-economic backwardness in the Southeastern region (2010, p.532). According to Tutar, the most radical Republican reform was the change in the Second Article of the 1924 Constitution that "the religion of the state is religion of Islam" with "Turkish State is republican, nationalist, populist, statist, laic and reformist" on 5 February 1937 (2011, p.121).

The new system in the Republican Turkey had been founded on a radical approach to the indivisibility of the state and had assimilationist practices towards marginal/minority groups (Mardin, 1997, p.71). During the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Independence War, religion had played an important role in holding people together, establishing the bridges between different social groups and answering

‘existential questions’ (Mardin, 1997, p.71). However, this sense of religion was much more horizontal in shape. According to Kırmızı and Bölme, the sense of belonging to a common religion had been the most important ground for Turkey’s nation building process (2007). In Lausanne, minorities had been identified on religious terms. Therefore, Turkish Republic was able to deploy the policy of “there is no Muslim minority” and had been successful in the implementation towards Albanians, Bosnians and Pomaks since they had been successfully fused into Turkish identity; nonetheless Kurdish people still were *otherized* even though they were not new comers or immigrants (Kırmızı & Bölme, 2007). This resulted in the change of the sense of religion as a binder of social groups to a vertical way where official Sunni Islam regarded as the formal religion of the state and cultural deviations among people had to be melted into this hierarchical structure.

With the new regime, the Kurds have been regarded as part of Turkishness and have been subjected to intense Turkification (Yeğen, 2009, p.598). In order to prove the Turkishness of Kurdish people, the new regime showed great effort. According to this “scientific notion”, Kurds were constituted from Turkish people who lost their language as a result of cultural exchange (spoke broken Persian) and lived in Turkey, Iran and Iraq (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.108). The regime deployed many practices to Turkify the Kurdish population which included the compulsory settlements of the Kurdish people to the West, state-sponsored education programs, encouraging marriages between Turkish civil servants and Kurdish girls, bans on traditional Kurdish religious schools, strong incentives for the boarding schools, and the allowance of land to the civil servants in the region (Yeğen, 2009, p. 602). Perhaps, one of the most important practices of this kind was the Settlement Law of 1934 which divided people and geography into three: Turks and Turkish speakers, counted from Turkish culture but non-speaker of Turkish, and unfamiliar to Turkish culture and non-speakers of Turkish (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.103).

Non-speakers and speakers of Turkish were made closer to each other in order to melt the cultural and linguistic differences through settlement policies. Some Kurds forcefully immigrated to the Western Anatolia as some Turks immigrated to the Kurdish regions. This law directed at creating a homogeneous group of people who spoke a common language. In contrary to the exclusionary policies regarding the non-Muslims of Turkey, Kurdish people were subject to direct assimilation. Sarigil argues that pro-Islamic intellectuals believed that by endorsing secular and

anti-religious nationalism, official Turkish nationalism promoted the rise of Kurdish nationalism (2010, p.536).

According to Ahmad, Republican reforms served the Kemalist recognition of the importance of the religion in Kurdish revolts as well as for the masses (1991, p.7). Therefore, responses of the political elites of the regime towards the revolts were harsh. It based on the idea of almost total prohibition of collective religious practicing such as the abolition of Sufi orders and their lodges. Mardin has a different angle on the issue. Parallel to the early Republican era's failure to understand the power of Islam within the society, he points to the existence of an inability to address the significance of Islam which caused 'unnecessary consternation' among Turkish intellectuals upon the rise of political Islam in Turkey (1997, p.67).

From the early years of the Republic, the reforms directed each and every aspect of political, social, and economic as well as religious practices. The underdevelopment and corruption discourse was deployed to convince people with a created sense of protecting the pureness of religion, the sacred and people. For instance, as it was argued by Ziya Gökalp –one of the most important ideologue of the Turkish Republic- for the sake of religion and nation, the judicial authority should be given to the secular courts of the state. The law should not be derived from religious principles but from the needs of the society.

The aim of adopting secularism and nationalism was to create a modern, homogenous, rational state and it became more and more militant against Islam (Ahmad, 1991, p.3). The fear of Islamist activism prevented political actors to use Islamism as a political project; instead an official Islam was conceptualized in which every approach to Islam except the state's had been precluded, and secularism meant a struggle against the devout and nationalism was blessed (Hanioğlu, 9 July 2012). In 1928, the article that described Islam as the religion of the state was removed from the Constitution.

The rulers of the new Republic were insistent to remove the religion from public life. In addition, they used mechanisms and institutions to form a version of Sunni Islam such as Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*), ordering the Turkish translation of the Qur'an to Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır – an important theologian of the time- through a protocol that shows the expectations of the regime from the translation, establishing religious vocational high schools

(*İmam Hatip okulları*) in order to generate the clergymen who meet the needs of the regime and cultivate this version of Islam among the people. The series of reforms directed to the religious institutions varied from the removal of the Caliphate to the ban on religious dress codes<sup>7</sup>, and from the ban on going to the Holy sites<sup>8</sup> to the change in the Arabic letters, and so on. In a way, nationalism became the new regime's religion.

### **3.3.3. Islamism in the Republican Turkey**

Zubaida argues that reformed religion would be based on reason and text which would be interpreted through the angle of modernism and modern law (2004, p.409). In other words, religious reformers despite being on different poles have overlapped with secular nationalists including Atatürk and Rida Shah, as well as with fundamentalists, radicals such as the Salafis and Wahabbis. All religious reformers were aiming at the purification of the religion in order to ensure progress within the society. By doing so, they were rejecting the existing status of religion in quest of transforming it with a top-down manner.

This is what happened in the experience of the Turkish state. As the reforms were intensified, the bonds among Muslim people within the country were weakened. The Republic's radical secular reforms caused Islam to move away from the public sphere and intolerance towards any possibility that might have awakened the Caliphate and the sultanate resulted in the absence of an Islamist opposition. This enabled Turkish Islamists to be closer to a nationalist line which in the long run might share a similar ground with Kemalists (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p. 135).

As Mardin states, the Republic adopted Western educational systems and cultural practices without understating that they were "the tip of an iceberg of meanings, perceptions and ontological positions" (1997, p.65). The Republican elite missed the fact that Islam established bridges between different ethnic groups. And

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<sup>7</sup>25 November 1925 Hat Act and 3 December 1934 act which forbades clerics to wear religious clothes places except for the mosques and prayer sites.

<sup>8</sup> During the Second World War years, through claiming the economic difficulties and foreign currency deficits, making pilgrimage to the Holy Sites in Mecca, Saudi Arabia was prevented by the regime until 1947 (Özdemir, 2013, p.71).

perhaps the fear of this bond made the Republican elites anxious for the survival and continuity of the new Republic.

For Kurdish people, the institution of the Caliphate was one of the strongest ties with the Turkish state in which Kurdish notables and religious leaders had felt themselves responsible. As Kirişçi and Winrow points out the Caliphate had been the source of legitimacy for the Ottoman Empire and self-definition mechanism for the Empire's Muslim people (1997, p.99). One year after the removal of the Caliphate, one of the most important Kurdish rebellions in Kurdish history started in 1925 and lasted from 13 February to 15 April: Sheikh Said Rebellion.

Kirişçi and Winrow trace this rebellion back to the Azadi Movement which was established in May 1923 as a Kurdish nationalist movement that aimed to found an independent Kurdish state and antagonized the Turkish state's dissolution of the Caliphate and other nationalistic and secular reforms led by Colonel Halid Bey and Bitlis MP Yusuf Ziya Bey and followed by Kurdish nationalists and Kurdish officers in the Ottoman army (1997, p.109).

Özbey argues that Azadi's real motivation was the realization of the new Republic's projects of Westernization and secularization and its non-recognition of Kurdish people (2009, p.119). Kurdish people who believed that they fought for the Caliphate's and the state's liberation during the Independence War must have felt they were cheated with the Republican secular reforms (Çevik, 2012, p. 90). Kirişçi and Winrow point out Mustafa Kemal's efforts to get the Kurdish people's support by emphasizing the bond of religion during the Independence War (1997, p.95). Sheikh Abdulbaki, Sheikh Abdurrahmane Şernexi, Sheikh Mahmud Berzenci, Sheikhs of Norshin and many other important Kurdish scholars, leaders and prominent figures received letters from Mustafa Kemal in which he was asking the Kurdish people's help for "saving the Caliph and Islam from the enslavement"(Özbey, 2009, p.64). This was not surprising; since for Turkish Muslim scholars and ideologues of the new regime supporters such as Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura, and Ahmed Ağaoğlu. Islam should be used to promote the interests of the state (Balcı, 2008, p.6). Therefore, during the Independence War the discourse of religion was frequently used to increase the number of people to support the cause. In this argument, Islam and nationalism were compatible and the feeling of nationalism was based on the power of Islam.

In the meantime, policies deployed for the suppression of the Kurdish people did not resolve the Kurdish issue; on the contrary, they resulted in a chronic and deep Kurdish problem which in turn led Kurdish people to appeal to violence in order to express their demands. Insurrections had been perceived as threats to the foundation of the new Turkish state and shook the confidence of Mustafa Kemal and his followers on their efforts of social conversion in Turkey (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.105). However, this confidence loss resulted in harsher reforms following the first years of the 1920s and 1930s. The failure of the Kurdish revolts is considered to be result of the irregularity and disorganization which can be attributed to the structure of the Kurdish society (divided along tribes, religious and linguistic affiliations) (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.111). In 1939, all the Kurdish rebellions were suppressed and the Turkish state reinforced its sovereignty in the region.

After the transition to the multiparty system, an Islamist line came about from a nationalist-spiritual discourse by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek<sup>9</sup> and other Islamist intellectuals (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.154). According to Çetinsaya, in contrary to the common belief, Islamists and Turkists have never been deadly enemies (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.420). He argues that Islamist criticism was not towards nationalism, but towards secessionism, which ended with Arab revolts in 1916. On the other hand, Çevik suggests that this emphasis on nationalism made by Turkish Islamists after the foundation of the Republic had caused the emergence of a different Islamic version in which Kurdish Islam had been considered as a reactionary movement (2012, p.89). According to Zubaida, Turkish Islamism is national and often nationalist (2004, p.414). In the new Republic, Sunni Islam considered as a criterion for Turkish citizenship in truest sense. Shafi Kurds or Alevis of Central and Eastern Anatolia constituted a distinct and somehow heretical position in the eyes of the Republican elites which enabled further merge of Turkish Islamism with nationalism of the state.

Islamists were not able to be active between 1924 and 1950 as an expected result of the Republican regime's restrictions. After the continuous state suppression for decades, in 1950, Kurdish nationalism and Islamism were reduced to a very weak

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<sup>9</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904-1983) is one of the most important Islamists thinker, poet, novelist, philosopher and publisher of "Great East – Büyük Doğu" magazine. Kısakürek was and still is very influential figure for a large spectrum of people and especially the conservatives and Islamists of Turkey.

position and almost nonexistence while Kurdish religious and tribal leaders were articulated to Turkish political system (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.112). However, during this time period, other parts of the Islamic world were witnessing the emergence of powerful and demanding voices of Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jamaat al-Islami in Pakistan.

In the years following 1945, with the end of WWI and the triumph of the Allies, especially the USA, the idea of democracy became a powerful call among the ordinary people. In this environment, since the regime was violating the freedom of religion Turkey's Islamists were able to present Turkish secularism as antidemocratic. With a multiparty system starting in 1946, opposition movements had increasingly found space for their activities. Remaining Islamist and Turkist intellectuals started their publications again. Political parties with Islamic themes emerged. Between the years of 1924 and 1950 at least eight parties had reference to Islamic values in their party programs (Eligür, 2010, p.52). Islamic responses had been directed to the reforms imposed on people by an authoritarian regime. According to Ahmad concessions made after 1945 although they were neither a counter-revolution nor a partial return to Islamic law, were acknowledgments of this disturbance and also efforts to reestablish the relations between the state and society (1991, p.8). Ahmad argues that Islamists –sophisticated ones- did not ask to end secularism; they claimed true secularism - where the state would not interfere with any course of religion, religious institutions and vice versa – this was not applied in Turkey because the religious system was tied to the state (1991, p.8). According to Ahmad, this argument became an important constituency of the Islamist discourse in Turkey. Similarly, Duran argues that the Republic's deeds had caused loss in the demands among Islamists regarding Sharia; contrary to the general trend in the Islamic world, Turkish Islamists could not realize their quests of returning the Sharia rule openly (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.133).

Bulaç argues that the second generation of Islamists between 1950 and 2000 saw “nation-state” as their reference framework. For them, the real concern was the preservation of Islam in the state rather than problems of the Muslim world or matters of jurisprudence (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.453). Their political themes and inclinations were towards the Islamic state and Islamic society rather than the unity of the Muslim world (Bulaç, 23 July 2012). Duran points out that since the radical reforms of the Republic had excluded Islamists from the public sphere

and there did not remain any possibility of publicly being at opposition, the Islamists appealed to nationalism as a shelter (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.135).

In 1950 and onwards, the Democrat Party (DP)'s tolerance towards religious values resulted in Sufi orders' growth, increase in the number of the Qur'an schools, construction of mosques, and religious organizations (Atasoy, 2009, p.74). However, the Islamist agenda was not politically expressed. According to Atasay, Menderes – the leader of the DP and prime minister between 1950 and 1960- was not about to allow anything close to an Islamist “counter-revolution against secular Kemalist principles” (2009, p.74). As a result of continuous disappointments, throughout the end of the 1950s Democrat Party's position among people who could be categorized as Islamists such as sheiks, landlords, and prominent leaders in especially the east and southeastern region in Turkey deteriorated. Expectations were not met.

With the 1960 military coup, democracy in Turkey was interrupted once again. Despite the 1961 constitution's relative openness to civil and collective rights, Article 19 became an obstacle for political expression of religious values and was abused by the political authorities in times of political crisis with Islamists. According to the article:

No individual can exploit religion in order to change the social, economic, political, or legal structure of the state according to religious principles; neither can he use religion to further his personal or political interests. (Eligür, 2010, p.60)

Turan expresses that after the 1960 military coup, the spread of socialism was supported by the state among Kurdish people in order for them to break away from Islamic identity in the context of a dis-identification project (2011, p.290). Thus, contrary to a rise in Islamism among Turkish counterparts, Kurdish political expressions were leftist in the 1960s.

Islamist intellectuals of the period seemed to have shared the idea of nationalism. However a bold line had been drawn between an atheist Turkism and Muslim Turkism. For Turkish Islamists, the Prophet's hadith of “a person cannot be punished for loving his/her nation” proves the existence of nationalism in Islam (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p. 437). Nonetheless, this nationalism has limitations. Ayoob argues that political Islam comes in different shapes and sizes (2007, p.154). These differences were not only observed among Islamists in different countries, but also among Islamists of the same country as well. This is considered to

be related to the fact that Islamists within a specific country, ideologically and in terms of their goals might have different strategies in the political arena. While some Muslim thinkers consider nationalism a form of idolatry (such as Qutb), others deploy a tempered view on nationalism bringing its benefits to the forefront.

Throughout the late 1960s, Islamists were inspired by domestic religious leaders and intellectuals such as Said Nursi, Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Hüseyin Hilmi Işık and so on (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.477). After the second half of the 1960s Islamists of Turkey met with their counterparts in other parts of the Muslim world and were influenced deeply from their publications. Most of these publications were written in a reactionary Islamic context (Uslu, 2009, p.216). This knowledge has played a significant role in shaping the political discourse of Islamists in Turkey (Eligür, 2010, p.62). It is important to note that Islamic internationalism was supported by Saudi Arabia, in the mid-1960s, Saudi Arabia started financing the Union of the World of Islam (Rabita't ul-Alam ul-Islami) (Ahmad, 1991, p.13). Kara perceives this influence troublesome since Turkish Islamists were unsuccessful in returning their own resources and internalizing the new items with the existent accumulation through the critique and process of filtering (Özkan, 12 August 2012). However, unlike parties from other ideologies, Islamists were not able to form their political parties before the 1970s. Until the 1970s they were participating in existing political parties.

1969 saw the emergence of the National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi) led by Necmettin Erbakan which can be considered one of the longest continuing and important Islamist political movement in Turkey. The movement was a call for activism and this was dividing the Organization from the previous religious social-political organizations (Ahmad, 1991, p.13). According to Mert, the National Outlook Movement in general terms is a salvation ideology such as the movements in the Constitutional Period of the late Ottoman Empire (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.414). The Movement put great emphasis on the moral renewal and restoring religious values. The survival of Turkey was directly related to the moral status of the society. They also brought strong criticism towards Westernization in terms of moral perspective. The projects such as Islamic Common Market (İslam Ortak Pazarı) and D-8 (Developing Eight which consisted of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt and Nigeria) excited Islamists and enabled

the vision of the ideal of the Islamic World (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p. 477).

The National Outlook Movement's political wing, the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi –the MSP) had been founded in 1972 following its predecessor's (Milli Nizam Partisi – the National Order Party) closure by the Constitutional Court's decision. The decision was based on the protection of the secular order and Atatürk's reforms. Starting from the 1973 general elections, the MSP became "the organized Islamist expression of discontent" (Eligür, 2010, p.71). Mert suggests that after the 1980s, the Movement started to keep itself distant from nationalism. The Party had a strong electoral base not only among Turkish Islamists and conservatives, but also in predominantly Kurdish populated regions

Other than the National Outlook Movement, Turkish Islamism positioned itself close to the center. The 1980 military coup had different consequences for Islamists. For coup makers, Islam was transferred and articulated to the official ideology as in the version of Article 136 of the Constitution "mission of national solidarity and unity" (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.527).

The military regime's Turkish Islam Synthesis (TIS) project transformed Islamism and its demands deeply. The project envisioned the social engineering through the creation of citizens who are nationalist, loyal to the state, and respectful to the moral values of Islam –but certainly not political Islamists- (Balci, 2008, p.6). Cizre argues that enlightened Islam was considered as the best protection against communism and even religious fanaticism (Cizre, 1196, p.239). Even though military rulers were not sympathetic to political Islam in anyway, they needed the power of religion to legitimize their acts. The TIS was a drift from Kemalist ideology, but nonetheless was much more unifying than any of the Kemalist principles. The military rulers implemented the TIS through a new reinterpretation of Turkish-Islamic history and incorporation of it to the nationalistic view. Introduction of religious courses obligatory in public schools, allowing Imam-Hatip school graduates to attend all departments of universities are some of its practices (Eligür, 2010, p.95).

### 3.3.4. Kurdish Issue and Kurdish Islamism

For the sides of Kurdish issue, the 1980 military coup became a turning point. In the end of the 1960s, large scale protests were organized in order to emphasize the problems of the Eastern Anatolia. “East Rallies<sup>10</sup>” which enabled the mobilization of a conscious who problematized the Eastern Anatolia and the Kurdish. The emergence of this conscious group resulted in the foundation of cultural and students’ organizations that drove forward Kurdish ethnicity such as Revolutionist Eastern Cultural Hearths<sup>11</sup> (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.116). These organizations’ primary concern was the recognition of the Kurdish language and cultural rights by the state. In the 1970s as result of the TIP’s (Turkey Worker’s Party) acknowledgements of Kurdish people’s existence, an increase in the number of radical leftist Kurdish organizations was observed and Kurdish voters inclined toward the leftist parties (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.114). A parliamentary report also reveals that some security operations such as burning villages as a military strategy, and forced migration resulted in raising Kurdish nationalism. This in turn triggered the foundation of the PKK and its ability to attract supporters (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.135). With the 1980 coup, members of Marxist separatist Kurdish organizations were subjected to heavy torture in prisons. Their organizations were banned. Moreover, expression of an identity other than Turkish was limited by the 1982 constitution and foundation of associations and political parties were complicated (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.118).

Item numbered 2932, which was written on 19 October 1983 states:

Except the first official language of the recognized countries by the Turkish state, it is banned to express, spread and publish of the ideas with another language. (Özbey, 2009, p.110)

In the meantime, PKK’s establishment can be considered one of the most important turning points in the Kurdish issue in Turkey. Kirişçi and Winrow trace its foundation to a meeting that was organized by Öcalan in Diyarbakır in 1977 where it was agreed on a document “the Way of Kurdish Revolution<sup>12</sup>” which would become the PKK’s program after its official foundation in November 1978 (1997, p.117).

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<sup>10</sup> Doğu Mitingleri.

<sup>11</sup> Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları.

<sup>12</sup> Kürdistan Devriminin Yolu.

After the 1980 military coup, PKK's use of violence<sup>13</sup> made the Kurdish issue one of the most important issues in the Turkish political agenda.

In addition to the state policies, PKK's impact on transformation of Kurdish nationalism and Islamism cannot be denied. As Abdülmelik Fırat –grandson of Sheikh Said- states, the state's suppressive policies in the East played a much more important role in the awakening Kurdish national consciousness than the PKK's activities. However, the PKK has been in realizing the problematic approach of the state in terms of the Kurdish issue and strategize its discourse over these deviances.

For the Kurdish society, religion has been an important regulatory force. In the East and Southeast region, the percentage of belonging to a religious order exceeds 30 %; whereas among Turkish people this ratio is only 6 % (Kırmızı & Bölme, 2007). Given to the conservativeness of Kurdish people, throughout the late 1980s PKK had to tone down its view on Islam and religion in order to attract more supporters in the region. For instance, on 26 December 1990 the PKK founded the Union of Kurdistan Pious People; in Syria they had established the Kurdistan Islamic Party (PIK) (Çevik, 2012, p.96). These organizations were established in order to compete with the TIS and created the Kurdish version of the TIS. Recognizing the fact that 50 % of the Kurdish votes were affected by religious leaders, PKK embarked on quest of finding young sheikhs and religious leaders who would support their cause (Kırmızı & Bölme, 2007).

Another reason for this visional change may be attributed to the success of Islamist parties in the Kurdish region as well as relative moderation of government leaders' expression towards Kurdish identity. It can be exemplified by President Özal's acknowledgement that he had blood of Kurdish, his special consideration regarding the advancements in Kurdish rights and his intimacy with Kurdish leaders (sheikhs and tribal leaders) (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.120). However, after the death of Özal, the following governments failed to approach the Kurdish issue peacefully and rather preferred to see it as a matter of national security and terror rather than identity and culture which resulted in further polarization of the sides. In mid of 1990s, giving cultural concessions to the Kurds was seen as a dangerous step that would lead to the dissolution of the state (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.124).

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<sup>13</sup> Before 1980 coup, their targets were consisted of the collaborators with Turkish state, feudal land lords, Turkish nationalists, and social chauvinist groups. After, their targets were enlarged through social, economic and political means.

After the death of Özal in 1993, a political vacuum emerged in terms of the Kurdish issue. Although Süleyman Demirel (the president of Turkey at that time) and Tansu Çiller (the new leader of the DYP (Doğru Yol Partisi) and prime minister) appeared to be promising for the Kurdish issue, however; their accession to their new posts proved the other way around. The priority was given to handling terror issue rather than resolving the Kurdish issue in socio-political terms. For instance, Demirel defended that it would harm the unity of the state to allow education in Kurdish language and a concession to be made would be understood as a concession granted to the terrorist organization (Wilson and Kirişçi, 1997, p. 145). This understanding dominated the decade for the most part.

In the meantime, by trying to develop a unity of Islamist understanding with nationalism, the PKK and political parties associated sought to gain the sympathy and votes of Kurdish Muslims. Bozarslan argues that the Welfare Party's success in the Kurdish region is linked to the Kurdish protest and by uniting Kurdish people with the rest of Turkey (1996, p.18). The RP had been one of the most critical voices of Kurdish policies of the state (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.151). According to the Party, the Kurds and Turks are the pieces of the Islamic world and the Kurdish issue could only be resolved via an Islamic bond. Although not in a continuous mood, the RP defended broadcasting in Kurdish, education in Kurdish, the abolishment of emergency rule and the village guard system in the region, which in return ensured a large segment of Kurdish votes in the elections of the 1990s. Also, the RP's accurateness in picking candidates from the region was effective in obtaining votes from Kurdish people. As Bozarslan points out the RP's cadres in the Kurdish region were mostly Kurds and predominantly Kurdish nationalists (1996, p.18), who present a contradiction of Turkish Islamists in terms of their toleration to nationalism. When the PKK-state struggle intensified in the 1990s, the Turkish governments started to revise the policies of compulsory settlements through the evacuation of villages in mountainous Kurdish regions. Both the RP and the PKK had probably politically gained more support from these policies (Yeğen, 2009, p.604).

Çaha argues that since the 1980s, rising visibility of Islam in the public sphere and the public institutions' transformation to a more Islamic shape as well as returning to the idea of Islamic unity has been the two trends among Islamists (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.477). Şengül suggests that after 12 September coup, from the environment which was created in the context of the TIS, Islamist

movements that did not favor the regime itself also benefited (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.528). The success of political Islam after 1980 can also be attributed to the Turkish Islam Synthesis (TIS) as well as the malfunctioning of the state since the 1990s (Eligür, 2010, p.3). These political opportunity structures were used and incorporated with new practices of social networks and became the pillar of success for political Islam in Turkey. Eligür incorporates all political Islamists (from the RP to the Hezbollah, and IBDA-C) and claims that they aim to bring Sharia law to Turkey by the Iranian top-down fashion by the use of violence or non-violence means (Eligür, 2010, p.4). However, the ‘existence of a secular-democratic regime and its acceptance by the vast majority of people (?)’ limited Islamist movements’ mobilization tools to peaceful strategies. Given the superficiality of the explanation, Eligür does not reason why from the 1990s and despite being AKP’s governmental power there has not been any attempt to bring Sharia rule to the country.

#### **3.4. Islamism and Kurdish Cause in Contemporary Turkey**

According to Bulaç, the era of the third generation of Islamists starts in the first years of the twenty-first century. He argues that the exact year for the transformation is 1997 when in Turkey the 28 February post-modern coup had been experienced and in Iran, Hatemi had been president (26 July 2012). One of the biggest handicaps of the third generation of Islamists is the lack of intellectuals and scholars who possess knowledge of Islamic philosophy (*Kelam*) and methodology (*Usul*). Rather Bulaç says that the third generation was consisted from the poets, storytellers and man of letters. According to Kara, one of the biggest problems of the contemporary, activist and intellectual Islamism is its indifference to local values (where it is grounded) through the emphasis of internationalism and pan Islamism (Özkan, 12 August 2012). He attributes this problem to the enthusiasm of learning others more than insiders according to which brings a mental drift and loss in intellectual center. This loss at the end causes a strategic mistake since there is no possibility of rooting in other lands, and at the same time, keeping position without being related to its own resources first (Özkan, 12 August 2012).

Aktas agrees with Kara by stating that Islamism through criticizing the previous generations’ perception, understanding and living the religion extended to a total denial of the local culture (2014, p.7). She also points out that one of the

divisive features of Islamism is its attempt to appropriate politics for the people by a councilor/democratic method rather than aristocracy. Uslu problematizes Hezbollah's appeal to violence and sees a very important external factor that the organization relied heavily on, which is imported ideologies, incorporating the outcome of the Iranian revolution and the principles of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood rather than domestic Islam (2009, p.222).

The contemporary Islamists are criticized to be unprepared to confront with the modernism and what it brought with itself (capitalism, liberalism, secular life styles, etc.) and satisfied with conservatism. The opportunity of being in being power is wasted and even worse transformed them. The ideals of the Islamism such as returning back to Quran and Sunnah, truly challenging the Western world, redefining the societal and political relations on the context of Islam, etc. are forgotten (Bulaç 26 July 2012).

Tuğal suggests that the RP in the 1990s, included ex-radicals into the party and changed its tone from the Turkish nationalist line to a more comprehensive cross-national and cross-ethnic Islamic unity; however still claiming Turkish superiority over leadership (2009, p.43). This attitude caused problems within the Party. First and foremost, the National Outlook Movement's inclination towards Turkish nationalism caused a division among Kurds who had been voting for the Movement. For instance, Altan Tan, an important Kurdish Islamist politician, left the RP because of the Party's alliance with the National Action Party (MHP) during the 1991 national elections. However, the WP's success relied on Kurdish votes that were not in favor of right-wing nationalists and seeing Islam as more overarching (Eligür, 2010, p.78).

Şengül pays attention to another contradiction of Turkish Islamists. In addition to the years of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia there happened to be ethnic conflicts in Central Asia and in the Balkans of which the victims were mostly Muslims. Attention and sympathy to the victimized Muslims of other parts of the world caused Kurdish Islamists to pose the question of why the same sympathy had not been presented towards Kurdish people who had suffered in the same way as other Muslims of the world (Çetinsaya, et al., 2010, p.529).

The Islamists of Turkey were unsuccessful in founding 'a vision of political unity' that could take precedence over nationalism of every kind. In its first years of

governance the AKP also took the RP's contradictory and problematic vision of Turkish nationalism and used it to enforce Turkey's integration to the European Union (Tuğal, 2009, p.242). This transformation in the ideals is criticized by Bulaç. He condemns that the Islamists' ideal of returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah have been forgotten; instead the EU map and liberal policies are adopted. He attributes weaknesses of the third generation of Islamists to the unexpected victory in attaining the government and the perception of "power for the sake of power" (26 July 2012). On the other hand, Kara suggests that leaving Islamism started with Erbakan himself (former leader of the National Outlook Movement and its subsequent political parties) (Özkan, 12 August 2012). The process that started with the RP can be read as the process of the abandonment of Islamism that can be observed in the texts of election manifests and banners in 1991, 1994, and 1995 for Kara. The AKP did not abandon Islamism, which had been already abandoned by former leaders of political Islam. Bilici attributes this to the Islamist intellectuals' works. According to him, in the 1990s and 2000s Islamist intellectuals had been marginalized compared to the past; however Islam became the subject matter of the whole country (Çetinsaya, Duran, and others, 2010, p.803).

While in the first and second generation of Islamism, the debates centered on being at the opposition; with the AKP's ascendance to the government a completely new era emerged for the Islamists. Bezci and Miş argue that historically, the idea of Islamism was heavily contested in times of dissolution in the Islamic world or in case of survival (2012, p.2). In Turkey, with the AKP government, debates on Islamism have been intensified. Old Islamists, who have been now experiencing the power and governance, came into state of crises. They started seeing Islamism as "useful other" and even sometimes refused it (Bezci & Miş, 2012, p.4). Since the Islamists legitimize their cause from the text, abandoning the textual claim could mean opting out of the sphere of Islamism. According to Bezci and Miş this is what happened among Turkish Islamists when the AKP came into power. Islamists have turned into conservatives. Since Islamism's political ideals have been making Islamic provisions livable in society, coming to power has been realized at the expense of letting the former Islamist political ideals go. Bulaç holds a similar view. He argues that Islamism in Turkey did not lose its intellectual importance and assertion; however its political form turns into conservatism and even within itself inclines towards the

secularization and protest where religion and affairs of state and economy are separated and too much weight was put on the financial development (19 July 2012).

Aktaş differs from Bulaç. For her, the AKP governments, in order to focus on the recovery and realization of the peace process, they could not opt out of reconciliation with the global liberal system; this is why the analysts state that the AKP actors have been transformed into “Muslim democrats” (2014, p.365). Duran states that under the compelling conditions of the Republican period, Turkish Islamism though reluctantly has been articulated to conservatism (Çetinsaya, Duran, and others, 2010, p.130). Bilici conceives this transformation in Bourdieu’s sense of symbolic and intellectual capital accumulations of Islamist masses through education and economic resources (Çetinsaya, Duran, and others, 2010, p.800). According to Bilici, this accumulation eroded the protest and reactionary stands of Islamists instead deployed pragmatism and capitalism.

According to Eligür, the success of the AKP in the Kurdish populated regions should be attributed to the ethnic Kurdish nationalism’s weakness in catching the electorate in comparison to Islamic rhetoric (2010, p.260). In addition, she argues that tribal affiliations matter greatly for voting preferences. Starting from the 2000s, the status of Kurds in the political realm started to be changed. Ease in the restrictions on the Kurdish culture, thanks to the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership as well as Kurdish citizens’ sue the Turkish state in the EHCR made their status vis-à-vis Turkisness uncertain (Yeğen, 2009, p.609). The idea that Kurds may become Turkish has gradually been replaced by the involuntary acceptance of the Kurdish identity. AKP’s appeal to the Islamic universality, and unity especially in ethnically mixed and problematic regions, and presenting Islam as the antidote for ethnic struggle has clearly attracted the voters.

The AKP’s practices such as change in the anti-terror law in 2003 as part of the EU harmonization process, revoking the state of emergency in the Southeastern region on 30 November 2002, liberalizing the broadcast in Kurdish language with 4928 Law in 2003, partial amnesty to former PKK militants with the Kurdish Initiative in 2009, and introduction of cultural rights has been implemented in the context of Kurdish initiative. These practices enabled the ceasefire between the PKK and the Turkish state and therefore contributed the peace (Ulusoy, 2011, p.412). Kırmızı and Bölme argue that conservative Kurds who chose to vote for center right parties have been the most important obstacle for the secessionist political parties in

the region. For example, the votes that made the AKP the first party in the 2002 elections came from this fraction (2007). On the other hand, despite the assimilationist policies and Turkish state's success in defeating Kurdish resistance in 1990s, Kurdish people's resistance to keep their identities and the HDP/the PKK's continuous support by the Kurdish people had been a major disappointment for the Turkish Republic (Yeğen, 2009, p.612).

Contrary to Turkish Islamists, Kurdish Islamists' transformation to conservatism has not fully occurred yet. It can also be said that the Kurdish Islamists are much more hard-liner than their Turkish counterparts. Not only the Hezbollah and/or the Huda-Par, there are other Islamist groups in the form of a religious group and non-governmental organization in the region. One of these groups is Med-Zehra. After Said Nursi's death, his movement split into different groups. Med-Zehra is one of those split groups that centered in the southeastern region of Turkey and that is pre-dominantly Kurdish. Contrary to Nursi's other followers, the Med-Zehra group is considered to be more fundamentalist as it can be seen in its leader Seyhanzade's views on democracy: "anyone who accepts democracy as a governing system should be considered as a non-believer. This is because democracy was created as a reaction to Quran, Islamic law and revelation" (Çevik, 2012, p.93). From this point of view, the Med-Zehra holds an even stronger stand on democracy's place in Islam than that of the Huda-Par line. Çevik compares Med-Zehra's ideas on nationalism and the state with Turkish Islamists. According to him, Med-Zehra underlines "every ethnic group should have its own state however these states bring about an Islamic federation" which is obviously unacceptable to what Turkish Islamists could imagine (Çevik, 2012, p.93). By giving reference to Said Nursi's works, Med-Zehra proposes that positive nationalism in which each and every nation has the right to express its characteristics and politically manage itself in opposition to negative nationalism, in which one nation has superiority over other ethnicities. Another difference of Med-Zehra from their Turkish Islamists counterparts is the idea that only an Islamic state can benefit Muslims and with this state Islamic unity can be sustained.

In explaining the Hezbollah's position on ethnic Kurdish nationalism, Tutar states that Hezbollah opposes all kinds of nationalism. The Hezbollah although consists mostly from Kurds also includes Zazas, Turks, Arabs, and Chechens which this variety disables Kurdish nationalism:

According to us, a Muslim Turk is much more valued than all other non-Muslim Kurds and a Muslim Kurd is much more valued than all other non-Muslim Turks. (2011, p.141)

Nonetheless, opposing to Kurdish nationalism would not mean staying silent on the Kurdish issue or the sufferings of Kurdish people. However, Hezbollah considers this problem as a regime issue that has not aroused from Muslim Turkish people (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p. 143).

Çetinsaya asserts that the current status of nationalism for Turkish Islamists was developed by İsmet Özel since the 1980s and heavily debated (2010, p.529). As it was stated by one of the writings of Özel:

I am proud to be a Turkish nationalist who do not look for any frame other than National Anthem for his ideology. I am proud to be a deadly enemy of the ones who sees Turkism different from being Muslim. I am proud to have nothing in common with racists. (...) I am proud to not to serve Kurdish and Alawi separatism and other sort of separatism. (Çetinsaya, et al. 2010, p.529)

According to Özel, Islam does not contradict with Turkism as it does not turn into racism and Turks have been able to protect their identities thanks to their acceptance of Islam. Özel makes distinction between Turkism and Islam, and considers that the ethnic nationalism and ethnic separatism serves to imperialism and capitalism.

For Turkish Islamists, the unity of the state has an important place. Although political Islam portrays a homogeneous Islamic community as “*ummah*”, it is also true that the religious nationalism has the strongest sense of belonging to a community (Altuntaş, 2010, 420). She attributes the powerfulness of religious nationalism to its inclusiveness to a wider community. This can also be understood in terms of justifiability of nationalism linked to religiosity. While for Kurdish Islamists, Sharia is a way out to express their Kurdishness in the legal space, for the Turkish Islamists, secessionist claims of their Kurdish counterparts have been violating the idea of the unity of Islam. Cizre expresses this difference as:

Kurdish-Islamist writers tend to search for a space for Kurdish ethnic distinctiveness within the framework of the suggested formula of *ummah*, the Islamist community of the faithful, while the position of the Turkish Islamist writers leans heavily toward defending the integrity of the Turkish state rather than acknowledging a Kurdish ethnic distinctiveness. (Sarigil, 2010, p.543)

Sarıgil argues that for the Turkish Islamist discourse the Muslim Brotherhood offers the withdrawal of separatist claims in the name of the Muslim unity and submission of Kurdishness to a higher and comprehensive identity. This discourse became a successful strategic tool in obtaining substantial support from the Kurdish regions during the 2002, 2007, and 2011 national elections (Sarıgil, 2010, p.536)<sup>14</sup>. The AKP's success can also be attributed to the Kurdish view of the AKP as "an anti-Kemalist and anti-system party" that has been repressed by the same actors (Sarıgil, 2010, p.544).

For the Turkish Islamists, one thing that has to be understood regarding the Kurdish issue is the defeat of Kurdish people to nationalism who once belonged to the Islamic World (Çetinsaya, Duran, and others, 2010, p.529). This unhealthy projection of the Kurdish issue has been the common denominator in the Turkish Islamists' minds. Şengül argues that the reason for the indifferences of Muslim Turkish people to the Kurdish issue is the issue's nationalistic feature and its antipathy towards Universalist Muslims. Turkish Islamists' view regarding their Kurdish counterparts seems conformist and top-down though. While Turkish nationalism does not take Turkish Islamists from the sphere of Islam, Muslim Kurds are considered to be out of line with their commitments to Kurdish nationalism. Furthermore, through ethnic nationalism Kurdish Islamists are considered to be damaging the religious bond that binds them to other Muslims, since they increasingly identify themselves on the basis of ethnicity rather than religion.

In a utopian sense, Bulaç offers the unification of Islam (İttihad-ı İslam) as a solution that brings all ethnic variations together through the participation in terms of equal rights (Çetinsaya, Duran, and others, 2010, p.530). For him, highlighting the (Kurdish) ethnic identity neither benefits Kurdish people nor the Ummah. Despite individual variations, Islamist thinkers portray the system of the former Ottoman Empire as the solution of the Kurdish issue.

In order to respond to the criticisms made by their Turkish counterparts, Kurdish Islamists appealed to the religious arguments which possess religious grounds for the justification of rights of nations and nationalism/patriotism. During my interviews with the Huda-Par leaders, when the subject came to nationalism, they immediately chose to appeal to the verses of the Qur'an, which state the diversity of

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<sup>14</sup>Although the AKP's votes from the region did not follow a steady line, it did become the first party in all the elections.

human communities rather than stressing a total rejection or acceptance based on their personal deductions. As such Şengül draws attention to the views of Mehmet Pamak –an important Islamist Kurd- on nationalism (Çetinsaya, Duran, and others, 2010, p.533). Pamak refers to Qur’anic verses and hadiths in order to show the struggle of Kurds as a struggle for rights rather than ethnic nationalism. Secondly, he sees nationalism as the cause of wounds of the Islamic world that has been most damaging for the Kurds. In this view, Turkish nationalism made Kurdish people suffer by abandoning their cultural rights. Thirdly, Pamak condemns the position of Muslims in terms of the Kurdish issue. According to him, the Muslims of Turkey choose to be silent about the state’s Kurdish policies however when others express their thoughts on the issue, they are immediately blamed for Kurdish nationalism. This collection of opinions holds similar parallelism with Huda-Par leaders’ view on nationalism which reflects resentment towards the Muslim brotherhood in Turkey.

Huda-Par leaders blame the state for its denial of the responsibility to solve the problems of the Kurdish Muslims by seeing the PKK and its co-organizations as the only accountable authorities for speaking in the name of the Kurdish people, and this has resulted in more supporters of the PKK line and ethnic nationalism. For Huda-Par leaders, problems have to be resolved in an Islamic way. Similar to Bulaç’s opinion, Kurdish Islamists advocate the unification of Muslims on the basis of the equality of all ethnicities (Çetinsaya, et al., 2010, p.535).

According to Kara, the Muslims of Turkey should reconsider their approach towards the Kurdish issue in terms of recovery of the rights through the lens of Islam:

It is a hadith of the Prophet that one person cannot call himself Muslim unless he wants what he wants for himself and for his Muslim brotherhood. Muslims -who do not want the rights for Kurdish people- want what they want for themselves and cannot call themselves Muslims. Kurds are deprived of all the rights in the world. A human being with honor and dignity cannot claim that Kurds are not under oppression and they have the rights with what other people have. Kurdish language and culture are banned; they have been desolated. (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.535).

Çevik argues that Muslim Turks did not have a successful position about granting Kurdish people their rights; they have chosen to be silent on the injustices made by the state. Even the enemies of the regime spoke the representatives of the regime when it comes to Kurdish people’s rights (2012, p.19). According to Islamist writers,

Kurdish Muslims' acknowledgments of their identities on the grounds of ethnic features rather than religious bonds have served the interests of imperialist forces. On the other hand, Islamist Kurdish people do not see similarities between the Kurdish struggle and the ideology of nationalism. For them, their objection is directed to the system that was founded as a result of the nineteenth century nationalism, because in the first place this system ignores the Kurdish people and their rights through establishing four states over the lands of the Kurds (Çetinsaya, et al., 2010, p.538).

### **3.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, the introduction to the main themes of the thesis is presented. Islamism and nationalism concepts and their provisions in the late Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, the transformation of the state in the first quarter of the twentieth century and its effects on the Islamists of Turkey are examined. Sources of Kurdish nationalism, its relationship with the Kurdish issue, Kurdish Islamism, and Turkish Islamism in the Republican Turkey are analyzed. Throughout the chapter evidence for the Kurdish Islamism's appeal to violence, and its' divergent points from the Turkish Islamism are examined. By doing so, it is seen that the Kurdish Islamism and the Turkish Islamism might not evolve in the same direction. It is contested that armed struggle is not a preference by itself but rather outcome of a collection the social and political conditions. As it is argued by moderation theorists, political inclusion has positive influence on moderating the marginal radical groups; while exclusionist and suppressive methods do the opposite.

In the following chapter, the Hezbollah movement, its foundation, principles, major events and its tragic end are going to be covered in the light of developments within the Turkish political system.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **TURKEY'S HEZBOLLAH**

The 1980s are considered to be a period when the revelation of religious radical ideology and practice had been observed more than ever in the history of the Turkish Republic (Büyükkara, 2006, p.130). Kurdish Muslims/Islamists, after great rebellions of the early Republican era went into a deep silence in the following decades. With the 1980s, Kurdish Islamists revealed themselves in several organizations. One of the most important and sounding one was the Kurdish Hezbollah. In order to examine the transformation of Kurdish Islamists, understanding contemporary Kurdish Islamists, especially the Huda-Par and the Hezbollah carries great importance. In this chapter, the ideal of the Islamic state among Islamists, the foundation of the Hezbollah in Turkey, its ideas and activities, its distinctiveness from other Islamist structures and organizations in Turkey, and its end in the 2000s will be examined.

#### **4.1. The Ideal of Islamic State and Its Reflections on Turkey's Hezbollah**

The necessity of attaining the Islamic state has been a controversial subject among Muslim thinkers and activists especially after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The abolition of the Caliphate and the emergence of nation states across the Muslim world generated a vacuum in terms of Islamic state and rule. Ruling by the principles of secular, and to an extent, democratic norms rather than Islamic norms produced a space for questioning the Islamic prerequisites of Islamic state. However, this necessity has been grounded on some specific forms. First and foremost the foundation of a society based on the "Sharia law" took precedence.

Many Islamic jurists degraded Islam to Sharia law (Ayoob, 2007, p.63). This resulted in the reproduction of legal scholars but hardly any political theorists and/or scientists to explore and answer the political needs of the contemporary world in line with the norms and spirit of Islam. According to Khan, this intellectual deficiency has declined Islamic thought to an outmoded legal tradition (Khaled, 2004, p.63). Sharia's domination over Islam resulted in Sharia being the forerunner of the Islamic

state and policies. Therefore, Islamist movements were based on the mixed demands of the Islamic state and Sharia law.

From the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire to the early 2000s, Muslim resistance and disturbance has been generally related to the aspiration of a society based on Islamic law and rule. According to Özdenören, in Islam, the law forms the basis of social structures to the extent that in line with the law, all other social structures are formed (Çetinsaya, Duran and others, 2010, p.153). Moussali argues “good politics” seeks attaining an Islamic state founded on “philosophy of normative principles and set of methods applying remedies to the societal problems” (1999, p.19).

According to Moussali, fundamentalism and modernism are two dominant Islamic discourses and modern interpretations of Islam that aim to find remedies to the problems of Muslim societies by revitalizing Islam. As other religious fundamentalisms, Islamic fundamentalism is much affected by its devotion to the text (Choueiri, 1990, p.9). Fundamentalist thought looks to reveal the divine text for extracting political concepts and even system. According to Sidahmed and Ehteshami, the fundamentalist approach has two main features; first, a strong belief in the infallibility of divine text, and second, the conceptualization of a world divided between true believers and others (1996, p.2). For Islamic fundamentalists, *jihad* (holy struggle) is the only way for bringing the sovereignty of God. Although known as an armed struggle, *jihad* is more than only militaristic struggle. As a concept, it envisages the struggle of the believer against its inner world (*nefs*), the struggle with knowledge (*ilim*), the struggle with assets (*mal*), and lastly struggle with arms. Thus, although armed struggle is only a particular way of *jihad*, Islamic fundamentalists saw armed struggle as the most important part and highlighted it in their discourse. Supposedly, fundamentalists saw *jihad* in armed sense as more practical and useful for their causes (Sidahmed and Ehteshami, 1996, p.22).

Modernism on the other hand, differs from fundamentalism in several ways. It is more open to the different and modernist interpretations of the texts fitting into the needs of the day. It mainly opposes traditional and religious discourses and brings a more rational way of thinking.

Islamic modernism/reformism was championed by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammed Abduh, Muhammad Iqbal, and Ali Shari’ati; while important Islamic fundamentalists were Abu al-A’la al-Mawdudi, Hasan al-Benna, Sayyid Qutb and

Ayatollah al-Khumayni who have had profound impact on Islamists all over the world as in the case of Kurdish Islamists. As fundamentalism is considered to be a reactionary phenomenon to existing social, political, and economic problems, Kurdish Islamism might as well be categorized under this banner. The early Muslim Brotherhood was deeply influenced by the Qutbian development of the Islamist activism, which perceived societies as being responsible for their governments' un-Islamic practices as well as called for a revolution against all secular systems that have been very influential in radical and violent groups as in the case of Kurdish Islamists (Moussali, 1999, p.21).

Cemal Tutar who had been tried for his inclusion in activities of Hezbollah explains Hezbollah's exposure from other Islamists movements as:

Hezbollah examined, studied and adopted practical aspects of all Islamic movements that had been struggled before us and also are struggling at the same period of time with us. Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, struggle techniques before Islamic Revolution in Iran, Mawdudi and Iqbal who made great effort for the foundation of Pakistan and other Muslim scholars, leaders, strugglers who have worked for making Islam dominant in their countries and spread its justice globally have been Hezbollah's source of inspiration. (2011, p.163)

Turan in explaining Islamic awakening among Kurdish Muslims after the foundation of the Turkish Republic and its secular reforms puts special emphasis on the publications of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt:

Although limited in madrasahs, publications of Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt arrived; scholars made connections from these books with Sheikh Said Rebellion, made deductions, time to time criticized the sufistic line that was purified from politics. The question of 'what can it be done to reestablish Sharia? posed openly. (2011, p.291)

Banna states that Islam should determine all human affairs and interactions, and influence all forms of conduct (Moussali, 1999, p.47). He continues by proposing that only worshipping without ideological and philosophical commitments deter the progress of Muslims and their religion. Islam provides all necessary rules for the benefit of a nation (Moussali, 1999, p.54). Islam is the only system that meets the needs of human disposition. Thus for the fundamentalists, ideologies such as socialism, liberalism and others might have some benefits; but their costs and

harmful effects outweigh those benefits. A revolution, which aims at the salvation from un-Islamic governments, is seen as a moral duty for Muslims.

Moussali argues that many of the fundamentalist groups in the Muslim world had been influenced by Qutbian sense of ‘radical, exclusivist discourse and his idea of paganism of the other’ (1999, p.101). According to Qutb and Mawdudi, compromise prevents the possibility of reshaping the world and enables Muslims to give up some principles and adopt others (Moussali, 1999, p.36). In other words, old establishments and institutions cannot be renovated; therefore, they need to be destroyed.

According to Khan, the idea that in Islamic governance God is the law giver whereas in democracies humans are the law makers comes from the understanding of Mawdudi (Khaled, 2004, p.65). In this understanding, since in Islamic states only God is sovereign; democracies are corrupted because they are ruled by the wishes of the majority. Thus, the main obstacles before the fundamentalists to achieve their goals are the governments and/or regimes that are based on un-Islamic rules and institutions. On the other hand, they do not openly advocate using force, and instead underline the necessity of a gradual transformation of the society (Enayat, 2005, p. 104). This system would produce Muslim scientists, philosophers, historians, economists, jurists, and politicians, who would, in turn, constitute the Islamic state. For instance, even though Banna saw the Islamization of the state as the final goal, he demanded inclusion to the political system and competed with other political parties (Moussali, 1999, p.36).

Another continuity between Islamic fundamentalists and Kurdish Islamists are their emphasis on the notion of justice in general and Islamic justice in particular. Since there is no clear definition of how an Islamic government/regime should be, an Islamic rule is basically the systematic rule of Islamic Sharia. Through Islamic Sharia the Islamic rules and philosophy of principles define the societal relationships and regulations of the state. Both in the books written by people close to Hezbollah organization and also in the party program of Huda-Par and the party leaders’ statements, a special emphasis on justice and rights is obvious. While the term justice (*adalet*) is repeated thirtytwo times, the term right (*hak*) is repeated one hundred and forty four times in the Party Program. It can also be claimed that Hezbollah and Huda-Par establish their discourses on what they consider as injustices that arose in the late Ottoman period with the emergence of Westernization and nationalism.

Our cause is;  
Freedom,  
Justice,  
Fairness,  
The end of oppression,  
Peace,  
Harmony of people,  
Brotherhood...  
Our purpose is only these.  
With all our existence we struggle for these.  
(The Huda-Par Party Program, 2013)

The Party Spokesperson Said Şahin also claims that the Party's foremost purpose is to ensure the justice:

We have some moral duties in the earth. Foremost among these is building justice that was commanded to the Prophets. Securing justice can be done with holding power, obtaining power can be done through sharing governmental authority, and sharing governmental authority can be done by founding a political party. (The author's interview, 27 May 2014, [Appendix 2]).

Ayoob argues that even though Islamist groups are in theory committed to transforming their polities to Islamic states through societal Islamization and adoption of Sharia law, this does not mean that these groups are all anti-regime. In most cases, Islamist groups are willing to compromise and work with the national authorities within constitutional limitations (Ayoob, 2007, p.34). Although the idea of universal *ummah* preserves its effect over Islamist groups, they mostly do not challenge with nation states they inhabit. Ayoob perceives Islamists group's loyalty to nation-states with what he calls "Islamism-nationalism" (2007, p.34). Once an Islamist group becomes an exponent of Islamism-nationalism, then it starts to operate as an opposition group that aims to change the moral conditions of the society they live through the approximation of governance to Islamic law and/or norms. About the metamorphosis the Islamist groups have experienced, perhaps the idea of a political party and its place in the mind of Islamists is striking. Once political parties were considered as a source of unrest (*fitne*), since they were thought of as causing the division of the *umma* by the traditionalist interpretations of Islam, now political parties are considered as legitimate mechanisms to achieve an Islamic society and political order (Ayoob, 2007, p.78).

Mawdudi, Banna, Qutb and others, opposed all sorts of nationalism whether it is linguistic, ethnic, or liberal (Enayat, 2005, p.115). Only legitimate grounds for such inclination would be resistance to foreign domination. However, even such kind of impulse does not have to be formulated in nationalism. Islam has enough resources to mobilize people for their independence. Even patriotism is left aside, since the only homeland they legitimize is the global “abode of Islam” (Enayat, 2005, p. 115). For them, the world consists of two parts: dar al-Islam (abode of Islam), and dar al-harb (abode of law). At this point, Hezbollah and Huda-Par line only slightly differs from that of the twentieth century fundamental Islamists. Although the division between dar al-Islam and dar al-harb is accepted by the Kurdish Islamists, Kurdistan and its salvation has its important place. Nonetheless, they do not consider this attitude to be part of nationalism. They explain their stress on the Kurdish issue not as a form of nationalism but as a way of supporting the struggle for the rights of Kurdish people who have been denied for decades.

Moussali argues that as fundamentalists have been unsuccessful in founding an Islamic state and getting rid of corrupted regimes, the majority of them are now in a quest for Islamization of democracy and pluralism (1999, p.67). The reason for this transformation is the view of undemocratic institutions, tyranny, and oppression as the main facilitators for the underdevelopment of the Islamic world. Now democracy is seen as beneficial for the rise of Islam, which will be stressed more in the next chapter on the Huda-Par.

#### **4.2. The Foundation of Turkish Hezbollah**

According to Uslu, the first violent Islamist organization in Turkey was the Hizbu’t Tahrir established in Ankara in the 1960s (2009, p.217). However the most famous organization in terms of its violence was the Kurdish Hezbollah. The Hezbollah of Turkey is an Islamist movement, which was formed and centered in the Kurdish region in Turkey in 1979, and the majority of its members consisted of Kurdish people (Bagasi). The organization laid its references on Islam and its provisions. Therefore, Kurdish people’s density in the organization did not transform its structure to a nationalist movement; on the contrary, given Islam’s universalist call, the organization’s sphere of influence reached all Muslims in the region and Muslims worldwide (Bagasi).

The Hezbollah movement was certainly unique; it was not a simple follower and imitation of any other Islamic movement (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.159). The legacy of former Islamist scholars and movements affected its development. Most importantly, ‘two Saids’, Sheikh Said and Said-i Nursi were the most influential figures for the movement. Writings of Said-i Nursi, *Risale-i Nur* were considered as the most significant resource of the organization from an intellectual perspective (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.162).

In the same year the movement was founded, the Iranian Revolution occurred across the borders. The 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution became a turning point not only for the Hezbollah, but also for Islamists and Muslim intellectuals all over the world. An autocratic and secular regime’s collapse due to the Islamist forces and the construction of the Islamic governance and system had been a utopia for decades; and then the utopia became attainable in the eyes of Islamists. Throughout the 1980s, Islamists’ were inspired by the success of their Iranian counterparts. Turkey’s Islamists were also affected by the Iranian Revolution. Büyükkara argues that given the proximity of Southeastern Turkey to Iran, as well as the ease in entrance and exists between two countries, Iran bound radicalism should have affected the region more in than other regions in Turkey (2006, p.146).

According to Çiçek, the founders of the Hezbollah were close to the line of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (2000, p.122). Thanks to relative toleration of the 1980 military coup makers towards religion –in a pragmatist sense- the number of religious communities/organizations and writings increased (Çevik, 2012, p. 97).

According to Turan, the Islamic movement never ceased to exist with the violent repression of Sheikh Said rebellion and others in the region among Kurdish Muslims (2011, p.291). Over the years, Kurdish Islamists were influenced by the developments among Turkey’s Islamists. In the 1970s, organizations such as the MTTB<sup>15</sup> and Akıncılar and political initiatives as the National Outlook Movement were influential among Kurdish Islamists. Not only these, but also a heritage coming from the region’s underground religious schools (madrassahs) and prominent religious scholars resulted in the emergence of an Islamist community and movement.

The Turkish Hezbollah could be mixed with the Lebanese Hezbollah. However they have no organic ties (Aras & Bacik, 2002, p.149). The Turkish

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<sup>15</sup> National Turkish Student Union, an organization with a conservative and nationalist orientation.

Hezbollah is consisted of predominantly Sunni Muslims, whereas the Lebanese Hezbollah consists of Shia Muslims. However, the sympathy for the Iranian Revolution can be observed in both of them as other Islamist groups. Another is their targets. While the Lebanese Hezbollah placed Israel and Western oriented Lebanese groups as the main enemies, and chose its enemies from an external source; the Turkish Hezbollah chose its main target from an inside source (the PKK, fellow Muslim groups and the regime itself). Western countries and supporter groups were second in the line for the Turkish Hezbollah. According to Kaya, founders of the Hezbollah might have wanted to take advantage of the Hezbollah's reputation throughout the Muslim world (02 February 2011).

Despite being known as a terrorist organization, realities surrounding the Hezbollah are not limited to this (Aras & Bacik, 2002, p.148). The Hezbollah and/or Kurdish Islamism was considered as one of the expressions of Kurdish conservatism, which was deeply rooted and consisted of an entanglement of religious sense with ethnic consciousness (Kırmızı & Bölme, 2007). The majority of Hezbollah's members were Kurdish Muslims. The basic reason for this is the historical characteristics of the region. Southeastern Turkey was historically populated mostly by ethnic Kurds (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.140).

Turan identifies the organization as “a faithful one who sacrifices itself for the Creator, Allah” and works relentlessly for the Islamic awakening for the Kurds, Turks, Arabs and other people in the Kurdish geography (Turan, 2011, p.292). This Islamic Community<sup>16</sup> differed from others in terms of not inclining towards Wahabism in cultural rejectionism, opposing nationalism and racism, a modest attitude towards Iran and Shia, and lastly neither defending partisanship nor declaring political parties as non-Islamic (Turan, 2011, p.292). According to Turan, these qualities enabled the Community/Organization to quickly attract people and supporters from the region. Then the Organization would be a candidate for being the greatest and most representative organization in the region (Turan, 2011, p.292).

Despite having roots in the 1970s National Turkish Student Union<sup>17</sup> of the Batman branch (Çiçek, 2000, p.61), Turkey's Hezbollah was founded by the Kurdish Islamists such as Hüseyin Velioğlu, Fidan Güngör, Ubeydullah Dalar, Mehmet Ali Bilici (Çevik, 2012, p.97). According to Kaya, bookstores that sold religious

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<sup>16</sup> Turan calls it as İslami Camia in his book.

<sup>17</sup> Milli Türk Talebe Birliği.

published works during the 1980s were the centers, which brought “radical” religious people together and enabled the exchange of ideas (02 February 2011). Most of the time, they served as centers where people of the same opinions met, discussed important topics and organized activities. First works of existential preparations of the Hezbollah were made in such a venue. Participants came together primarily for intellectual discussions centered on an Islamic Kurdish statehood in the Kurdish region in Diyarbakır (most probably in *Menzil* bookstore because of its early foundation) (Çevik, 2012, p.97).

From another account, according to the Report dated 9 August 1993 of the Parliamentary Commission of Unidentified Murders, Hezbollah’s roots are based on *Yurtsever İmamlar Birliği*<sup>18</sup>, an organization that derived from the PKK whose members were trained in the PKK camps in Bekaa and aimed an Islamic Kurdish state (Kırmızı & Bölme, 2007). The same report goes on by saying that the Union was split when its leader Mullah Abdallah died and one of its imams’ was murdered by the PKK. This meant the end of collaboration and the beginning of a mutual destruction. The first council of the organization was made with the participation of Abdulvahap Ekinci, Ahmet Tufan, Fidan Güngör, Hüseyin Veliöğlü and Veysi Kaykaç in Diyarbakır (Çiçek, 2000, p.131). After 1983, the organization started its activities and propaganda, and quickly attracted supporters (Yılmaz, 13 April 2013).

Cemal Tutar, who was captured after Hüseyin Veliöğlü’s death -an important leader of the Hezbollah-, summarized the reasons for the Hezbollah’s foundation before his trial as, the abolishment of the caliphate, the enactment of the Hat Act (Şapka Kanunu), the Law of Unification of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu), and the regime’s pressures over the Muslim community (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.58). His statements regarding the reasons of foundation continue as follows:

In order to protect from the evils of the time and non-Islamic way of living, Muslims have to follow a path of *cemaat*.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, Muslims, who have to conserve their honor and overcome the hardships of the regime’s cruelty, harassment, obstacles while living an Islamic life, should obey Hezbollah. (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.58)

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<sup>18</sup> Union of Patriotic Imams.

<sup>19</sup> Cemaat is a religiously group of people who came together generally under leadership of an important religious figure and differs one another on ground of interpretation of Islam.

According to Aras and Balcik, Hezbollah did not evolve into a homogeneous organization, and there were differences which caused fierce discussion among the group members (2002, p.150). Questions and ruptures aroused around the methods of operation. Most importantly, Fidan Güngör opened the *Menzil* Bookstore immediately before 1980, which later became the second most important wing within the Hezbollah movement after the *İlim* wing and started to represent a bloc within the whole<sup>20</sup>. According to the *İlim* group members, the *Menzil* group was not present in the beginning but joined later, and harmed the unity and harmony of the organization. Therefore, at the end, it had to be cleaned out from the Community of Hezbollah (Bagasi).

After many splits, the *İlim* and *Menzil* wings were considered as the most important ones (Çevik, 2012, p.97). The *İlim* wing was led by Hüseyin Velioglu. It claimed that an armed struggle for the Islamic Kurdish state should start (Çevik, 2012, p. 97). Fidan Güngör and Mansur Güzelsoy were the forerunners of the *Menzil* group which was considered as more distant to the idea of armed struggle. The *Menzil* had the idea that the process was still in the *tebliğ* (invitation) phase (Yılmaz, 13 April 2013). Given to the support of important religious figures of the region such as Ubeydullah Dalar and Mansur Güzelsoy, the *Menzil* group was in a more prestigious position; however its mass base was weaker in comparison to the *İlim* group (Büyükkara, 2006, p.147). Although the *İlim* group lacked the support of the mullahs named, it was powerful in organizational aspects. It was successful in bringing their organization to distant villages and in organizing as many mosques as possible for their use (Büyükkara, 2006, p.147). According to Kaya, although the crisis between the two groups was reflected as a matter of strategy, it was rather a problem of leadership (Kaya, 02 February 2011). After 1983, the *İlim* and *Menzil* groups became important elements of the Hezbollah organization and operated in the region independently, and at times, cooperatively (Kaya, 02 February 2011). However, by 1987, controversies between the two deepened and evolved into a violent struggle (Yılmaz, 13 April 2013). In the following years, the groups fought

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<sup>20</sup> There are different accounts regarding the dates of foundations of Vahdet, *İlim* and *Menzil* bookstores. Close accounts argue that Vahdet bookstore (1986) was founded later than *İlim* (1982) and *Menzil* bookstore (pre 1980). Therefore two bookstores cannot be derived from Vahdet bookstore. Other accounts put forward that Vahdet bookstore had been founded before the two. Nonetheless because of its founder's relatively young age at the time, the first account seems more plausible.

one another as well. Throughout this fight, the *İlim* wing repressed the *Menzil* and grew stronger. The *İlim*'s superiority over *Menzil* was a result of its more organized and homogeneous structure and branded itself as the true Hezbollah, and excluded deviant groups from the center. For instance, the *İlim* wing did not use the name of *İlim*; rather it preferred the Hezbollah in order to eliminate the *Menzil* group and maximize its base (Kaya, 02 February 2011).

There is not much evidence regarding the organizational structure of the Hezbollah Movement. The existing information could be biased given the suppliers' ideological affiliations. According to Çiçek, the Istanbul branch's organizational model consisted of the Organization General Director, the Head of Military Section, the Head of Internal Affairs, the Head of Intelligence, and the Head of Communique (2000, p.44). He also mentions a hierarchical order among the members of the organization in which *Musaid* (helper), *Müntesib* (participator), *Amil* (hardworking), *Mücahid* (fighter), *Nakip* (high rank officer), and *Naib* (head or deputy) bring about a sixth degree of order, which resembles the structure of Muslim Brotherhood, the Lebanese Hezbollah in terms of division of power between Spiritual and Political leader, and to some intelligence services such as the CIA or Mossad (Çiçek, 2000, p.44). In addition, Uslu presents the organizational structure of the Hezbollah, as can be seen in the Figure.4.1.

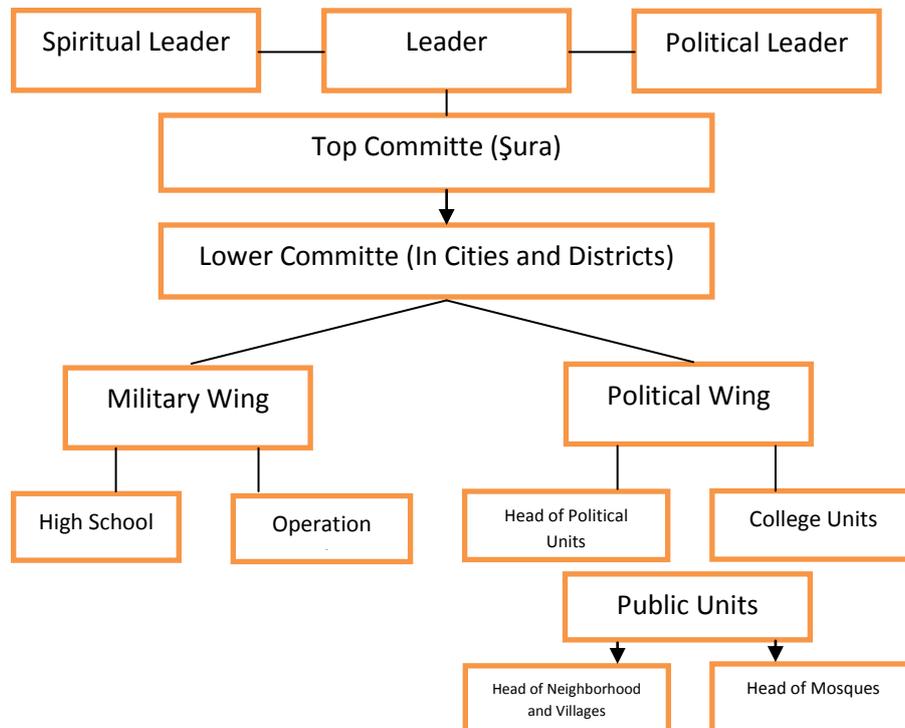


Figure 4.1: Administrative Structure of the Hezbollah (Uslu, 2009, p.224)

The Hezbollah is organized through a dual leadership: The spiritual leader and the political leader. The spiritual leader did not have authority over the decision making of political affairs. His power lied in religious affairs. The same applied to the political leader. He would not intervene in religious decision-making. The second most important body of the Hezbollah hierarchy was the top committee, which consisted of members of high-ranking political and military members. In cities and villages a similar body was actualized. The military wing operated the armed confrontations. The political wing, on the other hand, was responsible from recruiting new members and propaganda.

### **4.3. Operations and Ideas**

The Hezbollah categorizes its activities into two periods: the first period is from the foundation year (1979) until 1991, and the second period is between the years of 1991 and 2000 (Bagasi). In the first period, the congregation was completed, and then the invitation and education phases were carried out. During the second period, armed struggle against the PKK, the *Menzil* group, “deep state’s intelligence services” and gangs were initiated (Bagasi). *Menzil* group’s basic argument for refusing the armed struggle was the belief that the phase of Tebliğ (Invitation) was not completed and the infrastructure works for the next phase was not at a sufficient point. On the other hand, the *İlim* group was insistent and determined to precipitate in an armed struggle against the PKK and to use violence. Certainly, after the defeat of ‘the infidel organization (the PKK)’, the main goal would be to fight against the state whom it hold responsible from the adoption of secular and infidel practices and at the end, to found an Islamic state in the region.

The Hezbollah was effective in Diyarbakır, Batman and Istanbul on the Kurdish basis of which the inclinations were powerful towards Islam and its values (Yılmaz, 13 February 2013). Starting from the 1990s, its primary target was the PKK. While practicing the first phase (*tebliğ*), Hezbollah’s activities caught the attention and sympathies of Kurdish people in the region. However, the existence of a rival organization bothered the PKK (Bagasi). Thus, harassments of the PKK towards the Hezbollah organizations came to a critical point in 1991. According to Bagasi, Hezbollah either would permit the harassments made by the PKK, deny its responsibilities arising from Islam and give up the activities it had been involved

since 1979 or it would start responding in a similar fashion. It chose the second option and both sides gave fought against one another until the end of the 1990s. Uslu argues that Hüseyin Velioğlu was much influenced by the Syrian army's massacre in Hama, in 1980. After this incident, Molla Ahmed, an important leader of the Brotherhood in Syria, crossed the border and resided in Mardin in Turkey and became effective in Velioğlu's mental construction (2009, p.223).

The Hezbollah's motivation against the PKK was its denial of the religious values and sensitivity of the Kurdish people as well as their contribution to the sufferings and suppression of the Kurdish people side by side with the state forces (Çevik, 2012, p. 98). For them, the PKK was the greatest obstacle for the Islamic development in the region (Büyükkara, 2006, p. 148). Yılmaz argues that the Hezbollah's first open reaction to the PKK was after the latter's entrance to organizations as the "Kurdistan Union of Imams"<sup>21</sup>, which addressed the conservative people in the region (13 February 2013). According to the Hezbollah, the PKK's move was tactical and insincere and directly aimed the monopolization of the representation of the Kurdish people. The Hezbollah case's attorney and the Huda-Par's first party leader Hüseyin Yılmaz argue that the Hezbollah's appeal to violence was the result of the PKK's impositions (Göksu, 15 August 2014). In other words, if there was not the PKK, Hezbollah's purpose would have been a civil revolution in line with the principles of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and similar to what happened in Iran, 1979 (Göksu, 15 August 2014).

In defending their position against the PKK, Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol mention about an extermination process of the Muslims of the region by the PKK (2011, p.226). They argue that before initiating an armed struggle against the PKK's forces, the Hezbollah had warned the PKK leaders and asked them to stop enmity towards Islam and Muslims which would not benefit either the parties or the Kurdish people (2011, p.226). The Hezbollah claimed that their killings were most of the time retaliatory for the killings of the PKK as well as its humiliation of Islam (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.231).

Similarly, Büyükkara argues that the *İlim* group's struggle towards the PKK was not a matter of process rather it was a timely reaction, and a compulsion of the conditions of the time (2006, p.148). There were increasing numbers of assaults to

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<sup>21</sup> Kürdistan İmamlar/Dindarlar Birliği.

the members of the Islamist movement made by the PKK. As Çitlioğlu puts forward, “Hüseyin Velioğlu was conscious that if they would not target the PKK, they would be the PKK’s target”(2001, p.93). The *Menzil* group did not approve the *İlim* group’s debut. According to them, the Hezbollah-PKK fight would harm the Islamist cause; the main target should have been the state (Büyükkara, 2006, p.148).

In the first half of the 1990s, street assaults of the Hezbollah supporters against PKK sympathizers were intensified especially in Nusaybin, Cizre, Batman, and Silvan (Kaya, 02 February 2011). Both organizations appealed to street murders and used violent methods (such as hogtie) against their captives (Kaya, 2 February 2011). However, the cruelty of the methods used by the Hezbollah caused internal disagreements. According to Kaya, Gonca Kuriş’s murder was a result of such internal clash (Kaya, 02 February 2011). Kuriş was known to be a Muslim Turkish feminist and a former member of the Hezbollah who later criticized the organization openly. The Hezbollah side claims that their scope did not include Kurdish nationalists outside of the PKK organization with rare exceptions (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.231). Apparently, they went into a classification/segmentation process among people. Their actions were directed at influential people. Common people with opposite ideas were not in their targets. As put forward by Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol (2011, p.245), the Kurdish Hezbollah differentiated militia from sympathizers, and rulers from commoners, and directed their actions towards effective people. Therefore it can be concluded that they used violence systematically rather than randomly.

The Hezbollah perceived the events after 1995 as the PKK and state apparatus’ entering into “an unofficial alliance via international powers and local intelligence structures”, starting a joint operation against conservative structures in the region (Turan, 2011, p.292). The Hezbollah’s struggle with the PKK resulted in a systematic and educated military wing, which the Hezbollah had obtained. Also, the group entered into a phase where it was much more disciplined and it organized its activities more than before (Bagasi). In the fiercest time with its struggle with the PKK, the *İlim* and *Menzil* group started an inter group fight (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.247).

According to Bagasi, the *İlim* and *Menzil*’s struggle was a result of a security and intelligence issue. Inside the organization, there was a channel in which information regarding the organization was leaked to the state’s services, which were

used by the state for their operations toward the Hezbollah (Bagasi). The Hezbollah – *İlim* wing- justified its struggle with the *Menzil* group in this context.

The Hezbollah did not only fight with the PKK. It also struggled against the state forces and competing groups. Journalists and Islamists whose ideas were not found permissible were also on the death list of the Hezbollah (Yılmaz, 13 February 2013). People who were considered committers of immoral acts according to Islamic norms (alcohol consumers, people who do not fast in Ramadan, thieves, prostitutes, etc.) were also attacked by the Hezbollah members. After 1995, the number of this sort of punishment activities increased. According to Aras and Balcık, however, in the Hezbollah's development and fame, its move into larger cities and Istanbul should be considered an important phase (2002, p.152).

The Hezbollah choses to call its struggle with the state “efforts to make precautions in order to survive the destruction war of state's forces” (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.248). The Hezbollah denies the help and/or toleration of the state forces in any period of its existence, on the contrary complains about the impossibility of having a free area for activities (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.248).

Especially after 1995, the state's pressure on Kurdish people was felt intensely. The state's conflict with the PKK in the region caused much more sufferings than any time before. Villages were burnt and emptied. Kurdish people were compelled to migrate. Unidentified murders, executions without due processes, tortures, destroying goods and animals, long period custodies become the routine of the day. The PKK's cruel methods to attain new members and supporters from the villages together with the state's repressive practices made Kurdish people are caught between two fires. The Hezbollah's choice to be standing aside from the state and the PKK and its emphasis on moral and religious values made it a viable option for those people.

Aras and Balcık (2002, p.152) explain the Hezbollah's development strategy in two phases. The first phase is the invitation (tebliğ) phase. In this phase, people are invited into the Organization. In the second phase, once they believe that they have enough supporters they start aggressive competition with other organizations in the region. In order to finance the Hezbollah activities, kidnaping important people had been used as an effective tool. According to Çiçek (2000, p.67), the Hezbollah's strategy consisted of three phases: Tebliğ (invitation), Cemaat (community) and

Cihad (Jihad-fight in the name of Allah). In the first phase, as in the classification of Aras and Balcik, people are invited into the organization by propaganda. In the second phase, the Cemaat members are organized through education. In the latest phase, the fight for the cause is realized via different means and strategies. Thus, according to the overall strategy of the Hezbollah, when a sufficient number of people and efficient conditions were met, the phase of Jihad was to be initiated and armed struggle would be a viable option (Kaya, 2011).

According to Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol (2011, p.128), there is no possibility of success through individualistic struggle; therefore cemaat-ization is the only solution to fight back. In other words, for the leaders of Hezbollah, and for the struggle against the enemies of Islam, the foundation of the Hezbollah was necessary. This understanding opposes the “Protestanization” of Islam through individualization. For the Hezbollah, Islam cannot be realized individually. It needs to be performed communally in all aspects in societal norms, and ways of worships etc. Since humans can be influenced by the environment in which they live, in the case of an environment that is shaped by a non-Islamic way of preferences, of life, an individual salvation is unlikely to occur (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.129).

The PKK and the Hezbollah fight lasted five years and resulted in the death of 200 Hezbollah followers and 500 PKK militants in addition to hundreds of civilian casualties (Çevik, 2012, p.98). Following the PKK’s leader Abdullah Öcalan’s capturing on 15 February 1999, operations, which aimed to destroy Hezbollah, had been intensified. According to Kırmızı and Bölme, the timing signalled the end of the Hezbollah’s usefulness against the PKK in the eyes of the government (2007). As a result, thousands of Hezbollah members were arrested.

As it has been the case for other armed Islamist groups who have been using violent methods for their cause, the Hezbollah justified its actions and position from Qur’anic verses and Hadiths. For instance, in explaining their violent struggle against the PKK, they used the example of a Prophetic answer. In the example, Prophet Mohammad responds to a question of how to help brutality. The answer implies the prevention of it through help. (2011, p.129). For the Hezbollah, Islam is neither only religion of sword, nor religion of mercy; it includes both in right place and time (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, p.154).

The leaders of the Hezbollah had always refused any type of nationalism. However, this does not mean that they ignored the sufferings the Kurdish people had

been through since the new Turkish Republic was established. This was not limited to Turkey's reality. Kurdish populations of neighboring countries such as Iran, Syria and Iraq also had similar problems (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, p.144). According to the Hezbollah, nationalism does not fit the Islamic doctrine. Nonetheless, recruiting from ethnically Kurdish people resulted in a sense of Kurdish nationalism, which turned the group against the Turkish Islamists. They developed their discourse on the issue of nationalism in a negative sense. Their problem was not with Muslim Turkish people, but with the Kemalist regime (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, p.143).

As it was mentioned before, the Hezbollah's main problem was the regime's character and its anti-Islamic demonstrations. According to the Hezbollah, the Turkish state is religion-less. For eighty years or more, secularism had been invented, deployed, and propagated for the place of religion (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, p.147). The Hezbollah, at least in its discourse, had been against secularism and management of the state with non-Islamic laws and codes (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, p. 150). For them, in a Muslim society, governing must be shaped by the Islamic norms; the constitution and all the laws must be in line with Islam. Most importantly, jurisdiction should be based on Islamic Sharia, a principle that had been the most important denominator of the Islamists since the early 1900s.

Apart from its violent struggle, the Hezbollah organization materialized extensive activities especially in the areas of moral awakening and social life. A considerable number of mosques and schools were embraced by Hezbollah activists. For instance, drug dealers were sought to be removed from the school areas. The PKK threats to the schools, students, and teachers were to be diminished. Mixed gender meetings and gatherings were another target. In Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol's book (2011, p.196), it is seen that these gatherings were tried to be organized in separate occasions. The Hezbollah worked for reviving and awareness-rising and reintroduction of Islam in the villages. It also organized reading and writing classes especially for women in the region (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, p.200). The Hezbollah also aimed to heal the deep seated social and cultural problems of the Kurdish society. Animosity that lasted decades with blood revenges, conflicts over the distribution of land, disputes over the use of water, matters of pudicity, abductions of girls, and inter-family disputes which could not be fully resolved through modern jurisdiction mechanisms had been the Hezbollah's topics of interests. The

Hezbollah's offer for the problematic cases was solve the issues on the basis of Islam.

Nonetheless, the universality of Islam and its provisions does not mean total indifference and/or insensitivity to local/regional problems. On the contrary, Islam prioritizes the resolution of each and every Muslim's problems and troubles arousing in the social life. Thus, the Hezbollah, although it emphasizes the universal brotherhood of the Muslims all over the world, prioritizes the Kurdish issue because they resided and centered in Turkey's Kurdish region.

According to the Hezbollah's understanding, God, the Creator, has given humans different qualities (nationality, language, skin color, family, etc.) from birth, which should be considered as the right of humans to have and maintain them. Abolition of cultural rights with oppression is against the will of Islam and therefore such practice should be corrected (Bagasi). Struggling in order to reach a free, honorable and happy life in the shadow of Islam's justice is considered to be the duty of a Muslim and the reason of existence of an Islamic movement (Bagasi).

#### **4.4. The Hezbollah's Valuable Loneliness**

It could be said that the Hezbollah's eternal goal had been to establish an Islamic government. However, this –one might say political- goal is shared by almost all Islamist organizations. The Hezbollah's distinctiveness arouses from several features. The most important is its appeal to violence. Among Turkey's Islamists, armed struggle against one another or towards state structures is a rare phenomenon. After the failed rebellions of Kurdish Islamists and the violent suppression of Muslims by the Independence Courts in the early years of the Republic, Turkey's Islamists' choice has been a participation to the political realm via publications in magazines, newspapers, books etc. Islam and violence had not been the words that could be put together side by side in the Turkish society prior to the Hezbollah.

Secondly, the Hezbollah was successful in constructing a strong sense of the idea of the "other". As it was put forward by Aras and Bacik (2002, p.152), the Community separated itself from other groups, and preferred to live in an isolated community that aimed the destruction of the other and build what they believe was "just". In other words, they were not willing to compromise in a constructive

manner. The category of “unjust others” did not only consist of non-believers, but also Muslims who do not follow the same path with the Hezbollah (Aras & Bacik, 2002, p.152). Kırmızı and Bölme (2007) argue that when the PKK sought to include Kurdish conservatives in their activities by using a religious discourse, the Hezbollah movement had been the most disturbed ones. This disturbance resulted in the procurement of an in-group organization called “Hareketçi”<sup>22</sup> that did not want to give up their claims on religion and appealed to the punishment of religious people who did not support their methodology as well as directed their activities towards the state apparatus rather than the PKK itself (Kırmızı and Bölme, 2007). This otherization worked out for other Islamist groups as well. The Hezbollah wanted all Islamist groups in the region to join in its structure (Büyükkara, 2006, p.149). Groups that did not participate voluntarily were punished. The deaths of Mullah Ubeydullah Dalar, Mehmet Sümbül and İzzettin Yıldırım were reflected in the media as Hezbollah murders (Büyükkara, 2006, p.149).

In addition, the Hezbollah was considered a proxy of fighters from different organizations by different segments. The PKK saw the Hezbollah Movement as a tool used by the state for specific purposes and especially to reduce the PKK’s sphere of influence in the region. Since the PKK had been a Marxist organization, using an enemy Islamist organization against it might have been a logical strategy for the state. Çiçek, for instance, argues that the Hezbollah was supported indirectly by the military rulers of the 1980 coup who considered religion as a bond for people and adopted the Turkish-Islam synthesis for political calculations (2000, p.123). Further, the Hezbollah could be considered a “super-NATO organization” with the CIA supervision (Çiçek, 2000, p.126). Others and especially secular groups perceived the Hezbollah as a fundamentalist threat which could be supported by an international power –most importantly Iran-. Interesting enough, Turkish Islamists interpreted the activities of the Hezbollah as a “deviation from true Islam” (Aras & Bacik, 2002, p.156; Kırmızı & Bölme, 2007). Even the *Menzil* group perceived the *İlim* group’s decision to appeal to the use of violence against the PKK as being used by the state, which caused aggression between the two (Büyükkara, 2006, p.149). In short, the Hezbollah in Turkey was not interpreted as an authentic establishment; rather it had been interpreted as being the tool of another player within the country and/or region

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<sup>22</sup> Can be translated as “Conductor”.

and even the Islamists doubted the Organization's sincerity. This projection can be seen in the approach of the state bureaucracy, and in the media and society's dealing with the issue of the Hezbollah. Perhaps, this was the most problematic issue in the whole process and enabled the further marginalization of the group.

#### **4.5. The End of Hezbollah**

The Turkish state, by 2000, began to carry out large-scale operations against the Hezbollah especially in Istanbul and Diyarbakır. According to Bagasi, these operations were due to the deep state's intolerance of the Hezbollah's uncoverings of what had been happening in the Southeastern region of Turkey, the real dimension of the war between the PKK and the Turkish state (Bagasi). With the 17 January 2000 police operation, the Hezbollah's leader Hüseyin Velioğlu was captured dead and important leaders such as Edip Gümüş and Cemal Tutar were arrested. This date is a milestone for the organization, which is followed by trials in which so many people were tried (Yılmaz, 13 April 2013). Almost all the activities of Hezbollah were suspended. The community fell into deep silence.

After Velioğlu's death, the Hezbollah's political wing, and operation channels were eliminated to a great degree (Güner, 17 February 2001). According to Güner, its military wing did not take a major blow; rather they chose to remain in their cells (17 February 2001). However, the Hezbollah's inertia since then proves otherwise. In the meantime, the assassination of Gaffar Okkan who was at the time the Diyarbakır Chief of Police, and his colleagues on 24 January 2001, were believed to be realized by the Hezbollah supporters. This belief resulted in an increase in the pressure against the organization. According to Çiçek, the Hezbollah operation was the most successful implementation of the 28 February process, after the enactment the law of the eight-year compulsory education and ban on the Welfare Party (200, p.125).

Withdrawal from any of the activities and the deep silence of the Hezbollah protected its members from long prison sentences. In 2009, the Hezbollah case where 16 persons were trialed ended with a life-time prison sentence (Yılmaz, 13 April 2013). However, due to the Code of Criminal Procedure<sup>23</sup>, 23 of the Hezbollah

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<sup>23</sup> Ceza Muhakemesi Kanunu (CMK).

suspects were released from prison as a result of their ten year long imprisonment without a court decision (Yılmaz, 13 April 2013).

Although these releases were welcomed by the Hezbollah sympathizers and bases, some groups did not react the same way. Especially the PKK and its supporters criticized the court decision. In Dicle University (Diyarbakır), clashes between student groups who supported the PKK and Hezbollah sympathizers have occurred since then (Yılmaz, 13 April 2013).

According to Turan (2011, p.294), the Hezbollah's contribution to Islamic Community were:

International powers' calculations regarding pulling apart Kurdish people from Islam was destroyed.  
State's suspicions on conservativeness of Kurdish people were proved to be right and went deeper.  
Socialist Kurds' efforts on producing "one-type Kurdish" which had been supported by international powers were defeated. Socialist Kurds attacked Islamic development.  
Islam became a dominant force among Kurdish people. Beneficiaries from the use of religion were abandoned.

According to the published works from the Hezbollah's official website (huseynisevda.com), the Turkish State presumed its success after the 17 January 2000 operations against the Hezbollah organization. Operations were realized after 28 February process. The process had already put pressure on Islamists but especially political Islamist groups and personalities of the country. Therefore, operations included and punished as many people as possible without clear evidence of connections to Hezbollah's crimes. According to Bagasi, not only police operations but also large-scale psychological, financial, political and cultural extermination processes were deployed by the state. For this end, all opportunities and specifically measures were used in order to present the Hezbollah as a terrorist organization without public support and ineffective to the masses (Bagasi).

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

In this chapter, the place of the Islamic state for Islamists, the foundation of the Hezbollah, its organization structure, its ideas, operations and struggles, its distinctiveness and the Movement's end with the 17 January 2000 operation were examined. The Hezbollah Movement had a unique place in the political history of the

Turkish State since its emergence. Turkey's Islamists preferred to go along with the regime, although both had grievance for one another. The trajectories of the Kurdish region in the 1990s and a high tempered period of the Islamists after the Iran Islam Revolution 1979 resulted in a "radicalized" organization that justified the use of violence for their purposes and based its arguments on Islam. In the next chapter, the Huda-Par, which is considered as the successor of the Hezbollah will be examined on the grounds of transformation. The main question will be whether Kurdish Islamists in Turkey have been moderated or not in terms of ideology and or behavior.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE FREE CAUSE PARTY (THE HUDA-PAR)

From the 17 January 2000 operation in Beykoz, Istanbul until the establishment of the Huda-Par in 2012 the Hezbollah Community was not active politically. Throughout the period, Turkey has experienced a deep political, financial and social transformation. First and foremost, as the result of 3 November 2002 general elections, a conservative –one might say Islamist- and democrat party in Turkey took over the governmental authority. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) was founded by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his associates from the National Outlook Movement. Successive AKP governments enabled the realization of a great sum of reforms regarding many aspects in the structures of Turkish society. After years of economic, political, and social crises, the economy and standards of living and more importantly the expression of basic human and social rights were improved. The Hezbollah community and its sympathizers have benefited from the new initiatives and environment as other social, religious and political groups did. However, until 2012, the community revealed itself only in the shape of NGOs and/or mass religious gatherings.

In this chapter, the events following the dispersal of the Hezbollah and the process leading to the foundation of the Huda-Par are examined. Most importantly, the main question of this work, whether a moderation has taken place for the Kurdish Islamists, if taken in which degree and what aspects this moderation has taken place are analyzed through interviews. The interviews are made with Said Şahin -the spokesperson of the Party-, Mehmet Yavuz -vice president of the Party-, Aynur Sülün –member of the Party’s General Management Council and Vice President responsible from Family and Social Policies, and Faruk Bildirici –a journalist from Hürriyet Ankara office and follower of the subject- . The social media (twitter.com) sharing of the Party’s official channel and the Party’s leader Zekeriya Yapıcıoğlu are also examined. The chapter ends with concluding remarks that review and commentate on what has been discussed throughout the Chapter.

## 5.1. The Aftermath of the Hezbollah's Disappearance

As it was discussed in the previous chapter, operations against the Hezbollah intensified following February 28<sup>th</sup> post-modern coup d'état, the National Security Council's declaration of Islamism as the greatest domestic threat, the resignation of the Welfare Party from office, and the capturing of the head of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan on 13 February 1999 in Kenya. The final and most important operation took place on 20 January 2000, in Beykoz, a district in Istanbul, and resulted in the capturing of the dead body of Hüseyin Velioğlu, the top leader of the Hezbollah of the time, the arrest of leaders such as Edip Gümüş and Cemal Tutar and the acquisition of many documents of the organization. In the basement of the house buried bodies of the Hezbollah victims were found, in addition to 600.000 pages of documents revealing the details of the operations and the organization, photographs, and video records of the torturous investigations (Nugent, 2004). These small and large-scale operations resulted in the arrests of nearly 6,000 Hezbollah sympathizers (Uslu, 2009, p.239).

In the meantime, the Hezbollah community went into deep silence, previous activities were suspended, and all entities were eliminated to a great degree. Although for years, the community was still blamed for operating secretly and/or cooperating in major terror events (such as the assassination of Gaffar Okkan in 2001, and Istanbul bombing in 2003), after a certain point, it succeeded in making itself forgotten by the Turkish public and the media.

As Uslu points out, these operations were an important setback for the Hezbollah, but the community still survived and remained alive (2009, p.239). In addition to the arrests, many Hezbollah sympathizers had to leave the country; some chose to seek asylum in Syria and Iraq, while others went to Europe. At the end, İsa Altsoy who escaped to Germany captured attained the leadership for some time (Uslu, 2009, p.240). His new initiative started organizational activities in Europe. According to Özeren and Voorde, Hezbollah's new strategy was to recruit new members and to establish connections with non-violent mainstream Islamic groups in Europe in order to be seen as one of them and escape the repression of the police (2006, p.89). In other words, the Hezbollah returned to the first and second phases of the organization's development strategy: *invitation* and *education*. Uslu explains the new strategy of the Hezbollah Community as twofold: firstly, returning back to the

initial phases of development, dealing only in legal activities like publishing books and magazines, designing websites, and secondly, managing the Organization from Europe and benefit from the “arrest-free” environment (2007, p.136). Thus, the organization turned from violence to peaceful activities, more strategically, keeping the support base and if possible enlarging it. The Turkish as well as the Kurdish diaspora in the European cities enabled the realization of these goals.

In the years following the dispersal of the Hezbollah, Turkish political sphere was experiencing a profound transformation. Although the AKP specifically chose not to be called as an Islamic/Islamist party, as a conservative democrat party it was founded and took the government in November 2002 elections. The founders and important figures of the AKP were members of the National Outlook Movement.<sup>24</sup> Especially people with secular tendencies claimed that the AKP has an Islamist agenda. This assumption proved to be wrong during the initial years of the AKP government. Rather than immediate pursuit of revenge for the 28 February 1997 and its concomitants on the conservative Muslim people, the AKP started reform processes in the fields of economy, human rights, relations with the European Union, and Turkey's neighbors, etc. Most importantly, the AKP government “changed the anti-terror law, lifted the state of emergency in the Southeast, allowed the private media to broadcast in the Kurdish language, and granted a partial amnesty to Kurdish militants” all of which directly aimed to correct the state’s problematic stand regarding the status of the Kurdish identity and resolve the turbulent relationship between the state and the PKK by sustaining permanent ceasefire (Ulusoy, 2011, p.412). The introduction of cultural rights including the establishment of a state broadcasting in the Kurdish language as well as permitting the private media channels to broadcast in the Kurdish language were operated as extensions of the process of “democratic openings”.

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<sup>24</sup> National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi) is the one of the oldest Islamist political movement in Turkey. It was founded by Necmettin Erbakan in 1969 and produced several political parties all of which except the last one (Felicity Party) were banned by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that they violated the secular principle of the Republic and were being the focal point of anti-secular activities. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül, Bülent Arınç, Cemil Çiçek, Abdüllatif Şener, Salih Kapusuz and Numan Kurtulmuş were only some of former important members of the Movement who left it after a troublesome election for the party presidency between the reformist and conservative wings on 14 May 2000 and found the AKP.

Naturally, the AKP benefited from these reforms in the successive elections. It became the first party in the 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2014 elections in the Southeast region, defeating a strong aggressive regional party, the Peace and Democracy Party (Formerly the DTP, then the BDP, and today the HDP) (Erdem, 10 September 2014). However, reforms were not the only factor that helped the AKP's gain in the overall calculation. Apart from the extension of cultural and political rights, this opening resulted in the emergence of political opportunity structures for the political actors in the region, as in the rest of Turkey. Yavuz acknowledges "structural conditions either shrink or expand opportunity spaces, which in turn shape the goals and strategies of Islamic movements as withdrawal, confrontation or participation" (2003, p.27).

The appearance of the former Hezbollah community once again in the public sphere and media was neither in the form of a direct political confrontation nor participation; rather, it was in the shape of a collection of pro-Islamist, conservative and charity organizations, which have hundreds of branches in the region's districts. Apart from its political agenda, the Community is now very active in social services. As they are listed in Table 5.1., through tens of NGOs, they reach out to a large spectrum of the conservative Kurdish people. The community organizes funding and recruitment activities in the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, and in Turkey, as well hand prints books and magazines, operates websites, establishes radio and TV broadcasts, opens bookstores, organizes wedding ceremonies, brings thousands of people together for the birthday celebration of the Prophet etc. and socially and culturally exists in the lives of the conservative Kurdish people (Uslu, 2009, p.241).

Foundations such as Mustazaf-Der, Özgür-Der and Toplum-Der are known to be ideologically close organizations and differ from the former Hezbollah (Çevik, 2012, p.98). These organizations are different in that they serve by hymnal chorus, monthly magazines, and by communication channels, and charity organizations, which deal with the issues of the poor as well as moral issues and problems such as drug abuse and prostitution (Kırmızı and Bölme, 2007)). The most important and somehow umbrella organization of the other NGOs of the community was *Mustazaf-Der*.<sup>25</sup> Its name was heard with the organization of a mass protest in Diyarbakır for the Danish cartoons showing the Prophet Mohammed and attended by 130.000

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<sup>25</sup> Mustazaf is originally an Arabic word. The word points to "the ones who are oppressed" with a powerful sense with regard to the existence of an oppressor and continuous suffering for a holy cause.

people (Kırmızı and Bölme, 2007). *Mustazaf-Der* was found on 2003, in Diyarbakır. Its name derived from the Iranian Revolution’s “Revolution of Batteredds” (Çevik, 2012, p.98). *Mustazaf-Der* started its activities primarily in the Kurdistan region; then it steadily became organized in cities such as Istanbul, Konya, and Adana, etc. (Yılmaz, 13 April 2013). The foundation continued its activities until a court decision on 11 May 2012 that closed down the organization. Many prominent figures in the organization were the members of the former Hezbollah.

Below is listed some of the organizations/associations that are part of the former Hezbollah community:

Table 5.1: List of Organizations Related to Huda-Par

<b>Field</b>	<b>Name of the organization</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Human Rights - Education – Culture	Mustazaf-Der	Passive
Human Rights - Education – Culture	Mustazaflar Cemiyeti	Active
Charity	İhya-Der	Active
Charity	Umut-Der	Active
Religious Education	Bilge-Der	Active
Knowledge – Religious Education	Hira-Der	Active
Human Rights – Education	Sevgi-Der	Active
Charity	Şefkat Eli Derneği	Active
Social Solidarity	Köy-Der	Active
Health – Nature	Sağ-Çev	Active
Charity	Enfa-Der	Active
Education – Social Responsibility	Hizmet-Der	Active
Religious Publishing – Education	İlim Derneği	Active
Charity	Rahmet Pınarı Derneği	Active
Social Solidarity	İmam Hatip Der	Unknown
Religious Gathering	Kuran Nesli Platformu	Active
Religious Gathering	Peygamber Sevdalıları Platformu	Active
Broadcast	Kervan FM	Active
Broadcast	Serhad FM	Active
Magazine	İnzar Dergisi	Active
Magazine	Nisanur	Active
News Website	dogruhaber.com	Active
News Website	Hurseda.com	Active
News Agency	İlkha	Active
Broadcast	Rehber TV	Active

The benefit of founding and operating such societal organizations is at least twofold for the Hezbollah community: on the one hand, the Movement found a chance to adjust, moreover, the new cadres of the movement found opportunity to increase knowledge in managing organizations that are bound by law and operate legally.

Interestingly enough, Hezbollah has also become more visible recently. Its former leader İsa Altsoy published the book *Hizbullah in its Own Words: Selections from the History of the Struggle* under the pseudo name I. Bagasi. In addition, Cemal Tutar and one of the most well-known lawyers of the Hezbollah case as well as the first president of the Huda-Par Hüseyin Yılmaz wrote the joint book *The Hezbollah Main Case: Defences*. Lastly, the website, *huseynisevda* publishes online commentaries of the Hezbollah on recent events and books of the religious inspirers of the Movement.

Although the *Mustazaf-Der* journey did not end well, it gave great pulse to the former Hezbollah community to establish the political party, the Huda-Par.

## **5.2. The Foundation of the Huda-Par**

Some people see Islam as the religion that produces terrorism for the rest of the world. Thinking that Islam, Christianity, Judaism or any other belief system can cause the problems among people is a diverting idea from the realities surrounding the real phenomenon. It is rather difficult to explain Hezbollah violence based on religion. If religion itself does not explain the occurrence of violence, then there needs to be other explanations, which might be both internal and external to the group and lead the group to violent or peaceful activities.

Uslu (2009) presents following developments as the stages of changing opportunity spaces for the Hezbollah: process of the 1980 military coup d'état, the state's imposition of Martial Law, involuntary withdrawal to underground existence (which resulted in expansion of opportunities and protection from the PKK's harm), the state's inability to maintain order in the southeastern region, the PKK's attacks on the Hezbollah sympathizers, local feudal structures and relations ( which enabled promotion of the interests), the state's hardship in implementing religious bans in the region and also using religious brotherhood to encounter Kurdish separatism. These are certainly some of the variables, which resulted in the Hezbollah's drive for

violent struggle. However, they are not able to help us understand why the community stopped armed struggle and became involved in the recent party politics.

In a more explanatory sense, Özeren and Van De Voorde argue that three conditions must exist to motivate believers to use violence: first, there should be threat to the values, second, theology must be transferred to dogma with a fitting textual interpretation, lastly, believers must face violence as a way of protecting values (2006, p.76). If one is to apply these conditions in the case of the Hezbollah, it can be found that (1) the Turkish Republic made enough impositions for pious people, which made them feel threatened in terms of their religion, (2) as it is continuously claimed, the Hezbollah embraced a great sum of theological accumulation derived from local and international Islamic groups (Said-i Nursi, Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic revolution in Iran, etc.) and transferred them to the group's interpretation over the years in reading chambers via gatherings in bookstores and mosques, (3) the substantial rise in the PKK threats to the religious people in the region and its pragmatic discourse for the use of religious items for political gains. As these three conditions were met, the Hezbollah, which was established in 1979, started its armed struggle in the 1990s. As Uslu points out, the Hezbollah was a result of shrunken opportunity spaces in Turkey and an Islamic ideological phenomenon (2007, p.126). These spaces shape the strategies of the groups via "withdrawal, confrontation, or participation". During the first years of the Hezbollah, as a result of shrunken opportunity spaces, the organization chose to withdraw from the existing system and to go back underground. After some internal and external developments, the organization had to confront the rival groups, the PKK and the state. Now, after a period of imprisonment and silence with changes in the Turkish political environment, the organization now prefer participation in the political system.

As Uslu argues this formula does not explain why some organizations in the same geography, time period, and sociopolitical surroundings chose to appeal to violence while others did not (Uslu, 2009, p.220). Perhaps, this can be attributed to the differences among Islamist groups in Turkey. There might be methodological differences among the Islamists as well as their goals in terms of attaining the Islamic state. Despite the fact that secularism has been one of the major and strongest principles of the regime since its foundation, the successive governments used religion for their causes and this in turn benefited conservative, Islamist groups time

to time. While the Hezbollah had been suffering from the state's attack on its existence, groups such as Nurcus, and Süleymançis. could have been better off for practical purposes. These purposes include election concerns as well as the fear of taking all Islamists to one front facing and dealing all together.

In order to examine the reasons for the moderation of the Kurdish Islamism in the case of Hezbollah, one can look at three conditions. First of all, with the successive AKP governments, there has been steady liberalization in terms of human rights and especially the expression of religious values. This changed the perception of threat for conservative people in terms of their values. Second, theological accumulation derived from textual interpretation and other resources are still there with only slight changes. Lastly, the relative peaceful status of the Kurdish issue and the PKK's transfer of its power to more legal grounds especially to political parties lessened the burden on the Hezbollah community.

The success of gathering large segments of people together bolstered the Hezbollah community's morale. This in turn, resulted in more crowded gatherings. The closure of *Mustazaf-Der* after a court verdict did not stop the Community's aim to legalize its structure (Yılmaz, 13 April 2013). On the contrary, the community's leaders came to understand that without a legal political initiative, their causes could not be realized. Perhaps, if *Mustazaf-Der* were not closed, the community would continue to function with its non-governmental organizations for some time. However, as it was stated by the party officials that the community grew out of its container.

As Aynur Sülün expresses:

Before, we were actively engaged in NGO activities. Our purpose was to contribute to the recovery of the society which suffered from retrogression and moral crisis. But we reached to the conclusion that these activities were not enough and we should have carried them to the sphere of politics. Cause, the system was giving fight against the values of the society for years. As the family of the Huda-Par, we were aware of the unresolved and long-standing problems as we were engaged in non-governmental organizations hand-in-hand with people. Therefore, the Huda-Par was born due to the needs of the society. In addition, it is not formed by the elite, but rather composed of people who suffered from same problems. (Author's interview, 10 June 2014, [Appendix 3])

With this enlightenment on hand, and the suitable conditions of the political environment in Turkey, the Free Cause Party was established on 17 December 2012. In January 2013, its head quarter in Ankara was opened.

The emergence of the Huda-Par was not an expected outcome. On the contrary, the sides of the Kurdish issue (the PKK, the HDP, and the state) got used to being the sole representatives in the conflict. Therefore, the Huda-Par might have been well considered as a positive development in terms of creating plurality and finding a more democratic solution to the Kurdish issue. Nonetheless, as in the case of Hezbollah, the Party's emergence created speculations. First of all, the PKK side blamed the Party for being the subcontractor of the AKP in the region. The PKK would eventually lose its power to the Huda-Par, which would benefit the AKP and its status in the region. It also feared that the secular Kurdish nationalism would be replaced by Kurdish Islam (Kırmızı and Bölme, 2007). Secondly, the Huda-Par is seen as the extension of the radical groups in the Middle East such as the al-Qaeda, the ISIS and Iranian authorities. Lastly, despite the Party's contrary claims, it is perceived as the carrier of the devastated Hezbollah with a hidden agenda.

Estimates suggest that the adult population of many villages in the region is composed of mostly Hezbollah sympathizers (Uslu, 2009, p. 242). In addition, NGOs' services to those in need in the region guaranteed potential sympathizers in the near future. These associations have branches even in the remotest and smallest towns and villages that enable interaction and communication between the organization and the people and furthermore ease the administrative reorganization of the party in the region.

The Huda-Par is a new legal political actor in the region. It promises to be the third power besides, the AKP and the BDP and change the scene of politics in the region (Coşkun, 5 February 2014).

The first party leader of the Huda-Par, Huseyin Yilmaz, explains the transformation of *Mustazaf-Der* to become a political movement:

We are showing a civil struggle under the roof of an association (*Mustazaf-Der*) since 2004. Yet, there are other problems of the community; the issues of the country are well-known; it is impossible to engage in political issues through foundations. We faced a big societal support in the region. The court verdict that closed our organization led us to form a political entity. We will take pulse of society in days ahead. We will make meetings with the society to hear comments and suggestions. We will decide and disclose name and

identity of a political entity after those meetings which will be done soon. (Mehmet Sabri Akgönül, 04.06.2012)

Other party leaders, the vice president responsible for the foreign affairs, the spokesperson Said Şahin, and the general secretariat and the spokesperson Mehmet Yavuz all make similar remarks. In my interview with him on 27 May 2014, Said Şahin explained the foundation of the Huda-Par and the events triggered as such:

There are couple of factors and motives which pushed us to found the Party. First of all, after the closure of *Mustazaf-Der*, the need of the masses became evident. There was victimhood because of central administration. There was not a struggling political organization to represent us. Within the country, conditions were fulfilled which gave us impulse to effect the state's administration. On the other hand, representation of the Kurdish masses had been a problematic issue. It is in the PKK's hands. However, their ideology is based on anti-Islamic values and does not represent the mass ideology in the region. In addition, there was not any single political party which takes Islam as reference and struggles for Islamic values. This vacuum can be filled by the Huda-Par. Lastly; Islamic world is under the influence and subcontractors of the Imperialist forces. The Huda-Par aims to protect the wealth and values of its people as well as the existence of Islam in this geography. (Author's interview with Şahin, 27 May 2014, [Appendix 2])

As it can be seen, Şahin links the reasons of the timing of the foundation of the Huda-Par to internal and external causes. He feels responsibility towards not only to the party's potential mass base, but also towards a greater realm, the spirits and the existence of Islam and its domination in the region. This sense of responsibility brings us back to the Islamist thinking and its transformation over the decades. Such a universalistic claim is relevant to the first period of Islamists. In the second period, Islamist claims are reduced to national borders. In the third phase, after embracing governmental power, the Islamism moves on to a completely different realm, debates are reduced to some degree and the conformity given by a conservative government has been experienced. On the other hand, it can be seen that Kurdish Islamists might not be experiencing the same line of development parallel to their Turkish counterparts. A similar deduction can be made from Mehmet Yavuz's explanations regarding the reasons of the foundation of the Huda-Par:

In the regional aspect, the Middle East and Islamic world is under continuous conflicts. The borders in the region are not natural, which create sufferings. From an international perspective, it is a call for *ummah*. Consciousness of *ummah*... Quest for uniting... In Turkey,

Muslims suffered from the establishment of the Republic. Kurdish Muslims suffered more because of their ethnic belongings. (Author's interview with Yavuz, 29 April 2014, [Appendix 1])

Both leaders present the reasons of the foundation as categorical and local as factors well as international contexts. Although the party seems to address a small and local group of people –namely the Kurdish Muslims in southeastern Turkey-, its discourse is based on the unity of Muslims and its call is universal.

Aynur Sülün, who is a member of the Party's General Management Council and is the vice president responsible for family and social policies, is more direct regarding the reasons of the timing of the Party's establishment:

The conditions changed a lot. Especially, environment in Turkey is not similar to what it was in 1990s. Today, the system can be criticized easily for its problems. Even partially, some of the obstacles before the freedom of thought and expression are removed. Therefore, we are thinking that the time and conditions are more suitable now in comparison to the 1990s. (Author's interview with Sülün, 10 June 2014, [Appendix 3])

The reasons for the timing and the foundation of the Huda-Par can be categorized into two parts which can be seen in Figure 6.2: Political opportunity structures and internal causes. Political opportunity structures have increased over the last ten years in Turkey. This benefited many small and divergent groups. The Hezbollah community also benefited from the relative progress in terms of freedom of expression and thought as well as in cultural rights and religious rights. This is surely a result of one single phenomenon, the ascendance of the AKP to the governmental postulate. Extension of the usage of human rights and determinacy on resolving the Kurdish issue helped the Hezbollah community for reorganizing. The Kurdish Initiative enabled many policies that restored cultural rights for Kurdish people including broadcasting in Kurdish language, returning original names to the Kurdish villages and towns, etc. Yıldız adds that the PKK's ceasefire period which started with the capturing of Öcalan in 1999 and continued until 2004 provided a suitable environment for the Kurdish Islamist movement in which it manifested its thesis openly and started appearing as an independent movement (p.30, 2014).

In terms of internal causes/dynamics, the most important item is the learning process of the former Hezbollah members. After the police raid to the head quarter in Beykoz in 2000, hundreds of organization members were arrested, and some of them, including the leader of Hezbollah, died. The period until the openings of the

foundations in the region should have passed by reconsidering the former deeds. The activities and relative transparency of the group proves the same. From what I have read and gathered from the interviews, the Hezbollah learned that armed struggle is not a proper way of achieving the goals of the organization. It brought more harm than benefit. Secondly, the Kurdish issue that lasted for decades and the assumption of the PKK, the sole representative of the Kurdish side of the problem revealed the inconvenience for the community, since the PKK's ideology is not close to what the community stands for. Lastly, the closure of Mustazaf-Der became a turning point for the community; since it taught the lesson that a community with political ambitions cannot be contended with charity associations or cultural foundations.

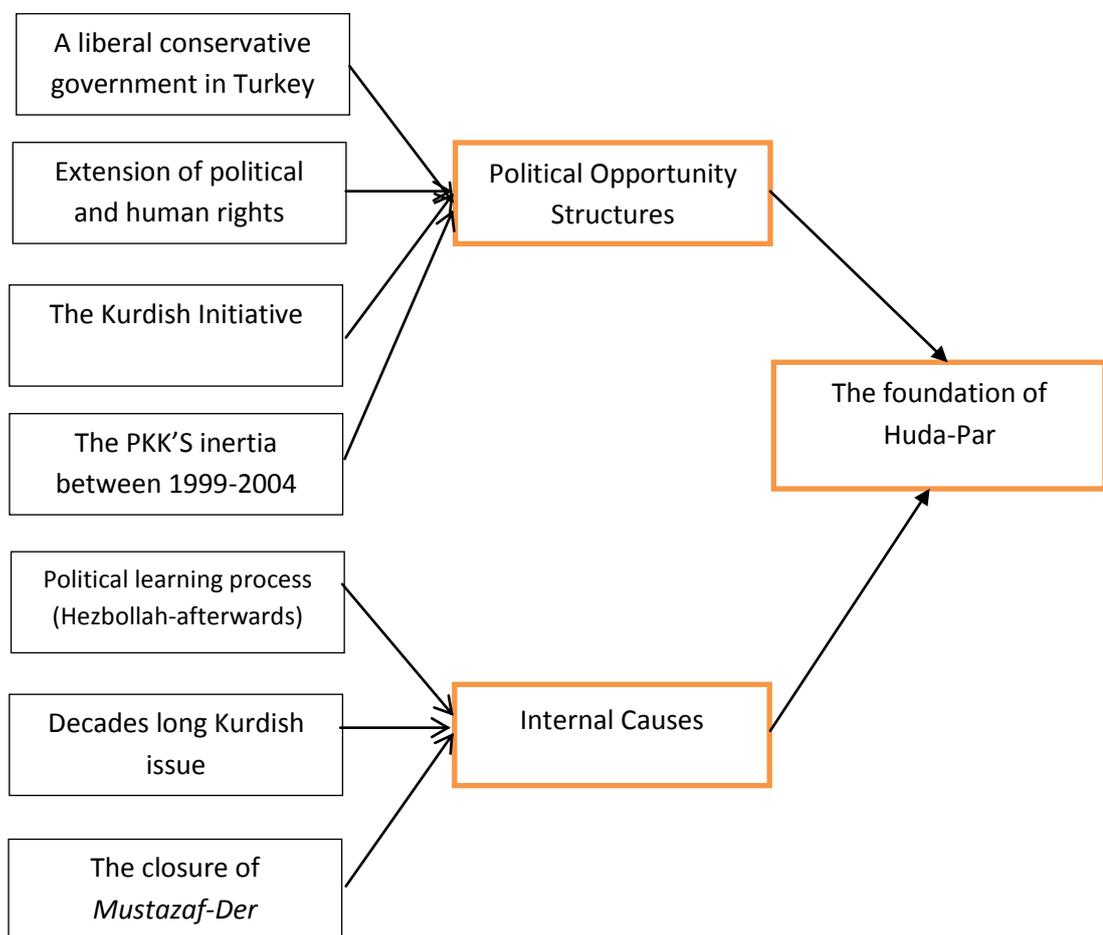


Figure 5.2: What caused the foundation of the Huda-Par?

### 5.3. Moderation Contested

The literature on the moderation of the radical Islamic groups is growing rapidly. In the works, two main questions are posed; (1) have the beliefs and the

practices of the Islamist group changed over time, and (2) which mechanisms, institutions, and processes have enabled the moderation (Schwedler, 2011, p.348). Another important aspect of examining moderation is in terms of its revelation. In other words, whether the moderation is in behavior, ideology of the group, or ideology of the individuals are examined. Since for this work, interviews have been conducted with the leaders of the group, it is not possible to examine the dimension of the overall group and directly talk about the mass base. Therefore, in order to make conclusions, the behavioral moderation of the group and ideology of the individuals will be analyzed.

For the behavioral part, the Huda-Par's approach to the 6-7 October events<sup>26</sup> and campaign process during the local elections on 30 March 2014 are considered to be responsive. In order to examine the ideological change of the individuals, comparisons are made with the comments in the Hezbollah publishing and the interviews I have conducted. To compare, I look at three subjects in order to see whether transformation has taken place: position vis-à-vis regime, position vis-à-vis the PKK and the Kurdish issue, and political pragmatism. If -at least rhetorically- the Party chooses a system friendly stance vis-à-vis the regime, unarmed confrontation with the PKK and is willing to compromise for political ends, then it can be considered that a high level of moderation has taken place. If the discourses are developed in the opposite direction, moderation has not taken place for the movement. If one or two factors are changed, partial moderation has occurred.

### **5.3.1. Behavioral Moderation**

#### **5.3.1.1. 30 March 2014 Local Elections in Turkey**

The Free Cause Party was established on 17 December 2012. With its foundation, speculations began. The common expectation was that the Hezbollah would be reborn in the region and conflict between the PKK and the Hezbollah

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<sup>26</sup> On 6-7 October 2014, in order to protest the Turkish government's reluctance to help the Syrian Kurds in Kobani who are threatened by the ISIS forces, the PKK sympathizers went into streets in Diyarbakır and started assaults to the Huda-Par and the Hezbollah sidlers whom they see as the collaborators of the ISIS. Assaults resulted in the deaths of 50 people and tens of wounded (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/27525777.asp>).

sympathizers are almost inevitable. The Party decided to participate in the local elections, which took place on 30 March 2014. It announced this decision on 12 October 2013 on the Party's website.<sup>27</sup>

After the foundation of the Party and especially after the announcement regarding the participation to the election, more news about the assaults to the Huda-Par offices in the region and small scale conflicts between the PKK and the Huda-Par sympathizers accumulated. According to Coşkun, since 2000 until today, there has been no interaction between the PKK and the Hezbollah (5 February 2014). They did not pass through a reconciliation process about what happened in the past. Because of this, they are ultra sensitive to one another's acts. Therefore, between the Huda-Par and the HDP tension continues. Some of these events are;

- On 3 October 2013, a wedding celebration in Batman was attacked by armed people, in which one person died, several were wounded. The BDP blamed the Huda-Par for the assault. (Coşkun, 11 October 2013)
- On 11 February 2014, an assault took place in one of Huda-Par Mersin branch members' home.
- Between the HDP and the Huda-Par sympathizers clashes happened during the celebration of the Holy Birth in Diyarbakır Dicle University. (15 April 2014)

The Huda-Par published the list of 40 assaults with the start of the New Year in 2014 until June 2014, which they blame the BDP and the PKK sympathizers for. In the website of the Party, between 03 November 2013 and 02 June 2014 before and after the local elections on 30 March 2014, 33 announcements were made. From these announcements, 14 of them are condemnations about the assaults to the branches of the Huda-Par. Only three of the announcements are rebuttals about the accusations regarding the Huda-Par sympathizers' involvement in the street events and/or assaults.<sup>28</sup>

When the language of the announcements is analyzed, it can be seen that there is constant emphasis on common sense and peace. The Party also ensures that they will not give credence to the "conspiracies and plots" that are planned and played by the HDP and the PKK. In the press announcement their answer regarding the accusations

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<sup>27</sup> <http://hudapar.org/Detay/Haber/272/basina-ve-kamuoyuna.aspx>.

<sup>28</sup> 10 December 2014, <http://hudapar.org/>.

of 2 November 2013 events, which ended with the death of one person in Batman, is below:

Real perpetrators of the event will be found eventually. We have faith on it. We are against the suppression and tyranny whoever commits it. We do not obey any sort of suppression and tyranny. We are trapped by the deepest dirty alliance. Batman police department permit this dirty alliance from the beginning. Our people should know that none of the plots will hold us back from our works. (12 November 2013, hudapar.org)

Again on 3 March 2014, a press declaration after an assault to the Mardin branch members of the Party and to the BDP sympathizers is as follows:

We as the Huda-Par are condemning both the bomb attack on the local BDP electoral bureau and the attacks to our members and bureau. These are nothing but the games of the deep and dark forces. Public opinion must know that as the Huda-Par, we will not be deceived and provoked; and we will never be the attacking side. (3 March 2014, hudapar.org)

Lastly, the press declaration of 5 March 2014 states that:

As the Huda-Par, we have declared in each and every platform that we are working for our people's peace and security since the date of our foundation. (.....) Peace shall not be wasted for ideological or political interests. There will be no winner of the possible conflict or chaos among the oppressed Kurdish people. (5 March 2014, hudapar.org)

As it can be seen from the press declarations, despite the tens of assaults to the Huda-Par branches in the region throughout the election process, the Party officials seemed to be careful and sensitive in picking their words in order not to cause any confrontation between the PKK and the Huda-Par supporters. From their discourses, it can be seen that, they try to stay out of any sort of physical confrontation with the PKK, value peace and order for the Kurdish people in particular, and in the region in general, and the ideology and politics should have been of secondary importance. For the former Hezbollah on the other hand, ideology –religion- came first even at the expense of lives. This was a similarity of the group with other fundamentalist groups.

### **5.3.1.2. 6-7 October Events in Turkey**

The 2014 summer was long and painful for the entire Middle East. The Syrian conflict entered into its fourth year, and a new phenomenon namely the ISIS

(the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) made to the international headlines. The group declared worldwide caliphate on 29 June 2014 in Iraq. Its immediate purpose was to establish a Sunni Islamic state in Iraq and Syria. For this goal, its militia started operations and took over villages, towns and cities in the region. These operations resulted in the fleeing of the people from the region to wherever they could seek asylum, especially in Turkey. In addition to the Syrian refugees, Turkey started to host Iraqi immigrants.

The ISIS started to move towards places populated by the Kurdish majority and under the control of Kurdish leaders. From early September, the ISIS started its attacks on Kobani, a Syrian town at the border of Turkey where the PYD<sup>29</sup> (the Democratic Union Party-Syria) is deployed. This caused disturbances among the PKK/BDP sympathizers in Turkey. Protests started demanding the Turkish state's involvement in the conflict helping the PYD in this fight. Despite the growing public conviction that the state should not remain blind to the conflict nearside its borders, the Turkish state chose the opposite and did not directly challenge the ISIS. In addition, the Huda-Par started to be considered as the natural adherent to the ISIS by the PKK/BDP supporters. The state's reluctance for the involvement in the crises, the Huda-Par's image as the proponent of the ISIS in the region and lastly the HDP's "call for continuous action"<sup>30</sup> resulted in further disturbances throughout the Southeastern towns and cities among the PKK/BDP sympathizers (Akbaba, 22 October 2014).

This tension resulted in a "witch hunt" on 6-7 October 2014 (Oğur, 10 October 2014). Because of the events, 30 people died and hundreds were wounded in more than 40 cities and temporary curfew was declared. During the events the HDP, the Huda-Par, and the Turkish nationalist groups came across (Akbaba, 22 October 2014).

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<sup>29</sup> The PYD is a Kurdish political party that was found in 2003 in Syria and led by Salih Muslim. The party is considered to be a sister organization to the PKK in the region.

<sup>30</sup> The HDP Central Executive Committee in its written declaration in 6 October 2014 stated that: "We invite all our people from 7 year old to 77 year old to the streets, to keep position and mobilize for the massacre initiation in Kobani. From now on, every place is Kobani." and ignited the wick of the events ([http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/hdpden\\_sokaga\\_cikma\\_cagrisi-1217350](http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/hdpden_sokaga_cikma_cagrisi-1217350), 06.10.2014).

While being a sad event for the country, the events also became a test point for the Huda-Par. The Party's approach to the events was closely observed. Whether the Party would appeal to violence or not become an object of interest.

The Huda-Par's leaders invalidated the suspicious expectations toward their sides and once more called for common sense. On 8 October 2014, Zekeriya Yapıcıoğlu, the leader of the Huda-Par, in his messages on Twitter complained about the assaults of the PKK supporters and the state's inability to sustain security:

Tweet 1: "At the moment, despite the curfew declaration in Kızıltepe, masses are in the streets. Our party residence and our friends' workplaces are on fire" 8 October 2014, 08:26 a.m.

Tweet 2: "It is said that our party members' homes are signed and showed as targets to the mass. We cannot reach to the Mardin Governor, the district governor and the head of police department" 8 October 2014, 08:27 a.m.

Tweet 3: "The Mardin Governor says that police department is not sufficient and they cannot do anything. There is no state authority in Kızıltepe, Nusaybin and Dargeçit" 8 October 2014, 08:31 a.m.

Tweet 4: "The massacres cannot be prevented through calling for the common sense. The state shall declare its dissolution, tell its citizens to take care of yourselves" 8 October 2014, 08:38 a.m.

Tweet 5: "The ones who called masses to the streets through showing the possibility of massacre in Kobani, will you be happy for Kızıltepe massacre?" 8 October 2014, 08:42 a.m.

From the official twitter account of the Party, any provocative or directive messages were not twitted during the days when the events took place. In fact, during 6-8 October 2014, no tweets were written down. On 9 October 2014, there was a call for the funeral prayer for the victims of the events that took place in Diyarbakır, Mardin, Van, and Adana, and the PKK attackers were blamed.

After the events, the first press declaration was made on 09 October 2014. In the declaration, a list of the assaults to the Huda-Par members and the Party offices and an explanation regarding the perception of the events were published. The second declaration was published on the website on 27 October 2014. The declaration was in reply to the rumors over the meeting of the Huda-Par and the PKK / the HDP. The party refused the claims and stated that there had not been any official meeting with any one mentioned. For them:

If the HDP is sincere about the de-escalation of the tension, stopping the assaults, not causing any conflict and facilitating the peace, it should abandon the slanderous language of accusation and insult and it should openly condemn the assaults and the committers.<sup>31</sup>

The last official press declaration regarding the events came on 27 November 2014. Again, the declaration included an updated list of the attacks, casualties and the wounded, in which 16 deaths were of their supporters. In addition, the Party declared that the attacks were not limited to 6-8 October. Afterwards, the assaults continued for a while. More importantly they declared:

The fact that the events took place in several places, at the same time and in a similar fashion shows that these events did not develop spontaneously, but were planned before and organized from a center. (.....) In this organization, the eye print of the Israel terror network and the strategic ally USA's existence should not be missed.

(.....)

Unfortunately there is always the danger of living similar events. Because, the mentality does not change. The PKK and its units continue to define those who do not depend on and obey them as their enemies.

(.....)

The HDP leaders must remember this,

From the very beginning of the Huda-Par, we said that do not make politics over the bloods of the Kurdish people. We said that Kurdish youth's intra conflict do not benefit none, everybody sees harm from it. You did not hear it, you did not understand it or you behaved like you did not hear and/or understand it. In order to understand this, is it needed for Muslim Kurdish people to say "now enough!" and run after your armed gangs in the streets with sticks and digging tools?

(.....)

There are responsibilities for all the sides in order not to live the same atrocities. The greatest responsibility lies with your side. Pull yourself together, retreat from exposing the Kurdish youth against them. Do not consider yourselves the only representative of oppressed people. You already know that, do not pretend otherwise. We know that your definition of the Kurd is also troubled. When you are calling the Kurd, you only mean the ones who obey you and your leader's followers. Retreat from this definition. While you are not able to express yourself in Kurdish –maybe not your fault-, do not leave outside the definition of the Kurds and present the ones who only knows and speaks Kurdish but do not consider you as their representatives as the "enemy of the Kurds".

In the Kurdish resolution process, do not make the Kurds' demands for rights as bargaining chips for your organizational interests.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://hudapar.org/Detay/Haber/1022/basina-ve-kamuoyunakurmanci--turkce.aspx>

Be respectful to the people. Stop fighting their values, stop attacking our Party which came out of the people's hearts, and stop targeting the NGOs.

(17.11.2014, for full text: <http://hudapar.org/Detay/Haber/1028/genel-baskanimizin-gundem-degerlendirmesi.aspx> )

As it can be seen from the declarations, the Huda-Par opposed to the notion that Kurdish people took over the streets and transformed them into battlegrounds for their causes/interests by sacrificing lives. Rather, the Party called for a mutual understanding of the differences. The Party simply defends that the rights of the Kurdish people should not have been made bargaining chips for any of the organizations that seem to represent the people. Rather, these organizations should have worked for the wellbeing of the represented base.

Throughout the events, the language of the Huda-Par leaders was temperate (Akbaba, 22 October 2014). At the farthest extreme, the Party officials declared that if they had to, they would appeal to the right to necessary self-defense.<sup>32</sup> But most of the time, they called for reasonable behavior and expressed non-violent means. By not turning the events into a mutual destructive conflict, they showed that their intention is not to agitate but make politics within legal boundaries, which certainly is a difference from the Hezbollah line. This is an indicator of moderation, since for the ends, no more violent means are deployed. On the contrary, the organization seems to have a high level of political learning. They learned that Kurdish people will not benefit from shedding the blood of people and creating inter-group conflict among Kurdish people. This would only serve to the organizational interests.

In addition, the approach of the Huda-Par raised questions regarding the PKK/the HDP's ability and maturity to accept the plurality in expressing the Kurdish mass' political demands as well as the importance of the participation of the other actors to the Kurdish Resolution Process (Akbaba, 22 October 2014).

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<sup>32</sup> Zekeriya Yapıcıoğlu after the funeral prayer in 10.10.2014 makes a statement: "We had never been the offensive side and never will be. But the attacks to us will never intimidate us. In every place in the world, people under death threat are legitimate to defend themselves. Our brothers would also use the right of necessary selfdefense". ([http://www.cihan.com.tr/news/Huda-Par-Baskani-Kardeslerimiz-mesru-savunma-haklarini-kullanacak\\_3225-CHMTU1MzIyNS8xMDA1](http://www.cihan.com.tr/news/Huda-Par-Baskani-Kardeslerimiz-mesru-savunma-haklarini-kullanacak_3225-CHMTU1MzIyNS8xMDA1) 10.10.2014)

## **5.3.2. Ideological Moderation**

### **5.3.2.1. Islamism & Nationalism**

Both Islamism and nationalism are ideologies from which the Huda-Par seems to have distanced itself. However, both concepts have long been in the making of the political organizations in Turkey. Nationalism is a more controversial topic among conservative Muslims, although the religion of Islam recognizes the differences between ethnic groups and looks at them as the creation of God.<sup>33</sup>

However, for Islam, tribal affiliations do not upgrade or downgrade the status of the Muslim. The deeds, bad or good, are determinant of the status of the Muslims. This doctrine caused controversies among Muslim thinkers. During the initial phases, nationalism was seen as a synonym for patriotism. However, since then, debates on whether nationalism is coherent with Islam have grown. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire with the age of nation states in the Middle East, nationalism spread in the region. The Turkish Republic's repressive policies towards secularism and Turkish nationalism caused inadequacies for the Muslim Kurdish population in the country. In order to safeguard its values and culture, prominent Kurdish leaders started successive religious and ethnic revolts but did not succeed in securing the intended outcomes.

After the period of revolts and the Republic's persistent reforms towards the secularization of the state and society, the Muslims of the country found nationalism to be a safe haven. The political expressions were made into a type of conservative nationalism for some decades and the debate on the coherence of Islam and nationalism were put aside briefly.

In the 1960s, lots of works of Islamists from the Middle East and beyond were translated in Turkey. Among these translations were the works of Mawdudi of Pakistan and Sayed Qutb of Egypt who struggled for the liberation of Islam from foreign dominators in their countries. This wave affected many religious people and establishments in Turkey and resulted in adopting a more fundamentalist position among Islamists. Not too long after, the Islamic Revolution in Iran occurred and

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<sup>33</sup> O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made peoples and tribes that you may know one another (The Holy Quran, 49:13).

inspired millions of Muslims all over the world. Now the dream of Islamic governance was much more attainable.

Until the 1990s, the Kurdish issue was politicized by Marxist leftist groups. For conservative masses, there was no organized political initiation. However, the National Outlook Movement seemed to be successful in securing a great sum of votes from the region. However, this success did not last long. The RP's cooperation with the MHP resulted in a fall in the Kurdish votes as was symbolized with the famous Kurdish Islamist politician Altan Tan's leave the RP.

The Kurdish Hezbollah had been established in 1979, but became publicly known in 1990s. The group's primary ambition was to invite people in the region to Islam and educate them accordingly. However, the PKK's increasing pressure on the conservatives of the region for years resulted in conflict between the two groups' supporters. Certainly, the eternal goal of the Hezbollah was to see an Islamic state founded; however given the conditions this was a distant possibility and the initial phases of invitation and education was not complete. Nonetheless, the organization could not continue with peaceful ways of coexistence and started a retaliation against the PKK's disturbances in its kind. Not only the PKK, but also rival Islamist groups and people who had been opposing the ideas of the Hezbollah had lived through the similar atrocities. The leader of the Menzil wing of the Hezbollah and the Med-Zehra group leader were also considered to be murdered by the Hezbollah. Lately, the intelligence service of the state was included in the activity chamber. However, the dissolution of the Hezbollah came later than the 28 February post-modern military coup in 1997 and the PKK leader Öcalan's capture in 1999.

During its active years, the Hezbollah's ideology was not understood clearly. The organization did not publish any physical documents. It did not hold a legal foundation. Therefore there were no documents enabling the categorization of the organization under ideology. However, in recent years, with the new leaders of the Hezbollah, İsa Altsoy and Edip Gümüş's initiations, a website ([huseynisevda.com](http://huseynisevda.com)) and several books related to the ideas and histories of the organization were published.

Given to the complexity of the religious groups in Turkey, it is not easy to put the Hezbollah into a category. Although not agreeing on being part of the Islamist heritage, the Hezbollah and the Huda-Par both expresses what an Islamist practically says.

Mehmet Yavuz, the Party's General Secretary, states his ideas on Islamism and Nationalism as:

There is an Islamic path and an un-Islamic path. Except these, we do not find other adjectives and ascriptions correct. We do not think that these kinds of concepts and terms are well intentioned. It can be well the idea that promoting Islam as other ideologies. Our motivation lies with Islam itself. Nationalism of any type cannot exist in our Party. The superiority is in piety. The Prophet's hadith says that there is no superiority of the Persian to Arab and of the Arab to non-Arab. Because of having majority from the Kurds does not mean that we will conduct Kurdish nationalism. Because we are more subject to the region's problems, there might be such kind of impression. From whichever nation is, as much the Islam is the common ground, it does not matter. We established our organization in 55 cities. Hopefully, we are working to be in 81 cities. (The author's interview, 29 April 2014, [Appendix 1])

He also answers the question "where do you historically start the Kurdish Islamism and the Huda-Par and how do you relate them" as such:

We do not accept these artificial terms and concepts. We do not want to be caught in this trap. Islam is the one. We do not accept the Kurdish Islamism, Turkish Islamism or Arab Islamism. (The author's interview, 29 April 2014, [Appendix 1])

In a different fashion, Said Şahin, the spokesperson of the Party admits that the Party is an Islamist party:

We are an Islamic party. The Islamism appeared two centuries ago. Before, there was Islam and non-Islam. Against the Western imperialism and colonialism, Islamism came into existence through the emergences of some Islamic movements. In essence, as we are aiming at an Islamic management, questioning the West and securing the religion; we have an Islamist identity. (The author's interview, 27 May 2014, [Appendix 2])

For the question "what are the differences of the Party from the mainstream Turkish Islamism" Şahin tells that:

There is a difference between the Kurdish and Turkish Islamism. It should not be, but in reality there is. The reason is sickness of nationalism. We see it as a virus of Western illness. (The author's interview, 27 May 2014, [Appendix 2])

Said Şahin's views on nationalism are similar to Mehmet Yavuz:

Each person has a race. But Islam is a roof. Under this roof, races and colors melt. If we push the roof aside and drive the colors forward, we

will suffer. We do not accept a position that will highlight Kurdish superiority against other races in the Party. (The author's interview, 27 May 2014, [Appendix 2])

Aynur Sülün, one of the members of the Party's General Management Council and the vice president responsible for family and social policies, explains her views to the question "do you consider that the Huda-Par is Islamist and why?":

Our reference is Islam. We are telling this straightforward. Until the foundation of the Republic, our society whose head directed towards the West needs to be cured with Islam. Today, the Western world because of not handling the drug issues formulated it as legal; is the place where homicides, physiological crises, divorces, gambling, and rapes are the most common. We are going deep down as a society as we have been imposed by the Western values under the name of modernism. In order for the West to pull itself together, it needs Islam. Islam is the only religion which can produce solution in every era. (The author's interview, 10 June 2014, [Appendix 3])

As can be seen from the answers, the leaders of the Huda-Par do not consider the Party as the heritage of Islamism and strongly deny nationalism. However, their description of the purposes of the Party and approach to their mission enables one to see it as a product of Islamist understanding. It may be disturbing to hear Kurdish Islamism versus Turkish Islamism and blame the illness of nationalism for bringing upon the differences; there is growing emotions among the Kurdish Islamist thinkers over the Turkish Islamists' attitudes towards the Kurdish issue and their intimacy to nationalism. This created a sense that the Turkish Islamists suggest a solution in which Turks are the leaders and the other Muslims are the helpers (Gökalp, 9 August 2012). Some of the Kurdish Islamist thinkers believe that there needs to be separation between Kurdish and Turkish Islamism, because, the Turkish Islamism has some troublesome features that would not fit into the Kurdish context (Bildirici, 18 December 2012). First and foremost, Turkish Islamism is interested in Anatolian Muslims (Gökalp, 9 August 2012). Kurdish Islamism, on the other hand, cannot be bound by the existing borders. Second, the thinkers believe that Turkish Islamism has become Kemalist over the time, meaning that the proceedings of the Republican regime are interiorized by the Turkish Islamists and they are interested in the continuation of the Turkish state at the expense of the rights of other groups. Third, Turkish Islamists are not seen sincere for their discourse on the brotherhood and the Ummah because of their double-sided discourses in the Kurdish sufferings and other

Muslims' sufferings in other places. Fourth is the insistence of Turkish Islamists on the historical role of dominating other Muslim groups. Fifth is avoiding naming the Kurdish problem and sidelining with the enemies of the Kurdish people.

According to Yıldız, Kurdish Islamism expresses a line that legitimizes the right of Kurdish people to be a nation in Islamic grounds. He argues that this is a precondition of the Islamic plurality (Yıldız, 2014, p.30). Similar to Gökalp and Bildirici, Yıldız agrees that there is a division between Turkey's Islamism and Kurdish Islamism because of the latter's criticism of the former's spearheading the project, which idealizes the creation of a prototype nation for the Republic. Nonetheless, Turkish Islamists are not alone in this project. Statist-nationalist Kurds who dream of bringing together uniform Kurdish citizens are considered to have this political mind (Yıldız, 2014, p.30).

Although blaming the Turkish counterparts for their inclination towards nationalism, the Kurdish Islamists seem to be occupied with the Kurdish issue as well. The Huda-Par leaders that I have interviewed are very insistent that they would not pursue nationalist politics. Nonetheless, when it comes to practice, they naturally prioritize the Kurdish issue. However, rather than seeing the problem as a matter of national existence and independence as it is seen by the PKK, the Huda-Par perceives it as a matter of improving the rights of people.

Although in essence, Islamism should not take national schism kindly, in practicality there is an increasing gap between the developments of Kurdish and Turkish Islamisms. Turkish Islamism developed closer to Turkish nationalism and avoided answering important existential questions such as those regarding the reinstatement of the Kurdish identity and cultural rights. This created a sense of disillusion among the Kurdish Islamists, which resulted in a quest for an independent path. However, by escaping from the Turkish-Islam synthesis, now the Kurdish Islamists seem to depend on the Kurdish-Islam synthesis. The Kurdish Hezbollah and the Huda-Par's distance from the mainstream Islamists, in a way, can be explained via these lenses.

It is not easy to label the community as nationalist, since the Kurdish Islamists are much more careful in using the language of religion despite their emphasis on the Kurdish case. For instance, one BDP Member of Parliament, an Islamist, Altan Tan states that Turkish-Islam synthesis is poison:

Within the Islamist movement there are plenty of Nationalists. At the moment, the Prime Minister's surrounding consists of these people. They cover up nationalism, the Turkish Islamism and the Turkish hegemony with the color of Islam. Therefore, the Kurdish Islamism and the Turkish Islamism are both wrong. (23 April 2013)

This understanding is valid for most of the Kurdish Islamists. Nonetheless, in practicality, they all appear as enthusiastic defenders of the Kurdish case and most of the time only of that case.

Thus if one was to locate the Huda-Par's place in ideological terms:

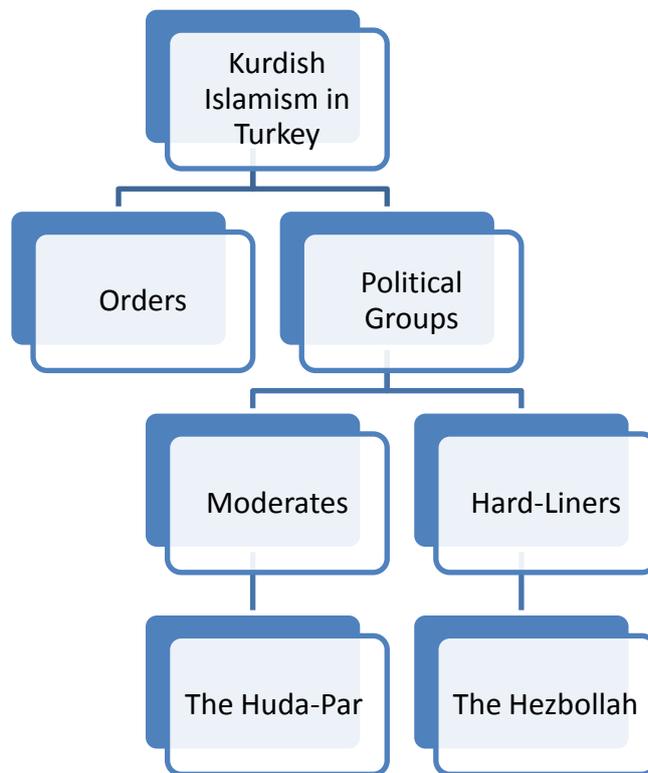


Figure 5.3: Huda-Par's Ideological Location

Given the Hezbollah's persistent distance from nationalism of any kind and its continuous underlining of the Islamic principles, I categorized it under the hard-liners group. The Huda-Par as a legal political organization determined to keep its distance from violence and anti-system activities is categorized as moderate. There are other hard-liner Kurdish Islamist groups as well, for instance, the former Menzil group, today's Öze Dönüş Platform (Back to the Essentials Platform), Med-Zehra and Nubihar group, and Azadi Initiation. Although these organizations have been influential on their potential mass base, it is not easy to find information and

objective evidence for them. Yıldız considers that the Azadi Initiation is more of a product of the Kurdish-Islam synthesis (2014, p.30).

As seen in the Table 5.3., apart from the *Political Groups* label, I added the label of *Orders* indicating both the religious sects and Jemaahs. However, the most known orders such as the Nakshibendi and Kadiri orders and Jamaahs such as Süleymançıs, Nurcus, and İskenderpaşa are both statist in essence and seem to appeal both to Kurdish and Turkish people at the same time. Therefore, I did not see them as diverting as in the case of *Political Groups*.

### **5.3.2.2. The Huda-Par Vis-à-vis the Turkish State**

In order to understand whether a change in the community's position vis-à-vis the regime/state has taken place, one should recall the past. The Hezbollah's position vis-à-vis the state was its abandonment and promotion of Islamic governance instead. The Turkish state was seen as illegitimate, because it was rooted on the principles of the Kemalist ideology and based on a secular constitution and norms. The Kurdish people's support of Mustafa Kemal was in order to save the Caliphate and defend the country from Western occupation. However, the Republic after its foundation was not shaped by the expectations of the Kurdish people or other religious people. This brought upon a legitimacy crisis for the state, which resulted in several insurrections. Although for a long time, the Kurdish conservative masses waited in silence and seemed to have accepted the status quo regime; the state's inability to protect their lives, dignities, and ways of living from the impositions of the PKK, brought into question the state's *raison d'être* once more.

Cemal Tutar, one of the leaders of the Hezbollah, explains the Hezbollah's view on the current regime as:

As an Islamist community, we are against secularism and the state's management according to un-Islamic rules. For us, in a Muslim society, the regime must be shaped through the Islamic norms. The constitution, laws and codes must be shaped in line with Islam. There should not be any laws, codes and organizations that are opposing Islam and not derived from Islam.

(...)

According to us, this system is a system of oppression. Imposing un-Islamic rules of secularism to Muslims cannot be expressed but with the oppression and no valid ground for this can be claimed. Therefore, the Hezbollah community believes in removing this oppression from

existence or at least creates consciousness among people through education in order to minimize the oppression. (2011, p.150-151)

The Huda-Par as a political party that is bound by law and legal forms can be considered as it resolved the problematic relations between the represented bases and the state and therefore joined political life. Nonetheless, it is still possible to observe that it has not fully completed this transformation. Perhaps, it is not in the direction of the state's total abandonment, the organization formulates a purpose in terms of the transformation of the state to a more Islamic context:

Other goals of the movement;

- To redefine the state and the politics,
- To carry the basic principles and values of the community into politics and to make them dominant,
- To make the system harmonious with the beliefs and values of the community, not the community with the system,
- To revive the humanly and Islamic values that are degenerated consciously or unconsciously...(the Huda-Par Party Program, 2013, 10)

From another perspective, the Hezbollah was not feeling bound by laws of the regime. Because the legal system is not based on the Sharia provisions, the Hezbollah did not see a legitimate ruling against itself. It did continue acting with what it considered correct no matter what the consequences would be. On the other hand, the Huda-Par, a legal foundation, and it is a well thought step with its envisaged results.

Mehmet Yavuz, the General Secretary of the Party, responds to the question “what is the difference between the Huda-Par and the Hezbollah’s in terms of their promises?” as follows:

Except violence, the Huda-Par as a political organization limits itself with judicial and legal boundaries. I do not think that the Hezbollah accept the law as its boundary. (The author’s interview, 29 April 2014, [Appendix 1])

Said Şahin replies to the same question as:

The Hezbollah and the Huda-Par are different structures that are nourished from the same source. NGOs, media, education, political organization or informal structure... They are all means. There is Quran and Sunnah over them. Our means, methods and wording is different from the Hezbollah. But, we became the same in purpose. (The author’s interview, 27 May 2014, [Appendix 2])

Aynur Sülün agrees on Şahin's position:

As far as I know the Hezbollah is a community that works for the recovery of the society. We as the Huda-Par family are struggling for the society's cohesion to moral values. Therefore, there are similarities in terms of our purposes. The difference is we are a Party and they are a Community. (The author's interview, 10 June 2014, [Appendix 3])

It can be said that although the Party and the Community converges in their purposes, their means and methods for the achievements are completely different. However, this difference would embrace of in violent methods and top-down fashion, at the same time protect and moderate the other's position through dialogue and mutual understanding as well as being bound by law. Assaults before and during the 30 March local elections and 6-7 October events and the Huda-Par's responses to these events prove that the Huda-Par and its base is not in favor of fanaticism, extremism, or violence; but rather the existence and sustained representation for the moment. Thus, at least in the short run, the Huda-Par is not aiming to change the regime in Turkey. Their purpose is to transform the society and state toward more value based structures.

### **5.3.2.3. The Huda-Par Vis-à-Vis the PKK and the Kurdish Issue**

The community's most important agenda is the Kurdish issue and the PKK. The Hezbollah's position regarding the PKK was far from a compromise. It neither surrendered to the PKK nor found a safe zone to keep itself from it. Rather, it started to respond with its enemy's weapons: violence, threat and spreading fear. However, from the sources the Hezbollah published recently it can be seen that the Hezbollah, before appealing to violence, tried to communicate with the PKK, finding common grounds for mutual understanding and making their stance clear for them.<sup>34</sup> In order to observe the Hezbollah's perspective of the PKK more closely:

The PKK was established based on Marxist-Leninist ideas. There is no room for religion in this understanding. All moral values were signs of primitiveness and causing blindness for the humans. Religion was the opium of the people. The PKK that was found on this kind of heretical thought realized its first fight against the devotion of the Kurdish

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<sup>34</sup> See İ.Bagasi, *Kendi Dilinden Hizbullah, PKK ile Çatışmanın Önlenmesi için Cemaatin Yaptığı Grişimler, Direnmekten Başka Seçeneğimiz Yoktu* ([http://huseynisevda.biz/viewpage.php?page\\_id=33](http://huseynisevda.biz/viewpage.php?page_id=33) ).

people to religion and moral values (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p. 215).

In addition, the Hezbollah justifies its position against the PKK by listing its activities such as establishing hegemony over people through fear and threat, raiding the villages, pressuring the mosques, harming the moral values of the people through anti-propaganda, etc.

The Huda-Par, on the other hand, does not take the PKK as equal to itself and does not directly enter into communication. However, this does not mean that the Party is out of the PKK's sphere of influence. The main argument of the Huda-Par in terms of the PKK/ the HDP front is their proclamation of the front as the only representative of the Kurdish side in the Kurdish issue of Turkey. Another problem of the issue is the state's voluntary acceptance of the HDP as the only viable actor in the issue. This causes the 'otherization' of all other important players and obliges the Kurdish masses to a monopoly of the BDP in terms of representation. This goes to the abandonment of plurality in political choices.

Aynur Sülün states:

Although the BDP seems like it is defending the Kurdish rights, actually it is using this as a Trojan horse. Its real purpose is imposing the leftist ideology through drawing people away from their beliefs. The government's is making a mistake in addressing only the BDP as the representative of the Kurdish people. The government should listen all the ethnic groups and people. Seeing the PKK/the HDP as the representatives of the Kurds, surrendering to their demands and ignoring the oppressions they are making to the people is wrong. Under the name of solution, the AKP left the Kurdish people to the mercy of the PKK/the HDP. (The author's interview, 10 June 2014, [Appendix 3])

Another issue is the Huda-Par's approach that the PKK and the HDP are nowhere near understanding and representing the Kurdish people and their values. According to the Huda-Par, the HDP despises this conservative structure and aims to replace it with what it perceives to be more important – a socialist, atheist, nationalist community. This argument is parallel to the Hezbollah's understanding.

In Said Şahin's words:

The HDP is a structure that is based on racism. It is the manifestation of a single party mentality. The structure does not tolerate any differences. We do not believe that they are defending the Kurdish rights. They are wearing this as a mask and actually aiming the

alienation of people from the religion. (The author's interview, 27 May 2014, [Appendix 2])

The Huda-Par differs from the PKK and the HDP in terms of their solution to the Kurdish issue. While the PKK and the BDP favors an almost federal structure for the Kurdistan region; the Huda-Par does not offer such a structure. Rather, the Huda-Par approaches the issue from a broader historical context. According to the Huda-Par, the borders in the region are artificial:

We are not demanding secessionism and/or federalism but we are thinking that the borders in the Southeastern region drawn after the First World War are one of the most important sources of the problem. Our demand is the abandonment of these artificial borders and to bring the people together. (The author's interview, 29 April 2014, [Appendix 1])

The Party's solution to the Kurdish problem is explained in detail in the Party Program. The Hezbollah did not have a program or a detailed remedy for the Kurdish issue:

In order to materialize normalization and social peace;  
Firstly, because of the cruelty practiced up until now, the state must apologize and pay compensation to the victims.  
The identification that every citizen affiliated to the Turkish Republic as a Turk must be abandoned and the existence of Kurds shall be identified constitutionally, Turks and Kurds must be approved to be the constitutive founders of the country.  
Kurdish shall be accepted as the second official language and it shall also be an education language.

(...)

The texts sang by primary schoolchildren such as 'Andımız' (Our Oath) which sounds like racist shall be withdrawn.

(...)

The names of the schools, barracks, avenues, streets and similar places that have the names of the historical figures who tyrannized and discriminated people must be changed immediately.

The exclusionary discriminatory rhetoric of Turkishness which dominates the constitution and the official literature of the system must be waived.

(...)

The aftermath of the thousands of the losses must be clarified, the investigations concerning the unsolved murders must be carried out steadily and the responsible ones must be found and punished.

The incidents like burning the villages and forced migrations must be investigated and the responsible ones must be punished.

(...)

It must be declared officially that the Kurdish scholars, foremost Sheikh Said, who is esteemed deeply by Kurds, were victimized, and the relatives and all the people shall be made amends.

The burial places of the people like Said-i Nursi, Sheikh Said and Seyyid Riza must be declared.

(...)

The strong centralist administration shall be ended, the local authority shall be empowered and all the local officials shall be elected by the people.

(...)

(The Party Program, 2013, p.30-32)

All the Huda-Par leaders that were interviewed are in the same opinion that with the AKP government, the problematic gap between the Kurdish identity and state has been filled to some degree. They also think that the AKP government contributed a lot to the democratization process within the country, which enabled them to consider finding a political party to enhance their activities and represent their mass base. Nevertheless, the Huda-Par and the AKP differ in their opinions regarding how to resolve the Kurdish issue as well. The AKP's policies are considered to be empowering the BDP and the PKK front:

The AKP has policies that are strengthening the BDP and the PKK. They behave like the BDP is the only representative in the issue. All the Kurdish rights are given because of obligation. The BDP is setting the scene, the AKP is returning the rights back and the BDP is strengthening more. The rights must be given with the constitutional assurance not through a sense of favor and without bargaining. (Author's interview with Said Şahin, 27 May 2014, [Appendix 2])

The Hezbollah emphasizes more of the atrocities made to religious people in the region and problematizes its existence for the most part through Islamic offences. On the other hand, the Huda-Par, in addition to moral values and Islamic sensitivities, also problematizes what can be considered as Kurdish nationalism. Most of the solutions that are suggested for the normalization of the Kurdish issue are about the retribution of past atrocities and the cultural rights of the Kurdish identity.

As a conclusion, it can be said that in terms of the PKK and the Kurdish issue, a transformation for the community's part did not happen. Although the Party believes that the AKP has resolved many of the problems of the Kurdish people in terms of their cultural existence, there are still unsolved problems and especially divergences over the methodology. They still believe in the existence of the PKK's

hidden agenda in which the real concern is not Kurdish rights but the changing of the society towards a religion-less kind. A similar situation exists between the country's secular republican elites and religious conservatives, each of whom suspects and blames one another for having a hidden purpose and/or agenda. Thus, although the events of 6-7 October proves that the Huda-Par this time does not volunteer to enter into a bloodshed with the PKK, it is difficult to say that in terms of the community's perception towards the PKK there is no visible transformation at hand.

As it was put forward by Faruk Bildirici, a journalist interested in the region's politics, the only common feature of the HDP and the Huda-Par is their weak democratic essence. They both have difficulty in accepting another organization outside their realm and aim to destroy it when possible. Therefore their peaceful coexistence is improbable.

#### **5.3.2.4. The Huda-Par and Political Pragmatism**

One of the important aspects of moderation is the observance of compromise. Political inclusion is a strong tool for its user to direct an extremist group to an intended shape and context. However, inclusion may also lead to an unintended outcome, the *paradox of democracy*. By participating in democratic institutions and mechanisms, radical and extremist groups may hide their genuine goals. But this does not mean that these groups would make undemocratic calculations or that they would not impose an undemocratic agenda. Therefore, being open or close to dialogue and entering into bargaining is an important indicator for the group's moderation.

As it was claimed before, for the Hezbollah, there were un-negotiable terms. The ends of the community are sacred in feature, which makes the means and methods unimportant. Therefore, giving them up, bargaining or compromising are not simple issues. As it was stated repeatedly, the organization acted from the power it took from the text. It followed a fundamentalist line that derived from the examples of worldwide Islamist figures and for some, gained a heroic and legendary position.

However, over the years, suffering, struggling, dying and feeling insecure might have resulted in an internal and external learning process and inner calculations. For instance, Yılmaz and Tutar's book, which contains the deepest details of the Hezbollah's fight with the state and the PKK, only devotes one single

page to its struggle with the Menzil wing. However, it is important in terms of seeing a glimpse of the regret and self judgment:

During our fiercest struggle with the PKK, we entered into a conflict which we had never wanted.

Even though we have tens of righteous reasons and items that show our righteousness, we know that it is no use to return back to this.

(...)

May Allah forgive both our and their deeds and sins. (Yılmaz, Tutar and Varol, 2011, p.247)

“Did/Does your inclusion into democratic process result in the moderation of your discourse and practices?” This question was the last question I posed during the interviews I conducted.

Aynur Sülün states:

We are aiming at stepping straight. We do not wish to become the defenders of the system after being a victim of it for so long. For this issue, we took necessary cautions and defined our roadmap. We believe that the system needs to change. Therefore, we aim at making peace between the system and the values of people and carry these values into politics, not the vice versa. (The author’s interview, 10 June 2014, [Appendix 3])

Mehmet Yavuz replies:

In terms of moderation, we will be an exception, not the rule. Until now, the practices in Turkey might support the theory. But when we look at the world, there is the example of Hamas, there is the Lebanese Hezbollah. Although they are participated into political system, they did not moderate. (The author’s interview, 29 April 2014, [Appendix 1])

Said Şahin explains:

“We aimed at freedom of expression and invitation (*tebliğ*). We have experienced. The Party is a powerful tool and we meant to use it. The system is un-Islamic. We are aiming at being with our Islamic values inside the system and realize our Islamic goals. We are not seeing a way through making concessions from our identity. We named it clean politics, honest politics. When a concession is asked, we cannot give it up. What we are going to give up will be the way of leading. We took the road of struggle for our values within the system”. (The author’s interview, 27 May 2014, [Appendix 2])

The Huda-Par is well aware of the possibility that the existing electoral system in Turkey and especially the 10 % threshold will stagnate their way to the

Turkish Parliament. Even though the 30 March 2014 local election was the first election that the Party participated in, the results were not promising. The Huda-Par candidates could not win any of the election districts where they had entered into elections. Although they became the third party in the region, they were not able to win any of the mayorship.

As it was put forward before, two mechanisms cause radical tendencies to decline: the pursuit of votes and organizational survival (Tezcür, 2010, p.71). Party leaders make a strategic choice between their ideological thorns and large segments of electorates when they decide to join the elections. Willingly or unwillingly transformation takes place in order to stay as a political reality. In the farthest extreme, even a leftist party might incline towards the center and even conservatism, and vice versa. Thus, strategic interests might transform a radical stance towards pragmatism, vote seeking and consequently a more moderate position through behavioral change.

In the case of the Huda-Par, its electoral base resides in the southeastern region of Turkey. The region consisted of conservative people and the two dominant parties namely the AKP and the HDP, which are well established and supported by crowded masses. The Party has a small but consistent mass base. Given the situation, the Party by using a more moderate tone might lose the secure votes and perish. In addition, a more moderate stance in terms of political and religious promises might result in the Party's turning into other catch all political parties who are now in full contradiction with the Party's current position. It can be said that the party has completed its transformation from becoming a Community to a legal representative unit in terms of political pragmatism. I do not believe that further transformation and softer language and a more moderate and compromising approach will be used by the Huda-Par in the near future. The most important aim for now is to represent the Muslim Kurdish people in the region as an alternative to the AKP and the BDP and promote Islamic values among the people. By their discourse, activities and performance since the Party's establishment in 2012, it seems to be heading in the correct direction.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I explained the events during the Hezbollah's disappearance, the foundation of the Huda-Par, the reasons of the need for a new political party for the former Hezbollah mass base, and the timing of the foundation of the Huda-Par. Then I explained what I wanted to explore throughout the chapter: Has there been a transformation among the Kurdish Islamists? Particularly, has the former Hezbollah transformed and moderated itself? Through which considerations, what mechanisms and institutions has this moderation been realized? Is this moderation observed in the behavior or ideology, or in both?

In order to answer the questions above, I looked at the events during the 30 March 2014 elections and 6-7 October 2014 Kobani protests. In addition I examined three dimensions whether there has been a moderation for the community's part vis-à-vis the Turkish state/regime, the PKK and the Kurdish issue, and political pragmatism. I used four interviews, the Party Program, and social media outputs of the Party officials. The main question of this work is "has moderation taken place for the Kurdish Islamists, if taken, at which degree and with which aspects did this moderation take place?"

For the behavioral part, the Huda-Par's approach to 6-7 October events and the campaign process during the local elections on 30 March 2014 are considered to be responsible. For the ideological change in the individual comparisons was revealed with the comments in the Hezbollah publishing and the interviews I conducted. For comparison, I look at three subjects. If -at least rhetorically- they chose a path of a system friendly stand vis-à-vis the regime, unarmed confrontation with the PKK and willingness to compromise for political ends, then it can be considered that a high level of moderation has taken place. If the discourses have developed in the opposite direction, moderation has not taken place for the movement. If one or two factors are changed, partial moderation has been deployed.

I concluded that from the Hezbollah to the Huda-Par, Kurdish Islamism is partially moderated. Leaving violence behind is the most important sign of moderation. In terms of their position on the state and the regime, Kurdish Islamists are willing to participate more in comparison to their past counterparts. Therefore, forming a legal political party and accepting the law are also indications of moderation. But when it comes to political pragmatism, Kurdish Islamism is still

insistent on its ideological position. It is not willing to compromise regarding any of its political or ideological ends. Its methods are surely changed, but goals are still the same.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

This thesis aimed to focus on recent developments in Kurdish Islamism. However, its central task was to examine whether there has been moderation among Kurdish Islamists and more specifically in the Hezbollah community from a more radical and anti-system to a moderate and system friendly position. To what extent has the Huda-Par moderated Kurdish Islamism and what has caused this moderation? In order to answer my main research question, some sub-questions were posed. Can one talk of a common umbrella of Kurdish Islamism? How did Kurdish Islamism evolve over time? Why did it fail to appear as a political movement until recently? What are the similarities and differences between Kurdish and Turkish Islamism? In what ways does Kurdish Islamism differ from Kurdish nationalism with regards to Kurdish identity debates? What is the triggering event in the establishment of the Kurdish Islamist Free Cause Party (Huda-Par)? Can Huda-Par be explained with the moderation of the radical Hezbollah movement? Have the beliefs and practices of Kurdish Islamists changed over time? What processes, mechanisms, events and institutions helped the promotion of this moderation? What are Huda-Par's political ambitions? How do they differ from Hezbollah's position?

Islamism and the Kurdish issue have been two problematic concepts since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Since both Islamism and Kurdish nationalism were seen as threats to the survival of the newly built Republic, for decades the ideas and movements somehow related to them had been suppressed and were not allowed to become politically active. Squeezed between leftist and militarist PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kürdistanî – Kurdistan Workers' Party) and its succeeding political parties as well as conservative and nationalist mainstream Turkish right-wing parties, the voice of Kurdish Islamists has been marginalized over the years. Given special importance to religion and power to different religious orders, Islam is an important binder for Kurdish people. With a government that has a common past with the National Outlook Movement, (which was popular among Kurdish people to some degree) which is conservative and liberal in many aspects, Kurdish Islamists were supposedly better off with the AKP government.

The main hypothesis of this thesis was related to the transformation of Kurdish Islamism. This hypothesis advocated that as a result of positive changes in the social, political, and economic spheres in Turkey, further democratization enabled the moderation of the former Hezbollah and contemporary Huda-Par in terms of perception towards formal politics. “Moderation theory” was used as the main theoretical framework in this thesis, according to which repressive and exclusionary state policies may contribute to the radicalization of political Islamic movements, while inclusion and accommodation may have an opposite effect – the moderation of Islamists groups was used for testing my hypothesis (Kubikova, 2009, p.139). Inclusion can be introduced via mechanisms such as political openings, the introduction of pluralism in multiparty systems, the guarantee of basic human rights, the conduct of fair elections, etc. In this case, which effects, such as political participation, could be observed in the behavior of Kurdish Islamists was investigated. Whether the behavioral or the ideological moderation of the individuals were in the forefront of this transformation was also investigated.

After having reviewed the related literature, I carried out my research on the ideas of the prominent leaders of the Free Cause Party. I conducted three interviews, with the Party’s Spokesperson and General Secretary Mehmet Yavuz in the headquarters in Ankara on 29 April 2014, the Party’s Spokesperson and the Vice President Responsible for the Foreign Affairs Said Şahin in the Istanbul branch of the Party on 27 May 2014, one of the members of the Party’s General Management Council and Vice President responsible for Family and Social Policies Aynur Sülün on 10 June 2014 via e-mail. I also conducted an additional interview with a journalist who followed the Kurdish issue and its actors closely, Faruk Bildirici on 2 December 2014, in Ankara. Additionally, I used existing newspaper and magazine interviews with Party members, and commentaries available on the Party’s website. I tested especially three subjects in order to see whether a transformation had taken place: position vis-à-vis regime, position vis-à-vis PKK, and political pragmatism. If -at least rhetorically- they had chosen a path of a system friendly stance vis-à-vis the regime, unarmed confrontation with the PKK and willingness to compromise for political ends, then it could be considered that a high level of moderation took place. If the discourses were developed in the opposite direction, moderation did not take place for the movement. If one or two factors were changed, partial moderation had been deployed.

The moderation literature is vast and is fed by multiple disciplines. However, given the few number of in-depth case study analyses as well as the authenticity of each case, it makes more difficult to make generalizations. Moderation is considered to be connected to the inclusion and democratic openings. Moderates and radicals are not realities that stand alone. Even the slightest change in the political surroundings might prompt the internal dynamics of the organization and result in an unexpected manner. The Huda-Par either as a continuation of the Hezbollah or as a new initiative is bound by the conditions of the political environment in Turkey.

Surely, there had to be a historical and political context for the issue. Many Islamic and religious groups in Turkey admit that they are not influenced by the Islamist figures and the accumulation they brought upon. The emergence of Islamist ideas can be traced back to the nineteenth century. As an ideology Islamism was considered as a way to sustain the survival of the Ottoman Empire during the traumatic dissolution process. In addition, not only in Turkey, but also throughout the Middle East, nationalism had been an important ideology, which shaped the borders and relations for people. With the foundation of the Republic, Atatürk's concept of Turkish nationalism and secularism became one of the most important state ideologies of the Republic. Islamism had been marginalized (Hanioglu, 9 July 2012). As the most conservative people of the country, the Kurdish population suffered from the developments. This is what happened in the experience of the Turkish state. As the reforms were intensified, the bonds among Muslim people within the country were weakened. The Republic's radical secular reforms caused Islam to move away from the public sphere and intolerance towards any possibility that might have awakened the Caliphate and the sultanate resulted in the absence of an Islamist opposition. This enabled Turkish Islamists to be closer to a nationalist line which in the long run might share similar grounds with Kemalists (Duran, Cetinsaya and others, 2010, p.135).

After continuous state suppression that lasted for decades, in 1950, Kurdish nationalism and Islamism were reduced to a very weak position and became almost nonexistent while Kurdish religious and tribal leaders were articulated into the Turkish political system (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997, p.112). As a result of continuous disappointments, throughout the end of the 1950s Democrat Party's position among people, who can be categorized as Islamists such as sheiks,

landlords, and prominent leaders, in especially the east and south eastern region in Turkey, deteriorated.

As Turkish Islamist groups centered on the idea of the Turkish Islam Synthesis, more and more Kurdish people joined the leftist groups and parties (Çevik, 2012, p.94). For Turkish Islamists, protecting and sustaining the unity of the state has an important place. Altuntaş asserts religious nationalism as the sustaining of the strongest sense of belonging to a community (2010, p.420). While for Kurdish Islamists, Sharia is a way out to express their Kurdishness in the legal space; on the other hand, for the Turkish Islamists secessionist claims of their Kurdish counterparts has been violating the idea of unity in Islam.

Kurdish Muslims/Islamists, after the great rebellions of the early Republican era went into deep silence in the following decades. With the 1980s, Kurdish Islamists revealed themselves in several organizations. One of the most important and sounding was the Kurdish Hezbollah. According to Uslu, the first violent Islamist organization in Turkey was the Hizbu't Tahrir established in Ankara in the 1960s (2009, p.217). However, the most famous organization in terms of its violence was the Kurdish Hezbollah. The Hezbollah of Turkey is an Islamist movement, which was born and centered in the Kurdish region in Turkey in 1979, and the majority of its members consisted of Kurdish people (Bagasi). The organization laid its references on Islam and its provisions. Therefore, the Kurdish people's density in the organization did not transform its structure to a nationalist movement; on the contrary, given Islam's universalist call, the organization's sphere of influence reached all Muslims in the region.

During the first period (1979-1991), congregation was completed; then the invitation and education phases were carried out. In the second period (1991-2000), armed struggle against the PKK, *Menzil* group and "deep state's intelligence services" and gangs were initiated (Bagasi). Apart from violent struggles, the Hezbollah organization materialized comprehensive activities especially in the area of moral awakening and social life. The Hezbollah's motivation behind its struggle against the PKK was its avoidance of the religious values and sensitivity of the Kurdish people as well as its contribution to the sufferings and suppression of the Kurdish people side by side with the state forces (Çevik, 2012, p.98). The PKK and the Hezbollah fight lasted five years and resulted in the deaths of 200 Hezbollah followers and 500 PKK militants in addition to hundreds of civilian casualties

(Çevik, 2012, p.98). Following the PKK's leader Abdullah Öcalan's capture on 15 February 1999, operations, which aimed to destroy the Hezbollah, intensified. The Hezbollah's distinctiveness arose from its several features. The most important was its appeal to violence. Among Turkey's Islamists, armed struggle against one another or towards state structures is a rare phenomenon. Secondly, the Hezbollah was successful in constructing the strong sense of the idea of the "other". In addition, the Hezbollah members were considered proxy fighters of different organizations by different segments.

From the 17 January 2000 operation in Beykoz, Istanbul, until the establishment of the Free Cause Party in 2012, and the Hezbollah was not active politically. During the period, Turkey experienced a deep political, financial and social transformation. The AKP government starting from 2003, enabled the realization of a great sum of reforms. After years of economic, political and social crises, the people experienced a bloom in the economy and standards of living and more importantly a recovery in the expression of basic human and social rights. The Hezbollah community benefited from the new initiatives and environment as did the other social, religious and political groups. Expanding political opportunity structures such as the AKP governance, the Kurdish Initiative, extension of political and human rights, the PKK's inertia resulted in the political inclusion of the previously marginal groups. In addition to political opportunity structures, the changing internal dynamics of the Hezbollah Community (political learning process, decades long Kurdish issue and the closure of Mustazaf-Der) resulted in the moderation and foundation of the Huda-Par.

In order to analyze the degree of moderation, some factors are reviewed. Leaving the violence is the most important sign of the moderation. In terms of their position to state and the regime, Kurdish Islamists are much willing to participate in comparison to their past position. Therefore, founding a legal political party and accepting being bound by the law and codes is also an indication of the moderation. But when it comes to political pragmatism, they are still insistent on their ideology's conclusiveness. They are not willing to compromise on any of their political and ideological ends. Their methods are surely changed, but their goals are more or less the same.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

Interview with Mehmet Yavuz (The Huda-Par General Secretary) on 29 April  
2014

Turkish Version – Türkçe Versiyonu

- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : İslamcılığı kendinize göre tanımlar mısınız? Hür Dava Partisi’ni İslamcı olarak niteler misiniz? Partinin Türk İslamcı çizgisinden ayrıştığı noktalar var mı? Varsa nelerdir?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : İslami ve gayri İslami çizgi vardır. Bunun dışında bu gibi sıfat ve ayrıştırmaları doğru bulmuyoruz. Bu gibi kavram ve sıfatların iyi niyetli olduğunu düşünmüyoruz. İslam’ı da bir ideoloji gibi sunup diğer izmlerle aynı çizgiye oturtma gayreti olabilir. Bizim hareket noktamız İslam’dır.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Hizbullah’ın vaadiyle Hüda-Par’ın vaadi arasındaki farklar nelerdir?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Şiddet dışında, Hür Dava Partisi siyasi bir parti olduğundan kendini hukuk ve legal sınırlarla belirler. Hizbullah’ın hukuku sınır olarak kabul ettiğini düşünmüyorum.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin parti ideolojisinde yeri var mı?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Hiçbir milliyetçiliğin parti içinde yeri olamaz. Üstünlüğü takva belirler. Acemin Arap’a, Arap’ın Arap olmayana üstünlüğü yoktur, olamaz. Yoğunluklu olarak Kürt kökenli olmamız Kürt milliyetçiliği güdeceğimiz anlamına gelmez. Bölgenin sorunlarıyla daha yakından muhatap olduğumuz için böyle bir izlenim oluşabilir. Hangi milliyetten olursa olsun payda İslam olduğu için milliyet fark etmez. 55 şehirde teşkilatımızı kurduk. İnşallah 81 ilde de olmak için çalışıyoruz. Allah Teâlâ bizi kavimler olarak yarattı. Bu kavmiyetten kaynaklanan dil ve kültürün muhafazası ve yaşatılması bir haktır. Bunun engellenmesi için yapılanlar zulümdür. Türklük, Kürtlük, Arnavutluk... Tüm milletler Allah’ın birer ayeti. Millet olmaktan doğan özellikler de bunun tezahürleri. Bunların yasaklanması, silinmeye çalışılması İslam’ın ruhuna aykırıdır. Zulümdür.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt İslamcılığını ve Hür Dava Partisini tarihsel olarak nerede başlatır, birbirine nasıl eklemersiniz?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Suni kalıp ve kavramları kabul etmiyoruz. Bu tuzağa düşmek istemiyoruz. İslam tekdir. Türk İslamcılığı, Kürt İslamcılığı, Arap İslamcılığı gibi ayırımları kabul etmiyoruz. İttihat ve

- Terakki, Osmanlı modernleşmesini problemlerin kaynağı olarak görüyoruz.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt meselesi çerçevesinde BDP ve Hüda-Par'ın ayrışma noktaları nelerdir?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Birleştirici noktayı İslam olarak görüyoruz başka bir ideoloji değil. Ayrılmak, federal vb. bir talep gütmüyoruz ama 1. Dünya savaşından sonra çizilen güneydoğudaki sınırların problemin başlıca kaynağı olduğunu düşünüyoruz. Talebimiz var olan bu suni sınırların kaldırılması. Halkların birbirine kavuşması.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt meselesi çerçevesinde AKP ve Hüda-Par'ın ayrışma noktaları nelerdir?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Anadilde eğitim, Kürt dilinin resmi hüviyet kazanması.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : AKP hükümetiyle birlikte Kürt kimliğinin ifadesi ve Kürt karşıtı devlet refleksi arasındaki gerilim ne oranda azaldı?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Ciddi oranda değişim var. Belli hakların teslimi gerginliği azalttı.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Hüda-Par'ın ortaya çıkış noktası ve bunu tetikleyen olay/lar nelerdir?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Bölgesel boyutta, bölgenin içinde olduğu çatışma durumu. Sınırların mağduriyetler oluşturması. Türkiye bütünlüğü içinden baktığımızda, Müslümanların cumhuriyetin kurulmasıyla beraber çektikleri. Kürt Müslümanlar etnik aidiyet yüzünden çifte mağduriyet yaşamıştır. Uluslararası boyutta ise ümmet çağrısı. Ümmet bilinci. Birlik olma isteği. Türkiye'de Müslüman halk Cumhuriyet rejiminin kurulmasıyla büyük sorunlar yaşadı. Kürt Müslümanlar etnik kimliklerinin de etkisiyle daha çoğunu yaşadı.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt İslamcılığının siyasi bir parti olarak ortaya çıkması niçin bu kadar uzun sürdü?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Zulüm, baskı, yıllarca süren batılılaşma politikalarına ters düşenlerin acımasızca cezalandırılması.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Demokratik sürece katılımınız söylem ve pratiklerinizde ılımlılaşmaya/yumuşamaya yol açtı mı?
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kural değil istisna olacağız. Şu ana kadar Türkiye'de oluşmuş pratikler teoriyi desteklemiş olabilir. Ama dünyaya baktığımızda Hamas örneği var, Lübnan Hizbullah'ı var. Onlar siyasi sisteme dâhil oldukları halde ılımlılaşmadılar.

Interview with Mehmet Yavuz (The Huda-Par General Secretary) on 29 April 2014

English Version (translated by Tuğba Yaşaroğlu)

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What is your definition of Islamism? Do you identify the Huda-Par as an Islamist party? Are there any points that the Party differs from the Turkish Islamist line? What are they?

**Mehmet Yavuz** : There is Islamic path and un-Islamic path. Except these, we do not find other adjectives and ascriptions correct. We do not think that these kinds of concepts and terms are well intentioned. It can be well the idea that promoting Islam as other ideologies. Our motivation lies with Islam itself.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What are the differences between the Huda-Par and the Hezbollah's promises?

**Mehmet Yavuz** : Accept violence, the Huda-Par as a political organization limits itself with judicial and legal boundaries. I do not think that the Hezbollah accept the law as its boundary.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Is nationalism tolerated in the Party's ideology?

**Mehmet Yavuz** : Nationalism of any type cannot exist in our Party. The superiority is in piety. The Prophet's hadith says that there is no superiority of the Persian to Arab and of the Arab to non-Arab. Because of having majority from the Kurds does not mean that we will conduct Kurdish nationalism. Because we are more subject to the region's problems, there might be such kind of impression. From whichever nation is, as much the Islam is the common ground, it does not matter. We established our organization in 55 cities. Hopefully, we are working to be in 81 cities. Allah created us as clans. Protection and sustainment of the language and culture that arouse from belonging to a clan is a right. Turkishness, Kurdishness, Albanian... All nations are the verse of God. Features of being a nation are manifestations of it. Prohibition of these features and seeking to abandon them is against the spirit of Islam. It is oppression.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : How do you start the Kurdish Islamism and the Huda-Par historically and connect to each other?

**Mehmet Yavuz** : We do not accept these artificial terms and concepts. We do not want to be caught in this trap. Islam is the only. We do not accept the Kurdish Islamism, Turkish Islamism and Arab Islamism. We consider that the Party of Union and Progress and the Ottoman modernization as the source of all the problems.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What are the differences between the HDP and the Huda-Par on the Kurdish issue?

- Mehmet Yavuz** : We see Islam as a common point, not any other ideology. We do not seek a secessionist, federal claim, but we consider that the borders that were created after the WWI in southeastern region as source of the problem. Our demand is the abandonment of these artificial borders and rejoining of the people.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What are the differences between the AKP and the Huda-Par on the Kurdish issue?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Education in mother tongue, official recognition of the Kurdish language.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : With the AKP government, in which degree the tension between the expression of Kurdish identity and the state's reflexes against Kurdism is reduced?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : There is a change in a great extent. Recognition of some of the rights reduced the tension.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What is/are the triggering event/s that resulted in the emergence of the Huda-Par?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : In the regional aspect, the Middle East and Islamic world is under continuous conflicts. The borders in the region are not natural which create sufferings. From an international perspective, it is a call for ummah. Conscious of Ummah... Quest for uniting... In Turkey, Muslims suffered from the establishment of the Republic. Kurdish Muslims suffered more because of their ethnic belongings.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Why the Kurdish Islamism failed to produce a political party until recently?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : Oppression, suppression, punishing to the ones who went against the decades-long Westernization policies cruelly.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Did your participation to the democratic process result in the moderation of your discourse and practices?
- Mehmet Yavuz** : In terms of moderation, we will be exception, not the rule. Until now, the practices in Turkey might support the theory. But when we look at the world, there is the example of Hamas, there is the Lebanese Hezbollah. Although they are participated into political system, they did not moderate.

## APPENDIX B

Interview with Said Şahin (The Huda-Par Spokesperson) on 27 May 2014

Turkish Version – Türkçe Versiyonu

- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : İslamcılığı kendinize göre tanımlar mısınız? Hür Dava Partisi’ni İslamcı olarak niteler misiniz? Partinin Türk İslamcı çizgisinden ayrıştığı noktalar var mı? Varsa nelerdir?
- Said Şahin** : İslami bir partiyiz. İslamcılık son iki yüzyılda ortaya çıkmıştır. Öncesinde İslam ve gayri Müslim vardı. Batı emperyalizmi ve sömürüsüne karşın İslami bir takım hareketlerin siyasi olarak ortaya çıkmasıyla İslamcılık gündeme geldi. Özü itibariyle din İslam. İdareyi hedeflediğimiz için, batıyı sorguladığımız ve toplumu batı etkisinden kurtarmayı hedeflediğimiz için İslamcılık kimliğimiz vardır. Müslüman Kardeşler’i de örnek olarak verebiliriz. Kavga emperyalist dünyayla Müslümanlar arasında devam ediyor. Çoğunlukla işbirlikçileri üzerinden çıkar sağlayacak bir metot uygulanıyor. Bazen İslamcı diyebileceğimiz gruplar da bunlara dahil olup çanak tutabiliyor.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt Müslümanlarının (İslamcı olarak da düşünebiliriz) Türk İslamcılarından ayrışma noktaları var mı? Varsa neler?
- Said Şahin** : Türk ve Kürt İslamcılığı ayrımı vardır. Olmaması gerekir ama vakiada vardır. Sebebi ulusalcılık hastalığıdır. Batıdan kapılan bir hastalığın mikrobu olarak görüyoruz.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Hizbullah’ın vaadiyle Hüda-Par’ın vaadi arasındaki farklar nelerdir?
- Said Şahin** : Hizbullah ve Hüda-Par aynı kaynaktan beslenen farklı yapılar. STK, medya, eğitim, siyasi boyut, ya da illegal yapılanma... Bunların hepsi araç. Hepsinin üzerinde ise Kuran ve Sünnet var. Hizbullah’la araçlarımız, metot ve üslubumuz farklı. Ancak amaçlarda aynileşiyoruz.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin parti ideolojisinde yeri var mı?
- Said Şahin** : Her insanın bir ırkı var. İslam bir çatıdır. Çatının altında ırklar, renkler eriri. Çatıyı kenara itip, renkleri öne çıkardığımız zaman biz zarara düşeriz. Parti içinde diğer ırklara yönelik üstünlük ve ayrıcalık konumlandırmayı kabul etmiyoruz, bunu reddediyoruz.
- Kürt sorunu yüz yıllık cumhuriyetten daha eski bir sorun. Hakların tesisi ve iadesi için ırkını ön plana çıkarmandan çalışanları Kürt milliyetçisi olarak görmüyoruz.

- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt İslamcılığını ve Hür Dava Partisini tarihsel olarak nerede başlatır, birbirine nasıl eklemlersiniz?
- Said Şahin** : Tarihsel olarak parti olarak kurulmadan önce, Mustazaflar Hareketi, İslami şahsiyetler ve farklı sivil toplum kuruluşları olarak vardık. Stk'larda mücadele veren insanlar olarak hedeflerimiz aynıydı. Mayıs 2012 itibariyle Mustazaflar Hareketi sona erdirilince, Aralık 2013 itibariyle Partileşme süreci başladı.
- Yeryüzünde bazı ilahi sorumluluklarımız var. Bunların başında Peygamberlere teslim edilen adaleti teslim etmek geliyor. Adaletin tesisi güçle, güç sahibi olmak idari mekanizmanın kontrolüne ortak olmak (hüküm verici pozisyona gelmek), bu pozisyona gelebilmek için ise parti kurmak gerekti.
- Din, dil, ırk... Ne olursa olsun hakları yaşayabilmek önemlidir. İslam'ı özüyle referans aldık. Yetime, kadını hakkını veren, köleleri özgürleştiren bir İslam... Sadece iman ve ibadet boyutuyla uğraşan değil, adaleti ve ahireti kazandıracak bir İslam... Sadece Müslümanların değil gayri Müslimlerin de haklarını kullanabildiği İslam. Bu yüzden parti tüzüğümüzde akıl, can, nesil, din ve mal emniyeti parti tüzüğümüze girdi. Şehirleri kalkındırırken insanlığı da kalkındıran İslam...
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt meselesi çerçevesinde HDP ve Hüda-Par'ın ayrışma noktaları nelerdir?
- Said Şahin** : HDP ırkçılık üzerine kurulu bir yapı. Tek parti zihniyetinin Kürtlerdeki tezahürü. Kendi dışında farklılığa tahammülü olmayan bir yapı. Kürtlerin haklarını savunduklarına inanmıyoruz. Bunu kendilerine maske edip Kürtleri dinlerinden uzaklaştırmayı amaçlıyorlar.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt meselesi çerçevesinde AKP ve Hüda-Par'ın ayrışma noktaları nelerdir?
- Said Şahin** : AKP Kürtlerin haklarını iade etme noktasında diğer partilere oranla ileri aşamada. HDP ve PKK'yı Kürtlerin temsilcisi yalnızca onlarmış gibi güçlendirecek politikaları var. Kürtlerin tüm haklarını zaruret oluşturma şartıyla veriyorlar. HDP ortam oluşturuyor. AKP hak iadesi yapıyor. Bu şekilde iki yapı da güçleniyor. Hakları pazarlık konusu yapıyorlar. Bizim AKP'den beklentimiz hakların anayasal güvenceyle pazarlık konusu yapılmadan verilmesi. Bu şekilde HDP ve PKK zayıflar.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Hüda-Par'ın ortaya çıkış noktası ve bunu tetikleyen olay/lar nelerdir?
- Said Şahin** : Partiyi kurmamıza neden olan birkaç faktör ve amaç bulunuyor. Öncelikle, kitlemizin ihtiyacı vardı. Mustazaf-Der'e in kapanmasında yönetim merkezli mağduriyetler

yaşanmıştı ve bunların mücadelesini veren siyasi bir organizasyon yoktu. İkinci olarak, ülkenin idaresine etki edecek bir istek oluştu. Çünkü gerekli şartlar oluştu. Üçüncü olarak, Kürtlerin temsiliyeti problemi var. PKK ideolojisiyle taban birbirine zıt. PKK'nın önerdiği yapı halkın değerlerine aykırı. Dördüncüsü, İslamı referans alan ve sorumluluk mücadelesi veren bir siyasi parti bulunmuyor. Bu boşluğu Hüda-Par ile doldurma ihtiyacı var. Son olarak ise İslam coğrafyasının içinde bulunduğu durumu gösterebiliriz. İçinde bulunduğumuz coğrafya, emperyalizmin taşeron oluşumları üzerinden şekillendiriliyor. Biz halkımızın zenginlik ve değerlerini ve İslam'ın varlığını muhafaza etmek istiyoruz.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu**

: Kürt İslamcılığının siyasi bir parti olarak ortaya çıkması niçin bu kadar uzun sürdü?

**Said Şahin**

: Kürt İslamcılığını reddediyoruz. Türkiye halkına hitap ediyoruz. Misak-ı Milliye çok önemsemiyoruz. Yurtdışında partileşen bazı İslami gruplarla görüşerek İslami parti birliği oluşturma düşüncesindeyiz. Ümmetçi bir anlayıştayız, çizgideyiz. Siyasi olarak gecikmenin başlıca nedeni Türkiye şartlarının elverişsizliğidir. Cumhuriyet tarihi boyunca rejimin Kürtlere hayat hakkı tanımayan uygulamaları oldu.

Doksanlarda PKK ve devletin hedefindeydik. Kimlik olarak kendimizi ortaya koyamadık. Koyduğumuzda ortadan kaldırıldık. Müsaade edilmedi. 2000'li yıllardan sonra AKP iler şartlar değişti. Medya ve STK'lar üzerinden kendimizi ifade etmeye başladık. Sonrasında da siyasi parti geldi.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu**

: Diğer Kürt ve İslamcı gruplar da düşünüldüğünde Hüda-Par ve Mustazaflar Hareketi'nin farklılığı nerededir?

**Said Şahin**

: Farklı orijinli gruplar var. İslam'ın önüne Kürt kimliği getiren siyasi oluşumlar var. Farklılığımız, İslam'ı referans alan ve önüne başka bir şey geçirmeyen, insana hizmeti amaçlayan, hakkı olan hakları sağlayacak olan bir düşünce yapısında, İslami hareket oluşumuz.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu**

: Demokratik sürece katılımınız söylem ve pratiklerinizde ılımlılaşmaya/yumuşamaya yol açtı mı?

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu**

: Davet, tebliğ, ifade özgürlüğü hedefledik. Bazı problemler yaşadık. Bir parti üzerinden kendimizi ifade etmeye başladık. Parti güçlü bir araç, kullanma amacı güdüyoruz. Gayri İslami bir sistem mevcut. İslami kimliğimizle içinde varolup İslami amaçlarımızı gerçekleştirmeyi hedefliyoruz. Kimliğimizden taviz verecek bir yol gütmüyoruz. Adını temiz siyaset, dürüst siyaset koyuyoruz. Taviz istendiğinde, vazgeçmeyiz. Vazgeçtiğimiz idarenin kapısı olacaktır.

Değerlerimiz üzerine sistem içerisinde mücadele vermek üzere yola çıktık.

Interview with Said Şahin (The Huda-Par General Spokesperson) on 27 May 2014

English Version (translated by Tuğba Yaşaroğlu)

- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What is your definition of Islamism? Do you identify the Huda-Par as an Islamist party? Are there any points that the Party differs from the Turkish Islamist line? What are they?
- Said Şahin** : We are an Islamic party. The Islamism was appeared two centuries before. Before, there was Islam and non-Islam. Against the Western imperialism and colonialism, Islamism came into existence through the emergences of some Islamic movements. In essence, as we are aiming at an Islamic management, questioning the West and securing the religion; we have an Islamist identity. We can give the Muslim Brotherhood as an example. The struggle is going on between the imperialist world and Muslims. Mostly, the method is deployed over the collaborators. Sometimes, groups that we can call Islamists are also involved and invite.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Are there any points that the Party differs from the Turkish Islamist line? What are they?
- Said Şahin** : There is a difference between the Kurdish and Turkish Islamism. It should not be, but in reality there is. The reason is sickness of nationalism. We see it as a virus of Western illness.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What are the differences between the Huda-Par and the Hezbollah's promises?
- Said Şahin** : The Hezbollah and the Huda-Par are different structures that are nourished from the same source. NGOs, media, education, political organization or informal structure... They are all means. There is Quran and Sunnah over them. Our means, methods and wording is different from the Hezbollah. But, we became the same in purpose.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Is nationalism tolerated in the Party's ideology?
- Said Şahin** : Each person has a race. But Islam is a roof. Under this roof, races and colors melt. If we push the roof aside and drive the colors forward, we will suffer. We do not accept a position that will highlight Kurdish superiority against other races in the Party.
- The Kurdish issue is older than a hundred year of Republic. We do not consider the ones who work for reinstatement of the rights without highlighting his/her race as Kurdish nationalists.

- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : How do you start the Kurdish Islamism and the Huda-Par historically and connect to each other?
- Said Şahin** : Historically, before the establishment of the Party, we existed as Mustazaf-Der, Islamic personalities and different non-governmental organization. As a group of people who struggled in the NGOs, we had same purposes. When Mustazaf-Der was closed on May 2012, the process for founding a political party was started in December 2013. We have some moral duties in the earth. Foremost among these is the building justice that was commended to the Prophets. Securing the justice can be done with holding power, obtaining power can be done through sharing governmental authority, and sharing governmental authority can be done by founding a political party. Religion, language, race... In any circumstance, it is important to experience the rights. We referenced Islam with its essence. Islam that gives justice to the orphan and woman, freedom to the slaves... Islam that not only deal with the aspect of belief and worshipping, but cares for sustaining the justice and winning afterlife. Islam in which not only Muslims but also non-Muslims can find justice... Therefore, in our party charter, we included the principles of security of mind, life, generation, religion and property. An Islam while improving the cities cares for improving the human.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What are the differences between the HDP and the Huda-Par on the Kurdish issue?
- Said Şahin** : The HDP is a structure that is based on racism. It is the manifestation of single party mentality. The structure does not tolerate any differences. We do not believe that they are defending the Kurdish rights. They are wearing this as a mask and actually aiming at alienation of people from the religion.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What are the differences between the AKP and the Huda-Par on the Kurdish issue?
- Said Şahin** : The AKP has policies that are strengthening the BDP and the PKK. They behave like the BDP is the only representative in the issue. All the Kurdish rights are given because of obligation. The BDP is setting the scene, the AKP is returning the rights back and the BDP is strengthening more. The rights must be given with the constitutional assurance not through a sense of favor and without bargaining.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What is/are the triggering event/s that resulted in the emergence of the Huda-Par?
- Said Şahin** : There is couple of factors and motives which pushed us to found the Party. First of all, after the closure of Mustazaf-Der,

the need for masses became evident. There was victimhood because of central administration. There was not a struggling political organization which represented us. Second, Within the country, conditions were fulfilled which gave us impulse to effect the state's administration. Third, On the other hand, representation of the Kurdish masses had been a problematic issue. It is on the PKK's hands. However, their ideology is opposite to their mass that they represent based on anti-Islamic values. Fourth, In addition, there was not any single political party which takes Islam as reference and struggles for Islamic responsibility. This vacuum can be filled by the Huda-Par. Lastly; Islamic world is under the influence and making of subcontractors of the Imperialist forces. The Huda-Par aims to protect the wealth and values of its people as well as the existence of Islam in this geography.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Why the Kurdish Islamism failed to produce a political party until recently?

**Said Şahin** : We deny the Kurdish Islamism. We address to the peoples of Turkey. We do not pay attention to much to the national pact (misak-1 milli). We are thinking to build a union of Islamic parties via communicating other political parties abroad. We are in a panislamist line.

The leading cause for the delay in establishment of political party is the impracticality of the conditions in Turkey. There have been practices that did not give chance to the Kurds to carry their culture and values throughout the Republic's history. In the 1990s, we were the target of the PKK and the state. We could not manifest our identity. When we tried, we were abandoned. We were not allowed. After 2000s, with the AKP, the conditions are changed. We started to express ourselves through media and NGOs. Afterwards, political party is founded.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : If you consider the similar establishments, what is difference of the Huda-Par and *Mustazaflar* Movement?

**Said Şahin** : There are groups with different origins. There are political organizations that bring Kurdish identity before Islam. Our difference lies in referencing Islam and bringing nothing else before it, aiming at wellbeing of the human, an Islamic movement striving for its rights.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Did your participation to the democratic process result in the moderation of your discourse and practices?

**Said Şahin** : We aimed at freedom of expression and invitation (tebliğ). We have lived problems. We started expressing ourselves through a political party. The Party is a powerful tool and we

meant to use it. The system is un-Islamic. We are aiming at being with our Islamic values inside the system and realize our Islamic goals. We are not seeing a way through making concessions from our identity. We named it clean politics, honest politics. When the concession is asked, we cannot give it up. What we are going to give up will be the way of leading. We took the road to struggle with our values within the system.

## APPENDIX C

Interview with Aynur Sülün (The Huda-Par Vice President responsible for Family and Social Policies) on 10 June 2014

Turkish Version – Türkçe Versiyonu

- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Hüda-Par'ın kurulması aşamasını kendi katılımınız açısından anlatabilir misiniz? (sürece ne zaman ne şekilde dâhil oldunuz?)
- Aynur Sülün** : Daha önceleri STK faaliyetleri içerisinde aktif rol oynuyorduk. Amacımız kendi öz değerlerinden koştukça yozlaşan, manevi buhranlar yaşayan toplumun ıslahına katkıda bulunmaktı. Fakat bu faaliyetlerin yetersiz kaldığını, toplumun manevi değerlerini Siyasete taşımak gerektiğinin kanaatine vardık. Çünkü sistem yıllardır toplumun değerleriyle savaş halinde. Hüda-Par ailesi olarak yıllardır halkımızla el ele sivil toplum faaliyetleri gösterdiğimizden kangrene dönüşen ve sürekli ertelenip çözülmeyen sorunları yakinen görüyorduk. Dolayısıyla Hüda-Par toplumun ihtiyaçlarından doğdu. Üstelik toplumun elit kesimi içinden çıkmayıp aynı sıkıntıları yaşayan insanlardan oluşuyor.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Parti içinde sorumluluk alanınız nedir?
- Aynur Sülün** : Aile ve Sosyal İşlerden Sorumlu Başkan yardımcısıyım.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Uygulamayı düşündüğünüz projelerin uzun vadede topluma ne şekilde bir etkisinin olacağını düşünüyorsunuz?
- Aynur Sülün** : Öncelikle insanı imar etmekten işe başlayacağız inşallah. Özünden kopartıldığı için buhranlarda olan, yalancı bir tarihle avutulmuş, özgüvenini kaybetmiş, toplumu yeniden kendi özüne döndürecek projelerimiz var. Toplumumuzun maddi projelerden çok manevi projelere ihtiyacı var. Manevi değerler bir toplumu ayakta tutan temel dinamiklerdir. Toplumumuzun o dinamikleri patlatıldığından cinnetin eşiğinde yaşıyor. % 60' anti depresan ilaçları kullanıyor. Karşımızda freni boşalmış, irade hâkimiyeti olmayan, haz odaklı, hedefsiz, başıboş, ferdiyetçi bir gençlik var. Bu acilen önlem alınması gereken bir felakettir.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Hüda-Par'ı İslamcı olarak niteler misiniz? Neden?
- Aynur Sülün** : Bizim referansımız İslamdır. Biz bunu açıkça söylüyoruz. Cumhuriyetten bu yana yüzü Batıya döndürülen toplumumuzun İslamla onarılmaya ihtiyacı vardır. O Batı ki bugün uyuşturucuyla baş edemediği için yasal kabul etmiş;

intiharların, cinnetlerin, cinayetlerin, boşanmaların, kumarın, tecavüzlerin en fazla yaşandığı yerdir. Bize Batının değerleri çağdaşlık adı altında dayatıldığından beri toplum olarak hızla batıya doğru gidiyoruz. Batının da toparlanması için İslama ihtiyacı vardır. Üstelik İslamın tüm toplumları bir arada tutma özelliği vardır. İslam her dönem kendisinden çözüm üretilen tek dindir.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Size göre Müslüman Kürtlerin legal çerçevede siyasallaşması niçin bu kadar uzun sürdü?

**Aynur Sülün** : Şartlar çok değişti. Özellikle Türkiye'nin şartları doksanlı yıllardaki gibi değil. Artık Sistemin çarpıklıkları çok rahat eleştirilebiliyor. Düşünce ve ifade özgürlüğünün önündeki bir takım engeller de kısmen kalkmış durumda. Dolayısıyla zamanın ve şartların doksanlı yıllara göre daha uygun olduğunu düşünüyoruz.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt Müslümanlarının (İslamcı olarak da düşünebiliriz) Türk İslamcılarından ayrışma noktaları var mı? Varsa neler?

**Aynur Sülün** : Ayrışma noktaları olduğunu düşünmüyoruz. İslam gibi bir ortak inancımız var. İslam'da ırkçılık kınanmıştır. Hepimiz Âdem ve Havva'nın çocukları olarak kardeşiz. Üstelik Kürtler ve Türkler 600 sene hüküm süren Osmanlı'nın içerisinde barış içerisinde yaşamışlardır. Dünyanın en uzun İmparatorluğu olan Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda 42 etnik grup yüzyıllarca barış içinde yaşadıysa bu İslam'ın birleştirici özeliğindedir

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Hizbullah ve Hüda-Par arasında amaçlar açısından benzeşme ve farklılıklar var mı? Neler?

**Aynur Sülün** : Bildiğim kadarıyla Hizbullah yıllardır toplumun ıslahı çalışan bir cemaat. Biz de Hüda-Par ailesi olarak toplumun manevi değerlerine kavuşması için mücadele ediyoruz. Dolayısıyla hedeflerimizde benzerlik vardır. Ayrılık ise biz partiyiz, onlar ise cemaat.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Kürt meselesi çerçevesinde Hüda-Par'ın, HDP ve AKP'den ayrışma noktaları nelerdir?

**Aynur Sülün** : Ülkemizde Cumhuriyetten bu yana Müslüman Kürtler gerek Devletin, gerekse de PKK'nın zulmü altında eziliyor. Rejim yıllarca Kürtleri dönüştürmek, dinlerinden uzaklaştırmak ve ırklarını inkâr etmeleri için zulmetti. BDP her ne kadar Kürtlerin haklarını savunuyor gibi görünse de aslında bunu Truva atı olarak kullanıyor. Asıl amacı onları inançlarından uzaklaştırıp sol ideolojiyi dayatmaktır. Üstelik Kürt meselesi PKK/BDP meselesi değildir. Hükümetin Kürt meselesinde yalnızca onları muhatap alması, onları Kürtlerin temsilcisiymiş gibi görmesi yanlıştır. Tüm etnik grupları ve halkı muhatap almalıdır. PKK/BDP'yi Kürtlerin temsilcisi olarak görmek,

onları isteklerine boyun eğmek, halka yaptıkları zulümleri görmezden gelmek yanlıştır. AKP çözüm adı altında Kürtleri adeta BDP/PKK'nın insafına terk etmiştir.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Benzeri oluşumlar düşünüldüğünde Hüda-Par ve Mustazaflar Hareketi'nin farklılığı nerededir?

**Aynur Sülün** : Hüda-Par Mustazaflar Hareketinden gelen siyasi bir partidir.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Sizce demokratik sürece katılıyor oluşunuz söylem ve pratiklerinizde ılımlılaşmaya/yumuşamaya yol açtı/açar mı?

**Aynur Sülün** : Biz adımlarımızı sağlam atma niyetindeyiz. Sistemden muzdarip olup da iktidar olduktan sonra Sistemin savunucusu haline gelme gibi bir niyetimiz yoktur. Bu konuda tedbirlerimizi almış, güzergâhımızı belirlemiştir. Biz sistemin değişmesi gerektiğine inanıyoruz. Onun için halkı sistemin değerleriyle değil, sistemi halkın değerleriyle barıştırma, manevi değerleri siyasete taşıma niyetindeyiz.

Interview with Aynur Sülün (The Huda-Par Vice President responsible for Family and Social Policies) on 10 June 2014

English Version – Translated by Tuğba Yaşaroğlu

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Would you tell us about the process of the Huda-Par's foundation in terms of your participation?

**Aynur Sülün** : Before, we were actively engaged in NGO activities. Our purpose was to contribute to recovery of the society which suffered from retrogression and moral crisis. But we reached to the conclusion that these activities were not enough and we should have carried them to the sphere of politics. Cause, the system was giving fight against the values of the society for years. As the family of the Huda-Par, we were aware of the unresolved and long-standing problems as we were engaged in non-governmental organizations hand-in-hand with people. Therefore, the Huda-Par was born due to the needs of the society. In addition, it is not formed by the elite, but rather composed of people who suffered from same problems.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What is your responsibility within the Party?

**Aynur Sülün** : I am the vice president responsible for family and social affairs

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : How the projects you want to practice would benefit the society in the long-term?

**Aynur Sülün** : We will start with improving the human, hopefully. We have projects for the recovery of the society who is in moral crisis, entertained with a lying history, lost his confidence. Our society needs more of the moral projects rather than the

material projects. The moral values are dynamics that support the society. Since our society's dynamics were blown, it lives on the verge of insanity. 60 % uses antidepressant medicine. We have a youth who is out of control, weak, pleasure focused, purposeless, rambling, and individualistic. This is disaster that needs to be cautioned.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu**  
**Aynur Sülün**

: Do you identify the Huda-Par as an Islamist party? Why?  
: Our reference is Islam. We are telling this straightforward. Until the foundation of the Republic, our society whose head directed towards the West needs to be cured with Islam. Today, the Western world because of not handling the drug issues formulated it as legal; is the place where homicides, physiological crises, divorces, gambling, and rapes are the most common. We are going deep down as society as we have been imposed by the Western values under the name of modernism. In order the West to pull itself together, it needs Islam. Islam is the only religion which can produce solution in every period.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu**

: Why the Kurdish Islamism failed to produce a political party until recently?

**Aynur Sülün**

: The conditions are changed a lot. Especially, environment in Turkey is not similar in what it was in 1990s. Today, problems of the system can be criticized easily. Even partially, some of the obstacles before the freedom of thought and expression are removed. Therefore, we are thinking that the time and conditions are more suitable now in comparison to the 1990s.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu**

: Are there any points that the Party differs from the Turkish Islamist line? What are they?

**Aynur Sülün**

: We do not think that there are any differences. We have a common belief that is Islam. Racism is condemned in Islam. We are all sisters and brothers as we are sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. Also, Kurds and Turks had lived peacefully within the Ottoman realm that lasted 600 years. It is because of Islam's unifying characteristic which enabled 42 ethnic groups lived peacefully for centuries in the longest standing empire in the World.

**Tuğba Yaşaroğlu**

: What are the similarities and differences between the Huda-Par and the Hezbollah's promises and purposes?

**Aynur Sülün**

: As far as I know the Hezbollah is a community that works for the recovery of the society. We as the Huda-Par family are struggling for the society's cohesion to moral values. Therefore, there are similarities in terms of our purposes. The difference is we are a Party and they are a Community.

- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What are the differences between, the AKP, the HDP and the Huda-Par on the Kurdish issue?
- Aynur Sülün** : Since the foundation of the Republic, Muslim Kurds were oppressed because of the state and the PKK in our country. The regime oppressed the Kurds in order them to convert, remove the religion from their lives and deny their races. Although the BDP (the HDP) seems as it is defending the Kurdish rights, actually it is using this as a Trojan horse. Its real purpose is imposing the leftist ideology through drawing people away from their beliefs. The government's is making mistake in addressing only the BDP (the HDP) as the representative of the Kurdish people and seeing them as it is. The government should hear all the ethnic groups and people. Seeing the PKK/the HDP as the representatives of the Kurds, surrendering to their demands and ignoring the oppressions they are making to the people is mistaken. Under the name of solution, the AKP left the Kurdish people to the mercy of the PKK/the HDP.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : If you consider the similar establishments, what is difference of the Huda-Par and *Mustazaflar* Movement?
- Aynur Sülün** : Huda-Par is a political party that is birth within the *Mustazaflar* Movement.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Did/Will your participation to the democratic process result in the moderation of your discourse and practices?
- Aynur Sülün** : We are aiming at stepping straight. We do not wish to become the defenders of the system after being victim of it's for so long. For this issue, we took necessary cautions and defined our map. We believe that the system needs to change. Therefore, we are in purpose of making peace among the system and the values of people and carry these values into politics, not the vice versa.

## APPENDIX D

Interview with Faruk Bildirici (journalist in Hurriyet Ankara office) on 2  
December 2014

Turkish Version – Türkçe Versiyonu

- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Hizbullah'ı Kürt hareketi içerisinde nereye konumlandırırsınız?
- Faruk Bildirici** : Hizbullah'ın Kürt hareketinin içinde olduğunu düşünmüyorum. Hizbullah için ulusal kimlik değil, İslami kimlik mücadelesi etkilidir.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Hizbullah nasıl oluştu?
- Faruk Bildirici** : Öncelikle, İran İslam Devrimi'nden sonra İslami hareketler genel olarak güçlendi. Buna ilave olarak, bölgede emperyalist güçler kendini hissettirmeye başladı. Bu da İslamcı grupları savunma durumuna geçirdi. İkinci olarak, PKK'nın eylemlerini yoğunlaştırması karşısında, devletin Hizbullah'ın oluşmasına ve güçlenmesine izin verdiğini düşünüyorum. Bir süre sonra, devlet bu yapıyla mücadele etme zorunluluğu hissetti ve cemaat bir müddet baskı gördü.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : AKP hükümetinin iş başına gelmesiyle Kürt siyaseti ve Cemaat ile ilgili ne gibi değişimler oldu?
- Faruk Bildirici** : AKP iktidarıyla birlikte yeni bir evreye girildi. Cemaat kendine daha rahat bir çalışma ortamı buldu. Güneydoğuda CHP ve MHP gibi siyer siyasi oluşumlar çekilmek durumunda kaldı.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Sizce Hüda-Par'ın bir şansı var mı? Cemaat bir değişim geçirdi mi?
- Faruk Bildirici** : Güneydoğuda muhafazakar taban Hüda-Par'a yönelebilir. Bu anlamda şansları olduğunu düşünüyorum. Cemaatin partileşmesini yeni bir fikri değişimden ziyade gücün geldiği yeni aşama olarak görüyorum.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Bölgenin son durumuyla ilgili ne düşünüyorsunuz?
- Faruk Bildirici** : Kobani'yle ilgili olarak İslamcı Kürtlerin ve ulusalcı Kürtlerin karşı karşıya gelmesi beni korkutuyor. Birbirlerine yaklaşma ve öldürme şekilleri aslında geçmiş olayları geride bırakamadıklarını, bir nefret birikiminin olduğuna işaret ediyor. Öcalan'ın statüsünde bir değişim var. PKK liderinden Kürtlerin lideri haline geldi. Gruplar arasında bir nüfuz çatışması oluşmaya başladı. Hüda-Par ve HDP'yi destekleyenlerin ortak yönü iki grubun da demokratik nitelikleri. Bu nitelik ne yazık ki kendi

dışındakinin örgütlenmesini kabullenemiyor, diğerini yok etmeye çalışıyor. Bu nedenle bu grupların/örgütlerin bir araya gelmeleri Kürt davası için bile olsa neredeyse imkansız.

Interview with Faruk Bildirici (journalist in Hurriyet Ankara office) on 2  
December 2014

English Version – Translated by Tuğba Yaşaroğlu

- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Where do you locate the Hezbollah within the Kurdish movement?
- Faruk Bildirici** : I do not think that the Hezbollah takes place within the Kurdish movement. For the Hezbollah, not the national identity but Islamic identity struggle is important.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : How did the Hezbollah bring about?
- Faruk Bildirici** : Foremost, Islamic movements strengthened after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. In addition, in the region, imperialist forces started to felt themselves. This resulted in the deployment of a defensive position among the Islamist groups. Secondly, because of the increase in the PKK's activities, i believe that the state permitted the establishment and empowerment of the Hezbollah.  
After a while, the state felt necessity of combatting against this structure and consequently, the organization experienced suppression.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : With the AKP government, what kind of changes have taken place about the Kurdish politics and the Hezbollah organization?
- Faruk Bildirici** : With the AKP leadership, a new era has started. The group found a better environment to work. In the southeastern Turkey, political parties such as CHP and MHP had to withdrawal.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : Do you think Huda-Par has any lack? Did the Hezbollah community experience a transformation?
- Faruk Bildirici** : In the southeast, conservative base can incline towards Huda-Par. In this context, i believe that they have chance. I see the legalization of the group as a new phase which led by change in power setting rather than a transformation in ideology.
- Tuğba Yaşaroğlu** : What do you think about the latest situation in the region?
- Faruk Bildirici** : About Kobani, i am afraid of the idea that the Islamist Kurds and nationalist Kurds coming across in the streets. The way they approach and kill each other reveals that they could not leave the past atrocities behind and an accumulation of hate. There is a change in the status of Öcalan. He became the

leaders of the Kurds rather than the leader of the PKK. There happened to start a penetrative conflict among the groups. The only common thing between the supporters of the Hûda-Par and the HDP is their democratic quality. This quality, unfortunately, do not bear the idea of the organization of the other and seeks to destroy it. Therefore, it is almost impossible to expect that these groups/organizations might eventually bring together even for the Kurdish cause.