Politization of Kurdish identity and culture: A Scrutiny of Kurdish issue in Turkey

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Abstract

Turkish nationalism was the last project of the Young Turks and the CUP to save the Ottoman Empire’s integrity, which in the aftermath of the first World War and after the collapse of Ottoman Empire emerged with the nation state logic in the form of Republic of Turkey. Through the transition of the state from the imperial order to the form of a nation state entity, the collective identity components of the communities living in the Ottoman Empire were swallowed up into the unitary modern state with its Turkic ethnic roots. Passing nearly a century since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, with reference to the setbacks that the Turkish state is suffering in its struggle with Kurdish movement in Turkey and partly beyond, seemingly the policy of assimilation and integration of Kurds has come to a failure. The question of this article would be: how has “the Kurdish issue” evolved from a cultural identity seeking set of demands into the political and armed movement with full-fledged self-determinist attitude we face today? This study hypothesizes that along with the making of Turkish national identity, and enforcement of bare assimilation policies, the Kurds have developed various measures in proportion to the enforced policies of the central government. Through an explanatory study, this article will examine the process that the Kurdish cultural identity in late Ottoman Empire in consequence of monopolization and institutionalization of culture in the form of national identity in modern Turkey, naturally adapted its political survival. In this essay, Turkish administrations` measures in regard to "the Kurdish issue" and the corresponding Kurdish reactions have respectively been considered as the independent and dependent variables. This interaction of the government with the Kurdish groups is examined in two periods: before and after the rise of the AKP to power.

Keywords: Kurdish issue, nation-state, the Peace Process, AKP, PKK, HDP.
Introduction

Ethnic conflicts are one of the factors threatening national and international security in the world today. These movements owing to their demands, such as national identity, self-determination and nationalist tendencies are in conflict and contradiction with the nature of the ruling nation-states. Kurdish crisis in Turkey with its specific characteristics of language and ethnic identity arose as a society with an identity seeking definition different from the standing nation-state in Turkey.

The Kurdish issue in Turkey should be examined on various aspects of economic, political, cultural and in national and international arenas. Before the AKP, the crisis was interpreted merely as an underdevelopment issue and the whole issue was reduced to an economic root ignoring its cultural and ethnic facets. The discussion believed that in the case of improved economic situation and business development in the Kurdish region, their youth will remain reluctant to join the PKK. However, the experiences of some developed countries such as Spain and the problems that this country faces with her states of Basque and Catalan are in contradiction with that argument. Moreover, historically scrutinizing the crises, in the brink of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire we face with a nation that instead of engaging in its own nation state building process, it turned into an issue in the process of forming modern governments in the four different countries of the region. Hence, the crisis is one of a large-scale national, regional and international levels which considering the events of the Middle East today, leads researchers and scholars of international relations and security to profound questions in regard to the Kurdish crisis in the Middle East.

In this article after a review on the history of the formation of cultural and political identity of the Kurds in Turkey, I will focus the political crisis of Kurds in the Republic of Turkey within two spans of time: before the AKP in power, and after that the conservative Muslims swept to power.

Some noticeable events and processes within these periods would be the formation of the armed struggle of Kurds, the peace process¹ and the new delicate phase of political Kurdish parties that interact with the Turkish government, Kandil mountain guerrillas, and the imprisoned Abdullah Öcalan on the island of Imralı. It is safe to say that the peace process with the Kurds is assumed as Turkish government’s the most important and decisive agenda, which has been included in the “Red Book” of Turkey according to many scholars and thinkers of the Turkey. (Fehmi Koru, 2014). When Recep Tayyip Erdoğan raised the name of Ahmet Davutoğlu as the new leader of the AKP and Turkish Prime minister and assigned two critical missions for the future of Turkey, noted that one of them as the continuation of the peace process and the events of these days of the Middle East has made Turkish authorities more determined to follow peace process². On the other hand, the events related to the protests of the Kurdish citizens in support of the besieged city of Kobani by the “Islamic State” militants and in response to an invitation by Salaheddin Demirtaş co-leader of Peoples' Democratic Party³ during which rallied in the streets and clashed with security.

1. çözüm süreci
2. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speech at the extraordinary congress of the party Justice and Development dated 27.08.2014.In this important speech Erdoğan to sit on the presidential throne officially stepped down from the party leadership and introduced the foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu as the new party leader and along with it the future prime minister of Turkey.
3. Halkların Demokratik Partisi
forces and nationalist groups for 4-5 days, caused nearly forty death and many injured, revealed the fragility of the peace process.

**Kurdish identity formation:**

The first Kurdish movement that had signs of Kurdish nationalism with it, to most of the scholars of the field occurred in 1880. The revolt is known as the revolt of Sheikh Obeidullah, a resident of Hakkari city. Abdol-Rahman Qasemlu the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran believes that the insurgency can be considered as the first sign of Kurdish nationalism, although, Abbas Vali another Iranian Kurdish sociologist and thinker opposed to the idea. Vali believes that merely having Kurdish sentiments couldn’t be signs of Kurdish nationalism. In recent years, plethora of Kurdish and non-Kurdish intellectuals and writers have conducted lots of research works on Kurdish nationalism and the development of its courses. The researchers, with reference to a letter from Sheikh Obeidullah to the deputy consulate of Baskale, have addressed him as the father of Kurdish nationalism still some others have given the title to the head of the Butan tribe, Badirkhan Pasha.

According to Naji Kutlay in his book “the Kurds on the eve of the 21st century” descendants of Badirkhan carried the struggle of Kurdish nationalist quite positively. According to the Kutlay in local riots between 1847_1843 led by Badirkhan, the nationalistic elements were venial. But the magazine issued by Badirkhan’s son Medhat Meqdad Beyg on April 21, 1898 in Cairo by the name “Kurdistan” is known as the first written heritage on nationalism in the modern history of Kurdish bourgeois class. To Kutlay the identity crisis and nationalist struggle among Kurds first emerged in the face of cultural identity and cultural nationalism, through time and together with fulfilling the political, cultural, economic and social processes, political or national political identity can be discussed.

By a peer review on this process one could conclude that in the last 15 years of the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire, the Kurdish cultural nationalism is considerable though it has little to say of quality. In spite of a bulk of written heritage, lack of equipment and facilities hindered it from being widely published in there.

In the final years of the Ottoman Empire, there were efforts to save the empire from collapse, especially among intellectuals. These activities in 1889 with the formation of the Committee of Unity and Progress become more serious. Two of five founders of the CUP were namely Abdullah Jevdet an Arab residents of the Kir and Isaac Sokuti from Diyarbakir.

During the course of Union and Progress (1918_1908), particularly in its early years owing to the weak bourgeois class among Muslims, the Ottoman government thought of creating a middle class dependent on the state. The government's efforts especially in larger cities like Istanbul, Izmir and Selanik were more obvious. In the Republic period for the middle class, giant Ottoman Empire’s loss of vast territories was not digestible. According to Kutlay, new bourgeoisie class hated Kurds instead for all those things that were losing out there. (Kutlay, 2012, s4).

CUP within a short span of time evolved in terms of structure and ideology. At first Turkish nationalism was concealed but later on CUP openly turned out to be a military and ideology organization promoting the Turkish nationalism. Although, from the onset the committee was combined of various ethnicities of Romans, Arabs and Kurds but later on because of the ruling ideology of Turkish nationalism, they had to leave the population.
The more CUP pushed the state apparatus to the course of centralization, naturally and together with that the more the society was pushed into Turkification. The CUP due to the weakness of the Ottoman Empire and lack of proper conditions was not able to drive forward the assimilation and Turkification policies of Ottoman Empire in her multicultural and multiethnic society. Origins of Kurdish nationalism can be traced in these years of Pro-western nationalist movements, specifically among the Christian nations living in the Ottoman Empire, which affected the Kurds. In short, the final years of the 19th century and the early years of the twentieth’s could be called as the Kurds’ cultural nationalism period. The political discourse rose thanks to the socio-political situation of the World War I.

Hizan riot in Bitlis Sheikh Abdul Salam in Barzan in the years of 1913_1914 bore some notion of political identity. During Barzan riot new demands came to forth; appointment of Muftis of Shafi’ sect and government officials with Kurdish origins to the Kurdish regions. (Kutlay, 2012, s. 5). As can be seen in the most nationalistic movements in other regions of the world, Kurdish nationalism also on the one hand has its own characteristics and on the other hand bears some other characteristics due to the influence of the state and Turkish nationalism. To Kutlay this is a mutual influence condition. As a result of this particular situation hand in hand with the growth of the Kurdish nationalism the influence of universal human values is getting obvious.

Kurdish nationalism in the aftermath of the establishment of the Republic was influenced by modernity and Western norm profoundly; this nationalism was based on the nation-state pattern. Kurdish graduates that were trained in the West were the first group to notice and react against assimilation policies of the Kurds and feelings of Kurdish nationalism was in the first place shown among these intellectuals. Hence, Kurdish nationalism right from beginning adopted Western and secularism characteristics.

In the 1950s poems inspired by the form and content of modernity are observable at least as much as Kurdish classical poetry. Kurdish nationalists who were forced to flee and emigrate from Turkey to Syria and Lebanon developed Kurdish literature in the Latin alphabet in modern Western concepts. Among them were Hawari, Rownahy and Sterk. Also in Iraq and Iran Kurdish books and magazines were published in Arabic alphabet. History, civilization and literature of the Kurds were introduced in a wide scope of the world, in the region, neighboring countries and mostly to the Kurdish urban class. (Kutlay, 2012, p.17)

After the 1958 coup in Iraq, Mullah Mustafa Barzani who had been deported to the Soviet Union after the fall of the Republic of Mahabad, after 12 years of exile returned to Iraq. It had a profound effect on the Kurdish nationalist movement. At the same in a preventive measure Turkish government to deter stimulus effects of the event among Kurds in Turkey, arrested and imprisoned forty nine Kurdish intellectual and writer. In 1978, the Kurdistan Workers Party was founded by Abdullah Öcalan and his comrades with the aim of armed struggle against the government. This period, the period of armed struggle should be studied separately.

In recent years the Kurdish movements and related parties and organizations are characterized by various currents of Marxist and socialist left discourses and thoughts. (Kutlay, 2012, s.43)
Period of Denial and Elimination

In the country with the official name of Republic of Turkey, for 80 years, a reality called Kurds has been denied. And anyone who has in any way addressed this fact has been stifled, suppressed or silenced. In this era of repression and silence Kurds were recognized as "mountain Turks"; the Turks who have lived in the mountains and developed a different dialect. Their language, traditions, customs and local celebrations were banned and the names of towns and villages in the Kurdish areas completely changed.

Here the period of denial and elimination has been reviewed in two time spans: the single-party era which is since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey to 1950 and from 1950 to 1980 which is the period of multiparty in Turkey and then I have gone over the period of armed struggle and the formation of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) led by Abdullah Öcalan.

A. Single Party Period in Turkey

Article 88 of the 1924 constitution defines the word “Turk” as: “In the ahali of Turkey, without distinction of race or religion, “Turk” shall be the term of citizenship”.5

This was to consolidate the foundation of the nation-state that was taking shape. Based on which, the Turkishness of all people living in the geographical borders of the republic was assumed. Based on this definition, being Turk (Turkishness) is left out of its narrow ethnic roots and regardless of religion, race or language of the inhabitants of the Republic of Turkey it was attributed to all the citizens subjected to the authority. We can see the authority of this concept in Ataturk’s famous phrase “blessed is the man who knows himself Turk”.6

It is noteworthy that one of the greatest theoreticians that conceptualize the Turkish nationalism and the term of Turk is Ziya Gökalp, the famous Kurdish sociologist and author. In his opinion, in conceptualizing the term Turk, the emphasis is on the common education and culture, not on the common race and history.

Despite the cultural nationalism which was ruling in rhetoric (discourse) and theory, the practical aspect of Turkish nationalism was implemented in the form of bare, exclusive and aggressive. In the first place of recognizing the Turk term, Islam was the central indicator and other non-Muslim citizens of the Republic of Turkey “Armenians, Romans and Jews ” were literally considered citizens but not in practice. In fact, similar to policy CUP, non-Muslims were deprived of entering the military schools and most government offices (Kirişçi & Winrow, s.104). In the 1930s along with Islam, which was the distinctive characteristic of being Turk, the importance of language and race also rose gradually. Tribal housing law that was passed in 1934 divided the people of Turkey into three groups:

1. Those who speak Turkish and are from Turk race.
2. Those who do not speak Turkish but are from Turk race.
3. Those who do not speak Turkish and are not from Turkish race.

4. “Kurd” appellation is ironically said to be originated from the sound of the feet when they walk in the snow and makes a sound like “kurt - kurt”.
6. "ne mutlu Türküm diyene"
So in this era thesis and theories that called the Kurds, Turk or “mountain Turk” developed. for example, a study was conducted by M.Sharif Firat in 1945 and later was praised by prime minister Cemal Gürsel as "Eastern provinces and Varto history” begins with these sentences: In different parts of our eastern hordes and also in difficult terrain and steep slopes of the mountains and in the plains and plateaus surrounding high mountains, the old tribes and tribal Turks and Turkmens, who today because of having the Kurmanji and Zaza dialects are called Kurd. These mountain Turks are in fact from the Turk race.(Krişiç & Winrow, s.104.)

Kurdish uprisings against the policies of the newly established Republic of Turkey in facing with its bare assimilation and aggression between 1924 and 1938, 18 uprising observed which 16 of them took place by Kurdish tribal rebellion, and the most bloody uprising began on February 13, 1935 and was crushed by the death of its leaders on 15 April 1935 and became known as sheikh Saied revolt.

The roots of most of these uprisings should be searched in Freedom (Azadi) party that was founded in 1923.

Freedom party brought together tribes which were speaking in Zaza Language7 in the company of a charismatic leader sheikh Saied Nursi to fight and revolt against the policies of the central government. Uprising which apparently was against the closure of Sharia courts and also the legal and religious demands, but in fact it bore the demands of Kurdish nationalism within. Sheikh Saied represented demands such as decentralization, traditional, religious requests and Kurdish nationalism in return for the modern nation-state policies, centralization, and western oriented secular Turkish nationalism.

From the government’s point of view, uprisings such as revolt of Sheikh Saied, representing efforts of former order that is reactionary Sheikhs, the heads of tribes. In other words, from the official discourse, this uprising is not in line with the Kurdish nationalism, but a struggle between superstition and reason, reaction and civility, order and disorder, and eventually and briefly was a struggle between the old and the new. (Ahmet özcan and Ural Aküzüm, 2012)


For the republic of turkey in the 1950s, it was not only the transition to multi-party era, but in the same time was the period of fundamental changes in the socio-economic structures. The Democratic Party, like the other regions of Turkey, also established new political, social and economic relations with the regions where mostly Kurds were residing.

Investment in infrastructure of these areas rose and the security measures in those areas were reduced. Urbanization spread and instead of the usual nomadic life, agricultural life style based on the ownership of agricultural land was being promoted. These fundamental economic and social changes in Turkish society brought two important results:

1. These changes not only spread the governmental bureaucracy in all over the country, but according to the logic of capitalism, it caused the transfer of the capital from the vicinity to the center, especially to the western and coastal cities of Turkey.

7. Zazaki or Zaza language or Vartu language is geographically spoken among the peoples of eastern Turkey and in the southwest Kurdish areas in the provinces of Sivirek, Erzincan and Vartu and their villages. To some linguistics, they are of Iranian branch of the Indo-European. For further study see: http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zazaca
2. The cultural, social, economic and political order, which occurred as a result of changes, lead to the emergence a new class of intellectuals that had interest in politics with their Kurdish identity.

In the 1950s the Kurdish Issue turned into a trans-state situation and the whole Middle East was involved in this issue. Baghdad government in 1959 suppressed the Iraqi Turkmen uprising in the most possible bloody way, and because of the good relationship that Mustafa Barzani had with the central government of Iraq at that time, there was a mentality in Turkey that Kurds worked with central government in suppressing the uprising. For example one of the MPs, as Nigde representative named Eren Asim in the name of revenge and retaliation, in a speech in parliament, said: "Kurds in Iraq killed our races we should kill Kurds as the same number of Turkmen people that have been killed. This racist discourse was criticized by the aforementioned new class of intellectual in the newspaper "Ileri Yurt ". At the end of this conflict, 4 month before the coup on Dec 1959, 49 intellectuals were arrested and imprisoned for 6 years. These 49 intellectual prisoners had key roles in the next Kurdish movements. (Krişçi and Winrow, p.107)

In the years before 1980 with respect to the Kurdish crisis, the Turkey's Kurdish Democratic Party is noteworthy which was found in 1965 to form the Federation and close to Barzani. Finally we get to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in these years that they agitated the Kurdish issue through different ways in the media and the press and civil society of Turkey. (Ahmet Özcan and Ural Aküzüm, 2012)

C. Since 1980 until today: The Kurdish Movement with a Focus on Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The PKK gathered in the mid-1970s by the number of Marxist-Leninist students within a group called the "Eastern Revolutionary Cultural Union" (DDKO), was founded under the leadership of by Abdullah Öcalan. Until 1980, the PKK launched some operations in southeast Turkey, but Öcalan with his escape to Syria in 1979, escaped from involvement in the 1980 coup. With the repression that all rival groups of the PKK faced in Kurdistan of Turkey, the PKK fled from this ordeal due to the remoteness of Turkey. After this event, the PKK did its first military operation on 15 August 1984 in Shamdinli and Aruh. After that with the bloody operations hurting the public feelings of the Turks, the PKK followed his actions.

Until the arrest of Öcalan in 1999, during the 15 years conflict span between the PKK and the Turkish government, approximately 35,000 people were killed and billions of dollars lost. After the capture of Öcalan, up to 2004, that was the restart of the PKK's armed struggle, for 5 years the PKK had declared cease-fire unilaterally. The PKK experienced a deep vacuum after arresting Öcalan which used to take out armed actions inside Turkey's borders before.(Ahmet Özcan and Ural Aküzüm, 2012)

As the invasion of Iraq in 2003 activated many potential cracks in the region, let the PKK open its wings again. The PKK suddenly found himself at the center of a new balance in the region and the international system. The PKK that up to that time was considered as a crisis and a problem for Turkey suddenly turned into a lever for activating some of the dynamics of the region. Therefore it found the functional role in international equations in the Caucasus and the Middle East, and for this purpose was supported by many countries. On the other hand, aim and timing of the PKK's activities should be investigated in relation to the policies of democratization and also the changes taken place in Turkey's foreign policy.
After Öcalan’s arrest and returning to Turkey, the PKK’s road map in combating with the Turkish government experienced dramatic changes in terms of "statism", "militarism" and "struggle". Öcalan in his book "In Defense of a Nation"8 noted a profound self-criticism of the PKK, so that after which a significant change in the PKK’s thoughts and actions is visible. (Ahmet Özcan and Ural Aküzüm, 2012)

To Öcalan, the main problem of the PKK was the obsession that it had toward statehood and being recognized as a state in 1970s which in Öcalan’s opinion lingers as a legacy of the left school in Turkey (Öcalan, 2004, p.270). Öcalan’s mentioned obsession now should be replaced with faith and commitment to the true democracy in Turkey (Öcalan, 2004, p.27). The self-criticism and change in the PKK strategy with the thesis of the "change to democratic structure" has entered a new stage of political and military combat, which rejected reaching some previous targets such as "sovereignty and statehood" through the armed struggle. From the time that Öcalan was arrested up to 2005, are the years of ideological shift and organizational reform of the PKK that in this era unilateral ceasefire was announced on the behalf of the PKK. We can see this shift in ideology and structure in Öcalan’s sayings in which the 21st century is called as the century of democracy, and believes that both the Turkish government and the PKK need to consider the rules and requirements of democracy, for this he sees the Kurdish movement not through nation-state lenses but within the "civil society". However, observing no change in the behavior of the Turkish government towards the Kurdish issue, the PKK initiated the armed struggle again. On the other hand, Öcalan’s “on the way to the Democratic Republic" thesis with the changes that was supposed to engage the Kurds living in neighboring countries, changed into "democratic autonomy"’thesis. (Öcalan, 2004, p. 22-21)

By the impasse in the policy of “the democratic initiative”10 by the AKP which had came to power since 2002, from 2005 armed conflict between the PKK and the government again entered into a new phase.

Before addressing the democratic initiative process, after reviewing the PKK as the major and the most influential organization in the Kurdish issue, other groups and political organizations in the forms of parties and trade unions that have raised the Kurdish issue in Turkey will be discussed.

Are the political parties an alternative to the PKK, or are the complementary movements and in fact carry the title of political arm for the PKK?

Since the formation of the first Kurdish legal political party in Turkey in 1990, free political activities have gradually expanded. The size and scale of the Kurdish movement beyond the PKK military actions has developed into the social and political arenas.

Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)11 due to the closure of the 6 parties before on charges of collaborating with the PKK, which was raising the government’s suspicion about the BDP on the one hand, and on the other hand because of the suspicions of some the PKK members over the BDP because of treason and collaboration with the government in line with the trampling the aspirations of the Kurdish people, were limited in action. The BDP to get out of this punctured situation that was severely restricting its activities from both sides chose the policy and path of peace. In this regard, Osman Bay Demir, Diyarbakır’s mayor stated: “this

8. Bir Halkı Savunmak
9. Demokratik Özerklik
10. Demokratik Açılım
11. Barış ve Demokrasi partisi
crisis doesn’t concern the PKK organization, but it’s about the freedom of a nation. The PKK is not the cause but the outcome of this crisis. If there is a will to solve it, it should be involved with this issue. Both parties must abstain from violence, otherwise, neither the government nor will the PKK reach their goals. Morally, there is no difference between the two sides. One legitimate itself with rights and law, and other with the right to freedom and the right to self-determination, we should seek for a solution that has a potential to encompass them all”.

Peace and Democracy Party achieved undeniable legitimacy among the people. Among Kurdish citizens, at least a third of its members would always vote to its members or whomever that raised Kurds demands. In parliamentary elections in 2011 in 12 provinces of the southeastern Turkey that the majority of its inhabitants are Kurds, 4/50 qualified voted for the BDP independent candidates. Generally the BDP became a party which was representing the Kurdish aspirations and expectations in the political arena more over did a huge effort toward progress and democracy.

The BDP in municipal elections in 2014, gained most of the agencies goals and achieved a victory, as a result of this election, it won municipality of 2 metropolises, 8 cities and the 67 municipal areas, and drew the eye of the election observers towards itself. After 30 March 2014 election, the BDP in a strategic move merged with the "People’s Democratic Party (H.D.P) and all its members joined H.D.P. This merge primarily was to cross the barrier of 10% of the total number of votes to enter the Great National Assembly of Turkey. After this merge, the H.D.P appeared with power as a leftist party in the first electoral test, and in the presidential elections of Turkey that for the first time in the history of the Republic was being elected directly by people, BDP-backed candidate "Selahattin Demirtaş"that had the common leadership of the party, during the campaign, became a rival for the other two candidates and acquired nearly 10 percent of the ballot casted and the Kurds had high hopes for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

At the end of this discussion the question would be whether the H.D.P’s shift from a purely ethnic party that used to represent the demands of a specific ethnic group into a party that claims to encompass the needs of disadvantaged people and the marginalized of Turkey, as a party from the left, will be a successful process? That If radical parties and organizations and the masses of their supporters will see it in a positive light? These questions will require further detailed study. (Taha Özhan and Hatem Ete, 2013)

Kurdish Issue and the AKP

The AKP with its arrival in power in 2002 has taken a big step to resolve the crisis by introducing the policy of "democratic initiative”. In the democratic initiative process, A.K.P together with abandoning the classic policy of the denial of the Kurds connects the settlement of this crisis with the initiative of democracy, as a result, and with the change in economic and social structure of Kurdistan of Turkey which had used to be a proper field of recruiting support for the PKK, stifle the PKK propaganda and, on the other hand, solving the crisis would pave the way for the entry of Turkey into European Union. In this regard, the AKP has done important initiatives, most notably the recognition the freedom of the Kurdish language.

The AKP prioritized the initiation of this process in a multi-task program which is also available on its internet website as the following:

1. Prohibition of choosing the Kurdish names for citizens was removed.
2. For areas in the southeastern part of Anatolia, the original names of Kurdish history returned.

3. Teaching of other languages and other accents were allowed.

4. The ban of establishing the radio and television channels in other non-Turkish languages were lifted. In this respect, state channel named T.R.T 6 started its work in the Kurdish language.

5. Important works of Kurdish language and literature should be published by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and also the ban of holding Kurdish rituals and celebrations were lifted.

6. The establishment of Kurdish language and literature at universities as well as the foundation of the Kurdish language institutes were allowed.

7. Prohibition of non-Turkish speaking prisoners with their relatives in their native language was removed.

8. The ban on political advertising other than Turkish language was removed.

9. Approved naming schools to the name of important Kurdish historical and cultural characters.12

In line with the "democratic initiative process", with the aim of improving area residents wounds following the 30 years fight, the following actions would take place:

- To citizens who have been affected by the terrorist conflict, damages will be considered, up to now around 2.5 million Liras has been given to damaged citizens.

- With a reduction in inspection of road and urban ways, everyday life and intercity travel would be easy.

- In line with the "Rehabilitation and return to the countryside" project in 14 provinces of the south and southeast Anatolia, up to now 28 thousand and 384 households 384 thousand and 861 people, have returned to their villages. For this project until 2010, 111 million and 860 thousand dollars of the budget were spent. (Halil Ibarahim Bahar, 2013)

- To prevent the violation of basic human rights, "the Prime minister human rights organization" has been strengthened. "Supervision on the public performance" bill was submitted to the parliament. The law against secession and the establishment of equality "has been approved by parliament, and also the UN Convention against Torture was signed.

In addition to that and in line with the "democratic initiative" significant changes took place in the existing laws in order to spread democracy. In this regard, the state of emergency that was imposed for 15 years in the areas was resolved and the National Security Courts were abolished. Laws to decentralization and strengthening of local governmental institutions have been legislated. In line with the Convention on Human Rights, Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code and Article 312 of the anti-terrorism law were changed. With the approval of "FOIA" and "union law" democratic rights expanded.

The referendum that took place on 12 September 2010, people agreed with the widespread change of the 1982 constitution that emerged from the coup. For this purpose, a parliamentary committee named the constitution change commission was formed. In addition to all this, on 23 Nov 2011 Erdoğan in an unprecedented move, invited Turkey's Republican People's Party to confront its history, and made Dersim massacre documents available to the public and made apologize from Dersim people on behalf of Turkey government. The AKP’s

12. “Kürt Sorununda Çözüm Sürecini Başlattık” Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi
2011.11.10http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/icraat/347/
democratic initiative process that had gone as far as the stage of authority’s clandestine meeting with Abdullah Öcalan in prison on 09 Oct. 2009, was stopped by the formally passing of 8 members of the PKK with military uniforms through the Habur border.

This image that was widely broadcast in Turkey prompted a wave of fear and surprise in the Turkish public opinion. Seeing this atmosphere, the AKP began to retreat from their positions because of fear of losing popularity and acceptance in society. But 2011 is a special year both in terms of military operations of the PKK and the government that retaliated by the military campaign or by legal actions. In 2012, from the objectives and operations point of view that were done both inside and outside of Turkey, significant changes can be observed. In this year despite all efforts that had been done in the last 10 years to the peace process, the PKK has intensified its attacks. This situation shows some serious conflicts exist within the PKK. Owing to these contradictions that have led to widespread attacks on civilians, the PKK lost its legitimacy that had gained in Europe, and the assistance to this organization was gradually reduced. Media offices of the PKK in Europe were swoop by the police. (Halil Ibarahim Bahar, 2013)

Events related to the Arab spring, gave doubled courage and strength to the PKK and they declared 2012 the "final year". In the first phase of the way that was to reach to the "last and the final" phase, the PKK wanted to create a widespread conflict between the Turkish and Kurdish masses. So in 2012, the PKK, regardless of military or civilian, targeted all of them. the PKK that called these times "the struggle of the revolutionary nation" wanted to transform Diyarbakir to Al-Tahrir of Cairo.

Also in the second stage of the ultimate way the PKK changed its combat strategy. Until that time the PKK's strategy of armed attacks was "hit and escape" , it means the guerrilla were leaving the targets after operations, but after this strategy it was changed to "hit and stay" thesis. The strategy change was made to determine the scope of the operations and influence of the PKK and wanted to bring it to the world`s attention.

` of his speeches on 30 August 2012, announced the PKK ruling on 400 square kilometers of land in the southeast of Turkey. In contrast, the Turkish security forces, based on the experience of the past few years did widespread successful operations. In this regard including massive attacks on the PKK camps in northern Iraq both inside and outside the countries territory, killed 1500 guerrilla members of the PKK. This number was one-third of PPKs guerrillas that were located in the mountains. At the same time with doing the operations against drug trafficking they also destroyed an important income source of the PKK.

One of the obvious differences in the operations of the security forces in this year from previous years was capturing the PKK fighters alive, that was showing the honesty of the security forces to the government and law. The AKP policy in the fight against the PKK can be seen in certain topics:

• Fight against the PKK
• Negotiate with politicians to solve the problem

As noted, the PKK had announced 2012 as the “Year of the final result” but as a result of successful operations of security and intelligence forces, had a big failure.

13. Final Yılı
14. Vur ve Kaç
15. Vur ve Kal
Since 2009, negotiations between the Turkish Intelligence Organization (MIT) and the PKK as "democratic initiative process" with the aims of putting an end to terrorist attacks by the PKK in Oslo of Norway was started, that was known as "Oslo Process ". Because the public atmosphere of society was not ready, these meetings were done secretly. Opposition parties accused the Prime Minister to meet with the PKK, Erdoğan denied it, and he even called the opposition parties dishonest in the absence of proof of this theorem.

Events happening in the Middle East, the effects of Arab spring, formation of Kurdish Associations in the Kurdish regions of Syria (Rojava), was encouraging the PKK in continuing armed struggle and intensifying it.

the PKK concluded that with the adoption of armed struggle again, it can achieve its goals more and better than the peace process, so for this reason the PKK withdrew from continuing Oslo talks. And revealed recorded conversations and documents related to the negotiations. And Prime Minister and the AKP officials that until then had denied meetings and conversations were caught red handed in critical condition. After disclosure of the negotiations on July 11, 2011, 13 military were killed in Silvan. On the same day the the BDP posed the state of democratic autonomy. These two events marked the end of the Oslo negotiations. For the first time, on September 13, 2011 documents of negotiations were published on the website of Dicle News Agency. (Halil Ibarahim Bahar, 2013)

Since the beginning of 2013, the major political issue of Turkey is ending the P.K.K terrorism and restarting the peace process. To this end, dialogue between the government and the PKK begins again in the course of the peace process. This time in the negotiations intelligence chief (MIT) and senior intelligence official in one side and Abdullah Öcalan on the other side participated. On the other hand, intelligence agents met with guerrilla leaders in Erbil. First this negotiation was called negotiation stage 2 and then negotiations "İmrali" and finally the word "negotiations for peace process ". Erdoğan called this stage “prudent Happiness” and this prudent happiness was considered by the government with the hope and excitement that was created in the community, Turkish analysts had hoped for the peaceful solution of the crisis.

This time, the government with experience that had been taken from the Oslo negotiations, made decision to begin these negotiations to be clear and transparent. According to government meeting and negotiation with Abdullah Öcalan was very influential in the success of the peace process. That's why the government wanted to be counterparty with Öcalan. The AKP had raised new approaches in the new negotiations despite the Oslo peace process. This time it was proposed timetable for negotiations, according to which stated:

1. Put an end to military operations
2. Get out of the borders of Turkey
3. The surrender of weapons to government
4. Returning commanders who do not have Turkish citizenship to their home countries.

The aim of MIT from the negotiations with the PKK and Öcalan was putting an end to terrorist operations and establishing security along with political actions for the rights of the Kurds in order to achieve democracy and peace. Thereby the PKK was considered as the ultimate stage of the Kurdish movement to resolve this crisis, gained great importance. (Halil Ibarahim Bahar, 2013)
Regional Effects of the Peace Process: (Iran, Iraq, Syria)

Crisis and the issue of Kurd are considered as one of the most important issues in the Middle East that have involved four countries that the Kurds reside. While this issue is to realize rights for the Kurds, on the other side, according to central government, it is considered illegal movement supported by foreign powers in order to provoke separatism and threaten territorial integrity. Holistically speaking, Kurdish movement in search of identity and power to self-rule sometimes appears as a revolt against the government and sometimes the insistence and persistence through peaceful process in the form of political projects and civil movements.

Since 1920 the issue of the Kurds has been considered in various forms in the republic of Turkey, in recent years with taking the democratic period of peace process has began a new trend in Kurdish issue.

This new beginning is promising the possibility of peaceful coexistence based on equal rights and resolve of the crisis through legal and democratic process and also has had its effects on the Kurds resident in Turkey’s neighboring countries.

It is observed significant interest and attention among Iranian Kurds towards the peace process in Turkey whose success or failure would have a great impact on the movement process and political activity of Iranian Kurds. On the success side of the process, Iranian Kurds who are members of the PKK will have to return to their areas, by leaving the guerrillas from the Turkey. This was applicable in the case of Syria in which with the intensifying of the conflict inside the Syria, the Syrian leader and the Syrian Kurdish forces returned to the Kurdish areas of Syria for fighting and organizing Syrian Kurds. Therefore the PKK members leaving Turkey and their return to their homeland will lead to strengthening of the Iranian branch of the PKK, PJAK, and other Kurdish armed groups, and that surely concerns Iran's security and intelligence officials.

Finally, in examining the effects of the peace process on the Kurds of Iran, these effects were evaluated in two aspects effecting the Kurdish armed groups as well as Kurdish masses on the one hand and impact on Iran’s ruling system and the security and intelligence decision-makers on the other hand.16

About the effectiveness of peace process on Iraqi Kurds, according to one of the officials assigned to the prime minister of Kurdistan, the future and fate of Iraqi Kurds would be associated with Turkey. In this regard, settling Turkey's Kurdish problem through peaceful ways is the priority of Iraqi Kurdistan. According to Kurdish regional authorities, they are closely connected to turkey not only in terms of economic relations, but also in terms of security issues. According to them the success of peace process will play a significant role in tying up the relations between the Kurdish region and the Turkish government.17

Syrian Kurds or Rojava, also are closely affected by Compromise process in turkey. Kurds in Syria have looked at this issue with great optimism by the initiation of the process.

They see this process in relation with their destiny. They assumed success of this process to end the pressure and oppression by Damascus government. This process in the view of the Syrian Kurds means joining families and relatives that fell apart the day after the Sykes-Picot contract, the day that they saw the artificial iron boundaries in front of themselves.18

**The International Effects of the Peace Process**

Kurdish crisis is not only a domestic problem of turkey but a regional and international crisis. In a situation that the Syria and Iraq’s crisis has involved most countries in the region, also it has called the world powers to the showdown and confrontation with each other. Kurdish crisis once again has become a node of the major problems of the Middle East, out of domestic issues of Turkey. Such that today Kurdish political groups and fighting organizations have become armed for the international coalition against the "Islamic State" or the former ISIS. Once that this issue is viewed from this perspective, the peace process which is inside the turkey becomes an international issue that should be considered in relation to conflict resolution in the Middle East.

In this regard, the first question that comes to mind would be how does the United States look and handle the way that leads to the peace process. Thus congratulating of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan by Barack Obama in relation to the peace process, cannot be just a simple gesture and stance of state leader. After the adventures in United States’ foreign policy after the event on September 11 didn’t bring favorable results for united states, after the events of the Arab spring, United States policy makers are to make balance with regional powers that could have influential and structural role in region. Therefore, the peace process and the democratization of Turkey and its security and stability as one of the main regional allies of America are crucial for the US.

Another important issue related to the establishment of peace and security in Turkey is an energy line. As for Turkey, it is also important In terms of regional and international powers. In the first priority, turkey that is energy dependent on Russia and Iran has to secure energy lines within its borders. Despite broad relations of turkey with Russia, for a country that claims to be acting on an international level, this much dependence on imported energy is a great weakness. Despite broad relations that have long existed with Iran, its southern neighbor and regional rival, sharp disagreements over the issue of Syria, Turkey's dependency on imported energy from Iran has placed turkey in weak position. To this end, it is understandable that Turkey's relations with the Kurdish region in northern Iraq In order to find new energy partners and alternative sources.

Compared with the two other countries, Syria and Iran, Kurdistan Regional has established much deeper economic and political relations on the basis of interactions with Turkey. However, having good relations with the Kurds in Turkey in terms of energy security and supply lines passing mainly through the Kurdish areas of Turkey is crucial. (Salih Ziya, Levent Baştürk, 2013)

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http://www.ijhcs.com/index.php/ijhcs/index
Conclusion

In the past 30 years, 7 thousand and 918 members of Turkish military and security forces and also 22 thousand and 101 men of guerrilla forces were killed in Conflict and struggle between the PKK and the central government. In addition, during this time 5 thousand and 557 people of the civilian population in relation to this crisis have lost their lives. If the death toll that its subjects remain unknown as well as clearing, execution and punishment that has been done within the PKK forces are not calculated, a death toll of 35 thousand 576 deaths is caused by the crisis in the past 30 years. Moreover, the number of close to 386 thousand and 360 people were forced to migrate mandatorily or optional from their homes. According to Ankara’s Center for Strategic Studies, about $ 400 billion is the loss of this crisis for the Turkish economy. (Halit İbrahim, 2013)

Kurdish issue is a political, cultural, social and psychological issue. Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is a product of this crisis from time to time has become an international organization that is capable of conducting operations and mobilize troops in the region and in the European countries.

Based on the foregoing, Justice and Development Party (AKP) after gaining power in 2002 and especially after 2007, started the negotiations with the PKK and political parties for the peaceful resolution of this crisis and putting an end to the terror and violence in Turkey. The AKP has taken this process under the slogan of "Fighting against terror and negotiation through politics", determined to solve the crisis. For this purpose, many meetings have taken place between turkey’s intelligence and security officials and the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan. The BDP party after the presidential election was merged with H.D.P both as intermediaries and as one side of the story bring Öcalan's message to both Kurdish masses and the government officials. Acting point of politicians who represent the Kurdish quest for identity was identified in two elections of 2014 namely the local elections (municipal elections) that the BDP party won the majority of municipalities in the Kurdish areas and somewhat draw a geography of Kurdistan on the map and also in the presidential election that H.D.P candidate became strong rival of Erdoğan and won nearly 10 percent of the votes. Salah Uddin Demirtaş was very successful in election campaign and almost won total votes of the Kurds. In one of his television interviews with CNN Turk channel by stating a sentence expressed an extract of the Kurdish crisis in Turkey. According to him, turkey has only two choices, whether to accept the peace process and mutual respect, Kurds and Turks as two nations live together peacefully or the only way will be Iraq and Syria. But the fragility of this process is to the extent that the smallest misunderstanding and lack of understanding of each other can destroy its loose foundations. Clearly, Kobani’s events demonstrated this situation to Turkish politicians. Despite the insistence of the authorities to continue the peace process, of course in the speech, it seems that once again the process goes to freeze. At the end, with reference to what has been mentioned in the beginning of this study, considering the battles of the Kurds against the Turkish Government during the recent decades, it is foreseeable that sooner or later the Turkish state has to face with the reality of the necessity of revising the unitary being of the nation state structure and embracing the Kurds with their non-Turkic roots, otherwise, they might prepare to the establishment of a new order in the region.
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