PARTECIPAZIONE e CONFLITTO
The Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies
ISSN: 1972-7623 (print)
ISSN: 2035-6609 (online)
Coordinamento SIBA - University of Salento

PArtecipazione e COnflitto
http://siba-ese.unisalento.it/index.php/paco
ISSN: 1972-7623 (print version)
ISSN: 2035-6609 (electronic version)
PACO, Issue 18(2) 2025: 502-520
DOI: 10.1285/i20356609v18i2p502

Published 15 July, 2025

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Streets, Ballots, and Bullets: Kurdish Engagement and Activism

Massoud Sharifi
Autonomous University of Barcelona

ABSTRACT:

This article analyzes profiles, trajectories, motivations, and subjectivity of individuals opting to join pro-Kurdish organizations, associations, or political parties in Turkey. Departing from organizational-centric models, it applies an analytical approach rooted in social movement theories, emphasizing agency-centered perspectives to analyze pro-Kurdish activism. The research encompasses seventeen organizations, spanning locations in Turkey, Iraqi Kurdistan, and France, drawing on 77 semi-structured interviews, including 11 with former militants and guerrillas. The article examines the demographic characteristics of Kurdish activists and identifies three groups: associative, office, and professional activists. Through a comparison of dimensions such as degree of investment, ideological commitment, autonomy of action, and objectives, the study aims to provide nuanced understanding of these activism forms. Furthermore, the research delves into the biographical narratives of Kurdish activists, tracing motivations guiding their alignment with associations, political parties, or armed groups. Finally, the actor-event dialectic is employed to elucidate the rhythm of engagement, analyzing events at different life stages as accelerators, conjunctions, or sequences influencing participation. The actor-centric perspective enhances understanding of motivations and dynamics influencing engagement in pro-Kurdish activism in Turkey, and sheds light on an emerging trend within the Kurdish movement, positioning itself as the confluence of various social, cultural, and political conflicts.

KEYWORDS: Activism, Engagement, Events, Kurdish Movement, Rhythm of Engagement

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR(S): Massoud.Sharifi@uab.cat

1. Introduction:

Over the past two decades, research on the Kurdish movement has expanded significantly, with a predominant focus on Kurdish organizations as the primary units of analysis (Akkaya and Jongerden 2012; Grojean 2017; Gunes 2012; Hassaniyan 2021; Koohi-Kamali 2003; Özcan 2006; Romano 2006; White 2000). While this organization-centered approach has yielded valuable insights into the history, ideology, and strategic evolution of political parties and armed groups, it often reduces the movement's complexity to organizational narratives—overlooking the lived experiences and subjectivities of individual activists.

A review of the literature on the Kurdish movement in Turkey reveals a dominant analytical framework centered on ideological indoctrination and political socialization. Concepts such as "the new man" (Grojean 2008), "the new Kurd" (Bozarslan 2003), and "the Kurdish personality" (White 2000) illustrate this emphasis on ideology as the primary determinant of activist engagement. While these perspectives offer valuable theoretical frameworks, they risk reinforcing an 'organizational bias' (Bennani-Chraïbi and Fillieule 2002)—conflating individual subjectivities with the ideological frameworks of movement organizations. Recent scholarship, particularly on Kurdish women's activism, has challenged this organization-centric paradigm by foregrounding alternative analytical perspectives that emphasize embodied experiences, grassroots mobilization, and multi-layered forms of resistance (Davidovic 2018; Käser 2021; Dirik 2022; Üstündağ 2023; Çağlayan 2020). This emerging body of work underscores the significance of localized struggles, intersectional identities, and the interplay between personal agency and collective action. By focusing on the lived realities of activists, these studies highlight the diversity of mobilization strategies and the transformative potential of activism beyond rigid organizational structures.

Building on these critical insights, this paper advocates for a bottom-up approach to the study of the Kurdish movement, centering the experiences, identities, and subjectivities of individual activists. Moving beyond an exclusive focus on organizational structures, the study examines the modalities of engagement, the factors influencing activists' choices of collective action, and the role of specific events in shaping participation. Through an in-depth analysis of activist biographies, this research explores the rhythms of engagement—the cyclical processes through which individuals transition from passive supporters to active militants.

In defining the Kurdish movement, this study adopts a broad perspective, conceptualizing it as a heterogeneous and dynamic network of both collective and individual actors engaged in political, social, and cultural struggles. While initially centered on nationalist political objectives, the movement has evolved into a multi-faceted platform encompassing diverse forms of resistance across various spaces, from armed struggle to political participation and civil society activism. This transformation underscores the movement's adaptability and its interconnected struggles against multiple forms of oppression.

Following a discussion of theoretical and methodological considerations, this article develops a typology of Kurdish activism, categorizing activists into three distinct groups—associative activists, office activists, and professional activists—based on four key dimensions: level of investment, degree of ideological commitment, autonomy of action, and objectives of involvement. By analyzing biographical narratives, the study unpacks the dynamic and context-dependent motivations that drive individuals to affiliate with associations, political parties, or armed groups. The study further identifies three distinct mobilizing logics of events: significant events as catalysts for engagement, the conjunction of multiple events, and the sequencing of events in shaping activist trajectories.

2. Theoretical framework: actor-centered perspective

This study draws on social movement theories, emphasizing actor-centered approaches (Melucci 1994, 1996; Snow 2001, 2006; Snow et al. 1980, 1986; Tarrow 2005; Touraine 1965, 1978; Wieviorka 1988, 1998; Fillieule and Neveu 2019; McAdam and Tarrow 2005; Ion 1997). Two theoretical currents centralize the question of the actor in their examination of movements. One current, inspired by the sociology of the Chicago School and notably the theories of E. Goffman, reintroduces identity and actors' experiences into collective action theories. Research groups affiliated with D.A. Snow and W.A. Gamson utilize Goffman's "frame analysis" to scrutinize movements, with Snow emphasizing the "work of meaning" and the creation of "collective action frames" by actors. Snow (2001, 27–28) elucidates, "the frame perspective...focuses its attention on the 'work of meaning' by which activists and other participants in social movements engage...The products of this framing activity...are called 'collective action frames,' defined as 'sets of action-oriented beliefs and meanings' that 'inspire and legitimize the activities and campaigns' of the organizational segments of a social movement". While Snow's (1986) analysis centers on the framing work conducted by social movement organizations, Gamson and colleagues concentrate on the mobilization process and face-to-face interactions leading individuals to recognize injustice and partake in collective action (Mathieu 2004, 66).

Incorporating new variables like identity and militant experience offers fresh insights into queries posed by social movement researchers regarding the mobilization process. However, as Fillieule (2001, 204) notes, "this program has...not, with rare exceptions, given rise to analyses of how militants construct the meaning of their commitment". The focus has been on analyzing persuasive communication by movements and forming collective identities. The flaw lies in viewing "frameworks" as interpretations crafted by movement leaders or organizations, reducing the work of the individual actor to a mere affirmation and sharing of representations proposed from above.

A theoretical trend that has significantly contributed to reinstating the concepts of actor and identity in the analysis of social movements is the sociology of action approach, primarily championed by A. Touraine and further developed by other sociologists such as M. Wieviorka. The sociology of action, as conceptualized by Touraine (1965, 107), departs from viewing individual and collective behaviors as responses to a pre-established social situation; instead, it seeks the constitution of this social situation through a creative experience. Touraine contends that to comprehend society, one must first scrutinize social movements, which he defines as "organized collective action by which a dominant or dominated actor struggles for the social direction of historicity within a concerted historical whole" (Touraine 1978, 52). According to Touraine (1978, 108), a collective action earns the designation of a "social movement" only when its actors can establish an identity, define a social adversary, and act to guide the cultural field's direction.

Despite Touraine's later shift towards the concept of the "subject" rather than the "actor," the idea of the actor remains present in his reflections. Touraine (2000, 49) clarifies that "the idea of the subject is a deepening of that of the actor." The central tenet of this novel approach underscores the necessity for sociological analysis to prioritize the subjective experience of those involved. Consistent with this theoretical perspective, Wieviorka, in his examination of "the rise of nationalism in contemporary society," asserts that the primary emphasis should be on the subjectivity of the actors. He argues that "a sociology of action should accord precedence to the consciousness of the actors, refraining from hastily reducing it to the mere significance of the action. Its objective is not merely to address Renan's renowned inquiry: 'What is a nation?' but rather to elucidate the phenomenon wherein individuals and groups mobilize under the banner of a nation" (Wieviorka 1993, 29).

This shift marks a departure from models that exclusively focus on organizations. By applying this approach to analyze the Kurdish movement, it suggests a need for a deeper exploration of the experiences and

consciousness of individual actors involved in various forms of collective action. This indicates that the relationship between activists and the Kurdish movement, as well as its organizational structure, may be shaped more by their specific subjective experiences rather than the cognitive and experiential framing typically imposed by the organization. To investigate this hypothesis, a comprehensive analysis of militancy is necessary. This analysis should encompass the identification of diverse modes of action, and the delineation of activists' trajectories upon their involvement with an organization, association, or party within the movement.

3. Method

This research adopts a comprehensive approach by examining Kurdish activism in a broad typological context, avoiding a focus on any specific organization or political party. This strategy prevents one-dimensional or political interpretations of the Kurdish movement. The study includes 17 organizations and associations affiliated with the Kurdish left-wing movement in Turkey. The research scope is expanded through observation sites in Istanbul, Ankara, Diyarbakir, and Van, with additional fieldwork in Iraqi Kurdistan, including visits to Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) guerrilla camps in the Qandil Mountains and Makhmour camp. Interviews were conducted with politicians, activists, former guerrillas, military commanders, and PKK leaders, including some in France with former Kurdish guerrillas. Conducting research with individuals living under constant threat presents challenges, especially in recruiting guerrilla fighters and ex-PKK members. Contacting organizations varies with their openness, so two strategies were employed: (a) establishing personal connections and (b) snowball sampling. A semi-structured interview format was used, focusing on participants' memories and life trajectories, both before and during activism. Initial inquiries explored personal backgrounds, relationships, and perceptions of Kurds and Kurdish organizations. The focus shifted to their involvement with specific organizations and their daily lives, perceptions of identity, the state, Kurds, and the groups they were active in. In the concluding phase, the interview guide was revisited to ensure comprehensive coverage of all pertinent topics. In some instances, interviews were conducted across multiple sessions.

Given the high sensitivity of the research context, stringent measures were implemented to ensure participant anonymity and safety. These measures included rigorous anonymization procedures, comprehensive informed consent processes, and robust risk mitigation strategies throughout fieldwork and data presentation. At the outset of each interview, participants were fully briefed on the research objectives, the intended use of their responses, and the measures taken to protect their identities. To further safeguard anonymity and minimize risks associated with documentation, verbal consent was obtained instead of written consent. To mitigate risks related to data storage and handling, interviews were recorded using dictaphones. Immediately upon completion, the digital files were encrypted with strong passwords and securely transferred to an offsite location, minimizing the risk of unauthorized access. To further ensure confidentiality, all interviews were manually transcribed by the researcher, preventing third-party access to the raw data. During transcription, personal identifiers were systematically removed, and pseudonyms or generic descriptors were used.

A total of 77 semi-structured interviews were conducted, including 11 with former militants and guerrillas. The recorded interviews, lasting a cumulative 5953 minutes, had an average duration of 81.5 minutes per interview. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke (2013) and Thelwall (2021), was applied to identify and refine themes. All textual data underwent systematic coding and were categorized into five principal themes: the trajectory of activists before and after engagement, experiences of activism, perception of identity, their relationship with the organization they are involved in, and their relationship to the ideological discourse

of the PKK. Following the initial coding and categorization phase, the subsequent step involved conducting detailed analyses for each identified theme. In addition to conducting interviews, the author participated in internal political meetings, associative activities, and informal discussions to capture perspectives of individuals outside formal groups. The author also joined collective actions, such as street demonstrations, sit-ins, and cultural festivals.

Of the 77 participants, 32.5% identified as women, 67.5% as men. Men's ages ranged from 21 to 78, with a median of 40.5, while women's ages ranged from 19 to 79, with a median of 30. Most of the participants (54.8% or 40 activists) were single, while 38.4% were married at the time of the interview. Most respondents (84.2%) had received some level of education. Among them, 2.6% completed primary school, 14.5% completed lower secondary school, and 15.8% completed upper secondary school. Notably, 51.3% had access to higher education, including university students who had not yet completed their studies. A small percentage of activists (7.9%, all women) were illiterate, and 2.6% (all men) studied in madrasahs. Additionally, 5.3% were self-taught. Participants' occupations varied: 13% in civil service, 10.4% in the pro-Kurdish political party, 6.5% in liberal professions, 5.2% in manual labor, 9.1% were retired, 7.8% were housewives, 16.9% worked in journalism, art, and consultancy, and 10.4% were students. About 16.9% were professional militants, including PKK guerrillas and cadres.

4. Modalities of engagement

Among the participants, 20.8% were actively involved in the pro-Kurdish party offices in Diyarbakir, Istanbul, and Ankara. Additionally, 9.1% identified as guerrilla members of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union), an umbrella organization established by the PKK. Most respondents (over 55%) were activists linked to Kurdish or Kurdish-related socio-cultural associations. The remaining 14.3% were former activists who had previously been involved but no longer maintained affiliations at the time of the interview.

A shared characteristic among all interviewed individuals is their self-identification as members of an association, organization, or political party. The concept of commitment is employed to denote this form of self-designated, active, and enduring membership in a group. In this context, the committed status is defined by both the individual's perception and their actions. The actions and the meanings ascribed to them exhibit considerable heterogeneity in motivation, level of participation in group activities, level of politicization, and the sites of action for those involved.

To analyze the modalities of engagement and evaluate the process by which individuals engage in collective action to contribute to the sudden or gradual transformation of the status quo, a distinction is made between associative activists, office activists (Watts 2011), and professional activists. The author proposes four analytical axes—degree of investment, level of ideological affiliation, autonomy of action, and objectives of commitment—to compare different forms of activism. These axes emerged from a qualitative and inductive analysis of interviews and fieldwork, designed to capture the diverse experiences of activists. The research process involved identifying recurring themes, issues, and ideas that appeared significant to activists' experiences, actions, and objectives. As the initial coding progressed, patterns began to emerge across interviews and observations. Rather than applying predefined categories, the author allowed the data to shape the analytical framework, ensuring an organic and data-driven approach. By grouping similar data points, broader analytical categories took shape. This thematic analysis reinforced the inductive methodology, as the four axes were derived directly from patterns that consistently surfaced in the data.

Observations and interviews revealed variations in the time, energy, and personal risk individuals were willing to invest in activism. A degree of investment refers to the extent of personal involvement individuals have in activism, ranging from a high level, where activism is central to an individual's life, to a lower level,

where participation is occasional or sporadic. The level of ideological affiliation assesses the extent to which activists identify with specific ideologies. The data showed that while some activists strongly adhere to a particular ideology, others adopt a more pragmatic or less committed approach. Autonomy of action measures the degree of independence activists have in determining their actions and strategies—this varies from highly autonomous actions, where individuals independently decide and act, to more constrained activism, where they operate within a structured framework. Objectives of commitment reflect motivations, from broad political change to tangible outcomes or personal fulfillment.

4.1 Associative activists

Among interviewees, 55% identified as association activists. Three distinct groups of activists were identified: those directly affected by the conflict, individuals with expertise in psychology, social assistance, law, or art, and students. Their activism focuses on two main areas: the promotion and preservation of Kurdish cultural identity and the provision of social, legal, and psychological support to conflict victims.

Turning to the four selected axes for comparing various forms of activism, the initial focus is the degree of investment demonstrated by associative activists. Unlike political party or armed organization activists, voluntary activists engage in a less intensive form of action, dedicating only part of their time and energy to the cause. A human rights association member explained:

"We are not professional militants. We have twenty members collaborating. Typically, we have external economic activities, and we allocate our free time to advancing the association's work. Some directors, who are lawyers, dedicate their free time. However, our chairman works full-time. Certain members, mostly retirees, consistently participate in association activities. We also have three volunteer activists assisting us: a secretary, a documentation worker, and one in the kitchen. Additionally, lawyers who are association members contribute when available."

Another significant characteristic of association activists is their limited ideological affiliation. Field observations and interview analyses indicate that these activists generally lack a deep understanding of the ideologies of Kurdish organizations such as the PKK. Even those who identify with PKK ideology tend to adopt only a selective set of symbolic elements from its discourse, often presenting them in a highly individualized manner. Furthermore, while many activists are dedicated to the Kurdish cause, they do not necessarily adhere to a specific ideology. The extent of their independence from ideological discourse is shaped by several factors, including the autonomy of the association, the activist's level of responsibility within the organizational hierarchy, and their chosen mode of activism. Nevertheless, the diverse nature of the associations' fields of action provides activists with considerable autonomy, enabling them to operate without feeling compelled to fully align with the ideologies of organized groups.

A defining feature of association activism is autonomy of action. One activist associated with a civil society organization characterizes the association as a space that aligns with her preferences for involvement, stating, "Our association is completely autonomous. We don't receive funding from the town hall or state. [...] we spend all our days organizing activities, and I have the choice. I can participate in certain activities if I wish, and if an activity doesn't align with my ideas, I choose not to participate. We discuss it openly, and it's not a major issue for any of us […] I actively participate in activities related to women's issues. For instance, we have a regular meeting schedule. However, I do not participate in the event dedicated to Abdullah Öcalan's anniversary. On the other hand, during the summer, I took part in all the activities of the Mesopotamian Social Forum. I make a conscious effort to stay on the civil side of things." While she identifies with the group, she retains the freedom to distance herself in both subjectivity and action. This autonomy extends beyond selecting activities within the association to engaging in external activities beyond the association's framework.

Regarding objectives of commitment, associative activists define clear spheres of action. While aiming for significant change, in practice, they confine their interventions to specific domains. A participant explained:

"I am part of an association dedicated to working for human rights. Our activities primarily focus on the plight of two specific groups: victims of torture and ill-treatment in prison; and victims of forced migration. We assist these victims by preparing complaints and petitions related to torture, ill-treatment, and forced migration. Our legal team then provides support and submits these requests to courts in Turkey or Europe. On the upper floor, we have a team of medical professionals, including doctors, physiotherapists, and psychiatrists, who offer their services to the victims, helping them prepare for and begin therapeutic treatment. Our doctor is responsible for coordinating these services."

From this perspective, the challenge lies in fostering a supportive and service-oriented relationship with a clearly defined public. These activists perceive their involvement as a means of addressing the tangible needs of victims who have experienced various forms of violence. In this form of activism, the rationale for action is not framed within the discourse of collective emancipation. For instance, the goal is not the liberation of Kurdistan or the Kurdish people. Instead, the focus is on alleviating the suffering of a specific group and advocating for the rights of those whose rights have been violated.

4.2 Office activists

The 1990s saw the rise of Kurdish involvement in mainstream politics, marking the emergence of a distinct political militancy. The evolving political landscape in Turkish Kurdistan enabled a new generation of politicians to engage in formal political arenas. In terms of dedication to the cause, office activists invest significantly more time and energy in their activities compared to their association activist counterparts. Their organization and approach to activism do not perfectly align with Weber's 'homo politicus' ideal type (1995, 372). Given the paramount importance of militant subjectivity, politicians are compelled to navigate a delicate balance between their 'professional duty' and 'revolutionary duty,' leading to a unique regulation of their activist and private lives. Representing an unacknowledged collective identity, they often face dissociation from colleagues and take risks others avoid.

Office activists operate in a state of perpetual instability, requiring continual commitment to their activities. A 60+ political activist highlighted the enduring challenges, including arrests, assassinations, and political persecution: "For twenty years, we have endured arrests and the loss of lives of our activists. Our parliamentarian was killed. Mehmet Sincar was a member of parliament. Many of our political cadres and party presidents in towns and regions have been assassinated. Tens of thousands of our cadres have been arrested and sentenced to prison. Yet, our party persists, always progressing [...] I have been to prison five times. Even today, I'm facing a trial in which the prosecutor is seeking a hundred-year sentence for me." Despite hardships, their dedication to achieving political progress remains steadfast.

Their activism extends beyond regular working hours. Committed politicians not only represent the Kurdish group in political institutions but continually navigate between the Kurdish communities, official political scenes, and trans-state spaces, shaping their level of investment. Despite the intensity of their activism, private life, family activities, and sociability outside remain integral.

Office activists not only consume but also shape ideological discourse. While projecting an "impression of unanimity" (Moscovici 1979, 218), they exhibit two distinct ideological orientations. The first group comprises individuals closely aligned with the PKK ideology, evident in their discourse and terminology. An examination of their life history indicates their political socialization followed the PKK's emergence. The second group selectively adopts certain ideas without a full adherence, shaped by diverse political experiences within Kurdish, Turkish, or leftist formations.

In this model, the autonomy of activist action is limited. Office activists articulate the collective project through concrete actions, bridging the State and the community. They manage bureaucratic relationships with adversaries while maintaining close ties with fellow party members.

Unlike association activists, office activists remain embedded in the broader political project. Their frame of reference includes Kurds, women, and other minorities in Turkey, with objectives articulated within the larger struggle. Despite proposals like "democratic confederalism" or "democratic autonomy," their commitment to the democratic, diplomatic, and parliamentary path remains central to achieving their goals. This discourse positions them at the forefront of the movement, transforming the PKK's call for revolution into a call for dialogue led by politicians.

4.3 Professional activists: cadre and guerrilla

Professional militancy embodies the essence of militancy envisioned by the founders of the PKK upon its establishment in 1978. Influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology (Lenin 1966, 35–37), they believed that building a robust organization required the presence of "professional revolutionaries." The PKK embraced professional activism as its preferred mode of action. Initially, the primary mission of these "revolutionaries" was the "decolonization of Kurdistan." They relinquished other professional pursuits and societal responsibilities to dedicate themselves entirely to the cause and organization. Initially focused on ideological propaganda, recruitment, and, when necessary, armed confrontations, their role expanded following the 1980 coup d'état. Some cadres were imprisoned, while others sought refuge, primarily in Syria, Lebanon, and Europe. In this altered context, their mission evolved, extending beyond recruitment to encompass a broader spectrum of activities.

The extreme commitment and self-sacrifice of PKK cadres, both inside prisons and in guerrilla warfare, highlighted a profound sense of responsibility and dedication. Despite differences in mode and location of action, cadres and guerrillas share a deep ideological and organizational commitment.

For a guerrilla fighter, and this principle holds true for a cadre as well, commitment entails the termination of all other spheres of investment, including family, work, studies, and traditional forms of social interaction. In the case of guerrillas, the separation from previous life spheres is distinctly evident, marking a decisive break from the individual's past upon joining the movement. In contrast, a cadre is not entirely detached from other forms of sociability. Instead, they coexist in society, acting as a representative of the cause and institution to which they are affiliated (Debray 1967; Egan 2016; Guevara 2019). One cadre's articulation of the requisite qualities for their role is clarifying:

"A cadre must maintain a professional commitment around the clock. It is not sufficient merely to be acquainted with the movement's program and charter; one must also internalize and endorse them. Through this acceptance, one actively advocates the cause’s success. These characteristics are indispensable for leaders within this movement. They must embody self-sacrifice, diligence, and humility. Their affection for their people and homeland must be profound, fostering a robust connection with their people".

A cadre’s life revolves around relentless commitment, deep ideological adherence, and active advocacy. This dedication enables the cadre to represent the organization and its ideals in society. Such unequivocal commitment facilitates the practical implementation of this level of dedication, consequently reinforcing the organization's "over-generating" capacity, a term coined by Gaxie (1977, 140) to describe a structure enabling a party to produce "as much fuel as it consumes".

A professional activist lacks permanent residence and familial responsibilities, allowing complete devotion to the party's cause and objectives. By adopting the role of a professional activist, an individual transforms their relationship with the external world and reconstructs it within the new party family. Their transformation

grants them legitimacy to represent the organization and serve as an "interpreter and transmitter" (Carlier 1995, 32) of the party's program and symbolic realm to the population. By embodying the movement's ideals daily, cadres extend their role beyond recruitment, becoming integral to a "partisan micro-structure," positioning themselves as the "bearer of the nation's truth" (Carlier 1995, 76).

The degree of autonomy of professional activists is contingent upon several factors, including levels of responsibility, the nature of actions undertaken, and the specific locations of their activities. Cadres, despite being subject to certain constraints, retain a negotiable level of autonomy as they propose and justify actions aligned with the collective interests of the group. This sentiment is encapsulated in the words of a 27-year-old professional cadre, who expressed, " I'll go where the movement leads me. Some comrades suggest specific locations for their commitment, believing it will enhance their effectiveness in supporting the Kurdish people. However, for me, it's not an issue."

In contrast, guerrilla systems prioritize control, emphasizing a visible and respected hierarchy. Given the inherently military nature of the guerrilla system, the meticulous control of actions stands as a central organizational concern. Unlike the more flexible dynamics within cadre groups, the vertical nature of relationships among guerrillas is markedly more pronounced and concurrently accorded with high respect by the members. Upon joining the group, individuals assimilate a culture of deference to the hierarchy. One former guerrilla (1991–1997), attests to this, stating, "In the mountains [where the guerrillas are present], in ninety per cent of cases we followed the commander because, for us, he was the one who knew best."

Paradoxically, despite their apparent lack of autonomy, professional activists enjoy considerable freedom due to organizational trust. As Coser (1974, 77) notes, "only those who are fully absorbed can be fully trusted". This trust sustains the group's cohesion. The PKK's decentralized structure, beyond its symbolic and military pyramidal hierarchy, accommodates independent circles within each layer, necessitating trust in professional activists for seamless organizational functioning. The autonomy of action resulting from this trust has on numerous occasions given rise to substantial challenges for the PKK, particularly within the guerrillas.

Finally, the objectives of professional activists center on collective emancipation. Particularly for cadres, the struggle extends beyond Kurdish identity to liberation from state dominance, patriarchy, feudalism, nationalism, and capitalism. Within this group, the Kurdish question is secondary to broader revolutionary goals. One cadre stated: "[The primary objective is to] "liberate individuals and society from the dominion of the state [...]. We aspire to build a liberated society capable of self-determination [...], necessitating our fight against feudalism, the nation state, and capitalism". The notion of advocating for the establishment of a Kurdish state is consistently discredited.

However, these indoctrinated individuals within this group exhibit a keen awareness of the pragmatic challenges on the ground. They recognize that relying solely on abstract ideals would impede their overarching mission of mobilization. Despite their disavowal of the Kurdish state creation, this indoctrinated core concentrates on tangible objectives to facilitate mass mobilization. This pragmatic focus plays a pivotal role in the movement's expansion, propagation, and temporal continuity.

Table 1 outlines three distinct activist profiles within the Kurdish movement. Associative activists balance activism with personal and professional commitments, showing moderate investment. Office activists dedicate greater time and effort, often making personal sacrifices, while professional activists, including cadres and guerrillas, exhibit the highest level of commitment, fully embedding themselves in the movement. These profiles also differ ideologically. Associative activists engage for socio-cultural or humanitarian reasons, with weak political ties. Office activists pragmatically incorporate ideological elements, while professional activists, especially cadres, demonstrate strong commitment to broader revolutionary struggles beyond the Kurdish cause. Autonomy varies significantly. Associative activists retain the most independence, choosing their level of involvement. Office activists operate within political structures, balancing party directives with

grassroots engagement. Professional activists have the least autonomy, though cadres may negotiate some flexibility, while guerrillas adhere to strict hierarchical discipline. Finally, their objectives reflect differing priorities. Associative activists focus on localized interventions, such as legal aid and cultural preservation. Office activists bridge grassroots activism and political institutions, advocating for the Kurdish cause through formal channels. Professional activists pursue systemic transformation, aligning with revolutionary ideals that extend beyond Kurdish nationalism.

Table 1. Characteristics of the three engagement models

	Associative Activist	*Office Activist*	*Professional Activist*
Degree of investment	Partial	Medium	Very High
Level of ideological affiliation	Weak	Selective re-appropriation of ideological elements	Strong among cadres and variable among guerrillas
Autonomy of action	High	Limited	Limited but negotiable depending on the site of action
Commitment objectives	Linked to each specific field of action	Partisan of the great cause	Collective emancipation

Source: Developed by the author through qualitative and inductive analysis of interviews and fieldwork

5. Paths of involvement

Having outlined various modes of engagement, this section focuses on comprehending the underlying motivations prompting individuals to participate in the Kurdish movement. The objective here is to discern the factors that influenced their choice of a specific form of action over alternatives. This topic will be examined in two distinct phases. Initially, an analysis will be conducted on the rationale behind the respondents' dedication to a specific form of action, drawing comparisons with alternative options. Subsequently, the focus will shift to examining the events that shaped an individual's trajectory toward "becoming an activist" (Fillieule and Mayer 2001).

5.1 Choosing the site of engagement

Throughout the interviews, participants were questioned regarding their preferences for one type of commitment over another and the factors influencing their choice of involvement. The discussions surrounding activists' engagements demonstrated significant diversity. Despite the multifaceted nature of activists' motivations and inspirations, a thorough analysis of the interviews unveiled the identification of four distinct categories encapsulating the rationales articulated by activists to justify their commitment to a specific group. These categories comprise group specificity and availability, biographical constraints, the sense of utility, and commitment linked to the perception of injustice.

Group specificity and availability

"Why this movement? This question resonates deeply in Kurdistan, where the PKK has become an integral part of our collective consciousness," reflects an activist, encapsulating the mindset of individuals drawn to the organization following its expansion into Kurdish regions. Many militants, predominantly professionals, justify their commitment to the PKK by emphasizing the lack of alternative organizations.

This perspective is not confined solely to the post-PKK generation; individuals who experienced the politically tumultuous periods of the 1960s and 1970s, coupled with the 1980 coup d'état and the subsequent disintegration of various groups, express a similar sentiment. A participant mid-40s, male, raised in a leftist family, became involved with the PKK guerrilla movement in response to the perceived "demise of hope for achieving revolution after military repression." The vanishing of leftist 'revolutionaries' and their inability to withstand suppression left him disillusioned, propelling him towards the PKK, which appeared to epitomize the revolutionary spirit he sought. According to him, "to truly become a revolutionary, one had to embrace guerrilla warfare."

The interviews reveal a reasoning unique to the specificity of the PKK. First-generation members highlight the consistency between the group's words and actions as its distinguishing feature. One guerrilla fighter, around 60 years old, emphasizes that they lived what they professed. This commitment was seen as a marked difference from other groups, many of which were believed to be “under state influence” or “unable to effectively combat colonialism”. A former military leader of the PKK, articulated during an interview, "At the time, all the movements started with socialism [...]. They all asserted that Kurdistan was occupied, and Turkey was the occupier [...]. Their differences were not defined by their demands. The significant distinction lay in the way they sought to achieve their objectives." Members frequently point to the armed struggle advocated and executed by the PKK as evidence that the organization did not succumb to the well-known contradiction between rhetoric and practice.

The discourse among the new generation of professional activists shifts from practices to ideological references. For those from the 1980s and 1990s, the main distinctive feature of the PKK lies in its practices. In contrast, activists from the 2000s and beyond emphasize ideological references. The new generation of activists, for instance, describes the PKK's difference as not just a question of weapons but an ideology that provides a vision to resist torture, injustice, and oppression. This ideological aspect, encompassing science, socialism, and awareness of humanity, differentiates the PKK from other Kurdish movements perceived as extensions of traditional tribalism and primitive nationalism. This stance can be construed as an apology rooted in faith. The conviction that drives the militant's commitment scarcely acknowledges the potential for action within any other organization.

Biographical constraints

Activists frequently employ an additional rationale to justify their chosen commitment, rooted in the "constraints" they grapple with at specific junctures in their lives. Within this framework, the term 'constraint' encompasses a spectrum of challenges, ranging from health issues to domestic violence or the looming threat of military conflict. A compelling illustration of this is observed in the plight of Kurdish villagers compelled to align with either the army or the PKK during the conflict. Moreover, the mandatory conscription enforced by the PKK between its Third Congress in 1986 and the Fourth Congress in 1990 exemplifies the formidable constraints thrust upon individuals, compelling them to assume roles as soldiers or guerrillas. A parallel scenario unfolds for activists in associations and cadres who resort to bearing arms under the specter of physical

harm or imprisonment. In this investigation, at least three individuals were identified as having resorted to armed activism in response to police threats to their physical integrity.

However, these instances of extreme duress, where genuine freedom of choice is severely curtailed, extend beyond the political realm. Many opt to retreat to mountainous regions dominated by PKK guerrillas, seeking refuge from problems that neither societal nor state institutions can redress. A case in point is one individual, a former fighter, who, at the age of 30, embraced guerrilla warfare as a sanctuary from domestic violence. For her, taking up arms became a refuge, shielding her from spousal abuse and familial vendettas. She articulates this sentiment in her own words: "I convinced myself that even if I were to join the guerrillas, it would no longer be a matter of honor, and there would be no pursuit of revenge based on honor. Even in the event of losing my life, my family could proudly declare that their daughter had become part of the guerrillas [...]."

Among the myriad constraints influencing the choice of commitment's form and locus, "biographical availability" emerges as a pivotal factor. McAdam (1986, 70), emphasizing its importance, defines it as "the absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities." The interviews reveal that activists accord significant weight to this factor. Many reference their 'biographical unavailability' to elucidate both why they did not engage earlier and why their involvement did not intensify further. Repeatedly surfacing in activists' narratives, biographical obstacles are entwined with family responsibilities, economic challenges, marital status, and, notably, health issues.

Sense of utility

Activists frequently attribute their involvement in organized groups to a belief that their participation contributes to both collective and individual objectives. The assessment of usefulness is typically determined either by adhering strictly to the organization's needs or by the preferences of the activists themselves.

In the former scenario, individuals align their objectives with those established by the organization and determine the efficacy of their contributions in attaining those goals. One participant explicitly endorses this idea, expressing, "The most crucial aspect for me is the widespread dissemination of the freedom movement, be it in towns, mountains, culture, or publishing. I am committed to campaigning wherever my presence is required." This sentiment is prevalent among committed activists dedicated entirely to the cause.

However, caution must be exercised when interpreting the relationship between individuals and institutions. Even in seemingly submissive situations, there is room for negotiation. This parenthetical note is inserted in the discussion on the sense of usefulness to emphasize that organizations also need to justify their value to professional activists before securing their involvement. For instance, when an interviewee chose to join guerrillas, the organization persuaded him to work in Turkish cities, emphasizing his greater utility there. This organizational division of labor relies on the personal capacities and skills of activists, who must consistently demonstrate effective commitment to maintain their participation, particularly in high-risk situations.

The sense of usefulness, however, is not exclusively grounded in organizational logic. Association activists, for instance, typically enter with a preconceived notion of their contribution's effectiveness. Once engaged, they continually reassess the utility of their commitment. One participant provides an insightful perspective: "I prefer to maintain continuity in my actions. It is essential to approach one's personality with a commitment to human rights and to live in accordance with that principle. While in a party setting, the responsibility is to remain active day and night, mobilizing people. However, in our context, our focus is not on mobilization but on welcoming those in need of assistance. I believe my personal character is not primarily geared toward mobilization or culture but is more technical in nature. This technical orientation is better suited for our objectives here than elsewhere, which is why I joined". Ismail underscores the importance of aligning personal

characteristics with the nature of activism, in contrast to his experience in a political party where emotional involvement and dedication are always expected.

Engagement linked to the experience of injustice

The analysis of interviews unveils an additional motivation articulated by activists in selecting their engagement sites, referred to here as commitment intertwined with the experience of injustice. Individuals' encounters with injustice manifest in diverse ways, spanning from personal experiences to empathetic identification with others who share similar identity references. Regardless of its manifestation, individuals develop a distinct perception of their encounters with injustice, propelling them to seek answers and solutions in specific areas.

A 30-year-old associative activist epitomizes this motivation. Born into a "democratic and intellectual" family, she confronted gender discrimination in society, culminating in workplace discrimination based on her Kurdish and gender identity. Her decision to actively engage with the Kardelen association stemmed from her personal experiences and a sense of responsibility: "I chose to come here because, as a woman, I witnessed instances of physical, psychological, and sexual violence. Confronted with this harsh reality, I felt a sense of responsibility, and ultimately, I embraced it." For her, involvement in a Kurdish women's association was a deliberate response to the double marginalization faced by Kurdish women due to both their ethnic and gender identities. This example illustrates how individuals' perceptions of injustice shape their choice of engagement. Subjective interpretations evolve as individuals continually reflect on themselves, the external world, and their capacity to transform the relationship between "self" and the "outside world."

Moreover, instances abound where individuals join associations in response to more severe forms of injustice, such as the loss of loved ones or unresolved deaths. Some individuals become members of an association with the goal of recovering the bodies of their children, who were victims of state violence. Conversely, individuals who have experienced the disappearance or unresolved death of a close acquaintance, establish their own association to challenge the code of silence and hold the State accountable.

The testimonials highlight a recurring theme: activists often connect their perception of injustice with their mode of commitment. The injustices, whether experienced or imagined, linger in the memories of these individuals, propelling them to seek ways to rectify or mitigate the unjust order. Notably, activists referencing this alignment argument demonstrate a clear understanding of the scope of their actions within their activist groups, and they focus on rectifying specific injustices. Their mission revolves around defending gender equality, exposing human rights violations, and advocating for the rights of political violence victims.

5.2 The event and the rhythm of engagement

Activists do not commence their journeys from a uniform starting point, nor do their commitments evolve at a consistent pace. Rather, the commitment process unfolds through diverse experiences, shaped by personal histories, social contexts, and transformative events. Analyzing these varied engagement rhythms presents a formidable challenge, as no single model can capture the complexity of these trajectories. However, a closer examination of interviews reveals the pivotal role of the actor-event dialectic in accelerating or decelerating engagement. The notion of "event" is central to this discussion, yet its meaning remains fluid and context-dependent.

Ricœur (1991, 43) defines an event as a sudden disruption in the established order; a moment that reconfigures how individuals perceive their realities. However, not all events exert an equally mobilizing or unifying effect; their significance derives not only from their objective characteristics but also from the

subjective meanings individuals attribute to them. This section explores the specific events or micro-events that catalyze the emergence of the militant commitment, focusing exclusively on those referenced by interviewees in recounting their activist trajectories. Life stories provide a lens through which to identify events that shape variations in engagement rhythm. Three mobilizing logics emerge from these narratives: (1) significant events that accelerate the engagement, (2) the conjunction of multiple events, and (3) a sequence of interconnected events that gradually reinforce commitment.

Significant events

An analysis of life trajectories reveals that certain events, perceived as significant by the individuals involved, generate cognitive and affective shifts that lead to deeper engagement. The key question, then, is how to distinguish a significant event from other life experiences. The defining criteria lie in the role the event plays in the engagement process and the meaning ascribed to it by the individual. Unlike banal and ordinary occurrences, significant events create a biographical rupture, a moment so transformative that returning to the prior status quo becomes inconceivable.

A compelling example is the case of an individual from a non-politicized background whose life dramatically changed when their family faced police intrusion due to a relative's possession of banned materials. This event triggered a cascade of hardships, including the imprisonment of a family member, forced marriage at a young age, and domestic violence. With the support of neighbors, the individual ultimately joined the PKK guerrilla movement. This example underscores several key aspects of significant events. First, their defining characteristic is the extremity of the experience—a rupture that reshapes an individual's perception of their life and social reality. However, the significance of an event is not solely determined by its objective severity but also by its subjective interpretation. Another important aspect of significant events is their personal proximity. Even when events are collective, they are reinterpreted through individual experience. This underscores the idea that events do not have inherent mobilizing power; rather, their impact depends on how they intersect with personal histories. By grounding activism in deeply personal experiences, these narratives reveal how political commitment is not merely a response to external conditions but a process of reconfiguring one’s understanding of justice, loss, and agency.

Conjunction of events

In certain cases, an individual’s transition from potential activist to engaged participant depends not on a single transformative event but on the convergence of multiple occurrences that collectively create a tipping point. This cumulative effect illustrates how engagement emerges when individuals recognize opportune moments that align with their evolving political consciousness.

For example, a senior civil servant in a government ministry was approached in 2002 by leaders of the pro-Kurdish party to join their ranks. This request coincided with the party’s efforts to restructure its electoral strategy and surpass the ten percent threshold. Although the party ultimately fell short, this period marked the individual’s official political involvement, leading to his eventual election as a parliamentary deputy in 2007. Reflecting on this trajectory, he noted that "it was time" for him to commit to political action.

A similar dynamic is evident in the case of a retired former civil servant and trade unionist who joined the management of a human rights association. His decision was shaped by a convergence of factors: personal readiness for activism and a connection between his previous union work and human rights advocacy. These cases highlight that when events align in a meaningful way, individuals are compelled to reassess their engagement and take decisive action.

These examples illustrate the interplay between biographical and institutional events in shaping activism. Biographical events alter an individual's availability for collective action (McAdam 1986, 70), while institutional events, such as recruitment efforts by associations or political parties, provide concrete avenues for participation. The ability to connect with these events is closely tied to the capacity of organized groups to create institutional opportunities for engagement.

Sequence of events

In some instances, engagement is not driven by a single decisive moment or a convergence of events but rather by a sustained sequence of incidents that collectively shape the activist trajectory. In such cases, it is not the intensity of individual events but their cumulative impact over time that acts as a catalyst for deepened commitment.

An illustrative example is an individual who, before joining the guerrilla movement, experienced a series of escalating confrontations with the state. Initially, participation in protest actions led to arrests and police brutality. In the following years, the region witnessed further upheaval, including university confrontations, hunger strikes, and intensified repression by both state and counter-guerrilla forces. As this individual recounted, the escalating tensions made engagement increasingly inevitable. The final tipping point occurred when two of his comrades were assassinated by Hizbullah, solidifying his decision to join the armed struggle.

This case highlights the significance of both temporal and spatial dimensions in activist commitment. During specific periods, a heightened perception of injustice can propel individuals into a chain of events that gradually reinforces their involvement. The same principle applies to spatial contexts, certain regions, shaped by historical patterns of resistance, become incubators of activism through their repeated exposure to protest events.

However, it is important to note that event-driven micro-engagements do not always result in sustained commitment. As Becker (2012, 46) argues in his discussion of "sequential models" in *Outsiders*, engagement does not necessarily follow a linear trajectory. Individuals may bypass certain stages or disengage at any point. Furthermore, the notion of a chain of events does not imply a predetermined structure for activism; rather, events are also shaped by the actions of activists themselves. The individual in this example did not merely experience events passively but actively contributed to their occurrence through participation in commemorations, hunger strikes, and protests. While each participation marked a step toward deeper engagement, true commitment arose when the desire to shape events overpowered other considerations.

6. Conclusion

This study provided an in-depth analysis of engagement within the Kurdish movement through the life stories of activists, identifying three primary forms of engagement: associative activists, office activists, and professional activists. These categories not only reflect varying levels of commitment but also diverge significantly in terms of ideological affiliations, autonomy, and objectives. Associative activists balance activism with personal and professional obligations, engaging in localized socio-cultural actions driven more by humanitarian concerns than by ideological commitment. In contrast, office activists, embedded within political structures, adopt a pragmatic approach to engagement, navigating party directives and grassroots mobilization to advance the Kurdish cause. Professional activists, particularly cadres and guerrillas, exhibit the highest level of commitment, motivated by ideological convictions that often transcend the Kurdish issue to encompass broader revolutionary ideals. Their engagement, however, is characterized by limited autonomy due to the strict hierarchies within their respective roles.

The typology developed in this study is an analytical instrument with the aim of enhancing knowledge of the various forms of activist involvement in the Kurdish movement. While certain characteristics might cut across categories, the distinctions remain meaningful in capturing the nuances of different activist trajectories. Further research based on other methods or larger samples may further refine and test the robustness of this typology. Recognizing the inherent fluidity of activist identities, this study highlights the usefulness of categorization as a tool of analytical accuracy rather than a rigid division of reality.

By adopting an actor-centric perspective, this study has addressed a gap in the literature, demonstrating that activist engagement is not a static or singular event but rather a dynamic and evolving process shaped by biographical experiences, critical conjunctures, and sustained sequences of activism. This perspective underscores how personal trajectories, rather than solely structural factors or ideological imperatives, shape individual involvement in the movement. A key question emerging from this analysis concerns the capacity of organized groups to influence engagement processes. Beyond recruitment strategies and ideological frameworks, it is crucial to examine how Kurdish organizations employ key events to foster collective identity and strengthen militant allegiance. The symbolic power of these events serves as a critical mobilization tool, linking individual experiences to broader political narratives. Future research should explore the mechanisms through which organizations construct, commemorate, and instrumentalize such events to sustain long-term commitment among activists.

Furthermore, the study's findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the Kurdish movement's formation, continuity, internal crises, and ongoing transformations. Over the past decades, the movement has evolved from a struggle centered on Kurdish identity and autonomy into a broader platform engaging with intersecting social, cultural, and political conflicts. This transformation has been shaped by the diverse identities and experiences of activists, who come from varied socio-economic backgrounds, regional affiliations, gender perspectives, and educational levels. This diversity, while a source of strength, also presents challenges to internal cohesion. As core organizations attempt to standardize ideological norms and strategic frameworks, tensions arise between differing activist profiles. These tensions reflect broader struggles within the movement over ideological direction, organizational structures, and the reconciliation of diverse political aspirations.

This ongoing ideological adaptation can be viewed as both a strength and a limitation. On one hand, the movement's capacity to accommodate diverse voices enhances its inclusivity and broadens its appeal, enabling engagement with a wide range of social and political issues. On the other hand, the continuous incorporation of new actors with distinct perspectives exacerbates internal contradictions, complicating the movement's unity and coherence (Sharifi 2016). This dynamic of inclusion creates fertile ground for internal debates, ideological negotiations, and practical disputes. The persistent process of re-evaluation and reformulation of ideological frameworks is a defining feature of the Kurdish movement, reflecting the complex interplay between unity and diversity. Understanding this dynamic is essential to comprehending the movement's trajectory, particularly its ability to navigate contradictions and adapt to shifting political realities.

Finally, while this study has focused on structured forms of activism, future research should expand its scope to examine less visible, decentralized, and everyday forms of resistance within the Kurdish context. Engaging with scholarship on everyday resistance, such as the works of Scott (1985), Clastres (1974), Bayart (1979), and Johnston (1991), would provide valuable insights into how individual acts of defiance contribute to broader mobilization efforts. Investigating these more diffuse and informal forms of engagement will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of Kurdish activism. By doing so, scholars can further illuminate the diverse ways in which individuals participate in and sustain the movement, thereby enriching our knowledge of both the Kurdish and broader social movements.

The author gratefully acknowledges the anonymous reviewers for their meticulous review of the manuscript and insightful feedback. Additionally, sincere thanks are extended to all participants who generously shared their perspectives through interviews, as their contributions were integral to the depth and richness of the study.

REFERENCES

Akkaya A.H., and J. Jongerden (2012), "Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the Project of Radical Democracy", *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey* [Online], 14, Online since 18 January 2013.

Bayart J.F. (1979), *L'État au Cameroun*, 1st edition, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Becker H. (2012), *Outsiders: Etudes de Sociologie de la Déviance*, Paris: Editions Métailié.

Bennani-Chraïbi M., and O. Fillieule (eds.) (2002), *Résistances et Protestations dans les Sociétés Musulmanes*, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Bozarslan H. (2003), "Le Nationalisme Kurde, de la Violence Politique au Suicide Sacrificiel", *Critique Internationale*, 21(4): 93–115.

Braun V., and V. Clarke (2013), *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*, 1st edition, Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Çağlayan H. (2020), *Women in the Kurdish Movement: Mothers, Comrades, Goddesses*, 1st edition, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Carlier O. (1995), *Entre Nation et Jihad: Histoire Sociale des Radicalismes Algériens*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques.

Clastres P. (1974), *La Société Contre l'État: Recherches d'Anthropologie Politique*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit.

Coser L.A. (1974), *Greedy Institutions; Patterns of Undivided Commitment*, New York: Free Press.

Davidovic M. (2018), "Mother-Activism before the European Court of Human Rights: Gender Sensitivity towards Kurdish Mothers and Wives in Enforced Disappearances Cases", *Kurdish Studies*, 6(1) : 134–154.

Debray R. (1967), *Revolution in the Revolution?: Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin.

Dirik D. (2022), *The Kurdish Women's Movement: History, Theory, Practice*, London: Pluto Press.

Egan D. (2016), "Marxism and Guerrilla Warfare", In: *The Dialectic of Position and Maneuver. Studies in Critical Social Sciences*. United States: BRILL, pp. 89–107.

Fillieule O. (2001), "Propositions pour une Analyse Processuelle de l'Engagement Individuel", *Revue Française de Science Politique*, 51(1): 199–215.

Fillieule O., and N. Mayer (2001), "Devenirs Militants", *Revue Française de Science Politique*, 51(1–2): 19–25.

Fillieule O., and E. Neveu (eds.) (2019), *Activists Forever?: Long-Term Impacts of Political Activism*, Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gaxie D. (1977), "Économie des Partis et Rétributions du Militantisme", *Revue Française de Science Politique*, 27(1): 123–154.

Grojean O. (2008), "La Production de l'Homme Nouveau au Sein du PKK", *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, [Online], 8, Online since 30 December 2008.

Grojean O. (2017), *La Révolution Kurde*, Paris: La Découverte.

Guevara C. (2019), *La Guerra de Guerrillas / Ernesto Che Guevara*, Linkgua Pensamiento 29, Barcelona: www.linkgua-digital.com.

Gunes C. (2012), *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: From Protest to Resistance*, London: Routledge.

Hassaniyan A. (2021), *Kurdish Politics in Iran: Crossborder Interactions and Mobilisation since 1947*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnston H. (1991), *Tales of Nationalism: Catalonia, 1939-1979*, 1st edition, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Käser I. (2021), *The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement: Gender, Body Politics and Militant Femininities*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Koohi-Kamali F. (2003), *The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran: Pastoral Nationalism*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lenin V.I. (1966) [1902], *Que Faire?*, Paris: Seuil.

Mathieu L. (2004), *Comment Lutter? Sociologie et Mouvements Sociaux*, Paris: Textuel.

McAdam D. (1986), "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer", *American Journal of Sociology*, 92(1): 64–90.

McAdam D., and S. Tarrow (2005), "Scale Shift in Transnational Contention", In: D. della Porta and S. Tarrow (eds.), *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 121–150.

Melucci A. (1994), "A Strange Kind of Newness: What's 'New' in New Social Movements?", In: E. Larana, H. Johnston, and J.R. Gusfield (eds.), *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 101–130.

Melucci A. (1996), *The Playing Self: Person and Meaning in the Planetary Society*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Moscovici S. (1979), *Psychologie des Minorités Actives* (trans. A. Rivière), Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Özcan A.K. (2006), *Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan*, London: Routledge.

Ricœur P. (1991), "Événement et Sens", In: J.L. Petit (ed.), *L'Événement en Perspective*, Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, pp. 41–56.

Romano D. (2006), *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*, 1st edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scott J.C. (1985), *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Princeton, N.J.: Yale University Press.

Sharifi M. (2015), "De la Résistance Microscopique à l'Action Collective Organisée: Engagement et Désengagement des Militants dans l'Espace Kurde", PhD thesis, *L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (EHESS), France.

Sharifi M. (2016), "Après le Désengagement: Les Défis de la Reconstruction Identitaire des Ex-Guérilléros", In: G. Pleyers and B. Capitaine (eds.), *Mouvements Sociaux*, Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, pp. 259–271.

Snow D.A. (2001), "Analyse de Cadres et Mouvements Sociaux", In: D. Cefaï and D. Trom (eds.), *Les Formes de l'Action Collective: Mobilisations dans des Arènes Publiques*, Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, pp. 27–49.

Snow D.A. (2006), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, 2nd edition, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Snow D.A., L.A. Zurcher, and S. Ekland-Olson (1980), "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment", *American Sociological Review*, 45(5): 787–801.

Snow D.A., E.B. Rochford, S.K. Worden, and R. Benford (1986), "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation", *American Sociological Review*, 51(4): 464.

Tarrow S.G. (2005), *The New Transnational Activism*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
Thelwall M. (2021), *Word Association Thematic Analysis: A Social Media Text Exploration Strategy*, San Rafael, CA: Morgan & Claypool.
Touraine A. (1965), *Sociologie de l'Action*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
Touraine A. (1978), *La Voix et le Regard*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
Touraine A., and F. Khosrokhavar (2000), *La Recherche de Soi: Dialogue sur le Sujet*, Paris: Fayard.
Üstündağ N. (2023), *The Mother, the Politician, and the Guerrilla: Women's Political Imagination in the Kurdish Movement*, New York: Fordham University Press.
Weber M. (1995), *Économie et Société, Tome 2* (trans. J. Freund, P. Kamnitzer, and P. Bertrand), Paris: Pocket.
White P.J. (2000), *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernisers?: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey*, London: Zed Books.
Wieviorka M. (1988), *Sociétés et Terrorisme*, Paris: Fayard.
Wieviorka M. (1993), *La Démocratie à l'Épreuve: Nationalisme, Populisme, Ethnicité*, Paris: La Découverte.
Wieviorka M. (1998), "Actualité et Future de l'Engagement", In: M. Wieviorka (ed.), *Raison et Conviction: L'Engagement*, Paris: Textuel, pp. 7–49.

AUTHOR'S INFORMATION

Massoud Sharifi is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and a researcher at the Research Centre for Migration (CER-Migracions). His research focuses on political sociology and social policy.