

**DYNAMICS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION IN TURKISH PRISONS:  
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MAMAK AND DIYARBAKIR PRISONS BETWEEN  
1980 AND 1985**

by

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Historically, one of the most significant periods in which incarceration was used as a tool to manage political opponents of the regime in Turkey was the 1980s, specifically during and after the 1980 military coup. This study investigates the high-risk environments of the two notorious military prisons: Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons between 1980 and 1985. These two military prisons: Mamak Prison, where Turkish revolutionaries were incarcerated and Diyarbakir Prison, where Kurdish revolutionaries were incarcerated, were infamous for the torture and level of repression implemented by the military junta. The aim of the military junta was to dissolve revolutionary organizations and military prisons were one of the state institutions that were used to realize this aim. Thus, while comparing the dynamics of collective action of the political prisoners in two prisons, I also consider how different prisons/ prison contexts affect the success a regime has in demobilizing dissident groups.

Using in-depth interviews I conducted, along with contemporary writings from former political prisoners, my research will demonstrate how the development of solidary interpersonal relations and shared identity were solidified during prison life and facilitated formation of collective action. Moreover, the risk-taking ability of the leaders appear as contingently interconnected themes to identity and relations in explaining how political prisoners in

Diyarbakir Prison formed more frequent and sustainable collective actions than the political prisoners in Mamak Prison. This thesis contributes to the discussions of different mobilization processes under high-risk contexts in undemocratic environments and addresses the understudied aspect of collective action in Turkish prisons.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Historically, one of the most significant periods in which incarceration was used as a tool to manage political opponents of the regime in Turkey was the 1980s, specifically during and after the 1980 military coup. This study investigates the high-risk environments of the two notorious military prisons: Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons between 1980 and 1985. In the following text, I define the two aforementioned prisons as “high-risk” in accordance with the severe state repression that occurred in these spaces. Christian Davenport states that the “actual or threatened use of physical sanctions towards an individual or organization within the territorial jurisdiction of a state would count as state repression” (Davenport 2009: 377-85). State repression can exist in many forms, such as: mass arrests, espionage, mass killings, torture, bans, outlawing political organizations, and censorship. Mamak and Diyarbakir prisons were the spaces where extreme levels of these repressive measurements were implied on political prisoners. This is why I will proceed without reservation in this study to call such environments “high-risk.”

The aim of the military junta was to dissolve revolutionary organizations and military prisons were one of the state institutions that were used to realize this aim. Between 1974 and 1980, the street protests and university occupations were among the largest protests in the history of the Republic of Turkey. Coalition member of the era, Republican People’s Party (CHP) was depicting the situation as a “de facto civil war” (Boratav 2006). Armed attacks and violent

clashes between revolutionary and right wing insurgents and the police were common occurrences. Assassinations by both right and left wing groups had mounted to over 5,000 by September 1980. Turkey's military leaders abolished the parliament after a coup. The junta then imposed martial law on the entire country (Amnesty International 1982). The military coup of 1980 in Turkey crushed the increasing protest cycles of the 1970s, seeking to deactivate the labor unions as well as the socialist revolutionary organizations.

The junta, consisting of five generals, declared martial law in 67 provinces in Turkey. Members of armed, unarmed, legal, and illegal right wing and left wing organizations were charged in military courts and held in military prisons, thus resulting in an exponential increase of political prisoners in military-run prisons. With the coup, all political and trade union activity was banned, political parties shut down and their leaders were arrested and major newspapers were closed. One of the most visible legal impacts of the coup was the decrease in the number of union member workers from five million in 1980 to one million in 1984 (Yılmaz 2013).

Within the first six weeks after the coup, 11,500 people were arrested (Zurcher 2004). This number rose to 30,000 by the end of 1980. Then, only a year later, this number rose to 122,600 arrests. By September 1982, a total of 80,000 people were still imprisoned, 30,000 of who were awaiting trial (Zurcher 2004). Almost one third of the prisoners were political prisoners and nearly all of them kept in military prisons. Between 1980 and 1986 a total of 650,000 people were arrested in Turkey; 230,000 of them were tried, and 7,000 were convicted and sentenced with capital punishment (Yılmaz 2013). The fifty condemned prisoners who were ultimately executed included members of the parliament, political parties, and trade unions (Yılmaz 2013). The findings of Amnesty International in Turkey confirmed reports of torture being used by police and military personnel. Such practice became widespread and skyrocketed during the

1980s. The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT) declared that by 2008, there were over one million victims of torture in Turkey. Amnesty International repeatedly documented that, in practice, incommunicado detention was often longer than the legal duration and systematic torture was being practiced in military prisons (Amnesty International 1985).

As can be gleaned from the numbers, the use of imprisonment and violence was intimately linked to an imperative for state control. The absolute authority of military officials in fact began a new era in prisons of Turkey. The military's disciplinary control aimed to turn prisoners into obedient, Turkish nationalist, soldier-like citizens, and those who refused were violently punished with methodical torture practices. In this politically antagonistic environment, three prisons turned into infamous places of torture: namely, Mamak Prison, in Ankara; Metris Prison, in Istanbul; and, the Diyarbakir Prison, in Diyarbakır—which was often referred to as the '*dungeon*' or '#5'.

Within the scope of this MA thesis I focus on Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons. The ethnic difference between the prisoner populations in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prison highly matters in this analysis. The reason behind the fact that Diyarbakir Prison was enlisted within the top ten notorious prisons of the world was extreme violence imposed by the soldier-guards deriving from Turkish state's historical denial of the Kurdish identity.

The significance of Kurdish identity in this process did not develop in the prison, it instead stems from a historical ethnic discrimination. Kurdish identity and language had been denied for 60 years in the Turkish Republic by the time the military coup of 1980. Educated Kurdish youth had started to get politically organized in the 1950s, and by the 1970s there was a plethora of Kurdish revolutionary organizations. Some of these groups chose to use political violence and started forming armed groups as a method to combat the Turkish state towards the end of 1970s.

Those Kurdish insurgents, mostly students, of 1970s became the political prisoners in Diyarbakir Prison with the 1980 military coup. Later in the post-coup era, starting in 1984, a significant portion of those released political prisoners from Diyarbakir Prison has mobilized to Kurdistan Workers Party's (PKK) guerilla camps (Zeydanlioglu 2009).

Since the aim of these military prisons was to dissolve the revolutionary organizations, Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons have significant roles in determination of which political organizations survive and continue as political players and which would not survive. The commanders of martial law in each city determined the characteristics of the prisons. More than that, they appointed the chief commanders of the prisons: Raci Tetik<sup>1</sup> for Mamak Prison and Esat Oktay Yildiran<sup>2</sup> for Diyarbakir Prison. Both commanders were given the authority to train guards to conduct torture on the prisoners and incite misconduct in the prisons. The main aim of this thesis is to explain different processes of resisting statist authority by forming collective action in two prisons, Mamak and Diyarbakir.

Studying collective action in prison environments is significant for several reasons. Evidently, there is a significant deficit of sociological research on Turkish prisons and their corresponding historical relationship with the social movements. The written material on political prisoners' resistance is limited to political organizations' self-promotional literature, the counter-propaganda of the state, and the memoirs of former political prisoners. Sociologists can help analyze these competing narratives and advance understandings of how the use of incarceration as a tool of political repression impacts oppositional mobilization and vice versa. Here in this study, I present how the Turkish state tried to dissolve revolutionary social

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<sup>1</sup> He served in special armed units with the NATO forces in Korea War (1950) and Turkey's invasion of Cyprus (1974). He was publicly missing after the prison mission. The place he lives is still unknown.

<sup>2</sup> He served in special armed units in Turkey's invasion of Cyprus too. They both confessed in interviews and dialogues with the prisoners that they practiced the torture methods in the prisons, which they learned and practiced in those previous overseas missions. Esat Oktay Yildiran was shot and killed by a PKK member in a public bus later in 1988.



movement organizations and their networks through incarceration. I focus on Diyarbakir and Mamak prisons and the response of political prisoners to the oppressive measures.

This thesis contributes to collective action literature and addresses the discussions on different mobilization structures under high-risk contexts in undemocratic environments. Moreover, it investigates both sides of collective action and repression through comparisons. After identifying several ways in which the two prisons differ—in terms of severity and imposition of repression and different tactics promoted by prisoners’ leaders—I will then further investigate how the relationship between repression and resistance interacted differently in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons.

This mission is possible to the extent that we distinguish between actions of the state and those of movement actors. The actions of the state, here also the actions of the soldiers who run these prisons, shape the ebbs and flows of the insurgents’ actions. According to Charles Tilly, political opportunity structures limit movement actions as well as movement struggles shapes opportunity-threat structure (Tilly 1998). “Opportunity structure refers to features of regimes and institutions that facilitate or inhibit a political actor’s collective action and to changes in those features” (Tarrow and Tilly 2007: 440).

Thus, I situate the four factors that I claim them to have explanatory roles in the process of engaging in collective action, into the changes in the political opportunity-threat structure. Within these four aspects first, I look into the state actions, which will unpack the opportunity structure namely, and more specifically, the different modes and varying levels of how state repression was exercised in the two prisons. Since Kurdish prisoners’ ethnic identity has a salient role in determining the ways and levels of exercising state repression in two prisons next, I consider the development of a shared identity around “Kurdishness” as a very important factor in

Diyarbakir Prison to forge collective action. Development of solidary interpersonal relations among prisoners, which were solidified during the course of prison life, and, the quality of leadership also appear to be explanans of the different courses of collective action in these two prisons. I define quality of leadership based on the following factors: a leader's willingness to take risks on behalf of the others, to act first in a situation of conflict and mobilize the followers. I will use the term, "risk-labile leadership" to denote a leader's capacity and willingness to take part in risky actions first among the others. The characteristics of the insurgents' actions impact whether state repression is effective or not. I argue that repression propels collective action if there is a risk-labile leadership presence, in addition to the development of a shared identity and solidary relations between the insurgents in these prisons.

Different approaches to the relationship between state repression and dissidence do not agree on a single outcome. Contextualizing each case is important to find out different dynamics in that relationship. As a result of my research, I contend that the extreme repression in Diyarbakir Prison impeded the recruitment to collective action at first, even though the initial attempts of collective action remained limited to the leaders. As time went by, indiscriminate and extreme repression turned into an opportunity to form alternative solidary relationships, which were crucial in recruitment to high-risk collective action in prisons. The conflicts in between the political organizations based on their ideological positions were the main reason of their in-cooperation at first. However, severe attacks against Kurdishness and inmates' sexualities worked for them to overcome those ideological conflicts and helped them act together in the context of Diyarbakir Prison. Furthermore, the role of risk-labile leaders and their framing of resistance under the concept of "honor" facilitated the formation of collective action in Diyarbakir Prison.

On the other hand, moderate-level, selective repression in Mamak Prison and cohabitation of left and right wing political prisoners hindered the formation of alternative personal relationships other than the prior organizational ties. On top of these aforementioned factors, the dearth of risk-labile and people-oriented leadership stunted the formation of collective action in Mamak. Although Kurdishness became a tool for the prisoners in Diyarbakir Prison to determine clear lines between them and the Turkish soldier-guards, ideological conflicts causing in-cooperation in Mamak prison remained salient throughout the process, thereby hindering any significant chance to successfully form a collective action. Exceptionally for Mamak, female political prisoners could overcome their contested relations and form a culture of resistance among them-selves. As a result, we witness fewer and less sustained instances of collective action in Mamak Prison and greater and more sustained collective actions in Diyarbakir Prison.

I will explicate the abovementioned processes and dynamics in detail through this thesis. In Chapter I, I visit theoretical discussions on incarceration, prison riots, and collective action. In Chapter II, I document the brief history of Turkish prisons and the Kurdish question. Further in Chapter III, I provide the Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons in detail. Lastly, in Chapter IV, I analyze my research findings.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

I conducted 28 semi-structured, open-ended in-depth interviews with former prisoners, who were incarcerated in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons during 1980 - 1985. Their age ranged between 50 and 80 years when I conducted the interviews. These interviews took place in February and March of 2014 in Istanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakir. Each interview lasted between 90 – 120 minutes.

My interviewees consisted of twelve former prisoners from Mamak prison and sixteen from Diyarbakir prison. Six out of twelve Mamak interviewees were Revolutionary Path (Dev-Yol) members. Remaining included two Acilci, one People's Liberation Army of Turkey (THKO-Devrim Yolu), one Workers Party of Turkey (TIP), one Halkin Kurtulusu (People's Salvation, HK) and one Revolutionary War (Dev-Savas) members. Diyarbakir interviewees, on the other hand, belonged to the following organizations: four Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association (DDKD), three Kurdistan National Liberations (KUK), two Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), two Rizgari, one Ala Rizgari, one THKO and one Kurdistan Socialist Party of Turkey (TKSP-Ozgurluk Yolu) member. Furthermore, my Diyarbakir prison interviewees included one non-affiliated prisoner and one former smuggler. Vast majority of the Diyarbakir prisoners were PKK members.

I use the testimonies of former political prisoners as my primary data sources for this study. Literature written by former prisoners, independent researchers and journalists are referenced in this study as secondary sources. Public access to reliable state reports and documentation from this time period is very limited. Therefore, I do recognize the limitations and accuracy of human perspective and recollection, most especially interviewees recalling their prison experiences from over 30 years ago. And yet, it must be understood the limited record of the recorded experiences from political prisoners during the military regime. Striving for knowledge of such first-hands accounts is important for helping both Turkish citizens and the international community to understand what happened in that time period between 1980 and 1985. As Beatriz Sarlo claims with reference to Susan Sontag, “understanding is more important than remembering; but to understand first we have to remember”(Sarlo 2012). Even though testimonies might be partial, recounting them in this thesis is a big part of the understanding process.

In order to locate my interviewees for this study, I employed a snowball sampling method. First, I contacted my sources at HDP (Halkların Demokratik Partisi)<sup>3</sup>, CISST (Ceza Infaz Sisteminde Sivil Toplum Derneği)<sup>4</sup>, VAKAD (Van Kadın Derneği)<sup>5</sup>, and several others that directed me to a larger web of connections, thereby allowing me to make a concerted effort to contact potential interviewees. The interviews took place in a variety of locations, such as: cafes, office spaces, and some of the interviewees’ homes. I recorded all the interviews, except for one that I could not because of a technical problem. All of my sources consented to allow me to use

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<sup>3</sup> People’s Democratic Party

<sup>4</sup> CİSPSO (Civil Society in the Penal System Organization)

<sup>5</sup> Van Women’s Association

their real names in the thesis, but I have instead chosen to use pseudonyms to avoid potential risks.

Additionally, I was successful in locating rare but informative autobiographies and memoirs written by former political prisoners. I coded the interviews and identified the themes and concepts that are central to my study. I analyzed all these accounts in light of the theoretical framework that I drew from the literature on prisons, state repression, social movements and particularly collective action. Before presenting my framework, I find sharing the limitations of my research useful.

## **2.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

Even though the vast majority of Diyarbakir prisoners were PKK members, I could only reach two former PKK member inmates. This was largely in part due to my limited time in Diyarbakir. My progress was impeded also since my visit took place shortly before the local election date. I soon discovered that many former inmates, who were still activists—most of them had become guerillas—, had either returned to their villages or refused to be interviewed.

Fortunately most of the written memoirs on Diyarbakir Prison belong to former PKK members thus, I compensate the flow in the interviews. Furthermore, it is especially important to note that I was unable to interview a right-wing, former prisoner for this study. Even though, I reached one, he was unwilling to participate in my study. Since, the right-wing prisoners never contributed or tried to form collective action in Mamak Prison, this does not influence the generalizability of my sample. I could only reach three female informants from Diyarbakir

Prison and five from Mamak. The population of female political prisoners in Diyarbakir Prison was at most 75 out of the estimated 1,000 – 2,000 prisoners at a time. In Mamak, on the other hand, the number of female political prisoners reached at most 200 out of the estimated 1,000 to 2,000 prisoners. Therefore, detailed experience of female prisoners and their different coping mechanisms with repression is not complete in my analysis. Secondary sources on the experience of female political prisoners in Mamak provide some lead. However, for the Diyarbakir prison sources on female prisoners are highly insufficient compared to Mamak. Due to time limitations and the scope of my research I could not reach more female interviewees. There is a great need to conduct further research on women's experience especially in Diyarbakir.

After officially requesting information from the Ministry of Justice on the number and sex information of the inmates during 1980-1987, I then asked permission to visit the prisons to be able to provide a more accurate description of such spaces. Unfortunately, the Ministry responded that they do not hold such records. Thus, to compose a thorough and balanced study, I decide to deduce the total number of prisoners from informants' guesses and official trial cases. Another compensation for this thesis would be to conduct a comprehensive review of newspapers and trial cases. I believe the researchers' own social and political locations and persona have also effects on the research outcomes; therefore I also want to share my reflections with you.

## 2.2 REFLECTIONS ON THE FIELD

My gender, age, and personal political position without a doubt affected the results of my research study. For instance, I could not contact any former prison guards and was able only to reach one right-wing political prisoner, who then declined to participate in my study. I tried to contact a lawyer of a former right-wing prisoner, but they were not willing to meet with me. Moreover, I was aware that the male political prisoners were unlikely to share accounts of their experiences of sexual torture with a female interviewer. This was made evident when one of my male subjects frankly stated that he would have shared more information if I were to be a male. This was confirmed when the aforementioned interviewee was about to recount an instance during which guards were burning an old man's pubic hair and continued to burn him up to his face. But his friend, who joined us for part of the conversation, persuaded him to tell the story while I was in the women's restroom. Then, my interviewee said he had been persuaded by his friend to tell me the story because I was his daughter's age. After he considered this fact, he said it would not be so *ayip* (inappropriate). I was in a disadvantaged position because of my gender with male informants but my age occasionally compensated for that. There were times that female prisoners also told me if I were a male researcher they would not tell me their "intimate" memories. However, I must also note that they did make me turn off my sound recorder, while recounting sexual harassment and torture experiences.

In some of the interviews, both my gender and age became a barrier, but the fact that I was not an official member of a political organization presented a neutral ground where they could



share their experiences. For example, two of the male informants from Dev-Yol's central committee were not disposed to share their stories with me. They asked if I was a daughter of a member of their group or if I was a member of any other political organizations. When I said "no", they were relieved because they said "others" try to discredit Dev-Yol with their work on Mamak Prison.

Some of the male interviewees from the Turkish revolutionary organizations, especially the Dev-Yol members, also hesitated to talk to me, citing my youth as the reason. And probably because I was a young female student, they did not take me seriously at first. Very often I was hit with a barrage of questions on the topic before I even conducted an in-depth interview. I had to meet some of my subjects several times for such quizzes before my subject complied to answer my research questions at the actual interview. Because of their attitudes toward my presence and research questions, I felt the need to dress more formally for those interviews. I started to wear a little make up and heeled boots rather than sneakers when I met them. This change in my outfit had the opposite effect in my Diyarbakir field study and interviews, whereas the Kurdish group of former prisoners treated me with extra kindness and respect. My conjecture is that they assumed I was a lecturer or professor, despite having informed them I was still in graduate school. Overall, male informants from Diyarbakir were more willing to talk, and were friendlier than the male informants from Mamak. On the other hand, being a young woman had a positive effect on all female informants. I never felt the need to change my appearance, in order to get female subjects to respond openly and respectfully.

I hope laying out the limitations and my reflections on this research before showing its strengths and novelty take us to a more comprehensive understanding of the cases I investigated. In the text below, I first present a selective review of the existing literature and then draw a

frame to analyze my cases. Also, this brief review will provide alternative routes to think about this research.

### **3.0 CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Social movement theories, such as resource mobilization, rational choice and political opportunity structure offer various approaches to explain collective action. Such theories explore why and how people mold their individual wills into collective performances and claims. Furthermore, these theories tend to expound on the particular conditions that such actions lead to a change in an existing situation. Collective action has been researched in a cross-disciplinary tradition, in disciplines ranging from criminology, political science, psychology and sociology.

Unique forms of collective performances occur in prisons under constrained conditions. To have a multifaceted analysis of this inquiry, I will incorporate a blend of structural and constructivist theories by highlighting micro-level processes of mobilization. Herein, I will provide a general overview of collective action literature as it relates to prison actions. My aim is to develop an analytical framework to better understand the dynamics of collective action in Mamak and Diyarbakir prisons between 1980 and 1985.

Analysis of collective action finds place in social movement theories. These theories mainly evolved around rationalist, structural and cultural perspectives. Each viewpoint offers various approaches to explaining the formation, recruitment, and mobilization processes of collective action. Dynamics between macro-level structures and micro level-mobilization processes, mainly between the state repression and the constructed aspects of the social world

such as emotions, culture, identity, face to face interactions, space and time have explanatory power for this thesis. By drawing a framework for the cases I will explain the variations in formation of collective action under different opportunity structures.

### **3.1 THEORETICAL DISCUSSION AND LITERATURE ON PRISONS**

Contrary to popular belief, the history of prisons and imprisonment in the modern sense does not go very far back into world history. Imprisonment as it is enforced today, which may occur prior to or preceding a sentence by a constituted court, became the dominant form of punishment only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe (Morris and Rotman 1995) The concept of imprisonment was introduced as a humane alternative to physical punishment. In Turkey, the transformation from traditional understanding of justice to rationalized penal codes began to emerge in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. “Modern” forms of imprisonment only trace back to the introduction of the Tanzimat (Reformation) edict during the late Ottoman Empire in 1839.

Some of the early scholars on prisons, such as Gresham Sykes, Micheal Ignatieff, Dario Melossi, Otto Kirkheimer & George Rusche, Erving Goffman, Micheal Foucault and Bert Useem & Jack Goldstone investigated prisons, recognizing the importance of prisons as prototypes of the society. These scholars built their theories of the society at large on their critical observations of prisons. Unsurprisingly, early studies on imprisonment are based on white men’s experience. Prior to 1980s, there is a meager chance one will find critical frameworks on issues of race or experience from female prisoners. In these early studies, matters

of identity, subjectivity and agency are implicit too. Yet in this work, I conceive the issues of identity and agency in the prison as crucial points when explaining collective action in prisons. I will approach prisons not as places where only power and surveillance dominates, but instead as contested spaces where power and resistance are constantly in flux amongst both prisoners and guards. To this end, I will mainly utilize Foucault, Goffman and David Garland's ideas of imprisonment to constitute the medium through which I want to frame my argument about collective action in prisons.

### **3.1.1 Core Justifications for Imprisonment in Penology**

*“Many total institutions, seem to function merely as storage dumps for inmates, but they usually present themselves to the public as rational organizations designed consciously, as effective machines for producing a few avowed and officially approved ends (Goffman 1961:74).*

*“Juridical punishment is not the transparent and rather self-evident institution of crime control that is commonly taken to be... Punishment today is a deeply problematic and barely understood aspect of social life, the rationale for which is by no means clear (Garland 1990:3)”.*

Historically, penologists have determined the most common justifications for imprisonment, such as: incapacitation, deterrence, retribution, and rehabilitation (treatment). Incapacitation is the most usual justification among different societies, as it effectively curbs the prisoner's ability to inflict criminal harm on those outside prison walls (Morris & Rotman 1995: 4-11). Incapacitation was not a form of punishment in itself, but rather a means to prevent a criminal suspect from disappearing before a decision could be made in the legal system.

Morris and Rotman explain deterrence as a justification to imprisonment, since it ideally prevents people from acting against the law (1995). However, Garland shows that prisons are not so effective in deterring people from offences. In contrast, his studies show that the possibility of an ex-prisoner to re-commit a crime is more than the first timers (Garland 1985). Another way of justifying prisons is the concept of retribution, which proposes to redress injustice. In a way, it was a moralist justification to “make even” the relationship between the offender and the offended. Finally, rehabilitation as a justification for imprisonment came into play through 17<sup>th</sup> during the European Enlightenment era.

Rehabilitation (treatment) differs from deterrence in the way it aims to change and give a new form to the prisoners’ attitudes. Institutional schedules based on hours devoted to education, praying, preaching, workshops and etc., were first implemented in North American and British prisons, as it very much reflected real or imagined Protestant ethics of hard work, prayer, and the ethical purification of one’s self (Garland 1985:27-53). Communal-based sentencing—for example, the ward system in Turkey, where 20-80 prisoners inhabited a single unit—went hand-in-hand with the rehabilitative form of punishment. The treatment approach superseded security, prevention, and deterrence rhetoric of punishments in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Garland 1985). However, starting in the late 1970s, risk-management and security approaches replaced the emphasis on treatment.

According to Garland prisons host a continuous relationship with culture and politics (1995). Thus, the prisons of 1980 military coup era gained a new meaning and function for the prison officials, governors and the inmates. In addition to deterring political prisoners from further political action outside the prison, the coup era prisons became like an incubator where the prison governors aimed to separate each political prisoner from their affiliated organization

network and dissolve their organization structure by the use of ‘rehabilitation’, coercion and torture. Strict planning of the daily routines of physical and normative education sessions was imposed on inmates. Normative education sessions were composed of memorizing the official chauvinistic history and military anthems whereas physical education was to practice exercising and marching in the military order. Yet the goal of ‘treatment’ was to create the ideal nationalist Turkish citizen, who would give up the revolutionary ideology or dissent they were imprisoned for, and instead adopt Turkish nationalistic ideas and religious manners together with the military’s disciplinary edicts. Revolutionary ideas of socialism and communism were even named as extensions of a mental disorder by the state-hand controlled media, politicians and medical doctors. Some psychiatrists of the era published how “pathological” is to be an insurgent and that is a form of “psychopathy”<sup>6</sup>. Thus, the insurgents who demand a revolutionary change in the social order were stigmatized as deviants and traitors, who needed to be re-conditioned into obedient citizens. In the 1980 coup d’état era, the military used the prisons to transform insurgents into resigned and compliant citizens.

### **3.1.2 Disciplinary Power and Resistance in the Prison**

*Discipline and Punish* (1975) became one of the most praised and cited sources on imprisonment. Similar to the earlier scholars on prisons, Foucault correlates change in punitive mechanisms with the rise of modernity. Foucault explains the prison order by showing how a certain social group would use discipline and surveillance technologies to surpass another social group. Goffman, on the other hand, scrutinizes the contentious relations in total institutions and

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<sup>6</sup> See the news pieces: S. Recep Doksat, “Anarşistler”, *Milliyet*, July, 12<sup>th</sup> 1956

“Süt Dökmüş Kediye Döndüler”, *Hürriyet*, December, 24<sup>th</sup> 2000

suggests that inmates create defensive adjustments to the mortifying aspects of spatial power (1961). Spatiality of power refers to authorities' control over the spaces that prisoners live in via coercion and creation of routines (O'hearn 2012).

I draw most heavily from Goffman's and Foucault's critical approaches to frame the spatial elements of the prisons. Foucault introduces the concept of "panopticon" to understand the dynamics in one of the modern institutions where power takes an architectural form that is prisons. Panopticon is a metaphor for internalizing the observation of another to create self-monitoring in the subjects. Foucault draws this idea from Jeremy Bentham, a 17<sup>th</sup> century social reformist and philosopher, who suggests an ideal architecture for prisons called, "panopticon"; the sole purpose of such architecture being to maintain complete surveillance in disciplinary institutions. In this model, each prisoner is visible to the observer. However, the subject of observation cannot confirm whether or not he/she is observed. Although, it was never completely implemented, "panopticon" is paradigmatic to understand disciplinary institutions, as Foucault asserts. Nowadays, surveillance as a disciplinary method is being implemented in prisons via cameras, finger prints and alike digital control mechanisms. Under these controlled conditions, according to Foucault, prisoners cannot escape from the grid of discipline and the panoptic gaze (Foucault 1984). He argues:

"Prison, as the ultimate "panopticon, "puts inmates in "so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible" (Foucault 1984:19-20).

The cases I investigate provide evidence for how inmates find ways to escape that web of surveillance. These escape methods are also examples of what Goffman calls "secondary adjustments", efforts by inmates to dodge authorities in total institutions, which I will discuss in



detail below. For instance, female political prisoners in Mamak Prison between the years 1980 and 1984 demonstrated how prisoners could escape from the grid of discipline and panoptic gaze. One of the former prisoners I spoke with stated that prison guards were to check in each ward via a small window in the door. To evade a guard's gaze, prisoners used their bodies as curtains in front of each other when they needed to exchange an item or news to maintain the resistance against the military regime in the prisons.

Furthermore, former prisoners said that there were unobservable areas of the ward, such as the cooking area, where they could perform illicit acts such as rehearsing for a small play in the ward or waxing. Goffman refers to such spaces as "free spaces." In addition to illustrating the limitations of complete surveillance in the prison, these acts of female political prisoners show us how inmates worked to preserve control over the use of the space and their bodies.

### **3.1.3 Productive Power and Resistance**

Foucault (1975) depicts power also as productive, positive and educative rather than solely being repressive one that cannot easily be diffused. In his analysis, the subject might be active in the process of self-formation but acts according to the operation of particular disciplines, which forge a docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved (p.17). According to him, this is replicated in general society by what Foucault calls the "microphysics of power," a process whereby we become our own regulators.

Foucault's theories differ from his contemporaries in 1960s-70s. He does not focus on power relations solely in political theory or even in the state. In his understanding of power, sovereignty or law is secondary. Power is decentralized and everywhere; it is neither a structure nor an institution (Foucault 1984). Prior to Foucault's genealogy of power and subject,

discussions on domination had revolved around fixed and institutionalized forms of power. Discussions on resistance on the other hand, were about organized opposition to power. Although this binary is not abolished from the literature and Foucault does not conceptualize resistance in prisons, his novel approach to power as being also productive paves the way for further discussions on resistance. In his later works Foucault states his well-known dictum, “Where there is power, there is resistance,” but leaves an unconcluded discussion on forms of resistance in prisons (Foucault 1993:101). Since, it does not have to be collective or organized for an action to count as resistance, I will consider creative actions of the inmates, such as communication methods, cooking, singing or dancing as resistance as well. These actions that can contribute to one’s subjectivity in desired ways, in contrary to the manipulation by disciplinary power, could also provide alternative accounts to overcome the abovementioned binary discussion between institutional power and organized resistance.

My cases as well as O’Hearn’s research on Irish political prisoners (2012) show that power alone does not shape prison life, but the dynamic relationship between power and resistance does. According to Foucault, power is relational and it is ontologically in coexistence with resistance, a thorough examination of the web of relations in daily life of prisoners can help us understand that the disciplinary power is not a homogenous, top-down exercise, but rather it is a complex map of relations. In this context, rather than solely thinking of resistance as an effect or result of the power exercised by authorities, we should see that resistance is reflection of power as well as creates power.

Furthermore, Goffman and Garland reinforce the importance of contextualization of power in prisons and help us overcome what is missing in Foucault’s discussions of the capillary power in prisons. Garland argues that if Foucault had studied resistance in detail as he had studied

power, he would have modified his narrative of the operation of power in prisons as less of an ‘automatic’ process and more of a matter of micro-political conflict in which the individual subject may draw upon alternative sources of power and subjectivity to resist that imposed by the institution (Garland 1990:173). However, Garland does not contextualize the power-resistance relationship through a concrete case. At this point, Goffman’s ethnography at a mental institution and his theoretical explanations on the dynamics of the relations at total institutions are—for the purposes of this thesis— more applicable to my analysis of the Mamak and Diyarbakir cases.

Goffman investigates inmates’ and wardens’ worlds separately in “total institutions” with micro-relational lenses (1961). Goffman (1961) defines a total institution as “a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administrated round of life” (p.6). He acknowledges that total institutions would not be without resistance by stating:

“Where enthusiasm is expected, there will be apathy; where loyalty is expected there will be disaffection; where attendance, absenteeism; where robustness, some kind of illness; where deeds are to be done, varieties of inactivity. We find a multitude of homely little histories, each in its way a movement of liberty. Whenever worlds are laid on, ‘underlives’ develop” (Goffman 1961:305).

His analysis helps us see that prison sites do not reflect the complex politics of state discipline in a form of mere “domination” and “resistance,” nor do they always follow patterns of the production of “docile” bodies in Foucauldian terms. Instead, they generate culturally complex and politically fraught environments.

Goffman acknowledges the “total institutions” as contested spaces and suggests that inmates create defensive adjustments to the degrading aspects of spatial power (1961). His

analysis of the interaction between inmates and staff and with the space unearths how the prison order attacks the self and identity via humiliation, mortification and contamination of the self and how inmates adapt or find creative ways to resist inside.

Mortifying aspects of power can either be losing one's private possessions, individual space, changes in personal appearance, or as the most commonly seen forms of mortification in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons: "disruption of the usual relationship between the individual actor and his acts" (Goffman 1961:35). Mostly this disruption takes the form of humiliation such as: the forced act of deference to call the wardens as "commander", obligation to humbly ask permission to scratch one's self, to use the bathrooms or to request sanitary pads during female inmates' periods. In addition to mortification of the self, Goffman in his ethnography also mentions contamination in total institutions as a way to humiliate inmates (1961). By serving unclean food and by failing to regularly clean the wards, floors, common areas, and toilets, authorities seek to undermine prisoner morale. The Diyarbakir case has extreme instances of physical contamination such as the denial of adequate water to allow prisoners to bathe and drink and serving infected food with tuberculosis. Another instance of contamination from Diyarbakir and Mamak prisons is the loss of sense of personal safety and physical integrity caused by arbitrary beatings and various forms of torture.

The abovementioned attacks towards one's use of space and self have humiliating aspects, by creating the situation of loss of adulthood, self-determination and autonomy for the inmates. Goffman discovered that since the inmates cannot defend themselves by usual means such as distancing their selves from the mortifying situation, they employ methods of resisting that incapacity (1961). He conceptualizes these methods in total institutions as "secondary adjustments" and "underlife" formed by those secondary adjustments. Goffman explains

secondary adjustments as “practices that do not directly challenge staff but allow inmates to obtain forbidden satisfactions or to obtain permitted ones by forbidden means” (1961:54). Secondary adjustments provide the inmate a sense of having control over her environment. I will talk more on the examples of secondary adjustments in Mamak and Diyarbakir prisons such as communicating via tapping on radiator pipes or making a ropeway by undoing their socks and using that lift as a tool of transportation and exchanging of goods or news.

Moreover, resembling James Scott’s concept of “hidden transcripts”, inmates have “free spaces” they use in the backstage of the usual performance of staff-inmate relationships (Goffman 1961:230). They have their own ways of communication, currency, transportation of goods and places to stash contraband. Mamak and Diyarbakir cases both reveal occurrences where inmates gave nicknames to threatening situations, items or spaces and made jokes about them. Especially, female inmates’ sustained resistant performance in Mamak prison shows how ridiculing with humiliating situations reduce the threat they feel.

When approaching collectivity in total institutions, Goffman introduces another captivating concept to help explain the collective rejection of the absolute rule of prison authority in prison by “collective teasing”. The concept of collective teasing as a form of secondary adjustment is commonly seen in Mamak and Diyarbakir prisons, as well. Goffman defines collective teasing as rejecting prison staff’s authority, and he gives the examples of slogan shouting, booing, tray thumping, mass food rejection and minor sabotage (Goffman 1961:58). With the beneficial insights of ethnographic research, he also unravels the effect of inmates’ status and their connections outside on the inmate-warden relationship. The effect of inmates’ outside connections and failure of expected emotion-control by the staff were especially seen in Mamak prison. There are instances of special treatment to the inmates whose relatives were in military or

who were high-ranked bureaucrats. Wardens who pitied inmates at times offered better treatment, and this had impeding effects in front of inmates' collective action in Mamak Prison.

Primary adjustments on the other hand, are the ways used by the individuals to cooperate and contribute to the standards of the institutions. Goffman helps us more by differentiating the secondary adjustments into two: disruptive and contained. Disruptive ones aim for a radical change in the structure and contained ones exist within the institutional structure without pushing for a radical change. For instance, hunger strikes can count as disruptive ones and learning how to speak without moving one's lips can be counted as contained secondary adjustment. Next, I will showcase the implications of these abovementioned theories on the literature of "prison riots."

### **3.1.4 Discussions on "Prison Riots"**

Initial studies on inmate movements started during Second World War era with research on the war-prisoner camps in Korea, Vietnam, Nazi camps and Soviet labor camps (Pederson 1978). Subsequently, most of the researchers focused on American prisons. As previously mentioned, the general tendency amongst scholars to develop a social theory for the wider society by studying prisons also reveals itself here. Useem and Goldstone (1999) conducted an intriguing study where they applied Theda Skocpol's state-centric theory of revolutions to prison riots. They investigated whether state-centric theories of revolution would be supported by the dynamics of prison riots, which they also refer to as "micro-revolutions".

Functionalist approaches were popular in two main veins: inmate-balance theory and rising expectations theory. Sykes argued in favor of the inmate-balance theory, suggesting that riots were results of increasing coercion by the officials, which distorted the normally functional

social system created by inmates themselves. Basically, this approach suggests “authority cannot be taken away from inmates, however skilled the effort, because shared authority is an essential element of prison stability” (Useem, and Reisig 1999:755). James Jacobs (1977) on the other hand, defends the “rising expectations” approach, claiming that when a more tolerant prison order takes the place of a stricter one, inmates’ higher expectations will not be met—and might therefore leading to a riot. In another study, Useem and Reisig suggested these two approaches are complementary to each other (1999). Furthermore, regarding their study on prison riots as micro-revolutions, Useem and Goldstone conclude that riots are more likely to take place during transitions or reforms of existing practices—from tight to loose, or loose to tight—and “like all historical events [are] subject to the role of contingent events that can shape the outbreak, duration, and scope of the event” (1999). While they discuss similarities between revolutions and prison riots such as elite dissension, administrative failures and popular grievances, they stress the importance of people’s perception of the central authorities’ acts as immoral, ineffective, or unjust in understanding the possible causes of a riot (Gurr and Goldstone 1991:331). In another critical study, the same scholars discuss that although the social movements theorists reject the breakdown theory of collective action, they found evidence to support this theory in a New Mexico Prison riot in 1980 (Useem 1985).

The difference in my case is that the former inmates I interviewed are previously organized political prisoners who were already in a politically contentious relationship with the state, thereby intensifying state repression in the prison aimed to break their organizational structures. Thus, in these high-risk contexts, explaining inmate collective action solely by extreme deprivation, inmate-balance, rising expectations or breakdown theories is not feasible. Nevertheless, understanding all of these approaches to inmate collective action sheds light on my

analysis. This is mostly in part because of some distortion in shared authority, where transition processes inside of the prisons are igniter factors for collective action in the cases I investigate, too. Now, I will discuss the collective action theories to reach a comprehensive theoretical framework for my cases by supplementing the theories on prison riots.

### **3.1.5 Discussion on the Dynamics of Collective Action**

Rather than employing one single “grand theory” through this thesis, I instead utilize crucial parts of several theories to form a framework within which I analyze the experiences of Turkish and Kurdish inmates. I have found that my method of analysis acknowledges the interactions of micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors together, rather than insisting merely on the centrality of human agency, or—for that matter—even the structural elements to explain the dynamics of collective action. To this end, I prefer to utilize a blend of theories rather than forcing my cases to fit in a single theoretical approach. Thus, I will briefly discuss the existing collective action theories.

### **3.1.6 Behavioral Approach**

Until the late 1960s, a psychological causality dominated the discussions around collective action, e.g. Strikes, street protests, marches, vigils etc. This perspective suggested that social movements are marginalized, unorganized, abrupt crowd reactions fed by grievances or deprivations. The commonly used term of “collective behavior” to refer to social movements indicated something inferior than a conscious and purposive action. This paradigm has long been



criticized for reducing collective action into a sporadic social breakdown or an irrational anomia and for marginalizing the participants.

### **3.1.7 Rational Choice and a Critical Look**

Later on with Mancur Olson, by the late 1960s and 1970s, rational choice theories paid more attention to motivations behind mobilization and rejected centrality of the behavioral theories. Rational choice theories explain participation based on methodological individualism. These theories also deploy abstract, game-theoretical tools for analysis. Furthermore, such theories put forth the claim that rational individuals would not participate in collective action to gain public goods. That is unless the group consists of a small number of people, or group members were forced to join such a collective. Olson continues to discuss the logic of collective action and suggested that collective action depends on selective incentives and perceiving the possible personal gain as the outcome (1965). Selective incentives can be positive or negative and if a social movement could offer positive incentives for the group, the problem of free riding could be overcome. Also, organizational, class-based, race/ethnicity based and gender-based ideological differences and conflicting interests together with differing previous life experiences of the protestors might precede the value of personal material gains in different historical contexts.

Especially in high-risk collective actions, positive incentives are not solely material or individual but are also moral and collective gains (Loveman 1998). Loveman criticizes the rational-choice theory for its inapplicability to the high-risk, life threatening, unpredictable contexts, such as in military prisons. With a reference to Geddes, Loveman posits that rational choice theory can work best where the “rules of game” are predictable (1998). She also reminds

us the combination of material or non-material incentives can change over the course of a collective action. Therefore, it would be a limited understanding if one only focuses on the material incentives at the decision point of recruitment but not through the process. In such environments like Mamak and Diyarbakir prisons where the cost of an action can be death, torture or any kind of physical and psychological harm and the benefit is the “maintenance of honor,” the rational choice theory based on a material calculation will most likely predict inaction. Considering political actors’ decisions to act collectively in unpredictable environments, as being irrational would be over-simplifying them.

Instead of conceptualizing actors as having homogenous perceptions and motivations about certain situations, I consider the contingent operation of the mixed motivations, backgrounds, interactions, and shared identities, in addition to material benefits as motivating the decisions of individuals. Discussions in the literature clearly conclude that collective settings operate differently from the individualistic models used by Olson and other economists. Still, the self-interest assumption is a useful heuristic principle, considering inmates’ material grievances and potential gains, rather than an explanatory law when explaining collective action in prisons.

### **3.1.8 Resource Mobilization Approach**

Resource mobilization theory rebuts collective behavior theories on the grounds that they define mobilization processes and collective actions as irrational and unorganized. McCarthy and Zald argued that rational individuals could legitimately participate in the normal, rationally organized activities of social movements (1977). They suggest that grievances and shared ideologies or beliefs always exist in a society. However, to mobilize people requires the availability of the material (money, services etc.) and non-material (authority, faith etc.) resources: structural

elements like political freedom, networks; along with a means of communication, media and alike tools (1977).

Yet, resource mobilization theories assume the success of a social movement is positively correlated with the availability and the richness of the resources mentioned above. This theory has been criticized for taking its evidence solely from the American social movements experiences, centralizing an entrepreneurial approach to social movements and insisting on the need for incentives and/or coercion to foster mobilization (Aslanidis 2012). More specifically, conditioning the assurance of a organizational base to bring people together and because of the flexibility of the term “resource”—skills, networks, leadership ability— in addition to the material ones, this theory is capable of creating a synergy with micro-level processes of mobilization; thus integrating emotions and identity to the collective action.

### **3.1.9 Political Opportunity Structure: Threats and Opportunities**

Diverging their foci from both grievances and resources Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Tilly in *Dynamics of Contention* take a more structural and systematic approach than the previous scholars and pay attention to the political and institutional conjunctures in which the social movement operates (2004). The political process perspective and political opportunity structure neither conceive social movements as irrational spontaneous acts nor as highly dependent of resources. The novelty of contentious politics theory is to suggest mechanism-processes approach to bring a clear methodology in social movements literature.

Political opportunity structure refers to features of regimes and institutions that facilitate or inhibit a political actor’s collective action and to changes in those features (Tarrow and Tilly 2005). Goldstone and Tilly’s formulation, in the simplest version, suggest a relationship in which

as opportunity grows, action mounts and as opportunity shrinks action fades (Aminzade 2001). Although, in their later studies, they expand the scope of the theory's scope by by acknowledging that repression can function either way to encourage action or quiescence (Aminzade 2001).

According to Jack Goldstone and Tilly, having access to resources or expecting material gains are not sufficient for emergence of a collective action. Instead, they claim defining a political opportunity structure is necessary for understanding the challenges towards an established political order (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2004). This approach is helpful to better embed Mamak and Diyarbakir prisons in the broader political context. Moreover, in Tarrow and Tilly's formulation, political opportunity structure is "external" to potential collective actors, so even resource-poor, "weak or disorganized challengers" can benefit from the altering opportunities (2005). This is why in environments with material resource deficiency, such as prisons, opportunity structure can be utilized to embed the collective action in the structure of the prison.

This latter perception leads us to look at both changing threats and opportunities that occur in the political system. Goldstone and Tilly emphasize that threats and opportunities are two distinct concepts that can overlap or interact with each other (2004). Moreover, Tarrow suggests that an opportunity is not exactly the opposite of a threat, but rather a beneficial change or shift in the political system and economic resources between the state and the challengers (1996). Furthermore, these authors define threat as "the cost a social group will bear or the level that they expect to suffer from inaction." They break threat into two different categories: "harms that are currently experienced or anticipated (current threat), and costs of repression if protest is undertaken (repressive threat) (Tarrow 1996:22-41)."

However, explaining collective action in high-risk contexts is more complex than assuming that collective action would occur when current threats, or the cost of inactions, are perceived as greater than repressive threats (the cost of action). In their views, protest usually leads to an increase in repression or concession. To explain this, they suggest scrutinizing the interaction between opportunities and repressive threats, which gives rise to contention (Aminzade, 2001). There might be a correlation between perceiving the opportunities, threats and emergence of a protest, but Diyarbakir and Mamak cases show that there is no direct causal relationship.

Even though Goldstone and Tilly encourage us to realize the interaction between opportunity and threats, they still base their theories on insurgents' decision process to act that is a calculation based on the state's or oppressor's actions (repression or concession). That is not to say that the concepts of opportunity and threat are not explanatory, but at the same time they are structurally limited, leading us to miss the rich micro-level dynamics in the formation of collective action in prison. However, there are instances—even though inmates acknowledge opportunities—in which they cannot mobilize or sustain collective action. To form a collective action in high-risk contexts, merely acknowledging threats and opportunities is not enough to recruit insurgents. Without the existence of a variety of interpersonal ties, trust in the leaders' willpower in taking risks and channeling emotions like anger, dignity/honor and fear into collective identity, overt resistance acts in high-risk contexts would be very rare as Scott also suggests (1990).

At this point we need to orient our attention to the micro-relational aspects of collective action. That is to say, we need to consider the micro level factors such as one's perception/framing of self, emotions and meso-level elements such as organizations and

networks all together embedded in the opportunity-threat structure to see why collective action processes were different in Diyarbakir and Mamak Prisons.

### **3.1.10 Moving to Micro-Level Explanations: Cultural and Emotional Theory of Action**

Abovementioned theories have overlooked the micro-level interactional dimensions for a long time and dominated the discussion on social movements. Until the 1990s, when feminist and constructivist scholars started investigating social movements, cultural processes and micro-level interactions in social movements analysis were limited to rational choice theory, in which individuals were treated as acting solely around individual materialist aims. James Jasper criticizes this approach by stating that even if individuals always do what is best for them, we need to look into interpretive and emotional dynamics that shape their decisions (Jasper 2010).

### **3.1.11 Emotions and Collective Action**

In parallel with Rachel Einwohner's (2003) work on Warsaw ghetto uprising, this study also supports the idea that collective action does not always need an opportunity and not every opportunity turns into action. With reference to Roger Gould's emphasis on the motivating role of emotions, Tarrow also recognizes that emotions like grief, anger, and pride turn into resources in converting passivity into action (1993). Even though Jeff Goodwin's study shows that affective ties have the possibility to act as barrier in front of collective action, Jasper passionately introduces emotions into the field of social movement theories.

Drawing upon my fieldwork, I take how people feel about themselves, the political situation and the options into account as components of interpretation before and during action.

If we turn to amalgamate emotions with political process theory, as Jasper carefully does: “Opening political opportunity might generate emotions like hope and pride or might legitimize emotions like anger and indignation, which in turn might inspire an emotionally resonant collective action frame or a reallocation of resources toward collective action” (2004:163) In his paradigm, attention to emotions might help us understand why and how opening political opportunities sometimes facilitate protests. (Goodwin and Jasper 2004) For example, moral shocks both of unexpected and outrageous outcomes, link emotions such as anger, indignation, self-respect and grief to confrontational action. According to Goodwin et al. (2007) different kinds of emotions are tied to different aspects of resistance. For instance, especially feelings of respect and trust are important for this analysis because they enable effective leadership and solidarity.

### **3.1.12 Networks and Relations**

Meanwhile, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly also argue that collective action emerges from interrelations between different subjects and the intersections of their perceptions of reality (2004). Additionally, McAdam underlines that assuming individuals, as isolated beings, detached from their context when making cost-benefit analysis would be misleading (1986). He buttresses the role of interpersonal relations and social networks (eg. friends, family, co-workers etc.) in the decision making process of individuals. Particularly, if we consider inmates’ dependence on each other to survive in prison, it would be unrealistic to assume that each inmate would solely decide according to their individual utility. For example, one’s personal wrong doing in a ward ends in punishment for all and one’s informal cooperation with the officers against her comrades makes her an untrusted person, which would lead to isolation.

Furthermore, individuals are embedded in multiple ties and some of those ties can be constraining as well. McAdam's emphasis on history of activism before, namely biography, also makes sense for the political prisoners. I have evidence to support that how previous experience of activism; biography and relations were crucial in formation of collective action in the prisons. Interpersonal ties and constraining aspects of them indicate that already knowing someone in a movement does not lead to higher recruitment rates to the movement. Dimensions of the ties, their salience, centrality etc. should also be considered.

However, Jasper finds this effort of including individual level factors into social movement studies still carry their structural bias. This is because the concepts of networks and ties also assume an established structure of relations. Looking into interactions that shape those ties would be more informative. He suggests that rather than going from macro to micro, instead go in the reverse direction, e.g. interpersonal interactions to relations and then ties and networks. This would provide us with a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at an individual-level of collective action (Jasper 1997). In a similar vein, Jocelyn Viterna (2013) unearths the recruitment strategies of FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) and motivations behind individual decisions of women guerillas by introducing the centrality of identity. According to her, the salience of identity has appeared to have a major prominence in mobilization processes. Further discussion will be on showing how movements can create opportunities for recruitment and how threats in the political contexts have the potential of increasing or decreasing the number of potential participants by reshaping the meanings of identities and the memberships of networks.



### **3.1.13 Leadership and Identity**

Especially in undemocratic and high-risk contexts, leaders can be very influential in fostering collective action. In particular, my case shows that the will and determination in taking risks by the leaders helps inspire and motivate political prisoners to take collective action. Resembling Weber's distinction of bureaucratic and prophetic leaders, Ron Aminzade also distinguishes leaders into "task-oriented" and "people-oriented." Task-oriented leadership functions to get things done, while people-oriented leadership evokes emotions and helps "reshape followers' framing" of the situations, motivating them to take action (2001). As the cases of Mamak and Diyarbakir also showcase—most especially in repressive contexts—that it is not sufficient for leaders to just get things done; but rather, they must also inspire participation in the collective. Similarly, William Gamson stresses the importance of leadership abilities in helping focus and sustain activists' motivation (1991). Denis O'Hearn similarly shows that a leader's devotion of her interests and desires to the collective encourages others (2012). In this study, I will demonstrate these distinct conceptualizations of task- vs. people-oriented leadership when I delve into details regarding recruitment processes in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons.

Additionally, Bob and Nepstad hypothesize that, besides a movement's political opportunity structure, the type of leader, the movement's ideology of martyrdom, the leader's embodiment of a shared group identity, and the movement's pre-existing unity matters significantly to the collective (2007). Although they focus on the impact of assassination of a leader on the movement, their perceptions of external and internal factors that shape a movement emphasizes micro-level mobilization factors once again. I also think that many studies oversimplify the difference between leaders and followers, and the roles of many informal leaders of a movement. The cases of Mamak and Diyarbakir showed me that regardless of the

source of the leaders' reputation, trust in their knowledge and risk-liability determines the weight of their influence in the mobilization process.

Effective leaders are able to build a sense of collective identity among participants in an organization or movement. Francesca Polletta and Jasper define collective identity as "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution." Prior bonds and organizational affiliations facilitate the formation of a shared identity among the people (2001:285). Furthermore, a well-defined and shared understanding of "us" vs. "them" is an essential precondition of successful mobilization (Gamson 1992). Thus, when a clearly identified enemy exercises coercion to humiliate and degrade the opponent, such a situation would ignite a group's tactics to combat that humiliation and forge a shared identity against it. Here, Gould and Craig Calhoun's work deciphers how individual and collective interests, identities, and solidarity are conceived, constructed, maintained, and reproduced in the process of struggle itself. Calhoun states, "Identity is, in many cases, forged in and out of struggle, including participation in social movements" (1991:52). Thus, the relationship between collective identity and action is reciprocal and reproduces itself with the changing dynamics of the process.

#### **3.1.14 Repression and Collective Action**

Since I frame this thesis both in terms of the dynamics of collective action under repressive conditions and also in terms of the variations in how successful that repression, I have reviewed the literature that speaks when and how the state repression effectively demobilizes movement activists. Repression can cause ordinary movement participants to drop out, fearing the costs and risks involved (McAdam 1988). It can also create a sense of hopelessness and resignation.

Finally, repression may also destroy unity by creating informers, as activists suspect one another of being collaborators with the oppressor (Churchill and Vander Wall 1988). As my cases show, it can also turn into opportunity bedrock for developing solidary relations required to mobilize.

On the other hand, Mark Lichbach and Mara Loveman argue that repression facilitates collective action. Keeping all the different approaches in mind, the cases I investigate provided me evidence to support the claim that, even though repression might cause demobilization and depression or hopelessness among the inmates at a time through the process, it also opens space for alternative interactions, sharing and trust to develop and if the leaders play perceptive role, followers could re-frame their situation and mobilize. That is to say, increasing threats for a movement has the potential to turn into an opportunity if the dynamics at micro-level interactions could be channeled into action.

Therefore, my cases support O'Hearn's analysis of Irish "blanketman protest" by the IRA members in late 1970s. According to O'Hearn, "Mortification can clear the way for collectivism and solidarity" (2012:461-526). In addition to these, Stathis Kalyvas has more to argue on repression by distinguishing into selective and indiscriminate violence in irregular contentious environments. He mainly examines civil wars, but his differentiation of the use of selective and indiscriminate violence is also helpful for understanding prison contexts. Kalyvas argues that indiscriminate violence occurs when precise information is scarce or selection criteria are rough when deciding whom to attack (2006). Although this was not the case in a prison environment where the authorities have full information about the prisoners, his third argument about the "use of indiscriminate violence to control a population, shape the behavior rather than simply to loot, displace, or eliminate" is explanatory (Kalyvas 2006). Obviously the Turkish state conceived of the Kurdish liberation movement as a bigger threat than the Turkish socialist movement; and

thus, used indiscriminate violence against Kurdish political prisoners while imposing more targeted but less severe violence against Turkish political prisoners in Mamak Prison.

Kalyvas conclude that indiscriminate violence seems to be counter-productive, “with the exception of situations where there is a high imbalance of power” (2009:171). He contributes to our understanding of collective action in high-risk contexts by arguing indiscriminate violence creates an environment where compliance is almost as unsafe as non-compliance. In such an environment, the “innocent” can do little or nothing to escape punishment and the “guilty” are no more (and sometimes less) threatened” (Kalyvas 2009:154). This argument reflects in Diyarbakir case. For instance, the nascent activists who were not involved in political violence acts or the relatives of the insurgents who were also confined did not receive a milder treatment than the leaders. He further adds that selective violence is effective in enabling deterrence because “the effectiveness of selective violence hinges less on pinpoint accuracy and more on a perception among the population that a process of selection is taking place” (p.150). This distinction between indiscriminate and selective violence is important because we witness the different outcomes that they lead to e.g. indiscriminate violence in Diyarbakir Prison and selective violence in Mamak Prison.

In this chapter I first presented the core justifications of incarceration in penology and the theories on modern prisons that I found helpful in framing my case. I approach prisons as contested spaces shaped by the relationship between power, compliance, resistance, violence and solidarity between prisoners and the prison officials as well as the prisoners themselves. Foucault and Goffman’s theoretical discussions primarily informed this framing for my study. I most especially find Goffman’s concepts such as “underlife”, “primary adjustments”, “secondary adjustments”, and “collective teasing” very significant as I reflect on how these concepts help me

explain the patterns I discovered in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons. Furthermore, I briefly reviewed the literature on prison riots and find that distortion of the shared authority in transition processes in prisons is explanatory for my case, too. Leaving the literature on prisons aside, I delved into the existing discussions on how to explain collective action in general. After taking a critical look on early theories, I buttressed the importance of the micro-level dynamics in explaining collective action in prisons. These are mainly the role of leadership, identity, interpersonal relations and the effects of the way and extent repression is imposed on collective action. From there, I find the concepts of “selective and indiscriminate” violence compelling to frame the difference of the repression in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons. In the following chapter, I will showcase an empirical description of Turkish prison practices and provide a historical account on Turkish prisons to better see the changes come with the military coup in 1980.

## **4.0 CHAPTER II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 TURKISH PRISONS AND POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE REPUBLICAN HISTORY (1920-1980): CONDITIONS OF PRISONS BETWEEN 1920 AND 1980**

To better understand the experience of political prisoners during the early 1980s, we must relate the changes in the organization of prison system before the 1980s. Here, I briefly review the changing management methods in the prisons, penal codes and daily prison order in the republican era. Financial incapacity, lack of modern prison buildings, and escalating organized political opposition appear as main determinants of the state-hand intervention to transform these institutions.

The transformation from traditional understandings of justice to rationalized penal codes—the birth of “modern” forms of imprisonment—dates back to the introduction of Tanzimat Edict (1839)<sup>7</sup> during the late Ottoman period. In addition to public executions, physical punishment, exile, penal servitude (*prangabentlik*, *kalebentlik*, *kurek cezasi*) and imprisonment in castles, islands, dungeons, or the houses of governors or imams<sup>8</sup> were widely used under the rule of Ottoman Empire (Yildiz 2012). In 1871 the first modern prison building was built with the

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<sup>7</sup> Starting in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with modernization reforms in the military, the legal and tax system and the bureaucracy were already significantly reformed in Ottoman Empire. Later on, such “liberal” concepts as equality before law, Ottoman citizenship, property rights and security of life were introduced with the Tanzimat Edict (1839).<sup>7</sup> Shortly after the declaration of the edict, reforms in crime control institutions such as courts, police service, gendarme and prison reforms were also initiated.

<sup>8</sup> The title of the person who leads prayers in a mosque.

precise aim of imprisonment in Sultanahmet, Istanbul, where the first Ottoman palace stands with the goal of concentrating prison populations near central authorities (Sen 2007). The Republic of Turkey inherited the Ottoman prisons when it came to power in 1923, along with the financial and governmental incapacity to manage them until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the financial deficiency, schools, hospitals, military wards, churches, caravansaries<sup>9</sup>, and castles were utilized as places of incarceration by the early republic (Eren 2014).

There were nearly 35,000 prisoners in the year 1923 (Sen 2007). The new laws make it apparent that the early republicans aimed to “rehabilitate” the inmates to make them utilizable individuals to the society in their terms. Unlike deterrence, rehabilitation aims to change and give a new form to the prisoners’ attitudes. However, the young republic was not able to create the “modern” prison buildings and sufficient trained staff suitable for their aims of rehabilitation, which required vocational and physical training for inmates. Similar to the Ottoman prison reforms, the reports and narratives of the inmates indicate that these regulations were never completely implemented on the ground. The journalist Zekeriya Sertel depicts the Istanbul (Sultanahmet) prison in 1930s in these words: “There was a huge atelier in which prisoners worked...One day they took us to the ward of heavy imprisonment, a cellar from Byzantines. It was a deep dark place without windows and with a heavy smell of moisture and coal. About 500 inmates were living in that cellar with a slice of bread given by the prison for a day. They were smoking weed to accelerate their deaths, they seem to be lost their humanity and turned into animals, and they were the residuum of the society (Öztürk 2004:127).”

It would not be wrong to assert that prisons were among the least invested of all state institutions in the early republican era. The state did not invest resources in or respond to the

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<sup>9</sup> Historical inns with large courtyards

needs of the inmates in regard to health, hygiene, nutrition or the architectural style. Moreover, lack of security, violence among inmates, lack of hygiene, overcrowding and co-habitation of minors with adults were the worst aspects of the early republican prisons. Absence of separate prisons for women and children was also a major problem when managing the overcrowding and addressing the prisoners with special needs.

Although the government passed legislation in the 1930s to build new facilities in order to address the problem of overcrowding, it wasn't until the 1950s that new construction of prison buildings picked up speed. Between 1929 and 1950, 87 prisons were constructed; but when the one party rule of the Republican People's Party (CHP)<sup>10</sup> ended in 1950 and the Democrat Party (DP)<sup>11</sup> came into power, the number of prisons jumped to 149 only within three and a half years of the DP rule (Hur 2009). This escalation in the number of prisons was also a harbinger of the new waves of trials. The DP expanded the scope of the penal law by expanding the duration of punishments and the definition of crimes. Furthermore, the DP increased the arrests of TKP (Communist Party of Turkey) members and followed a harsh opposition policy against CHP and the press. As a result, the prison population jumped from 32,250 in 1953 to 46,000 in 1955 (Ozturk 2004:92).

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<sup>10</sup> The secular modernist political party established by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and ruled the republic for 30 years with one-party government.

<sup>11</sup> The conservative and pro-Islam political party as the opponent of CHP.



## **4.2 POLITICAL PRISONERS OF THE EARLY REPUBLICAN PRISONS:1920-1960**

I briefly depicted the prison system of the early Republic, which—like the Ottoman system that preceded it—was characterized by insufficient physical capacity and the inability to meet the needs of the prisoners. Yet there was another challenge for the penal system, namely: the political opponents of the young Republic regime.

With the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923—and even before then—opponents of the new regime were being arrested. Until the 1960s, the majority of the political prisoners were members of the TKP, opponent journalists in Istanbul and opposition military officials, together with the former bureaucrats of the Empire. Those former bureaucrats were mostly the members of Committee of Union and Progress (Ozturk 2004). The new republic was attacking a variety of opponents including Islamists, Kurdish insurgents and members of TKP in its early years. Its main methods were arbitrary trials under state of emergency, incarcerations, and executions. Kurdish uprisings of the 1920s and 1930s were suppressed with arbitrary trials, executions, and massacres (Besikci 2013).

“Political prisoner” as a legal term was not used at that time by the state authorities. In state discourse, these prisoners were generally referred to as communists or anarchists (TKP members and other socialists), “rebels” or “bandits” (Kurdish insurgents) or “reactionists” (Islamists) up until the 1970s. After the 1970s, the term “terrorist” was coined and used to refer

to all political prisoners at an increasing rate.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, wardens, prison officials and other inmates used the term “politicals” (*siyasiler*) to refer to such prisoners within the prison environment.

#### **4.3 INCREASING NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS: 1960-1980**

According to Boratav, more people became actively engaged in social and political life after 1950. With the transition to a multiparty system in 1950, the political parties had to consider the needs of the peasants, workers and tradesmen—at least during election times (Boratav 1988) . Thus, it is useful to touch upon the DP rule and the 1960 military coup before considering the polarization of the social and political realm between the 1960s and 1980s.

Throughout the 1950s, the DP employed repressive policies against the CHP, the press, and the communist opposition, namely the TKP (Boratav 1988). Furthermore, the DP government pursued liberal market economy reforms during the first half of the 1950s, which was also visible in the 1947 party program of the CHP. Liberalization of imports, relying on foreign capital investments and credits, characterized the DP efforts to transition into a liberal market economy model. However, these attempts failed due to rising inflation and severe devaluation of Turkish Lira in 1958. The pressure of the post-WWII years and the Korean War affected foreign markets and foreign trade negatively. Thus, it led to a high level of external debt (Boratav 1988).

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<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/139818-hapishane-den-cezaevi-ne-turkiye-de-degisen-mahpusluk> Analysis of the use of “terrorist” in Milliyet gazetesi between 1950-2004 shows the increase in the use of terrorist and decrease in the use of anarchist from 1950s to 2000s for the political prisoners.

In this context, the DP government strengthened the punitive hand of the state by expanding the scope of the penal law, constructing new prisons and pursuing arrests of communists and opponent journalists. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1960, the military intervened in parliamentary rule and nearly 500 Democrat Party affiliated politicians including the ministers, party members, prime minister, and the head of the state were arrested. Members of the DP were confined in the prisons, which they had helped construct. The major trial was held in Yassiada and lasted 204 days. In the end, fifteen executions took place—including the Prime Minister Adnan Menderes—forty-three lifelong sentences, and numerous other sentences were issued (Ozturk 2004).

Law professors appointed by the military prepared the 1961 constitution in which certain social and political rights were given more liberty than before. For example, workers gained the right to collective bargaining and unionizing, and new institutions were formed to provide checks and balances. The new constitution partially protected citizens from the state. As Caglar Keyder (1989) also points out, the 1961 constitution opened space for new political actors and for the eventual politicization of society. Despite the fact that most history books commemorate the 1961 constitution as the peak of Turkish democracy, it is important to remember that it was introduced by a military coup. It was not liberating for all segments of the society. For example, in 1959 fifty Kurdish students and politically active young men were arrested with the accusation of conducting Kurdish nationalist propaganda against the Turkish state.<sup>13</sup> The president suggested they be executed, and framed their activism as a communist threat in order to receive

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<sup>13</sup> Known as the 49s case.

financial aid from the United States (Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mucadeleler Ansiklopedisi Cilt.7 1988).<sup>14</sup>

They were, however, not executed but kept in solitary cells for about a year. One of the students died in custody because of poor health conditions. Meanwhile, the military coup took place, and the National Unity Committee<sup>15</sup> arrested 485 Kurdish local and religious notables at a camp in Sivas in 1960. They chose fifty-five of the *sheiks* and *aghas* from the group and exiled them to different western cities of the country. Another outcome of the coup was to turn Armenian and Kurdish names of the villages into Turkish and campaign for only speaking Turkish in public spaces.

Until the 1960s, the left-wing was active in the political realm under the name of TKP. In 1961, the Workers Party of Turkey (TIP) was established, and it dominated the leftist opposition sphere throughout the 1960s. In the 1965 general elections the Justice Party, as a continuation of the former DP, came into power, and for the first time six different political parties found seats in the parliament including TIP, CHP, New Turkey Party (YTP), which was established as a right-wing party by the Kurdish elites and other right-wing politicians. The Nation Party (MP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) were also right wing. In 1966 the government released a general amnesty law, targeting the remaining DP members. A majority of the prisoners considered that law too narrow; soon after it was passed prisoners started protesting it in Ankara, Istanbul, and Elazig prisons (Ozturk 2004).

Towards the end of the 1960s, left-wing Turkish and Kurdish student organizations became visible in the street protests and university demonstrations. In the mid-1960s, both Turkish and

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<sup>14</sup> Framing all political oppositions under “communist threat” was a common strategy of the governments to ask financial and military aid from USA until 1990s.

<sup>15</sup> The National Unity Committee (in Turkish, Milli Birlik Komitesi) was a group of military officers, led by General Cemal Gürsel, that staged the military coup of 27 May 1960 and subsequently ruled Turkey through 20 November 1961.

Kurdish socialists came together under the leadership of the TIP, which unlike most of the socialist parties of the era preferred an unarmed parliamentary route towards socialism. As a result of their efforts, they gained seats in the 1965 elections (Zurcher 2004). Alongside the TIP, the Kurds also organized under the Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan (TKDP), established in 1965, the Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearts (DDKO), established in 1969, and the Democratic Party in Turkish Kurdistan (T-KDP), formed in 1970. TKDP was an illegal Kurdish nationalist party. T-KDP was also illegal and had a Marxist framing for the struggle but they were both aiming for a free Kurdistan. DDKO on the other hand, resembled a Kurdish student organization holding cultural activities during its initial years (Turkmen 2013).

Unlike the Kurds who preferred to organize under the TIP; the TKDP and T-KDP were inspired by the Kurdish armed movement in Iraq and had close connections there. In this vibrant environment of the late-1960s, TIP started to lose its place as a unifying party of the left. Fractionalizations within the TIP became visible between the Turkish and Kurdish socialists and promoters of SD Socialist Revolutionary Argument (SD) and the National Democratic Argument (MDD). The supporters of the SD were claiming a parliamentary route to fulfill socialism; whereas, supporters of MDD had Turkish nationalistic constituents and suggested a military coup with the alliance of the army, intellectuals and bureaucrats before the proletariat dictatorship (Akyol 2010).

Meanwhile, the same fractionalization was taking place among left-wing university student organizations. Federation of Thought Clubs (FKF), which later was turned into Revolutionary Youth (DEV-GENC) in 1969, was the leading student organization. Student protests targeted the capitalist system and U.S. imperialism together with the university students' issues such as illiberal school environment, high fees, and unequal treatment. The most popular of these armed

organizations were Turkey People's Liberation Party/Front (THKP-C), led by Mahir Cayan, Turkish Communist Party/Marxist-Leninist (TKP/ML), led by Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, and the Turkey People's Liberation Army (THKO), led by Deniz Gezmiş. These revolutionary student organizations were in touch with the Palestinian guerilla camps in Lebanon, and most of them visited the camps between 1968 and 1971. Concomitantly, right-wing para-military groups with an "anti-communist war" motto were trained by the state in commando camps to fight against the flourishing armed revolutionary organizations.

Along with revolutionary student organizations and political parties, labor unions were also polarized. In 1967 Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK) was established in opposition to the state-led Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Turk-Is) (Ozturk 2004). Left-wing students were imprisoned for the first time in 1968. The years between 1968 and 1971 passed with increasing number of strikes in mines, factories and farms; numerous invasions of universities by the organized students; mass street protests; and violent attacks against U.S. and Israeli ambassadors and soldiers. The police and gendarme responded violently to all these actions. On March 12, 1971, the military intervened in parliamentary rule for the second time. This time their reason was to end "anarchy"<sup>16</sup> on the streets and economic downfall.

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<sup>16</sup> Anarchy here does not refer to anarchism, but rather to the actions of socialists with reference to disrupting existing "order".

#### **4.4 THE PRISON SYSTEM AS AN INSTITUTIONAL WEAPON AGAINST REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

From the 1960s on, a majority of new prisons were built on a ward-based system until they were transformed into the high-security rooms/cells-based prisons of the 2000s. Embedded in the new legislation code of the year 1965 was also an article about regulating the daily lives of prisoners. Article 122 read: “Wake up, cleaning, physical training, going to school or joining workshops, meals, free time and sleep hours schedules were determined according to internal regulations.” Point 123 read: “Inmates could not talk during working hours, meal times or at schools. Inmates could not talk after the sleeping hour” (Menguc 1968). The new legislation paralleled that of the 1930s, which sought to treat (rehabilitate) inmates. However, the architectural changes, intense security precautions, and strict inner regulations on daily lives of the prisoners were manifestations of the shift to a strict regulatory form of disciplinary rule in prisons. Working regularly, being subjected to a time schedule, obeying the hierarchy of the prison authority and a moral life style were the expected outcomes of this disciplinary rule in prisons.

Additionally, until the covenant of 1967, political prisoners were not officially classified and separated from ordinary prisoners. In 1967, the new covenant categorized the prisoners into three groups: 1- First committers of crime, persistent violators, habitual or vocational criminals; 2- the criminals to be subjected to a special regime because of their mental, physical and age situations; 3-Political criminals (Menguc 1968). The covenant enforced the isolation of political prisoners from ordinary prisoners and defined the aim of such “treatments” as: “the use of

precautions, technics [sic.] and rules to create the willingness to obey the laws and help the prisoners adapt to the outside life easily” (Menguc 1968:379-423). It is possible to interpret these changes in prison management as the state’s response to escalating revolutionary opposition.

Throughout the 1970s, following the 1971 coup, an increasing number of Turkish and Kurdish left-wing insurgents found themselves imprisoned as political prisoners. Table 1 shows the increasing number of prisoners in the 1970s and 80s. The number of total prisoners in Turkey increased from 30,000 in the mid-1970s to 79,000 in 1981



**Table 1:** 1970-89 Total number of convicted and detained prisoners.

Year	Convicted	Detainee	Total
1970	30.119	26.392	56.511
1971	33.416	28.047	61.463
1972	36.14	28.749	64.889
1973	33.722	27.246	60.968
1974	5.442	19.418	24.86
1975	14.276	23.34	37.616
1976	19.881	24.45	44.331
1977	22.632	27.752	50.384
1978	25.232	29.43	54.642
1979	22.417	30.236	52.653
1980	31.241	38.931	70.172
1981	42.446	37.34	79.786
1982	44.65	33.551	78.201
1983	45.144	31.114	76.258
1984	46.37	26.694	73.064
1985	45.388	25.842	71.23
1986	30.786	21.364	52.15
1987	31.315	19.484	50.799
1988	33.078	18.592	51.67
1989	29.407	17.697	47.104

**Source:** General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses <http://www.cte.adalet.gov.tr/>

The 1970 coup suppressed the rising left wing movements in Turkey only for a while. A significant number of young people subsequently died in custody and in skirmishes with the police and soldiers. Three student leaders were executed, and many others were imprisoned and died in custody between 1971 and 1974. The Kizildere Massacre in March of 1972 and then the three executions following the massacre just two months later had the greatest effect on the revolutionary groups. Maltepe, Mamak, Sagmalcilar and Pasakapisi prisons confined most of the revolutionary insurgents until their release with the 1974 general amnesty law. The significant drop in the total prison population in 1974— from 60,000 in 1973 to 24, 000 —is largely due to the amnesty law.

Although their leaders had been executed by the state, remaining political members were released with the 1974 General Amnesty Law. They subsequently re-formed the revolutionary organizations. Especially between 1974 and 1978, Turkish and Kurdish left wing organizations established strongholds in working class neighborhoods, factories, trade unions, villages and universities. Fractionalizing between the Kurdish and Turkish revolutionary organizations continued and speeded up in the second half of the 1970s. Kurdish organizations that were founded in the post-1974 era considered Kurdistan as a separate country and a colony, which is divided between four nation-states of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey (Turkmen 2013). Thus, they re-framed their struggle beyond the 1960s' idea of that inequality would be overcome by collaborating with Turkish revolutionary organizations. Instead, most of the post-1974 Kurdish political organizations adopted a strategy of armed struggle to break the Turkish state's colonialism.

Here are some of the organizations established during the 1970s whose members were imprisoned into the 1980s in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons. The main active Kurdish

revolutionary organizations in the post-1970 era whose members were incarcerated in the 1980s were: DDKD and Revolutionary Democratic Women's Organization (DDKAD), Ozgurluk Yolu (Revolutionary Path), Rizgari, Kawa, PKK Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), Kurdistan National Liberators (KUK). The main active Turkish revolutionary organizations in the post-1974 era were: Kurtulus (Salvation), Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Path), Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left), Halkin Yolu (People's Path), Halkin Kurtulusu (People's Salvation), Acilciler and Turkey's Worker-Peasant Salvation Army (TIKKO).

The era between 1974 and 1980 was the most vibrant, polarized, and contentious political environment experienced by both right wing and left-wing communities. Besides daily and armed skirmishes between right wing and left-wing students and between left-wing students and police, the May 1<sup>st</sup> (1977), Maras (1978) and Corum (1980) massacres ignited political contention between left-wing insurgents and the state. The number of mass street protests, strikes, factory and university invasions, bank robberies, and armed skirmishes between the organizations or police forces escalated. In 1978, a state of emergency was declared to combat increasing "anarchy" and "fraternal fighting." Eventually, in 1980 the military abolished the civil government and ruled the country for three years. At the same time, due to the disputes over methodology, ideology, and mobilization zones, armed skirmishes and enmities flourished among socialist revolutionary organizations, too. Conflicts between the above-mentioned organizations will matter for our understanding of the dynamics among inmates in Mamak and Diyarbakir prisons between 1980 and 1985.

The order in the prisons started to change with the 1971 coup. Prison legislation of 1965 and 1967 introduced a more restrictive rule in prisons. This was further intensified under the military rule in 1970s. Following the 1970 military coup, political prisoners were subjected to

military discipline (Calislar 2010). Just as if they were in a military ward, their hair had to be short as a soldier's, roll calls were made in the military order, prisoners had to stand still and wait for the guards, and they were expected to obey a military hierarchy in the prison. In addition to this militarized regime, political prisoners were forced to wear ties. Treatment in the prisons was becoming harsher when THKP-C leader Mahir Cayan and four of his friends fled from Istanbul Maltepe Prison within the first seven months of the coup. Colonel Nevzat Bolugiray was in charge of the prisons during the emergency state of 1978-1980 and the 1980 military coup in Adana, Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Hatay and Mersin. He presents the situation of the 1970s and early 80s prisons in the region: "As the number of arrests increased, especially after the Maraş events, overcrowding was the major problem. Desperately we converted dining halls and the wards of the soldiers' into prisons. People were sleeping on top of each other under very poor health conditions. Security precautions, on the other hand, were extremely insufficient in civilian prisons. People were everywhere, in the corridors, doorways, and toilets everywhere. The prisons had the ward system, wards of 80-100 people. If we had the room for a system of cells for 3-5 people, we would have obstructed the way of the ideological education sessions of political prisoner and their commune systems. Moreover, escapes were the biggest problem. For example, a right wing agitator fled and killed someone and returned back to the prison! The precautions were so weak that anyone could escape easily. The architecture of the prisons was far away from keeping the terror criminals safely (Bolugiray 2001:69-73)."

In addition to Bolugiray's observations, Oral Calislar, a former inmate of Mamak Prison, depicts the 1970s prison environment in Ankara as a place where they could stay all day in the yard, move between the wards, and had access to books and cigarettes (2010:9-11). Despite the disciplinary rules and laws that were introduced, the use of time was still under the control of the

prisoners in Ankara. Actually, the military coup in 1970 tried to introduce daily regulations into the prisons, but only the 1980 military coup could realize it for a while.

The junta justified the 1980 coup by stating that they had to intervene to restore the social and economic order (Birand 1985). It was a common practice in other countries of the world too, in late 20<sup>th</sup> century that state violence interfered when the capitalist order cannot function properly and attacked by the organized political opposition (Dilek 2014). Due to the global economic recession and rise in oil prices post-1974, the Turkish economy was in depression with a more than four million dollar trade deficit in 1977 (Boratav 2003). High inflation rates and repetitive devaluations were not satisfying the IMF's economic restoration policies for Turkey. Moreover, increasing strikes and strong labor unions were seen as management problems for the employers. In addition to crushing organized labor, students and Kurdish insurgents, the 1980 military coup also functioned as a transitory means to introduce a neo-liberal economy model by collaborating with the leading owners of capital.

Since the military promised to pursue the economic "stabilization policies" of January 24th, local capitalists and inter-state organizations such as NATO, the IMF and the World Bank were in favor of the 1980 coup d'état (Mavioglu 2006). Despite these financial constraints, the military built new prisons, increasing their capacity from 55,000 to 80,000. The construction of Metris and Diyarbakır prisons were accelerated to be ready for confining the insurgents during the 1980 military coup, however Metris opened seven months later than the declaration of the coup (Kukul 1998). The Martial Law Command of Istanbul announced that the slowing down of work constituted a crime. After having adopted the most restrictive constitution of Turkey via referenda on October 10 1982, most of the social and political rights were suspended. Seniority

compensation rights of workers, membership in labor unions, and rights to collective bargaining and strike were limited (Birand 1999).

Military rule formally ended on November 6, 1983 but in practice it lasted until the end of the 1980s. Civil elections were held on November 6, 1983, consisting of candidates approved by the military council, National Security Council (MGK). Martial law ended in Ankara in July of 1985 and in Diyarbakir in July 1987. The Mamak and Diyarbakir prisons were actively used to imprison political prisoners in this era, specifically between 1980 and 1985.

As novel practices of discipline in Turkish prisons, military prisons of 1980s operated to transform prisoners into soldiers, meaning they were subjected to harsh military discipline and treated as if they were the lowest-ranked soldiers. The disciplinary program imposed on these prisons was strict and violent in comparison to a previously loosely controlled prison system. Mehdi Zana in his memoirs from Diyarbakir Prison writes: “According to the decision made by Military Court of Cassation in 1975, general and political prisoners could be treated as soldiers before the military courts. Prescription of Military Penal and Detention houses’ section for ‘rules for prisoners to obey’ declared: ‘Soldier convicts should not forget that they are soldiers and civilians should not forget that they are soldiers before the military judiciary’” (Zana 2004). Such episodic evidence reveals how procedures of punishment were evolving into a barrack-style mode of military discipline in prison. State authorities were carrying the rule of military barracks into wards by strict daily programs.

Torture and strict regulation of the daily schedules were dominant in prisons, especially in Diyarbakir, Mamak and Metris. Educational hours centered on Ataturk’s edicts and religion. Prisoners were forced to memorize the military anthems and selected words of Ataturk. If they broke prison the rules, they were beaten, or worse, faced torture. Another prominent application

of military rule in prisons was mandatory uniforms. Resistance against uniforms, torture, military discipline, and the top-down imposition of a homogenous subjectivity grew among political prisoners. Prisoners relied on the communal life and other forms of resistance to survive under the military regime. The communes in wards improved both the psychological and physical health of the prisoners by fostering solidarity and flashed of organized movements against prison authority.

Chanting slogans, rejecting meals, refusing to stand up when a guardian came around, refusing to wear the uniform, and boycotting the canteen meals were some of the everyday forms of resistance practiced by the detainees. Above all, however, the most effective and publicly prominent forms of protest were hunger strikes and acts self-immolation. Among Metris, Mamak, and Diyarbakir prisons, conditions in Diyarbakir Prison, where the Kurdish insurgents were detained, were the harshest. Also, the most extreme cases of torture were reported there. To have a more comprehensive understanding about the significance of the Kurdish identity in a Turkish military prison, we need to grasp the history of the Kurdish question in Turkey, and I provide a brief description of that history below.

#### **4.5 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON THE KURDISH QUESTION IN TURKEY**

Historically, the root of the modern Kurdish conflict can be traced to 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire's modernization era. The Ottoman Empire took control of Kurdistan<sup>17</sup> in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Besikci 2013). Until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kurdish tribes had local autonomous

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<sup>17</sup> Geographically the area where the Kurdish speaking population had lived for centuries in southeastern region of modern Turkey, northern regions of modern Iraq and Syria and northwestern region of modern Iran.

governments where they regulated their religion, local security, education, trade, judiciary courts and so on. The relation between the Empire and the Kurdish tribes depended on a military agreement in which Kurds provided warriors to the Empire during wartimes and protected the Empire's borders with Safavid (modern Iran) Empire (Bruinessen 2000). The Empire's efforts to centralize governance and introduce tax reforms in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ignited the conflict between autonomous Kurdish governments and the Sultanate. The resistance of Kurdish tribes against state centralization and loss of their autonomy created the perception of Kurds as obstacles to Turkish modernization (Yegen 2007). Between 1803 and 1912, Kurdish tribes rioted twelve times and fought with Sultan's central armies. During this era of armed conflict in 19<sup>th</sup> century, Turkish nationalism was flourishing in the Balkans. Furthermore, the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) was the determinative point where Muslimhood conjoins Turkish nationalism, with the loss of vast territory and most of the non-Muslim population, the idea of homogenization of the population occurred (Yegen 2007). The traumatizing consequences of the Balkan Wars with the loss of Balkan territories made Turkish modernists abandon Ottomanism<sup>18</sup> and conceive a nation-state without non-Muslims, as only way to escape from the past.

The First World War and the Turkish Independence War followed the Balkan wars. As a result of all these wars, the Ottoman Empire was partitioned, invaded by the Allied forces, and the territory shrank to Anatolia. The modern Turkish Republic declared independence in 1923 on the territory of Anatolia and a small portion of Thracia. In the following years between 1920 and 1938, different Kurdish tribes rioted nineteen times (Bruinessen 2000). After 1925, the future trajectory of Turkish nationalism added "Turkification" to the "Muslimification" of Anatolia. Of the two major non-Muslim peoples of Anatolia, a majority of the Armenians faced the genocide

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<sup>18</sup> The idea of pulling different ethnic and religious groups together under the Ottoman citizenship.



and forced migration, and a majority of the Greeks were exchanged with the Turks of Greece. Kurds on the other hand were considered as future Turks, since a majority of the Kurdish population was also Sunni-Muslims.<sup>19</sup> In a way, Turkishness was a status that Kurds could acquire if they went through a successful assimilation (Yegen 2007).

In other words, Turkish nationalism was open to Muslim peoples of the Empire, which were seen as potentially assimilated Turks, but it was closed to the non-Muslim populations (Yegen 2007). After 1925, the Turkish government denied the existence of Kurds as a separate ethnic group. Speaking Kurdish was banned, all information regarding Kurdistan erased from the history textbooks, and the remaining Kurdish and Armenian names of the villages, streets, and regions were given Turkish names—anything was done in order to obscure and separate Kurdish identity and history. “Scientists” inspired by the Italian and German fascism in 1930s, were measuring skulls and trying to prove that Kurds were genetically inferior to Turks, that their language was a distorted version of Farsi, and that they were primitive mountain savages, uncivilized bandits who had to be educated and assimilated into Turkishness (Yegen 2007). Kurds were thus allowed basic citizenship rights as long as they assimilated. Stemming from this historical ethnic discrimination, educated Kurdish youth had started to get politically organized in 1950s, and by the 1970s there were large number of Kurdish revolutionary liberation organizations. Most of these groups used political violence and guerilla fighting to resist the Turkish state.

Yegen’s analysis shows the shift in Turkish nationalism’s perception of the Kurdish question coinciding with changing power constellations, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a rivalry between backward tribal sheikhs, pre-moderns and a modern, prosper Turkish army and

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<sup>19</sup> The Alewite and Yezidi population of Kurds were seen religiously heretical in the eyes of the Turkish authorities; they were also killed or deported.

government. By the 1950s and 60s, communist mobilizations polarized the society. In the 1970s, the rise of Turkish nationalism led to the portrayal of the Kurdish national liberation movement as a product of a global communist movement. Thus, the Kurdish question was turned into a security and democratization problem by the 1980s and 1990s due to the changes in the global political realm (Yegen 2007).

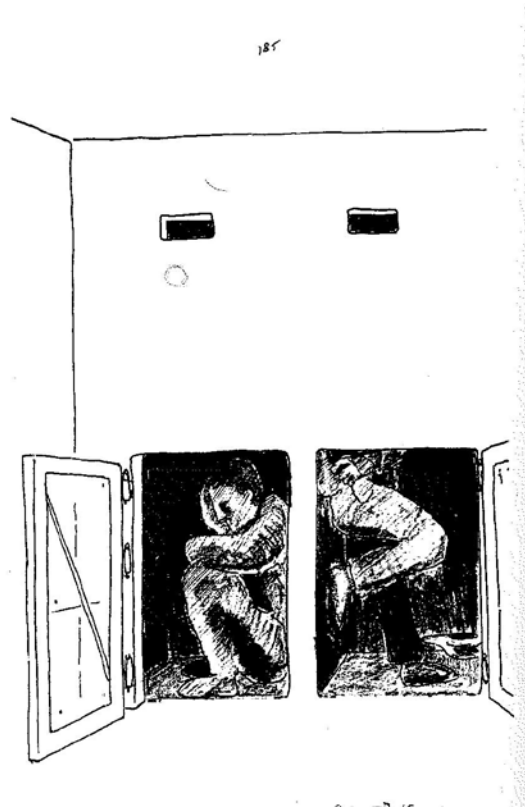
Similarly, Gunes shows the transformation of Kurdish movement since 1960s from the bases of social inequality and lack of economic development to discourse of colonization of Kurdistan by four nation-states and a need for socialist revolution in 1970s. Again, the belief in the need for a socialist revolution left itself to armed struggle for national liberation during 80s and human rights discourse from late 90s onwards (2011). We can see how Turkish nationalism and Kurdish movement transformed through similar paths. Of course this similarity is not only based on their contingency and reciprocal relationship, but also the influence of international conditions such as the Gulf War, Cold War, the pressure of international press and the EU membership process, which contributed to a rise in human rights discourse. In the following chapter, I will show how, in the case of Diyarbakir prison the use of state repression and prisons to dissolve social movement organizations continued the Turkish state's assimilation policies towards the Kurds. In line with this historical fight against Kurdish identity and organized movement, Kurdish identity holds a salient position as a reason for imposing indiscriminate violence in Diyarbakir Prison.

## **5.0 CHAPTER III: INSIDE THE MAMAK AND DIYARBAKIR PRISONS**

### **5.1 MAMAK MILITARY PRISON**

Mamak Military Prison was built in the Mamak district of the capital city, Ankara, at the city's outskirts, downhill of the Huseyingazi Mountain. It is located inside the 28<sup>th</sup> Division of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps. It continues to be a military prison. Mamak was infamous amongst the Turkish revolutionaries because, during the 1971 coup, student movement leaders Deniz Gemis, Huseyin Inan and Yusuf Aslan stayed there prior to being sentenced to death by the military junta of the 1971 coup. In 1970s the entire prison was composed of only one building to confine convicted soldiers, two big and two small wards, and two solitary confinement cells. Subsequently, one building became Block-B and new blocks were added (A, C and D blocks) before the 1980 military coup. In addition to the cells, the infamous Colonel of Mamak Prison, Raci Tetik, built special solitary confinement spaces, which he called *tabutluk* (coffins). Tabutluks were dark, vertical rectangular prisms of 1x1 square meters, where one could either sit or stand. The space was not enough to lie down or move around. Another architectural feature that is specific to Mamak was the *kafes* (cages). Cages were modeled after the lion cages, and were built to keep prisoners in for a few days before sending them to their wards.

**Figure 1:** Tabutluk (coffin)



**Source:** <http://www.mimarlarodasiankara.org/mamak/index.php-Did=7.htm>

After the 1974 general amnesty of political prisoners, left-wing political organizations dispersed into separate, smaller organizations following different revolutionary leaders of 1960s and 70s. The Mamak military prison housed nearly 31,000 prisoners between 1980 and 1985. The yearly population increased to 3500 inmates, at times housing a maximum of 200 female inmates. A majority of the inmates were members and sympathizers of Revolutionary Path (Dev-Yol). Dev-Yol had the highest number of sympathizers and members within universities and working-class neighborhoods. Its protests attracted the largest crowd, and its organization extended into the central Anatolia Mediterranean and the Black Sea region. Members of Halkin Kurtulusu (People's Salvation) comprised the second largest population of inmates in the Mamak Prison. The remaining political prisoners were scattered in smaller numbers, and they were

members of TKP, Kurtulus, Halkin Yolu, Dev-Savas, Acilciler, TIKKO, Partizan, TIKB, Aydinlik, TKP/ML and Devrim Yolu. In addition to these left-wing political organizations, there were members of the right-wing political organizations as well. They were the sympathizers or members of MHP, MSP, Grey Wolves and Turkish Revenge Brigade. However, they were smaller in numbers in comparison to the political prisoners associated with left-wing organizations. An important element of Mamak constituted placing right wing and left-wing political prisoners in the same wards and cells under the policy of “*karistir baristir*” (mix and reconcile).

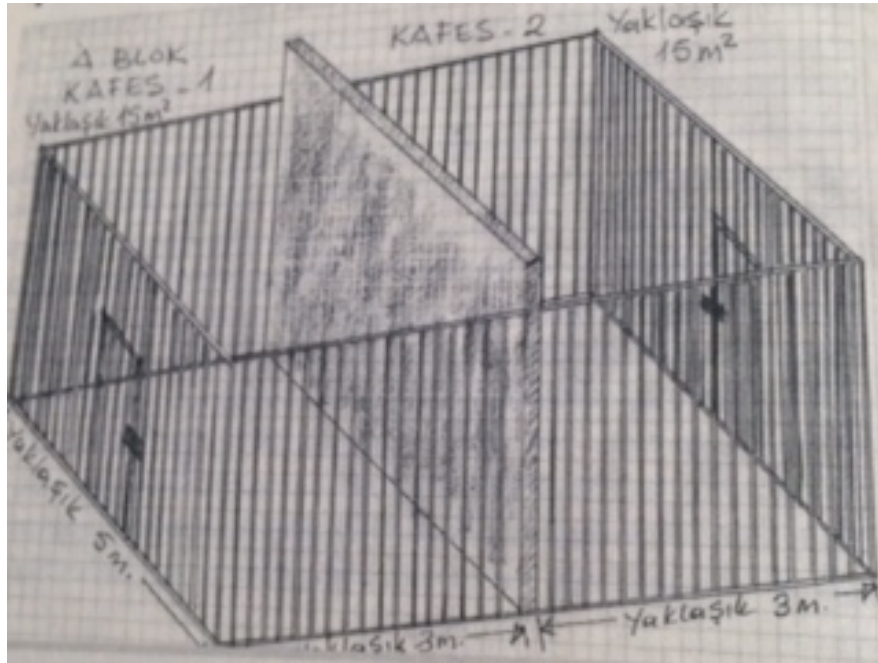
Common types of political actions of the above mentioned organizations were pirate demonstrations, meetings, organizing and informing the people living in poor neighborhoods and new students in universities. Other political actions included posting revolutionary banners and painting walls with slogans, bank robberies to fund their organizations, issuing periodicals, distributing fliers, and holding informative political theory meetings in student houses or university halls. Armed skirmishes between the left and right wing political organizations as well as with the police were very common. A few of those organizations formed guerilla squads, but could not sustain or grow like the PKK did.

The interrogation of the inmates took place at the police station, known as Deep Inspections Laboratory (DAL). Every interrogated insurgent was subjected to torture, electric shocks, “Palestinian hangings” (hanging by the arms) and beating. Sexual harassment and rapes of prisoners at the police station were also common before they were taken to Mamak. Mamak was infamous for the cages Colonel Raci Tetik constructed during his reign at the prison. The cages were used to welcome the newcomers with torture. Every prisoner was beaten in this cage and kept for a few days before being assigned to the wards. Torture, in the form of regular

beatings with a truncheon, excessive exercise in extreme temperatures and verbal humiliations, dominated prison life in Mamak. Although the level of violence never intensified as it did in Diyarbakir prison, it was a daily routine. Other forms of repression included the banning of family visiting hours, attorney visits, and free yard hours. Similarly, mandatory education and training sessions, as depicted in previous chapters, were introduced in Mamak prison too. A male informant Mehmet from Mamak depicts the cage: *“When I saw the cages, I immediately remembered the books I read on Vietnamese resistance in Saigon prison. There were also cages, the only missing thing were two lions!”* Another male informant Metin goes on: *“After staying seventy days at DAL and suffering from torture, we were dreaming of a comfy ward, but what we got was a cage! Literally a lion cage with fences in the middle of the prison yard! They kept us in the cage for three days constantly humiliating before scattering us to the wards.”*

The cages in Mamak Prison are typical examples of mortification of self in Goffman’s description of total institutions. Since this kind of cages were made for keeping animals, soldiers were degrading inmates’ status by keeping them in the cages like animals, stripping them off from their belongings and privacy.

**Figure 2: Kafes (cage)**



**Source:** Kaktusler Susuz da Yasar

By July 1980, prior to the coup, the infamous colonel of Mamak Prison was assigned. As nearly all interviewees stated, military rule in Mamak prison started on August 28, 1980, about fifteen days before the actual declaration date of the coup on the September 12th. On August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1980, a preliminary decree on the military coup was posted to the Generals asking them to be ready for action at any moment. On the very same day, a special team of soldiers brutally attacked the prisoners in Mamak Prison. This was the first operation conducted in the prisons to mark the military coup. A male Informant Kemal says: *“Special commandos from Bolu came for that operation. They didn’t stop beating us and shooting at the sky and our wards until the morning.”* All the male and female inmates were severely beaten and threatened between 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1980 and 11<sup>th</sup> of September 1980. During these thirteen days, one inmate died due to torture, many of them were injured and soldiers managed to impose the military order in the Mamak prison.

According to the new rules, inmates must salute the wardens as “commander,” and they should shout and give an oral report and headcount to the soldiers. When they did not shout loud enough they would be beaten up. Moreover, inmates had to wake up at 6am, shave, and start physical education every hour for 45 minutes followed by a 15 minute break and then start normative education, memorizing Ataturk’s life and edicts in *Nutuk* for 45 minutes (Yıldız 2001). Education sessions consisted of forced reading of a book on Ataturk, memorizing sixty military anthems, the Turkish national anthem and national oath, and praying before meal times. The daily schedule of prison life in Mamak was the same with Diyarbakir Prison. The only difference was that the military imposed the rules a week before the coup in Mamak and they were ended sooner. Calislar depicts the era of the 1980 coup as a “new system,” where the inmates lost their control over how to spend time inside. He states that before the coup, ward doors were open all the time. Prisoners could freely visit other wards during 1970s, however conditions became stricter with the 1980 coup (2010). With this new system, spaces gained new meanings. Yards became spaces for military education and torture; wards became spaces where prisoners’ interactions with others were watched and punished. Tabutluks were the ultimate space of incarceration. Nevertheless, inmates created free spaces in the wards and utilize yard hours to communicate.



**Figure 3:** Physical education hour in Mamak Prison



Source: <http://www.mimarlarodasiankara.org/mamak/index.php-Did=7.htm>

## 5.2 DIYARBAKIR PRISON

Diyarbakir Prison is located in the Baglar district of the city of Diyarbakir, one of the biggest hubs in southeast Turkey.<sup>20</sup> Currently, it is not in use; instead, a new high-security prison was built. There is an ongoing discussion between former inmates, their relatives, human rights associations/activists, political parties, and the government to decide the future of the old building. Human rights activists demand that the prison building be turned into a museum of

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<sup>20</sup> Northern Kurdistan

memory, resistance and torture. The government on the other hand, wants to either demolish or turn it into a school or hotel.

In 1980s, an urban area like it is today did not surround the prison; it is located on the west-end of the city. Architecturally, it was built as a “type-E” prison, which consists of five parallel blocks with shared yards, resembling the letter “E.” Including the administration building; it consisted of five blocks in total. Former inmates point out that at the time of their transfer to the prison, its construction was incomplete.

The structural maximum capacity of the prison was between 600 and 900. However, informants report overcrowding, more than a thousand inmates at times. Based on these accounts, more than 20,000 people were housed in Diyarbakir Prison between 1980 and 1985 (Bulut 2003). The population of Diyarbakir prison was predominantly Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK) members. PKK had 591 defendants at the main trial. There were also members of the following Kurdish organizations: Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association (DDKD), Ozgurluk Yolu (Liberation Path), Kurdistan National Liberators (KUK), Rizgarî (Salvation), Ala Rizgarî (Flag of the Salvation) and Kawa. Additionally, there were also members of smaller Turkish revolutionary organizations: TKP, Dev-Yol, and TIKKO.

Before entering the prison, each inmate was interrogated in the 7th Army Corps campus, which was named as “Kurdoglu” (equivalent of DAL in Ankara). One of the first measures after the 1980 coup d’état was to extend the maximum period of detention from 15 to 30, and then to 90 days. Not all of the inmates were held there for 90 days, but most of them were kept more than 30 days. Nearly all informants were taken there, handcuffed and blindfolded. They experienced severe beatings, electric shock, rape, and threats that their children or spouses would

be raped, and Palestinian hangings, beating with baton, starvation and dehydration. Their nails were pulled off and cigarettes were put off on their backs and sexual organs.

Inmates were forced to admit to the crimes the prosecutors assigned to them and to share information about their comrades. After the interrogation process, they were transferred to the Diyarbakir military prison. The beating and interrogation continued upon entering the prison as well. The first thing a female prisoner, Aliye, remembers about the prison is: *“I remember iron doors shutting and making terrible noises. The giant one of the guards asked me if I wanted to stay in a room with a TV or bath. I was surprised. Then they took me to a cell full of sewage water rising up till my belly. They kept me there for one week, beating me in that pool of sewage every day before sending me to the ward.”* The treatment inmates received upon entering the prison is significant in the way that it depicts how the insurgents were already subject to violence, exhausted and passivized prior to and during their entrance to the prison. Thus, they came into prisons already aware of the risks of resisting state repression.

In Diyarbakir prison, between 1980 and 1984, fifty-two insurgents were killed; twelve were disabled due to severity of torture and 108 of them caught tuberculosis (Tekin 2012:40-54). During Colonel Esat Oktay’s tenure in the Diyarbakir prison (1981-1983), it was considered among the ten most notorious jails in the world.<sup>21</sup> Severe and systematic beating, being stripped naked, the obligation to salute Captain Esat Oktay Yıldırım’s dog, water and food deprivation, “falaka” (beating of the soles of feet), Palestinian hangings, excessive exercise in extreme temperatures, stretching, squeezing or crushing of limbs and genitalia, piling of naked prisoners on top of each other, asphyxia and mock execution, electric shocks (specifically electrodes attached to genitals), extraction of nails and healthy teeth, forcing prisoners to mix with prisoners

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.criminaljusticedegreehub.com/top-10-most-violent-prisons-in-the-world/>

with tuberculosis, sexual humiliation and assault, rectal examinations, forcing prisoners to beat/sexually humiliate/rape or urinate on each other, rape or threat of rape of prisoners, or relatives of prisoners in their presence by prison guards, violent forcing of truncheon rectally, forced feeding of rotten/contaminated food or feces, baths in prison sewers (referred to as “the disco” by the guards) (Zeydanlioglu 2009) were the most common methods of torture during Esat Oktay’s reign. In brief, systemic mortification of self (identity), sexual molestation and physical pain dominated the domain of prisoners’ lives. The extent of violence never reached to this level in Mamak Prison. There were political and historical motivations to treat Kurdish groups differently than the Turkish prisoners. We can read the severe attacks against one’s sexuality and ethnic identity as in a continuum with the Turkish state’s denial of the Kurdish identity and historical fear from an autonomous/independent Kurdish sovereignty in the region. Since this ethnic differentiation determined the ways and extent of the repression in Diyarbakir prison, and the prisoners formed their responses against this form of repression. I argue that inmates’ shared ethnic identity became more salient by overarching their differing political positions, and that matters a lot in the formation of more frequent and sustained collective action there.

Before the military coup was declared, restrictions on prisoners’ actions were very limited in Diyarbakir prison. Prisoners could bring resources such as books and paper into the prison. They were in charge of scheduling their own daily routines and could communicate easily with other wards. There were no education sessions or special extra-repressive rules either. However, a few months following the coup, repressive sanctions and violence escalated (Ayata 2011a).

The junta introduced mandatory military educational hours and torture into the daily life of the prisoners, similar to the case in Mamak prison. One of the male informants, Sidar, recounts

their typical day: *“They woke us up around 5-6 am. Without an exception, everyday we had to shave, and share one little plastic cup of water with three to five other people. I remember they made us shave twice on the same day. We had to salute them as “commander” and stand in attention. After the shave, they made us pray and eat something. Then until 11-12pm we had to do military exercise in the yard, which included running and shouting military anthems. Same thing repeated until dinnertime. They would not let us sit freely even for five minutes. They would not give you free time to think. Around 9-10pm everyone had to sleep lying down in a stand still position. If one of us would talk to one another during these, they would severely beat us up.”*

Sidar emphasizes: *“they ruled our bodies to some extent but not our souls. People lost their physical and psychological health but most of us believed that if we were subjected to that cruelty because of who we are, then let it be, we won’t give up who we are.”* Inmates did not only conceive these attacks against their bodies but also their selves, their identities. In the following chapter, I will delve into the details of how identity, leadership, repression and resistance interacted in these prisons. I will make a content analysis of the interviews I did to present my data more clearly.

**Figure 4:** Normative education session in Diyarbakir Prison



Source: <http://en.habervesaire.com/haber/1604/>

## **6.0 CHAPTER IV: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION IN MAMAK AND DIYARBAKIR PRISONS**

### **6.1 DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISON OF THE INMATES IN MAMAK AND DIYARBAKIR PRISONS BETWEEN 1980 AND 1985**

The table below shows the demographic information of my research sample, which corresponds to the larger prison population of Mamak and Diyarbakir between 1980 and 1985.

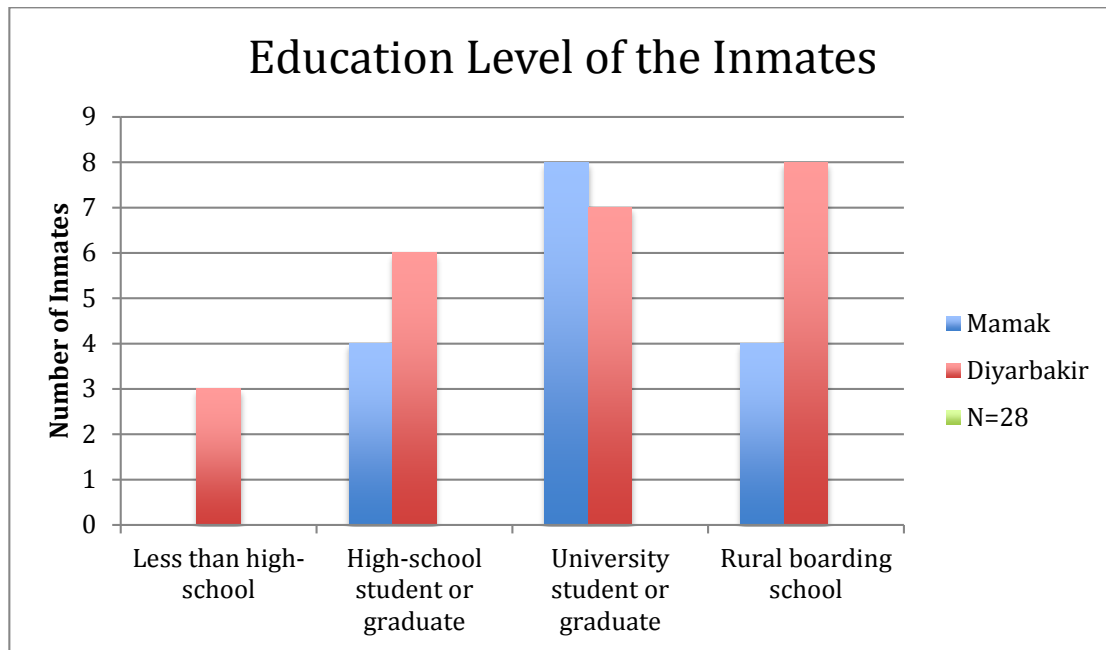
**Table 2:** Inmate Age Group

	<b>Inmate Age Group</b>				<b>Sex</b>	
<b>Prison</b>	<b>15-20</b>	<b>20-25</b>	<b>25-30</b>	<b>&gt;30</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Diyarbakır	3	6	4	3	13	3
Mamak	5	5	1	1	7	5

Source: Author's compilation, interviews

Political movements in this period attracted a very young group of people, 67% of the inmates I interviewed were incarcerated between the ages 15 and 25 years old. Some of them had already been involved in armed skirmishes and guerilla camps in Syria and Palestine prior to the 1980 coup.

**Table 3:** Education Level of the Inmates



Source: Author's compilation, interviews

This bar graph shows the education level of my informants when they were incarcerated. Even though the difference between Mamak and Diyarbakir is not extreme, this pattern coincides with the information available in secondary sources. It suggests that Mamak Prison's population was more urban and better educated than the Diyarbakir Prison.

In both prisons, political prisoners had the tendency of belittling the guards (the lowest ranking soldiers at the time). Aysen, a female prisoner from Mamak, recounts that: *"We were all very educated and not from some cheap universities like Sutcu Imam or so. There were Teaching Assistants and students from METU, AU and doctors too. Soldiers on the other hand were philistine, young boys coming from the villages of central Anatolia. Probably, they had not interacted with many women before; they harassed us, beat us, they didn't even know how to treat to us. The chief commander Raci Tetik once came to our ward and shouted: "I hate you all, you are all so literate and cultured, despite all the bad treatment you see, you still can go-by and*



*laugh!” Can, a male prisoner, from Diyarbakir Prison also shared that: “They were specially picking the soldiers to torture us. Most of them were illiterate young boys from central Anatolia or Black Sea region. They were all right-wing folks or had some people from MHP in their family. These were the people who didn’t even know how to socialize or look after a sheep in their villages, but here at the prison they were empowered, they could torture and command us.”*

Second, this distinction reveals itself in the discourse of PKK leaders as they justified the positions they take either to call for an action or not. I will describe this in more detail when I compare the role of leadership in the two prisons. I also included the number of inmates who went to rural boarding school because boarding schools appeared to have a prominent role in framing Kurdish students’ ethnic identity in a political context. I will discuss this issue more when I compare the role of a collective identity in the mobilization process of a collective action.

Even though the difference between educational backgrounds of the soldiers and prisoners do not seem to affect collective action directly, this differential status increased the prisoners’ feelings of degradation. In Goffman’s analysis one of the mortifying aspects of power is humiliation. This includes “disruption of the usual relationship between the individual actor and his acts” (Goffman 1961:35). Mostly this disruption takes the form of humiliation such as the forced act of deference to call the wardens “commander”, the obligation to humbly ask permission to scratch one’s self or to use the toilet. Since, the political prisoners believe that normally their status is higher than uneducated soldiers, the disruption of that status order is also an attack on their self and on adulthood, which further deteriorates their honor.

In the Diyarbakir Prison, military rule imposed increasing restrictions and violence gradually after the coup, specifically during internal security chief Mevlut Akkoyun’s rule. But the hardest and most violent conditions were experienced during Esat Oktay Yildiran’s reign,

which was between August 1981 and September 1983. In the Mamak prison military rule was enforced nearly two weeks before the coup and intensified within a short time. With the coup, officials in both prisons isolated the leaders of political movements into solitary cell confinement. Some of these leaders had already been incarcerated before and were experienced in determining action plans and ideological education strategies in prisons. Since the leaders were isolated and none of the trials had started, communication among prisoners was the biggest obstacle to their mass mobilization. Leader cadres of Dev-Yol in Mamak, waited for their trials to start before they took action. Since Dev-Yol in Mamak and PKK in Diyarbakir constituted the largest groups in these prisons, inmates from smaller organizations did not take action unless members or leaders of these organizations join. In both of the prisons, the most effective form of collective action was hunger strikes.

The table in the below shows the number and durability of the declared hunger strikes in two prisons. There were fewer and less sustained hunger strikes in Mamak Prison when compared to more frequent and sustained attempts in Diyarbakir.

**Table 4: Chronology of the Hunger Strikes**

<b>Prison</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>1984</b>
<b>Mamak</b>		<b>July 10 days</b>			<b>February 42 days</b>
		<b>December 3-10 days</b>			
<b>Diyarbakir</b>		<b>January 8 days</b>		<b>September 27 days</b>	<b>January 54 days</b>
		<b>April 43 days</b>			

Source: Author's compilation,interviews

Partizan, Acilciler and Halkin Kurtulusu's trials started before Dev-Yol's in Mamak. Additionally, some Acilci inmates were transferred to Mamak from the Metris prison, where they were already protesting. On July 7, 1981, members of Halkin Kurtulusu, Acilciler, Partizan raised the first call for collective action in Mamak, in the form of a hunger strike. According to a male informant from Mamak, Mehmet's account, more than 150 joined the hunger strike for ten days, but another smaller group started with fifty people, endured longer and ended with two people on the 32<sup>nd</sup> day.

Protestors were severely beaten every day in the courtyard and kept in specially designed claustrophobic cells called as "tabutluks" (coffins). Since Dev-Yol, with 753 inmates in the prison, did not join in the first call to action, a strong enough participation was not attained. The strike ended without any collective gain. In the following months, towards the end of 1981, on December 21<sup>st</sup> inmates collectively agreed to start a hunger strike. This time Dev-Yol participated. However, soldiers targeted especially the male prisoners on their first three days

and made them quit on the third day. Only female prisoners in their separate wards and leaders staying in solitary confinement endured this strike until the end for ten days.

Until the next collective attempt in February 1984, against mandatory uniforms, none of the groups tried to mobilize other inmates in the Mamak Prison. Utilization of constant repressive measures in Mamak increased towards the end of 1983 again. The military introduced mandatory uniforms in all prisons simultaneously. Male prisoners in Mamak resisted wearing them, and beatings intensified. Officials were dressing them by force and torture. Soon after they were forced to wear the uniforms, the prisoners would tear them off. As the protest persisted, the prison authorities decided to negotiate. They offered to accept prisoners' demands to end beatings, military education sessions and verbal humiliation if prisoners would wear the mandatory uniforms. As a result, inmates agreed to wear the uniforms and the torture ended in Mamak.

However, the right-wing prisoners were not satisfied with the agreement. The bill of indictment for right-wing prisoners' was accusing 392 detainees, 170 of them were from the Ankara region. Still, they were less than the half of the total left-wing prisoners who stayed in Mamak Prison between 1980 and 1985. They fabricated a motive and attacked left wing inmates at the ward. Soon after, the fight intensified and soldiers reintroduced the education sessions and beatings to quell the fight. In turn, left-wing inmates did not obey the rules and started a hunger strike. This was the biggest collective action achieved in Mamak Prison. Without any former planning, it expanded and endured for 42 days. This time, nearly the entire population contributed and the families put pressure on the military officials outside. One of the prominent members of Dev-Yol was from a well-known family with close ties to high-ranking army members. Oguzhan Muftuoglu says that a member's father talked to a member of the junta, and

he said that if they would give up the hunger strike, Raci Tetik will leave and conditions would improve. Upon hearing this, they agreed to quit the hunger strike. The hunger strike ended with prisoner's acceptance of wearing uniforms in return for ending repressive measures. Exceptionally, female prisoners fostered their resistance prior to the agreement by not referring to soldiers as "commanders", and not participating in education hours, among other actions.

Meanwhile in Diyarbakir Prison, shortly after the military repression started to increase towards 1981, the leadership cadre of PKK, confined in isolation from the others, started a hunger strike for eight days as a warning on January 4<sup>th</sup> 1981. That very first hunger strike was to show that they did not intend to obey the military rules, and if such rules continued they would start a bigger strike. Other inmates also supported them by chanting slogans and hitting keyholes, but this protest action generated little support. The main reason for the low participation was due to the trials having not yet started. Trials provided the biggest opportunity for the inmates to communicate, spread/exchange news and check in with each other.

A short time after Colonel Esat Oktay was instated, around February 1981, the imposition of military rules accelerated and violent attacks against the inmates became widespread. In the following months of Colonel Esat's rule, leaders of the PKK held a second protest. On March 4, 1981 they started a death fast with 14 others from the cells #35 where well-known, initiator members of the PKK, who undertook the leadership positions stayed; this time against Esat Oktay's brutal leadership and to stop violence in the prison. As a result of the attacks during the death fast, only 80 to 100 inmates remained non-submissive to the military rules out of a total prison population of 1000-2000 at the time. Remaining resisters were refusing to read the Turkish Oath and National Anthem, and would not refer to the soldiers as "commander". During the protest, one inmate died as a result of being force fed by the prison doctor.

On April 13, 1981, when the hunger strike reached its 40<sup>th</sup> day; the PKK's main trail (with 591 suspects) had already started. Trials were big opportunities for communicating with others as well as for voicing their opinions in the official reports. Inmates went to the courthouse pale and tired from the hunger strike and did not agree to verify their ID checks as an initial step at the trials—another form of protest against judge's demands. This first hunger strike, initially comprised of 25 participants, ended with an agreement with Colonel Esat. According to the negotiation, the Colonel agreed not to engage in torture, not to impede inmates' political defenses at the trials, to allow family and lawyer visits to be conducted without beatings and restrictions on action, and thereby to end the use of basic necessities such as water, food and excretion as means of repression (Welat 2011). In response, inmates would stand at attention like soldiers when they would see the guards, and they would go to visits and trials in a single file line. Soon after the negotiation, the Colonel stopped respecting the agreement and started practicing torture again. By May 24, 1981, the last remaining resistant leader cadre finally agreed to obey the military rules and suffer that violence.

Following the pacification of the inmates and escalating torture in Diyarbakir Prison on Newroz day<sup>22</sup>, the March 21, 1982 one of the members of the leadership of PKK, Mazlum Dogan, hung himself in his cell, leaving three matches on the ground. Drawing upon the symbols of the day and the matches, the PKK framed his suicide as flaunting resistance in the prison. Two months after this act, four PKK insurgents self-immolated by starting a fire with thinner, plastics and paint that were used to paint the walls and windows with Turkish flags (Yetkin

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<sup>22</sup> The Kurdish New Years day, which tells the story of a young blacksmith Kawa's revenge on the cruel king and lighting the resistance fire on the mountains of Kurdistan.

2010). They left a letter stating that *“this is not a life to live”* and urged everyone to follow Mazlum Dogan, and resist against humiliation and torture (Yetkin 2010).

These protestors were using their bodies as instruments of resistance and these kind of self-sacrificing actions created moral shocks as well as heroic martyrdom stories for morale. Following these self-sacrificing actions, on 14th July of 1982 the leadership of PKK declared an unconditional death fast against the torture. It lasted for 65 days and ended with the death of five insurgent leaders. In the end, soldiers and prisoners reached an agreement to end the torture, dismiss Esat Oktay from his post, improve the quality of food, and cure the ill insurgents at the hospital. These amendments were valid only for the ward #35, where leader cadre's cells were located (Ayata 2011b). This was the first gain of the insurgents but it was only limited to the protest participants.

The biggest collective action of the Diyarbakir Prison with the most widespread participation started on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1983. It endured for 27 days, and a majority of the insurgents participated (Zana 2011). On the 27th day of the hunger strike, an agreement was reached. For the first time after three years, torture ended. They had access to pencils and paper, were able to talk freely in the wards, corridors and in common spaces, and ordering books from outside were free. For the first time, insurgents had the confidence and morale of winning, and for the following three months, the insurgents were at ease. A group of insurgents was attacked by the soldiers during visiting hours in January 1984, greatly unsettling the group after relatively peaceful days. The new civil government imposed the mandatory uniform on all insurgents in all prisons of Turkey by the end of 1983. Soon after the beginning of January 1984, a hunger strike started against the mandatory military uniform. Unlike the 1983 resistance, leader cadre did not organize this action; it started abruptly. This time, the morale, experience and the confidence

gained by the September 1983 resistance enabled a vast participation. As a result, inmates agreed to wear the uniforms but conditions never became notorious as it was before September 1983, though repression continued towards the end of 1980s. In the following section I will compare the different patterns of collective action in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons by explaining the opportunity-threat structures in these prisons.

## **6.2 OPPORTUNITY AND THREAT: ROLE OF STATE REPRESSION**

Up until now, despite the repression having been more severe in Diyarbakir Prison between 1980 and 1983 than in Mamak Prison, we see more frequent and sustained formation of collective action in Diyarbakir Prison and fewer faltering instances of collective action in Mamak Prison. I argue that task-oriented leadership; competition among the different organizations and the inability to mobilize a shared identity in the prison impeded the formation of a large-scale and sustained collective action in Mamak.

In Diyarbakir Prison, during the escalation of repression between 1980 and 1983, we witness frequent attempts at collective action. However, these remained limited to the leadership. More insurgents were recruited in 1983 and 1984. This is because inmates utilized the opportunities opened in 1983, such as the shift to a civilian government, realignment in the prison authorities namely Colonel Esat's transfer, and the opening communication opportunities by the beginnings of the trials. For instance, at least one inmate from each ward had to be at the PKK's Suruc group's trial on September 2, 1983. That was a major opportunity to further mobilize inmates and spread the news of the planned action. In addition, there was another factor coming from the outside: the PKK launched its first armed attack against the Turkish army in



August 1984, and this was celebrated in the prison as a source of morale. The Diyarbakir Prison case also suggests that collective action may be more likely during the escalation of repression than during periods of stable but high levels of repression. Of course, since this is only one case, it cannot suggest a generalized pattern. Moreover, I argue that the main reasons why leaders in Diyarbakir Prison could not recruit more insurgents to the early collective actions were their lack of the means of communication until the start of the trials, the intensity of repression, and competition among organizations. As time went by, shared identity between insurgents maintained and the problem of organizational conflicts was overcome in Diyarbakir but not in Mamak Prison.

One of the basic assumptions of opportunity-threat structure is that people can mobilize in response to changing political opportunities (Meyer 2004). According to the political opportunity theorists, a large-scale mobilization is often preceded by power realignment or a shift in the political power structure. Activists perceive this transformation as a chance to make changes in the structure. However, micro-level dynamics also shape changing opportunity-threat structures and insurgents' perceptions of them. For instance, as a result of the negotiations after July 1982 hunger strike in Diyarbakir Prison, the chief during the period of most intense torture, Colonel Esat Oktay, was removed from duty in early summer of 1983. Inmates' actions paved the way for a change in the power alignment. In that transitional process of the new colonel, torture decreased initially, even though it escalated again later. The leader cadre of PKK who gained exemption from torture and military rules after the July resistance started planning a bigger collective action, which started on September 5, 1983. In addition to the shift to a civil government, realignment in the prison authorities and communication opportunity was all in thanks to Suruc trial. Other micro-level dynamics such as development of alternative relations

under repressive conditions until that time make that collective action possible and sustainable.

Further, repression in opportunity-threat structure is one of the factors that raise the costs of collective action. However, by comparing the mobilization processes in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons, I have shown that at first the extreme repression in Diyarbakir Prison impeded the recruitment to and expansion of collective action beyond core leadership. With time, extreme repression created bedrock for prisoners to alter their previously contentious relationships by coping with violence and scarce resources together, thus, opening the way for more solidary relations. A male interviewee Haldun explains how they perceived the intensity of the repression and how it acted as a barrier to collective action too: *“Everybody realized that we had to do something. But you got beaten, or even raped with truncheons just even because you talk to the person next to you. I wanted to die for hundreds of time but there is the possibility of not managing it. What if I cannot kill myself? Then the torture would be worse than suicide. If you survive from the suicide then it is worse than death. Sometimes death was something that we could not achieve by ourselves.*

As the interviewee suggests, between 1981 and 1983 in the case of Diyarbakir prison, extreme repression creates the will to act against the repression but it also depresses the conditions to form a collective action. If we include that rumors of death and gossip as factors that created a climate of suspicion in the prisons, as well as intensifying violence, it is, thus, less likely that prisoners will engage in collective action.

According to the process of change in opportunity-threat structure, certain micro- and meso-level dynamics might develop, such as reframing the meaning of identity, emotions and developing interpersonal relations. My thesis shows that the main determinant of mobilization is the formation of a shared identity, the role of leaders in that process, and the formation of new

relations under the conditions of changing opportunity/threat structure. The military chose different ways to increase repression in the two prisons. In Mamak Prison, changing of the power structure started earlier and with immediate violent attacks in a short time; in Diyarbakir Prison violence increased gradually between 1980 and 1983 but was sustained longer and at greater intensity than in Mamak. In Mamak Prison, military rule started before the coup on August 28, 1980 with special commandos, shooting around the prisoners and severely beating the prisoners. This caused the death of one on the very first night that they imposed the military rule in the prison. Other than differing in its temporal process of imposition, the military had different repressive policies in two prisons.

**Table 5:** Similarities and Differences of Diyarbakir & Mamak Prisons

	<b>DIYARBAKIR</b>	<b>MAMAK</b>
<b>Prison Type</b>	Military, Military Practices Imposed on Prisoners' Daily Routines	Military, Military Practices Imposed on Prisoners' Daily Routines
<b>Prisoner Rights</b>	Banned	Banned
<b>Gender Distribution</b>	Majority Male	Majority Male
<b>Visibility in</b>		
<b>Level of State Violence and Repression</b>	Extreme and Indiscriminative	Moderate and Selective
<b>Leaders among Prisoners</b>	High Risk Taking Leaders, Leaders Isolated from Their Groups	Low Risk Taking Leaders, Leaders Isolated from Their Groups
<b>Communal lives</b>	Banned	Allowed, Cohabitation of Right and Left-Wing Prisoners
<b>Political Affiliation of Prisoners</b>	High, Mostly Affiliated with Kurdish Organizations, No Right-Wing Prisoners	High, Mostly Turkish Left-Wing Prisoners
<b>Cooperation Among Prisoners</b>	A lot of Informants (snitches)	Few Informants (snitches)

Source: Author's compilation

I show some of the differences and similarities in the **Table 5** above. First, the military allowed prisoners to live communally based on their organizations in Mamak prison but they banned communal living based on organizations in Diyarbakir Prison. Second, they mixed right wing and left-wing political prisoners in wards and cells in Mamak; and there were no right-wing prisoners in Diyarbakir. Third, violence was selective in Mamak and indiscriminate in Diyarbakir. Fourth, repression towards ethnic identity (Kurds) and sexuality were severe in Diyarbakir, and it did not exist in Mamak Prison. Fifth, torture was much more violent in Diyarbakir Prison, but for the majority of the population it did not go beyond severe beating and “falaka” (beating the soles of the foot) in Mamak Prison. Though, the conditions of the leaders were similar, they were both isolated in the cells in both of the prisons. However, their positions were different. Leaders in Mamak did not take the same risky initiatives that leaders in Diyarbakir did.

According to my interview data, in Diyarbakir Prison there were no criteria on whom to torture. For instance, there were Arab prisoners from the Iraq Communist Party, elderly peasants or neighbors or relatives of insurgents without any relation to political organizations, smugglers; and even a German tour guide in Diyarbakir Prison. Even those from Iraq Communist Party and the German tour guide were forced to follow military rules, torture and memorize the Turkish Oath and the military anthems. Moreover, Diyarbakir Prison was also infamous for its high number of informers (snitches). However, being an informer and collaborating with the officials would not ameliorate the “snitch’s” situations.

In Mamak Prison on the other hand, cooperation with the wards paid off. For instance, Raci Tetik separated the cooperative female prisoners to a ward, where they were exempt from severe repression and had more resources. Also, torture in Mamak prison was selective. Most of

the prisoners in Mamak Prison experienced the extreme levels of torture in DAL, before arriving at the prison. Only selected leaders were subjected to torture other than beating and “falaka” in Mamak Prison. Female prisoners were also exempt from “falaka” most of the time; they were only beaten by batons on the hands, back, or legs. Furthermore, soldiers consciously picked the important people, mostly the leader cadres from Dev-Yol and kept them in “tabutluks.” Leader cadres of other organizations were also kept in “tabutluks,” but special attention was given to Dev-Yol leaders. Because it was such a vast mobilized organization outside, the administration focused its most intense pressure on them. Waiting outside in the cold, beating with baton and contaminating the wards were a common experience of them.

For instance, the four inmates who burned themselves in the middle of the ward in 1982 in Diyarbakir Prison were in the so called “confessors’ ward.” By the time they realized the intensity of violence did not change for them even though they had cooperated/snitched, they made the decision to take action. In Mamak Prison on the other hand, female prisoners say they were subjected less severe violence than the male prisoners and leaders were treated worse. For instance, Levon Ekmekciyan, an Armenian revolutionary was subjected to worse behavior and more humiliation before his execution than the Turkish revolutionaries. However, if inmates comply with the soldiers in the prison, they experience less repression. Kalyvas further adds that selective violence is effective in enabling deterrence because “the effectiveness of selective violence hinges less on pinpoint accuracy and more on a perception among the population that a process of selection is taking place” (Kalyvas 2006: 192). Thus, I think the differences in the use of repression in the two prisons help account for the different patterns of collective action we see.

**Table 6** shows the difference in the intensity of repression in two prisons. Even though these numbers are incomplete because of the unreported events by the junta, it reveals some critical patterns. First, I wanted to show how repression in Mamak increased faster before the coup and in the first weeks of the coup in 1980. In contrast, it gradually intensified in Diyarbakir Prison and stayed at an intensified phase. I think the number of deaths in the early stages of the coup in 1980 and the change in that numbers over the years show both the difference in pace of repression's imposition and its intensity. Secondly, as Isa Tekin also shows in his book, purposely exposing and infecting prisoners with tuberculosis is a prime example of how indiscriminate violence was imposed in Diyarbakir Prison (Tekin 2012).

**Table 6:** Number and Causes of Injuries and Deaths in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons

Cause of Death	DIYARBAKIR							Total	MAMAK					Grand Total
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1986	N/A		1980	1982	1983	1985	Total	
Death Fast			4		2			6						6
Death Sentenced									3	2	1		6	6
Suicide			5		3	1		9	1	1			2	11
Tortured to Death	1	7	13	4	4	3		32	2	1			2	35
Unreported cause of death		1	2	3			8	14			2	2	4	18
<b>Sub-Total Cause of Injury</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>75</b>
Tuberculosis							104	104						104
Injured / Crippled After Torture		2	5		4		1	12						12
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>192</b>

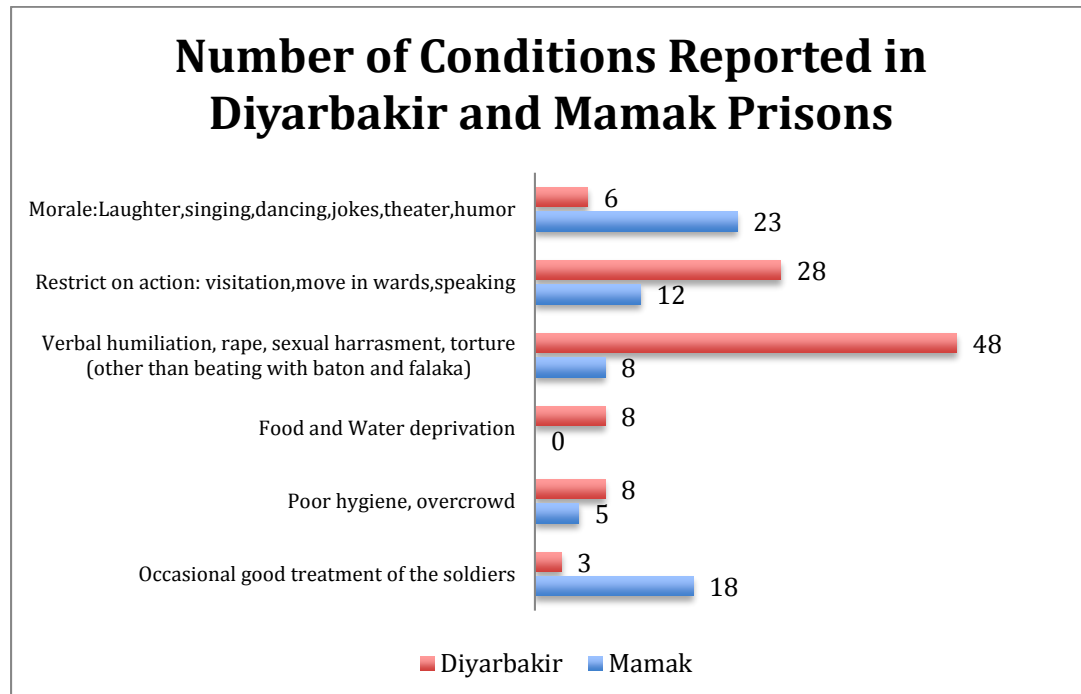
Source: Yılmaz, Ali. 2013. *Kara Arşiv: 12 Eylül Cezaevleri*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınevi and Author's compilation

It is difficult to quantify or measure repression. Thus, I made a comparison of prison conditions based on the interviews to provide a base for considering how different prison conditions may have affected the different outcomes we see in these cases. I determined repressive conditions introduced by the military order and counted their mentions in the interviews. Additionally, I think comparing the number of inmates who became disabled or died under torture and the number of inmates who were executed by the state are also indicators to grasp the difference in extent and intensity of the repression in these prisons.

**Table 7** below shows the difference in the extent of the repression in two prisons. It was not only in the form of attacking their bodies but also using other daily or natural needs as means of repression such as food and water deprivation. Additionally, more existence of occasional good relations with soldiers in Mamak also show there was a difference in approaching two

different inmate groups on the military's side. The greater existence of activities such as singing, dancing and theater also shows the difference in restriction of the action in two prisons. Though, I should note that instances of laughter, dance and theater appeared in the female prisoners' accounts more than in male prisoners' accounts. Subsequently, as Della Porta (1996:66) attempts to typologize repression based on five dimensions: 'repressive' versus 'tolerant', based on 'the range of prohibited behavior'; 'selective' versus 'diffuse', assessed by the array of repressed groups; 'preventive' versus 'reactive', based on the timing of police repression; 'hard' versus 'soft', as judged by 'the degree of force involved'; and 'dirty' versus 'lawful', based on 'the degree to which respect for legal and democratic procedures is emphasized'. In comparison, state repression in the cases I choose was more tolerant, selective, soft and "lawful" in Mamak prison whereas it was more repressive, diffused, hard and dirty in Diyarbakir prison.

**Table 7:** Degree of Repressive Policies in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons



Source: Author's compilation



### **6.3 HOW DID MICRO AND MESO-LEVEL DYNAMICS VARY UNDER DIFERENT POWER STRUCTURES?**

#### **6.3.1 Collective Identity, Emotions and Honor in Re-framing Resistance**

One of the main differences between Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons is the salience of Kurdish identity in the process of mobilization in Diyarbakir Prison. Nearly all of the prisoners' mother tongue was Kurdish; speaking Kurdish was banned in the prison and not all the Kurdish prisoners were fluent Turkish speakers. Insurgents had experienced verbal humiliation and additional torture because of speaking Kurdish among themselves, during family visits and also refusing to say that they are "Turks". Colonel Esat Oktay once told the insurgents: *"Don't call this place as a prison! This place is a school, where you will learn to be worthy of Turkish nation and Ataturk."* (Welat 2011) Therefore, Junta's aim was not only to destroy the organizational networks of Kurdish revolutionary insurgents, but also to continue assimilating the Kurds (Zeydanlioglu 2009).

Actually interviewees showed me how they bridge their initial consciousness of "Kurdishness", which started to develop when they started school or before in the family, to their perception of shared identities in the prison. Extra humiliation due to their ethnic identity helped them see that they have more commonalities than their revolutionary stances in the prison.

I also included a boarding school parameter to the demographic table where I show the education levels of the interviewees. Interviews from Diyarbakir prison showed me boarding schools, *yibo(s)* and teacher schools, especially the teacher schools in Kirsehir and Dersim, are focal spaces where Kurdish youth affiliates with a political organization. Boarding schools for Kurdish youth was a confrontational place where they stay with Turkish students and educated

with the official state ideology. Those schools were the places where they continued gaining an understanding of their ethnic identity and politicized as being the oppressed and despised in the country they live in.

In Diyarbakir Prison, the soldiers' aim was to make them internalize that prison's institutional sub-world of a militarized Turkishness, wherein they were humiliated and tortured because of their ethnic identities and ideological stances. As a response to this forced socialization, inmates developed their own underlives, in Goffman's terms where they could create their alternative communes.

Moreover, after the torture sessions, Colonel Esat would ask them if they were "Turks" or not, and if they said "yes," he would send them to the wards, but if they said "no I am a Kurd," he would continue to torture them and kept in cells. Thus, practices like those continue shaping their perceptions of a shared identity throughout their socialization in the prison. At this point, Gamson (1992b) proposes that "a necessary precondition of successful mobilization is a well-defined and shared understanding of "us" and "them"—the solidary notion of who *we* are must be supplemented by clear agreement over who or what we are *against*. To the degree that an identifiable enemy exercises power by attempting to humiliate or degrade, this can heighten an insurgent group's collective identity, if that insurgent group develops tactics to neutralize or transcend humiliation." (p.12) I think this differentiation of "us" and "them" also blurs the lines between organizations. As these repressive and violent implications towards their bodies and identities continued, inmates started to perceive the soldiers not only to combat with their revolutionary organizations but also to destroy their self-perceptions. Another former male inmate Engin illustrates *this* situation by stating: "*The issue was not to pacify the inmates, it was to break Kurdish people's will*. Continued humiliation of the inmates' ethnic identities, other

than creating the situation of loss of adulthood, self-determination and autonomy also worked for prisoners to frame their resistance under “defense of Kurdish honor and the honor of humanity.” Similarly former inmate Nurettin says: *“Their aim was to destroy our identity and leave without a personality”* This salient aspect of clearing the boundaries between “us” and “them” over their own ideological distinctions in Diyarbakir Prison was one of missing things in Mamak Prison.

There was no repression targeting one’s ethnic identity or sexuality in Mamak Prison. Thus, inmates could not frame their insurgent identities in other ways than their organizational affiliations. I argue that there are two reasons for that. First, inmates could form good relations with some of the soldiers via “townsmanship” (*hemsehrilik*<sup>23</sup>) and religious affiliation. Alevite soldiers were more in favor of left wing ideologies, therefore they were not treating the inmates as cruel as the non-Alevite soldier-guards and from time to time they were helping the inmates. Second, historically Turkish left-wing organizations have some kind of faith in the military as a potential ally for the revolution<sup>24</sup>.

Third, there were some affectual platonic relationships on the side of the soldiers to the female prisoners. Here are some examples to the good relations with the soldiers: Kaya: *“One guardian was a sympathizer of the HK. They had a song about their comrade shot in Antep, for example that guardian asked me to sing that song. One day he came and asked me if I had killed the Muradiye Mayor, I said ‘no,’ he thought I was lying, but really Kawa was responsible of that action. That kid appeared to be from Muradiye, he thanked me for killing the mayor, even though I didn’t. Some of those soldiers helped us a great deal then they were punished for that. We were*

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<sup>23</sup> An informal tie between people that fosters trust and help; based on coming from the same town, village or city.

<sup>24</sup> MDD tradition.

*so sorry for them to have been beaten because of carrying messages in between us. Then they said: “They beat us once, but you are beaten every day. Good boys they were.”*

Another female inmate from Mamak, Kamer says: *“Those soldiers were also in twenties. There were both fascist and leftist guardians. Alevites were pro-left wing prisoners most of the time. We could also form ties via hemsehrilik. There was one from my village who helped me a lot. He carried messages from my mom to me. Once he asked me what I missed the most, and I told him ‘sunflower seeds.’ He brought me a package but it blew while he was throwing it from the loophole. They tortured him a great deal, his military service ended because of me. Some of them fell in love with us too. Once one gave a lipstick to Figen (laughs)”*

Moreover, some prisoners during a beating session chanted *“Soldiers and people are brothers!”* and, as time went by, prison administration felt the need to hang a banner saying: *“Compassion for the convict is betraying the homeland”* (Yildiz 2001 p. 165). These accounts show that the political prisoners in Mamak Prison did not maintain clear boundaries between them and the soldiers to frame a shared collective identity by overcoming their organization based conflicts to counter the soldiers as the prisoners in Diyarbakir did. In Diyarbakir Prison, prisoners could perceive themselves as being “the Kurdish people” versus “the Turkish state,” or “the colonizer enemy.” The relationship between collective identity and action is reciprocal and reproduces itself with the changing dynamics of the process as it did in Diyarbakir Prison (O’Hearn 2013). However, in Mamak prison, that dialectic did not forge a shared identity, prisoners did not clearly distance themselves from the soldiers as themselves being “revolutionaries” and the soldiers being “the enemy state,” for example.

What is more important is how leaders framed collective identity during the mobilization process. In Diyarbakir prison, the leaders of PKK framed their resistance as a “fight for honor.”

For example, on the morning of September 5, 1983, during the roll call, slogans came from the ward # 27. For the first time since 1980, slogans were chanted in the prison (Tekin 2012). A strong voice was shouting: “Comrades! Revolutionaries! Democrats! Patriots! This is the day of honor! This is the day of riot! Slogans from other wards followed this initiation “Human dignity will beat torture!” “Damn colonialism!” and even “Long live death!” was chanted as a slogan. In a way, death, resistance and honor were equated in Diyarbakir Prison.

In Mamak Prison, leaders allowed everybody to be responsible for their own bodily survival. The concept of preserving one’s honor or equating it with resistance did not appear. Since the concept of honor appeared mostly when they were telling about sexual and ethnic humiliation in Diyarbakir Prison, I checked for the same targets in Mamak Prison. A former male inmate Kadri said: *“There wasn’t torture targeting sexuality in the prison. However at the interrogation in DAL, everything happened: rape, sitting on a bottle, rape with baton etc. In Mamak, it was to a lesser extent like bending, hitting in the ass, creeping, duck walk”*. This is valid for the male prisoners. Female prisoners had more to say on sexual attacks, which I will present in the following section.

As I said before, the concept of honor appeared in the interviews mostly when they were telling me about the torture and humiliation against their sexualities and ethnic identities of the Kurdish insurgents. These are some examples that my informants gave when they were describing the incidents that they felt their honor was under attack. A male informant, Tekin from Diyarbakir Prison says: *“Colonel Esat once said that “you will be ashamed of yourselves when you are released from here, your women will not sleep with you again.” Sidar continues: “Once they wanted all of us to spit on a friend’s face and then urinate on him. None of us did that, they beat the hell out of us, but we didn’t spit or urinate on a friend. Then they took that*

*soldier away since he couldn't make us spit or urinate on a friend. This was a very normal thing to reject, but we felt extremely happy for not doing that. Especially between 1980 and 1984, they did everything to make us feel dishonored. They forced people to rape their fellows, checked our penis to see if we were circumcised, tied a rope to our penis and pulled like we were a line train, and more that I cannot say."* For instance, all the informants I have interviewed have experienced sitting in a sewage pool by force in Diyarbakir Prison. As Einwohner also argues that honor can be a motivational factor and facilitate collective action when combined with the opportunities (2003); resistance becomes a way to maintain honor, sometimes suicidal protest acts like the ones in 1982 and 1984 in Diyarbakir Prison are seen as self-preserving rather than self-sacrificing.

Diverging from the male prisoners, female insurgents have found ways to construct a culture of resistance in Mamak prison. They agreed to never refer to the soldiers as "commander," they refused to attend the mandatory education sessions, they cooperated with each other in the wards by preserving dialogue in between different political organizations' communes and pursued all of the hunger strike calls despite the increasing state violence (except Dev-Yol members at the first call in July 1981). In addition, not extending their hand for truncheon and refusing to chant the Turkish oath when soldiers asked, all served as parts of their culture of resistance. I did not find evidence of these kinds of collective decisions in the male prisoners' wards.

For example, even though female Dev-Yol inmates did not join the first hunger strike, they resisted by not allowing the soldiers take the female strikers to solitary confinement. Ninety-nine of them were tried specifically for resisting soldiers on that day and they did not give headcount after that incident, which is a very unusual and risky way of protest in a military prison. In the

second hunger strike, although the male prisoners gave up on the third day, female prisoners endured till the final, tenth day. They revealed most of the accounts I recorded about free spaces in the prisons, laughter, and humor. For example, they had a beauty contest on “who has the best scars from the last beating” and they were preparing small plays.

A female informant, Senay says: “*There was passive resistance until the removal of colonel Raci Tetik and introduction of forced uniform in 1984.*” What she means by passive resistance is parallel with Scott’s conceptualization of a hidden transcript: every subordinate group creates, a “hidden transcript” that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant (1990). Another female informant, Nurgul explains: “*We named the guards, we were mimicking them and laughing, we laughed a lot. As they hear us laugh they came in and beat more, there was nothing more than our laughter driving them crazy in the prison.*” The concepts of hidden and public transcripts provide us tools to interpret the rumors, gossip, gestures and jokes of the powerless as anonymous and insinuating backstage vehicles as critique of the power. Therefore, the fact that prisoners in Mamak prison could not sustain collective action in prison does not mean that they were not resisting or they had no claims to make.

However, the exceptional situation of the female prisoners is not detached from the rest. There were differences in the implication of repression to female and male prisoners. Female prisoners repeatedly stated that they were not subjected to severe beatings as male prisoners were. Additionally, since prisons are architecturally designed for males and female bodies’ political imprisonment was seen as a very extra ordinary situation for the state, prison administration could not decide how to behave or situate female political prisoners. First, they did not put females to Mamak Prison. Instead, they brought women to a high school building called “2 yillik.” In that school building, there were no military rules, violent or repressive

conditions, iron bars or doors. Furthermore, since it was designed as a school building, prisoners' interaction with outside was commonplace via wide windows. Female prisoners formed bonds in that school building and when they were moved to Mamak Prison, they preserved their solidary bonds. In the first call of action female Dev-Yol members followed the males and did not join the hunger strike. However, in the second call, despite all the males' giving up on the third day, females continued until the end.

Here, I argue that using one's body for collective purposes, such as smuggling cigarettes in one's hair bun or smuggling paper notes inside one's body shows us how resistance not only opposes the power but also creates its own space and control over one's body. Thus, female political prisoners in Mamak Prison, between the years of 1980 and 1985, show that prisoners could escape from the grid of discipline and panoptic gaze. One of the former prisoners stated that there were guards whose shifts involved staring at the ward from the window of the ward. Prisoners were using their bodies as curtains in front of each other when they needed to exchange an item or news to escape the gaze. Furthermore, they said that there were blind points of the ward, for example the cooking area.

As an example of the creative aspect of the resistance, tens of female political prisoners rehearsed in the cooking area while some others were curtaining and guarding the door for them. In a month they were ready to perform a play on the Uruguay revolution. At first, the deduction of everyday forms of resistance sounds difficult to determine and analyze them. Nonetheless, a thick description of the everyday actions of the political prisoners, namely, looking for the meaning and consciousness that they attach to their actions showed me how subjects could bend the limits of disciplinary power with relational and productive resistance tactics in the contexts where they cannot break those limits of power. Their resistance was capable of reshaping power



by bending, mocking, or getting round the power relations. Thus, female prisoners' experience in Mamak shows that once a shared identity and solidary ties formed, even though the threat increases—when they were moved to Mamak from the school building—insurgents could preserve their culture of resistance.

### **6.3.2 Role of Effective Leadership in High-Risk Collective Action**

Leadership has an important role in motivating and recruiting followers to take action. Gamson says that it might be easier to persuade someone to sign a petition but to invite someone to high-risk actions such as hunger strike in a prison is not the same as the former (1991). I argue that the lack of people-oriented leadership and enduring contested relationships between the different organizations impeded the formation of sustained and large-scale collective action in Mamak Prison. I discussed Aminzade's categorization of leader types before into "people-oriented" and "task-oriented." I also already presented that if the organization with the vast population does not take action, it does not make much sense in the eyes of the prison authorities. Therefore, followers were waiting for Dev-Yol in Mamak, and the PKK in Diyarbakir to take action first. Between 1980 and 1983, PKK leaders declared hunger strikes for three times, and some of them committed suicides and self-immolated. Expectedly, gradual deviation from the old less constraining prison management model to a strict military discipline, led to reactions among the inmates.

Loveman states that "early risers" (in cases of severe repression) may mobilize in response to, not despite, severe repression; their actions may then create space for later waves of participants who may indeed be responding to relative improvements in the structure of opportunities"(1998). The overt protestors of 1980-1982 in Diyarbakir Prison and the ones who

started the first hunger strike on July 1981, in Mamak Prison can also be considered as “early risers.” However, the difference is that early risers in Diyarbakir Prison pursued their leading position in the course of actions to recruit more people until the conditions they protested ended. Leader cadres in Mamak Prison on the other hand, did not re-frame the situation in the prison to forge mobilization; instead they waited for another threat to occur, which happened with imposition of mandatory uniforms in 1984.

Thus, I refer to them as people-oriented leaders who “reshape followers’ framing” of the situations to take action. Leaders of Dev-Yol can be counted as “task-oriented,” since they only took a role in negotiating with the authorities on conditions when ending a protest, and made individual political defenses in the courts. Below is the comparison of the two different types of leadership in Mamak and Diyarbakir:

From Mamak, a male informant, Celal says: *“Dev-Yol was not a hierarchical organization, we didn’t have a formal membership status. The leader cadres never conceived of themselves, as they were still leaders inside. If one inmate asked them what to do, how to respond the state repression, they would respond as: “We are at the same level with you guys, we all have the same one-vote right as you have, so we cannot tell you what to do here. Under these dangerous conditions everyone is responsible of his own survival.”*

Furthermore, one of the leaders of Dev-Yol, Oguzhan Muftuoglu, says: *“We were devastated when 204 of the central members of Dev-Yol in managing positions were arrested and released information about the rest. We were really depressed. As leaders, we stepped back in the prison; I did not make an organizational-based defense in the trials as well. There was no organization left, I made my defense based on a movement.”*(Bostancioglu 2011:252-254) Despite leaders’ rejection of the leadership in the prison, prison officials considered them as their

addressee. For example, to end the biggest hunger strike of Mamak in 1984, officials talked to Dev-Yol leaders, took them to each ward so that they would announce that the hunger strike had ended. In turn, inmates agreed wearing the uniforms as a compromise for ending the repression and daily violence in the prison. This is also an example for a task-oriented leadership. Additionally, since vast numbers of followers of Dev-Yol were captured after dissolution in the central committee when 204 of them were caught, “snitches” in the prison were another big problem facing mobilization. A male informant, Kadir says: *“Dev-Yol leaders waited very long, until the trials had started, to take action. They were afraid of risking others’ lives as well as increasing the number of “snitches.”* Therefore, they eschewed creating conditions suitable for that, too.

In Diyarbakir Prison, on the other hand, informants’ accounts parallel Viterna’s analysis that “in high-risk contexts maintaining an identity or networks alone are unlikely to generate participation unless a specific recruitment attempt is made” (Viterna 2013:57). In parallel with Viterna, a male interviewee Can states: *“Leaders should walk first. If they don’t, no one will follow; people want to see leaders in the battle field, fighting for them.”* This account also coincides with O’Hearn’s findings that leadership has a critical role in organizing and framing a collective action (2013). Especially in Diyarbakir Prison when the leaders take risks on behalf of everyone, they foster morale, trust, respect and solidarity amongst the followers. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the difference in the ways of leadership in two prisons depended not only on their strategic choices. One of the PKK leaders when organizing a hunger strike says: *“The majority of our followers were peasants or workers, who did not get ideological education or read the revolutionary materials as we did. We know why we are here, but they might not. We should not let them feel abandoned, they are here because of us so we should be the ones to take*

*responsibility for their survivals, and give them some morale.”(Sunar 2015)* Thus, different from Dev-Yol leaders, since PKK leaders were aware of the demographics of their followers, they were in favor of taking risks. Probably, Dev-Yol leaders were aware of their followers’ level of ideological consciousness and did not feel an extra need to pioneer for them, since most of them were urban university or high school students. That is to say, their decisions were not only individual or ideological but also based on the context of their movements. I noted this point about the discourse of the leaders under the demographic comparison of the two prisons.

### **6.3.3 Organizational Networks and Interpersonal Relations in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons**

Another factor in front of a large-scale and sustained collective action besides the intensity of violence at that time was the organizational conflicts in both of the prisons. The cases I investigate provided evidence to support my claim that even though repression might cause demobilization and depression or hopelessness among the inmates at times through the process, it also opens space for alternative interactions, sharing, and trust to develop. Especially, if the leaders play a will-taking role in this process, mobilization is more likely. That is to say, increasing threats for a movement has the potential to turn into an opportunity if the leaders could channel the dynamics at micro-level interactions such as emotions and a shared collective identity into forces for recruitment.

Prior to September 1980, each political organization had its own ward and commune in which they controlled the space and the resources in it. For instance a male informant, Ferhat from Mamak tells: *“Before the coup we could obtain anything in the prison, I even had my own gun. We could visit other wards and spend our time as we wished.”* Dursun from Diyarbakir

prison tells: *“Martial law was in practice since 1978 but there was no military rules or restrictions until the morning of September 12, 1980. We had our radio, books and other things, they started constraining after the coup.”* Another male inmate from Diyarbakir Prison said: *“On the morning of September 12, 1980, manners of the guard changed and he started not responding our demands. Then we heard on the radio that the military had intervened. We chanted slogans and sang anthems so the outside would hear us...we were hopeful that DISK would resist, Dev-Yol, Kurtulus, PKK, KUK those were the organizations with vast followers But as time went by and the visitors told, we understood that nobody was collectively resisting outside.”* These accounts both show that prison order was not that strict and regulatory before the coup, and inmates had great hope in the organizations that they were attached to for pursuing resistance outside.

In contrast with the abovementioned accounts, post-1980 coup d'état, military rule in the prison did not allow the political prisoners to continue their daily practices as they wished. For example, commune systems in the wards were eventually forbidden, and authorities dispersed the members of the same organization to different wards in Diyarbakir Prison. Diverse political organizations competed with one another. For example, PKK and KUK even got into armed skirmishes over ideological conflicts outside and over who gets to have the power of being the prominent organization in the Kurdish region prior to the military coup. These conflicts echoed within the prison as well. Therefore, banning the organizational communes and dispersing inmates to the wards to merge them with members of the different organizations was successful at first to impede their formation of solidarity.

As the interviewee Can from Diyarbakir Prison, a former member of the KUK, stated: *“Normally KUK and PKK are enemies, sometimes in the prison we were helping each other.”*

*However, we did not join their calls of action in 1981. PKK members from the nearby ward informed us, via communicating through a water hose. They passed the message asking if we individually wanted to join, we could start with them the following day. As a response, we said that we were members of a political organization and if they forsake our organization, we wouldn't join them individually. They said that they considered KUK as an extension of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization, but they knew that there were good people among us."*

A similar account from Mamak Prison: *"Halkin Kurtulus and TKP was not in dialogue at all. Dev-Yol was despised in the prison too, they rejected joining the first call of action."* Left-wing revolutionary organizations of the 1970s in Turkey fragmented according to the different political traditions of Soviets, China, Cuba, and Albania. Most of the conflicts between the organizations stemmed from the different model country experiences they choose to follow. These accounts suggest that the weak and contested relations and poor communication impeded the willingness of other groups to join each other's calls at first.

In addition to organizational conflicts in Mamak, left-wing insurgents were forced to live with right-wing political prisoners, who used to literally look for instances to kill each other outside. This difference increased the impossibility of formation of solidarity or an action plan in the wards or cells in Mamak Prison. Mixing left- with right-wing prisoners meant a double-isolation for leftists, since right-wing prisoners were aligned with the soldiers. A male informant, Kaya tells: *"If the food came while I was at the trial and the fascist cell mate took it in, I would not eat it. During Ramadan, they wanted to sleep at the lower deck because fasting made them dizzy. We did not allow that; we refused any kind of relation with them. Only the commune representatives of both sides would talk if there is a problem or write the canteen list together."*

Additionally, since the military allowed them to pursue communal lives based on organizations, each political organization formed their own commune and only the commune spokesmen was in touch to transmit the ideas or requests of the sides for the left-wing organizations too.

Another puzzle is to make sense of these contested relations between organizations in the prison. McAdam's study on Freedom Summer shows how interpersonal relationships and friendship networks matter in recruitment into action. He facilitates our understanding of how the abovementioned contested relations between organizations play role in forming collective action. He argues the types of social networks within which potential participants are embedded affect micro mobilization processes (1986). Furthermore, Loveman states that this is especially the case for recruitment to potentially risky forms of collective action (1998). Thus, I think between the years of 1980-1983 leaders' onset of collective actions couldn't be expanded to the followers because of the contested social networks and intensity of violence in Diyarbakir prison. The effect of contested relations, doubled in Mamak because of right-wing inmates. Additionally, the lack of people-oriented leadership and reframing a shared identity were other impediments to a collective action between 1980 and 1984 in Mamak Prison.

Although I stated the dampening impact of intense repression on collective action by barring the formation of interpersonal relations, it must also be noted too that repression can also become constructive in forming solidarity. For instance, to cope with this isolationist policy of forbidding the communal livings based on organizations, inmates formed secret groupings based on "townsmanship" (*hemsehrilik*), neighborhood and familial/traditional ties in Diyarbakir Prison and pursued communal livings with those smaller cliques. Coping with violence together, sharing torture, water and food in the scarcest conditions produced trust and solidary relations

between the members of different contested groups. In a way, prisoners' biggest threat of state repression yielded an opportunity for them to form new solidary relations.

Kleinmann further shows that violence has consequences such as suffering and means of coping, it destroys inmates' local worlds and perceived differences by turning everyone into victims, violence gives birth to a opportunity of coming together under shared claims (2000). Interviewee Can explains these alternative relations: *"After a while, enmities between different organizations in the prison became invisible. We saw that the only enemy that is trying to destroy us was the state. We could not have survived if we didn't act together. Moreover, if one is from a different organization, but at the same time he is from my village, kinship (asiret) or family, and I don't help him, it would be insulting my family. If I confess that person's political acts outside, or spy on him inside, their family would say 'the son of Haci Aziz is dishonorable.' I could not do this to the reputation of my family."* Therefore, we should acknowledge that both the operation of power and resistance is a dynamic and variable process and this process does not have a fixed beginning or end, just as no socio-historical process does. It can be cyclical - the relations can reiterate themselves or it can be spiral - the reiteration could reach a progressive point as did in the case of alternative commune formation. The communes in wards improved both the psychological and physical health of the prisoners by fostering solidarity and instances of organized movements against prison authority.

I already showed how more traditional ties depending on kinship or on *hemsehrilik* ties based the same village/town among inmates functioned to form solidarity under repression in Diyarbakir Prison. At this point, Gould presents that personal ties such as kinship or close friendship are particularly important for recruitment to high-risk activism (Gould 1991). Reinoud Leender's analysis on the role of tribal networks in mobilization of people in Syria also suggests



that “these networks offered relatively autonomous sites for the sharing of grievances, the circulation and interpretation of information, and the framing of state repression, as well as solidarity, skills, and resources for mobilization under prohibitive conditions of massive repression.” (Leenders 2012: 425-429) In a high-risk environment full of informers around the ward, formation of trustful and solidary ties were harder than usual. Thus, these alternative relations, other than organizational, developed under the repressive conditions contributed to the widespread mobilization process for the September 5, 1983 resistance in Diyarbakir Prison.

In Mamak Prison, on the other hand, conditions never deteriorated enough to break the partisan boundaries for a sustained large-scale collective action until 1984; when administration abruptly attacked them and everybody protested mandatory uniforms. That is not to say that prisoners were not sharing time together or help each other if needed. Especially, the allowance for organization-based communes and cohabiting right-wing prisoners supported the negative conditions for maintaining trust and solidarity and break the organizational boundaries, which are crucial for recruitment. In brief, the case of Diyarbakir prison shows that the state violence, to some extent creates the bedrock to form an alternative space and collective action based on shared experience, emotions and coping strategies in the prison. These interpersonal relations, different from the organizational ties, contributed to the changing shared identity of the insurgents during the process and fostered willingness to join collective action too.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

Within the scope of this thesis, role of risk-labile and people-oriented leadership together with a shared identity occurred as the most prominent dynamics to forge collective action in the prisons. The salience of Kurdish identity in a Turkish military prison should be noted to see the role of identity. I examined the dynamics of collective action in Mamak and Diyarbakir Prisons between 1980 and 1985 through experiences of 28 former prisoners. Starting with the theoretical background chapter, first I visited collective action theories in brief chronology such as collective behavior, rational choice, resource mobilization and political process approaches. I introduced a blend of theoretical approaches to have a better understanding of my cases by situating micro and meso-level dynamics, such as interpersonal relations, emotions, organizational networks, framing a shared collective identity and role of leadership, into opportunity-threat structure in the prisons.

I also visited prison riot theories briefly, but neither rising expectations nor the inmate-balance theory were solely appropriate for my cases. I approached prisons as places shaped by the interaction between repression and resistance instead of idealized panoptic spaces where power ubiquitously enacts. As in Goffman's study of total institutions, where inmates create defensive adjustments against the degrading aspects of power, my cases also show that repression as a threat can create bedrock for collectivizing those defensive adjustments.

Subsequently, in the historical background chapter I documented the transformation of the state's approach to the prisons in Turkish Prisons since the 1920s. We witness how institutional changes happened in relation to societal changes. One of the biggest determinants of those societal changes was the upheaval in social movements. Moreover, I documented the historical relationship of the political opposition and incarceration stemming in Ottoman Empire. I presented the both politically and economically contentious era of the 1970s before the 1980 military intervention. The era between 1974 and 1980 was very significant for polarization of Kurdish and Turkish revolutionary organizations. State repression managed to suppress the armed Turkish revolutionary organizations together with many other Kurdish organizations and their networks with the coup. However, PKK chose guerilla warfare strategy starting in 1984 and still continues its struggle for a liberated, self-governing Kurdish region in Turkey.

Since discussions on the impact of repression on collective action do not agree at one point we need to contextualize each case and look for the differences. For instance, to form a collective action in high-risk contexts, merely acknowledging threats and opportunities is not enough to recruit insurgents. Without the existence of solidary interpersonal ties, trust in the leaders' willpower in taking risks and channeling emotions like anger, dignity/honor and fear into collective identity; observing collective action would be very rare in high-risk environments. These dynamics explain the scarcer and less sustainable collective action in Mamak and greater with more sustainable actions in Diyarbakir. Overall, I argued that repression drives collective action if there is a risk-labile leadership and a shared identity together with solidary relations between the insurgents in undemocratic and high-risk conditions.

Further, the differences in the state's repression, its extent, intensity and temporality between the two prisons carried a significant importance in determining inmates' resistance.

Thus, interaction between the extent of repression and resistance help us understand the prison order. When approaching to repression's effects, I mainly utilized Kalyvas's conceptualizations of selective and indiscriminate violence to explain the different outcomes of state repression in two prisons. I argued that, indiscriminate violence became counter-productive, since cooperation did not pay off in Diyarbakir Prison. Moreover, the intensity of the repression, paved the way for necessary micro and meso- level dynamics to develop in Diyarbakir Prison, such as alternative solidary relations, different from the organizational networks, and development of trust and solidarity among the inmates. The extent of the repression, namely, its denial of Kurdish identity and attacks towards inmates' sexualities facilitated the sharing of a collective identity among the inmates. More importantly, risk-labile and people-oriented leadership in Diyarbakir Prison framed the situation into action for honor and pioneered for the rest. In parallel with O'Hearn's case of Irish political prisoners, the leaders' ability to taking risks on behalf of the followers was also a motivating factor in recruitment in Diyarbakir Prison.

In Mamak Prison on the other hand, I argued that the selective violence was effective in enabling deterrence because cooperation with the soldiers paid off. Moreover, moderate level of repression never attacked inmates' ethnic identities or sexualities as different from the Diyarbakir Prison. This difference is important for two reasons. First, those specific attacks against identity help clarify the distinction of "us" vs. "them," and propel the concept of honor; such framing is absent in Mamak Prison.

Second, the moderate level of repression enabled the conditions for preserving organizational boundaries in the prison thus, preventing alternative solidary ties to evolve and overcome the organizational conflicts. On top of these, I argued that leadership was task-oriented in Mamak prison and did not pioneer for the followers, which is very crucial in recruitment to

high-risk collective action. Exceptionally, female political prisoners in Mamak created a culture of resistance in the wards. In further research the impacts of different understanding of repression according to gender, the relation between space and solidarity and role of humor and laughter should be investigated in detail to come up with a solid analysis on female prisoners' collective action experience.<sup>25</sup>

Drawing upon Viterna's micro-mobilization analysis, I conclude that the existence of opportunities and threats are not sufficient enough to form collective action in high-risk contexts. As Viterna states, movements take off when changing macro-level environment reshapes the meaning of identities people hold and the networks in which they are embedded. Thus, changes in the level of repression in these prisons pave the way for insurgents to reframe their identities, actions and networks. Especially the attacks against Kurdish identity in Diyarbakir Prison had the similar effect on the informers as in the Viterna's case. Within this fluctuating order I argue that extreme repression in Diyarbakir Prison impeded recruitment and expansion of collective action at first. Collective action remained limited within the leaders cadre during September 1980 – September 1983.

Concomitantly, as time passed by, extreme repression turned into an opportunity to form alternative relationships and a shared identity among prisoners, which were crucial in recruitment of others to high-risk collective action. Moreover, the role of risk-labile leaders and how they framed their actions within the concept of honor facilitated the foundations of collective action in Diyarbakir Prison. As this process overlapped with the available political

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<sup>25</sup> See Akbas, M. (2011). Mamak Kitabi. Ankara: Ayizi Kitap.for detail.

opportunities in 1983, the shift into a civil government, change in the chief soldier-guardian and the beginning of trials, collective action further strengthened.

On the other hand, cohabitating with right-wing political prisoners and lower level of repression hindered the formation of solidary relationships other than the prior organizational ties and a shared identity to constitute bedrock for recruitment and to overcome the prior organizational conflicts. Additionally, the lack of leadership skills left the reframing the movement in the prison insufficient to sustain collective action in Mamak Prison. As a result of the contingent interaction of the abovementioned dynamics, we see a more frequent and sustained formation of collective action in Diyarbakir Prison and scarcer and unsustainable instances of collective action in Mamak Prison.

This thesis also opens questions for further research. Post-prison activism of the released inmates could be investigated to find out how state repression influence mobilization structures of the movement organizations. Another prison, such as Metris should be added to the comparison to be able to make more generalizations about the high-risk collective action in prisons. Even more, an international comparison would contribute more to the theory and the literature whether to see if the findings of this thesis are valid for other insurgents in similar conditions.

## APPENDIX

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**AP** [Adalet Partisi]: Justice Party

**CHP** [Cumhuriyetçi Halk Partisi]: Republican People's Party

**DDKD** [Devrimci Demokratik Kültür Derneği]: Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association.

**DDKAD** [Devrimci Demokratik Kadınlar]: Revolutionary Democratic Associations of Women

**DDKO** [Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları]: Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearts

**DİSK** [Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu]: Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions

**FKF** [Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu]: Federation of Thought Clubs

**HRFT** [Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı]: The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey

**KDP** [Partîya Demokrata Kurdistan] : Kurdistan Democratic Party

**KUK** [Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları]: Kurdistan National Liberators

**MP** [Millet Partisi]: Nation Party

**MHP** [Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi]: Nationalist Action Party

**MBK** [Milli Birlik Komitesi]: National Unity Council

**MSP** [Milli Selamet Partisi]: National Salvation Party

**MC** [Milliyetçi Cephe Koalisyon Hükümeti]: National Front Coaliton Government

**PKK** [Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan]: Kurdistan Workers Party

**TİP** [Türkiye İşçi Partisi]: Workers Party of Turkey

**TKDP** [Türkiye-Kürdistanı Demokrat Partisi]: Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey

**T-KDP** [Türkiye’de Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi]: Kurdistan Democratic Party in Turkey

**TKP/ML** [Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marksist Leninist Hareketi]: Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist

**TKSP** [Türkiye Kürdistanı Sosyalist Partisi]: Kurdistan Socialist Party of Turkey

**THKP-C** [Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi]: Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front

**Türk-İş** [Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu]:Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions

**YTP** [Yeni Türkiye Partisi]: Party of New Turkey

**THKO** [Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu]: People’s Liberation Army of Turkey



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