

KURDISH MUNICIPALITIES IN TURKEY (1999-2013)

Case Study of Sur Municipality

Abstract

This Master's thesis focuses on the institutionalization of the Kurdish movement through municipalities in the Kurdish region from the late 90s. The framework is a Kurdish municipality, Sur, in the city of Diyarbakır, where the Kurdish movement is well organized. My argument is by taking part in the legal political system, Kurdish activists accessed resources that allowed them to expand their repertoire of contention and to create a counter-power through institutions. Becoming a institutional power gives Kurdish activists the opportunity to impose their standards and practices. However, having become a norm-making powers, Kurdish municipalities' pathes cross those of other normalizing powers. Beginning with the study of the Kurdish population and identity in Turkey, this master's thesis analyzes the state-society relations in the Kurdish region of Turkey. Afterwards, in the framework of our case study, the thesis then identifies the change of Kurdish movement through the Sur municipality and the new Kurdish institutions emerging in the Kurdish region. Finally, it studies the process of standardization / normalization of the counterpower. In conclusion, bearing in mind that the municipalities are not the only entity constituent of the Kurdish movement, the thesis argues that despite some limits to the integration of the Kurdish movement into the political system, the Kurdish movement is integrated within municipalities. Yet, it gives rise to the contention among the different groups within the movement on the one hand and on the other hand expands their repertoire of contention as a whole.

KEY WORDS: KURDISH MOVEMENT, MUNICIPALITY, INSTITUTIONALIZATION, NORMALIZATION, POWER, DIYARBAKIR, POLITICS OF PROXIMITY