

EXTENDED COMMENTS

When Doing Ethnography with Armed Movements: Participation, Rapport, Resistance – And Ethics

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Introduction

In this text I discuss ethical challenges concerning ethnographic fieldworks and participant observation in resistance movements with armed branches. By so doing, my point of departure will be my own ethnographic fieldwork with the Kurdish movement in Turkey's Southeast that I conducted between May 2015 and January 2016. More precisely, I will discuss a particular instance when I was asked to participate in an unofficial weapon production workshop with militant youth activists in an autonomous Kurdish neighborhood. This situation evoked a series of hesitations, internal questioning and reflections concerning ethics, participation and Resistance Studies that will be addressed below. Although the research interest that brought me to Kurdistan was the movement's experiments with civil forms of *constructive resistance* (see Sørensen, 2016; Koefoed, 2017a) in the context of the movement's ideological paradigm of 'democratic autonomy' (see e.g. Jongerden & Akkaya, 2013), I will in this text focus on violent aspects of the autonomy project, as I find this particularly useful for a fruitful discussion on research ethics.

During the time of my fieldwork, the conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish State escalated dramatically. In July there was a violent attack on a cultural center in Suruç, a predominantly Kurdish town bordering Rojava, Syrian Kurdistan. The center was housing a delegation