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**Kurdish Question in Turkey: Development of Kurdish Political
Parties and Their Perception of Kurdish National Movement from
2003 to 2015.**

Master Thesis

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SUMMARY

This thesis explores the evolution of Kurdish issue in Turkey during the period from 2003 to 2015. It analyzes the political circumstances shaped by the ruling party, *AKP* (Justice and Development Party) which is led by the current president R.T. Erdogan, and the stages that the Kurdish issue went through. At the beginning the thesis examines the concepts *ethnic identity*, *nation*, *nationalism* that are related to structure of Kurdish people. The theories are taken from different sources and compared and analyzed in various ways. In the next chapter, the thesis introduces the Kurds with their history and origin, and their social structure including language, religion, social and cultural life. The following chapter is formed by observing the political scene of Turkey from 2003 to 2015 which constructs the core study of the thesis. Accordingly, it examines how the *AKP* became a successful actor in the political arena of Turkey, the contribution of the Kurdish political parties in Turkey's political scene, and the processes that are aimed to solve the Kurdish issue in the country. Afterwards, this paper analyzes the perspectives of current Kurdish political parties in Turkey toward the present situation of the Kurds and their perceptions for the solution of the issue. Henceforth, the paper also indicates the evaluation of the perspectives of Kurdish political parties through the theories that are used to determine the criteria of national and ethnic identity for the sake of implementing the theories on the identical, social and political structures of the Kurds. In conclusion, the paper is aimed to emphasize the situation of the Kurds in Turkey with their rights and freedoms and promote the alternative elements regarding the solution of the Kurdish question.

Key words: *ethnic identity, nationalism, PKK, Kurd, Kurdistan*

SANTRAUKA

Šis darbas tiria Kurdų problemos Turkijoje raidą 2003-2015 metais. Jame tiriamos Teisingumo ir Vystymosi Partijos (AKP), kuriai vadovauja dabartinis Turkijos prezidentas R. T. Erdoganas, formuojamos politinės aplinkybės, ir pagrindiniai kurdų problemos raidos etapai. Pradžioje nagrinėjamos etninės tapatybės, tautos ir nacionalizmo sąvokos, kurios yra susijusios su Kurdų tautos sudėtimi. Darbas ima teorijas iš skirtingu šaltinių ir jas analizuoja pagal keletą aspektų. Kitame skyriuje darbas pristato Kurdus, šios tautos istoriją ir šaknis, apibūdina socialinę struktūrą, kalbą, religiją, socialines normas ir kultūrinį gyvenimą. Trečias skyrius paremtas Turkijos politinės arenos stebėjimais 2003-2015 metais, ir formuoja pagrindinį darbo tyrimą. Jame tiriama kaip AKP tapo sėkmingu Turkijos politinės arenos aktoriumi, Kurdų politinių partijų įtaka Turkijos politikoje, ir procesai skirti Kurdų problemai šalyje išspręsti. Po to darbas analizuoja dabartinių kurdų politinių partijų požiūrį į šių dienų kurdų situaciją šalyje ir jų išvystymus problemos sprendimo būdus. Siekiant pritaikyti teorijas kurdų tapatybinei, socialinei ir politinei struktūrai tirti, darbas pateikia kurdų politinių partijų perspektyvų įvertinimą naudojant teorijas, kurios nurodo nacionalinės ir tautinės tapatybės kriterijus. Apibendrinant, darbas yra skirtas pabrėžti Kurdų situaciją Turkijoje, jų turimas teises ir laisves, ir pasiūlyti galimus kurdų klausimo sprendimo elementus.

Raktiniai žodžiai: tautinė tapatybė, nacionalizmas, PKK, Kurdai, Kurdistanas.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
PKK	Kurdish Labors Party
HDP	Democratic Party of People
CHP	Republican People Party
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party
AZADI	Freedom Movement
PAK	Kurdistan Freedom Party
PAKURD	Kurdistan Party
HAK-PAR	Rights and Freedoms Party
DDKD	Revolutionary Eastern Organization
PDK-BAKUR	Kurdistan Democratic Party- North
HEP	People's Labor Party
OZEP	Freedom and Labor Party
HADEP	Democratic Party of People
DTP	Democratic Society Party
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party

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INTRODUCTION

Kurdish question is the most complex issue which Turkish government is facing since the foundation of the republic. After the foundation of the republic and especially with the Treaty of Lausanne, the Kurds with their national identities as well as their national rights and freedoms, have been denied by the Turkish officials with their cultural, social, and linguistic features. Therefore the early era of the republic and the after has been the most difficult time for the Kurds. Since then, this question has been through different stages in Turkey due the political and social conjunctures.

Related to the ethnic and national identity of the Kurds, this paper will primarily analyze the concepts that have evaluated the understanding of the identity in comparison of different theories. In order to shed the light on the issue of their identity, the history and the origin of the Kurds, their social, cultural, linguistic background will be analyzed.

The intensive political period of Turkey started with elections in 2003 created a new paradigm in Turkey's political scene. The political structure which was shaped by the victory of *AKP* (Justice and Development Party) by the leadership of the current president R.T. Erdogan will be shown analytically and based on the figures and the maps. Relatively, the Kurdish issue, like many social cases, has been paradoxically concerned in the contemporary political frames between 2003 and 2015. Therefore, this era, so called *AKP* or Erdogan's era forms the core analysis of the paper. Thence, the development of the Kurdish issue during that time and its evolution with the new political scene will be explored in accordance with the circumstances of the period.

Above all, the perceptions of the Kurdish political parties in Turkey toward the structure of the Kurdish issue will be observed according to their political views based on the questionnaires and their party programs. Thus, the issue will be explored in comparison of the legal as well as illegal activities of the parties. At this point, the answers of the leaders of current Kurdish political parties given to the questionnaire will be presented. Finally, their thoughts and ideas toward the solution of the Kurdish issue in Turkey will be comparatively evaluated.

The thesis is based on three fundamental questions:

1- What are the reasons that triggered the Kurdish issue to appear in Turkey, and what are the roots of the issue?

2- How did the Kurdish issue evolve during the AKP's era?

3- What are the perceptions of the Kurdish political parties toward the Kurdish issue in Turkey?

The aim of the thesis is to analyze the evolution of Kurdish issue and the Kurdish political parties during AKP's era with their political views.

The basic aims of the thesis are:

1- Introducing the concept of "identity", evaluating the *ethnic* and *national identities* and their relations with *nation* and *nationalism*.

2- Introducing the Kurds with their history and origin, their social, cultural, religious, and linguistic characteristics.

3- Examining the growth of Erdogan in Turkey's political scene, and analyzing the Kurds and the Kurdish political parties in Turkey's political arena.

4- Assaying the view of the current Kurdish political parties, their suggestions and resolutions toward the Kurdish issue.

5. Evaluating the perspectives of the Kurdish parties through the prism of identity theories.

The objectives of the thesis is the Kurdish Identity and question in Turkey, the development of Kurdish political parties and their perceptions of Kurdish issue and the Kurdish national movement between 2003 and 2015.

Research Methodology: The methodology of this thesis is the *case study*. As Rolf Johanson defines this kind of methodology, he indicates that first; it should be a complex functioning unit; secondly; it should be investigated in its natural context with a multitude of methods; and finally; it should be contemporary.¹ That is how the thesis is constructed following this methodology.

Without creating a hypothesis and only concerning to identify the issue, this thesis is and *explanatory study*. Also with *document analysis*, the research is largely *qualitative*. While involving literature search and conducting focus group of interviews the thesis is also an explanatory study. On another hand, *analytical*, *historical* and *descriptive methods* were also conducted in the work's different parts. As a part of qualitative research, the work also uses the *semi-structured interviews*. In this regard, the interviews are done by the author with Mustafa Ozcelik, the co-founder and the leader of the Kurdish political party, PAK; Sidki Zilan, co-founder and leader of AZADI, and Mehmet Emin

¹ JOHANSON, Rolf, "Case Study Methodology", Royal Institute of Technology, Available: http://www.psyking.net/htmlobj-3839/case_study_methodology-rolf_johansson_ver_2.pdf

Kardas, co-founder and leader of PDK-T. Additionally, by analyzing the online newspapers and internet portals, the *public discourse method* is also implemented in this work. Besides, the books and academic research are also conducted. Last of all, the research data are presented in the text as maps and figures, and the interviews in the text as well as shown in the annexes.

Literature Overview: Various academic journals, research and books have been conducted concerning the Kurdish issue, as well as the interviews and questionnaires have been used in order to clarify this question. Initially, the concept of “identity” has been analyzed by various scholars. Such as; J. Luis Lucaites, (*Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*, 1999), Mihaela Dumitrescu, (*Modernism, Postmodernism and the Question of Identity*, 2001), and POWELL, John A (*The Multiple Self: Exploring between and beyond Modernity and Postmodernity*) concerning the concept of “identity”.

Besides the English sources, many other sources have also been used as reference. Ahmet Yildiz, identifying the ethnic identity, concerns on the depending and not depending on the person to any community. (*Ne Mutlu Turkum Diyebilene*, 2001). Also Erol Goka identifies the basic elements of ethnic identity. (*İnsan Kısım Kısım: Toplumlar, Zihniyetler, Kimlikler*, 2006). Regarding the “ethnicity and ethnic identity”, different books and articles have been observed, like; David Horowitz (*Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 1985), Anthony D. Smith and John Hutchinson (*Ethnicity*, 1996), and James Fearon and Davind D. Latin (*Ordinary Language and External Validity: Specifying Concepts in the Study of Ethnicity*, 2000). The identification of ethnic and ethnicity has been done by Horowitz based on two important elements; physical and custom types (*Ethnic Groups in Conflict* 1985). The concept was also touched by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (*Ethnicity*, 1996).

The consensus of national identity, nation, nationalism and nation-state are explained with the definitions of A. Smith (*When is Nation*), Anna Triandafyllidou (*National Identity and the “other”*, 1998), several other scholars in their books and articles, such as the article of Max Weber’s *What is An Ethnic Group?* with similar and different elements, however the idea of Ernest Gellner (*Nation and Nationalism*, 1983) brings more concrete and realistic view. And also the Marxist approach for nationalism, *Lenin on National Question*, is observed with R. Swell. One of the most important scholars who rigorously studied nationalism is Habermas, *Kuresellesme ve Milli Devletlerin Akibeti* (*Globalization and the Fate of Nation-States*), as he compared the different groups of people in the state.

The literatures which are related to the history and the origin of the Kurds are mostly references by the Kurdish scholars as well as non-Kurdish historians. M. Emin Zekibeg, who is known

as the famous Kurdish historians shed light on the origin of the Kurds and where they come from (*Kurdistan Tarihi (History of Kurdistan,)* 2014). The non-Kurdish historians, such as; Ferdinand Hannerbichler (*The Origin of the Kurds*), and Hassan Arfa (*Kurtler*) also complete the historical evolution of the Kurds as Zekibeg does. *A Modern History of the Kurds* by D. McDowall is one of the important non-Kurdish sources which analyze the history of the Kurds. Their social structure, religion, language and culture have been studied in Jamal Rashid's *Zuhur al Kurd fil Tarih*,(2005), and *Ibn Kather's Al Bidaya Wa-l Nihaya* which are written in Arabic language. As well as Bois Minorsky (*The Encyclopedia of Islam, 2004*) evaluates the Kurdish tribes that form the basic structure of the Kurdish social construction, during the British colony in Kurdish region.

Regarding the political views of the Kurdish parties,

Documents and Data: In order to introduce the formation of the Erdogan's party, AKP (Justice and Development Party), the official page of the party is used as the main literature. (: <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/secimler/2002-genel-secim>). The success of the AKP in the election of 2002 (<http://www.jamesinturkey.com/turkeys-cruel-election-threshold-a-crash-course/>), and distribution of the rate of the votes overall in Turkey (<http://www.ysk.govtr.org/>), are based on the official websites and documents (www.tbmm.gov.tr). The figures and the maps are enlisted in comparison of 2002, 2007, 2011, and 2015 to demonstrate the results of the elections in Turkey (<http://www.internethaber.com/2015-oy-sonuclari-ile-2011-ve-2007-karsilastirmasi-793044h.htm>), generally taken from the archives of the news websites (<http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2007/07/23/haber,936406EBE2BA499E980590C0F6DE66FE.html>). On another hand, the diversity of the current Turkish parliament and distribution of the parties according to their positions is shown by the examples of the official page of the Turkish parliament (https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.dagilim).

Besides, concerning the perspectives of the Kurdish political parties regarding the Kurdish question, their programme, charters and declarations were taken as the basis of fourth chapter. In this regard, the party structure of the HDP and its view on the Turkey's political arena expressed in their party programme (: <http://www.hdp.org.tr/parti/parti-programi/8>), and the formation and aims of the PKK from the beginning until the present time (<http://www.pkkonline.com/tr/index.php?sys=article&artID=174>) as well as their activities in the last decay (<http://www.terororgutleri.com>) have been observed for the sake of understanding their

ideological structure and their main goals. _Also the decisions of the PKK after launching the congresses and meetings in different years (<http://www.serxwebun.org/arsiv/218/files/assets/downloads/publication.pdf>) were taken as primary sources. Additionally, the political formation of the other parties and their resolutions and suggestions toward the Kurdish issue were observed based on their official pages, such as (<http://rizgari.com/ebook/PAK-program-Turkce...12.12.2014.pdf>) and (http://tr.hereketaazadi.org/hareket_hakkinda)

Structure of the thesis: This thesis consists of four main chapters; however it is formed as two parts; theoretical and analytical. The theoretical part which evaluates the concepts of *identity, ethnicity, nation, and nationalism*, forms the first chapter. The second chapter is aimed to introduce the Kurds and their history. The third chapter analyzes the political conjunctures Turkey in Erdogan's era, as well as the political contribution of the Kurds in Turkey's arena. Later on, the fourth chapter is based on the perspectives of Kurdish political parties regarding the Kurdish issue and the evolution of Kurdish national identity, rights and freedoms. Finally, the fifth chapter is devoted to evaluate the perspectives in accordance to the theories that are analyzed previously. Last of all, the structure of the Kurdish question is concluded with different interpretation and alternatives by the author in the conclusion part.

I. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF “IDENTITY”

In the historical process, according to the phases of social structures, it is clear that “identity” shows in different formations. Since the communities are being complex, the parameters to identify the “identity” have been changed as well. While the identification of the identity was belonged to family, clans, tribes and progeny, with the modernism, the identity has taken a multi and a mobile structure in the modern society.

In modern society, individual builds out *itself* over the *other*. In another word, the perception of identity is the product of the opposite relationship of *self* and *other*. The construction of *self* over the *other* or putting forward against the *other* and its building according to *other* is the basic form of the concept of identity.² This concept is strongly related to the belief of being different. And it also leads to perceive the relationship between them in entirely different frames. In another word, it simply creates two classes; the high class that is represented by the members of *self*, and the low class of the others who cannot reach the privileges given to the community of *other*. Therefore, their identity creates the top level class that patronizes environment, changings, material, and innovations, and most importantly, it forms the basic structure of the state. That is how the concept of nation-state which is influential in the modern era emphasizes the understating of belonging and the identity. Therefore it is possible to say that the individual of the modern era who is in the class of *self*, gains a strong position over the other in the modern era’s nation state. They may be widespread as imagined communities, or as aspirations, but their existence as social and political practice is much overstated.³

In the postmodern era, the concept of identity shows up in different formation. The postmodern notion of identity is one that decenters the individual, causing a shift from sheer subjectivity to an almost a loss of subjectivity.⁴ The preferred class policies under the postmodern conditions provide much more common and pluralistic identity politics. Postmodernism helped to bring out and free the power of local, regional and the unique and also to homogenize. Thus, the concept of identity in the

² LUCAITES, J., Louis, Condit, C.,M., Caudill, S., *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*, The Guildford Press, New York, 1999, p.595

³ WALBY, S., *The Myth of Nation-State*, Sociology, Vol. 37, No.3, 2003, p.530

⁴ DUMITRESCU, M., *Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Question of Identity*, *Reperes Theoriques*, Available at: <http://www.romanice.ase.ro/dialogos/03/7-Dumitrescu.pdf> Accessed: 4/11/2016

postmodern period will be handled through the differences and similarities; going beyond the rational boundaries of modernity, and be shaped on the essence of heterogeneity through the social conditions.⁵

Postmodern identity is based on multiple identities and multiple passes, in another word, *multipherina*.⁶ In any case and any characteristics, the identities are fragmented however they are always open to arbitrary, different and unusual dramatic changes. “Many postmodern and late modern theories of the self-echo the assertions of the intersectionality critique, and assert that the self is fractured and multiple.”⁷ On another hand, the role of multiculturalism in postmodernism is an undeniable fact, and also the failure of one of them would affect to the other one as well. Postmodernity is a condition of successful multiculturalism, states that largely rely on party-democracies will have difficulty in adapting to multiculturalism, and fostering a politics of multiculturalism.⁸

I.I. Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity as it is directly linked to the ethnicity is considered to be a constructive process. The main parameters in consideration of ethnic identity as a construct, is that, as it is seen in identification of the concept, it corresponds to a modern phenomenon.⁹ Using the concept of ethnicity as a modern phenomenon is also related to a team of adverse events in the world as well as different incidents taken place in the different times and regions, such as immigration cases.

After the search of new lands, so called “geographical discoveries” and consequently the colonization of Africa, enslavement of the locals and moving them to the Western countries, their status in different nation-states regarding the principles of “minority and majority” led to use the term “ethnicity” especially in the Western world. And also the world-wide observed the unfortunate events basically related to the regions and later on became international interests, so called ethnic cleansing gave more weight to use the terms “ethnic and ethnicity” in the social sciences as a reference to the

⁵ MONGU, B., “Postmodernizm ve Postmodern Kimlik Analizi” Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Journal, 2013 17 (2): 27-36

⁶ WADE, R., Where did “I” Go? Available at: <http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/wheredid.html> Accessed: 4/14/2016

⁷ POWELL, John A., “The Multiple Self: Exploring between and beyond Modernity and Postmodernity”, Available: <http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2582&context=facpubs> Accessed: 4/14/2016

⁸ MENNES, G., Multiculturalism and Postmodernity: A Challenge to our political structures, Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ger-mennens/multiculturalism-and-postmodernity-challenge-to-our-political-structures> , Accessed: 4/14/2016

⁹ Introduction to Sociology/ Race and Ethnicity, Available at: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Race_and_Ethnicity Accessed: 4/14/2016

identity context. Therefore, because of these and other social, political, economic and cultural reasons, the ethnicity, while becoming available along with the “identity”, it also has been referred to as a reference in the statement of it.

The first use of ethnicity as a political concept is attributed to the American sociologist David Riesman in 1953.¹⁰ Despite the use of “ethnic” as a concept in 1953, it has a functional dominance in the terms of the nation-state formulation. After the formation of nation-state an effective *ethnie* would be in control and in power. Due to their indigenous legitimacy and emotive power, such groups are arguably more central to exploring cultural and political developments than either subaltern minorities or professional state elites.¹¹ As the *ethnie* is culturally and socially dominant, it comes as the priority in the political formation of a nation. Because first of all a particular ethnic groups is to be chosen, and then an appropriate national conceptualization and a political formulation is formed for this particular group. In this context, an emphasis must be on a case of ethnic identity. Because ethnic identity, especially in the times of chaos, comes to front and plays unifying role in the society, but in the modern times, the common ethnic origin is not sufficient for the formation of “national identity”. However, ethnic identity, without depending on an ability of an organization to organize itself in a state’s structure, possible to say that it is the properties given and owned by the community.¹²

Ethnic identity as a modern phenomenon, in the early formation of the nation-states and in today’s differentiation of the nation-states has the sociological reality that fulfills the function of combination of different identities and enhancing solidarity among the groups.¹³ Because, as it was mentioned in the explanation of the concept of identity, the ethnic identity, if it is taken from its direction of providing intragroup solidarity, can present a political, cultural and social structure for the group of people who have been able to organize itself around a common language, common ancient beliefs, cosmogony-cosmology and common life rituals.¹⁴ On another hand, the ethnic identity can also be discriminative as well as can separate the communities from each other, and consequently creates one group as enemy over another group.

¹⁰ YILDIZ A. Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene, İletişim Yayınları, 2001, İstanbul, p. 39

¹¹ KAUFMANN, E., Dominant Ethnicity: From Background to Foreground, Available at:

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/cronem/files/conf2005files/EricKaufmann.pdf> Accessed: 4/14/2016

¹² GÖKA E., İnsan Kısım Kısım: Toplumlar, Zihniyetler, Kimlikler, Aşına Kitaplar 2006, Ankara, p. 261

¹³ Bornman, E., Struggle of Identity In the Age of Globalization, University of South California

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 311

Horowitz defines ethnicity as an umbrella concept that easily embraces groups differentiated by color, language, and religion; it covers “tribes,” “races,” “nationalities,” and “castes”.¹⁵ Horowitz exemplifies his definition with Hindus and Muslims in India, Christians and Muslims in Lebanon, and Creoles and Indians in Guyana and Trinidad as ethnic categories.¹⁶ However, this might be seen as a simple definition for ethnicity, but the subjectivity of ethnic and political science leads us to different definitions by several scholars:

1. “Ethnic groups are those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.”¹⁷

2. “Ethnicity is based on a myth of collective ancestry, which usually carries with it traits believed to be innate. Some notion of ascription, however diluted, and affinity deriving from it are inseparable from the concept of ethnicity.”¹⁸

3. “Ethnic group is “a group larger than a family for which membership is reckoned primarily by descent, is conceptually autonomous, and has a conventionally recognized “natural history” as a group.”¹⁹

4. An ethnic group is, “a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of a common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity.”²⁰

As it is understood from these definitions, the ethnic identity is an element that forms the basic identification of groups of people which creates the key stone of the identification. The emergence of this identification in different regions as in West and East, primarily based on religion, is a process that occurred relatively to the circumstances of the time, therefore the evaluation of the terms “*ethnie*” and “ethnicity” has been done in different times and different places. But in our time, identifying a group of people as an ethnic group becomes more difficult due the developing in different social areas based

¹⁵ CHANDRA, K., What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?, p.2, Available:

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/chandra/ars2005.pdf> Accessed: 3/26/2016

¹⁶ Ibid., p.2

¹⁷ WEBER, M., Economy and Society, England: University of California Press, 1978, p.389

¹⁸ HOROWITZ, D., Ethnic Groups in Conflicts, LA: University of California Press, 1985, p. 52

¹⁹ Fearon, J. and David D. Laitin “*Ordinary Language and External Validity: Specifying Concepts in the Study of Ethnicity*” Stanford University, 2000, p.6

²⁰ FEARON and LAITIN, Available at: <https://quizlet.com/69328331/ethnic-conflict-miterm-flash-cards/> Accessed: 4/15/2016

on recent conditions as well as cultural, linguistic, religious, and also sense of belonging, and most importantly the influence of these factors over the understating of “ethnic identity”, and “ethnicity”. Moreover, since the “national identity” becomes more crucial especially in political basis, the ethnic identity becomes less valuable for the people who want to identify themselves in a higher position. Hence, analyzing the “national identity” as a second step shall bring us more perceptible examples and elements to reach to such understating.

I.II. National Identity

The concept of national identity, like many other modern ideas, is an idea that emerged after the French Revolution. While during the revolution the lower class of the bourgeois was defined as “people”, after the revolution this term is replaced by the “nation”. With the emergence of nation-states, the national identity of the citizens in the borders of the nation-states became the most important identity rather than religious identities.²¹ And the states collected their citizens under one national identity. The most important tools of this collection were, indeed, the national culture and language.

In order to analyze the national identity as asocial structure and as world view, it is important also to analyze the criteria that crated the nationalism. Generally, three basic elements create the consensus of nationalism. First, the world is divided to the nations. Every nation owns its own culture, history, and language. Secondly, every individual belongs to a nation. Belonging to a nation is higher than any other ties, except sometimes the religious identity replaces the national identity. Third, nations, in order to reach their goals and to live in a free environment, should have the unity. In another word, the nations are the only legitimate source of social and political power.²²

Smith defines the national identity as “a kind of collective cultural identity”²³, and classifies the elements that create the national identity as: 1. A historical land, homeland or country, 2. Common myths and historical heritage, 3. Common public culture, 4. current common legal rights and duties for all members of the community, 5. A common economy for the members of the community to have the

²¹ The French Revolution and the Idea of the Nation, Available at: http://thelessonlocker.com/materials/history/french_revolution_nationalism.pdf Accessed: 4/15/2016

²² TRIANDAFYLLIDOU, Anna, “National Identity and the ‘other’ ”, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Volume:21, Number:4, July 1998, p.595

²³ SMITH, Anthony D., “When is a Nation”, Geopolitics, Available: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/714000928> Accessed: 4/4/2016, p.15

opportunity to move freely over the country.²⁴ The “sense of belonging” described by Connor can also be added. Because Connor claims that this sense is psychologically related to the national identity and has building role of the national identity.²⁵ The same approach is made by Giddens. According to him, the national identity is a psychological belonging that has emerged by cultural and historical circumstances.²⁶ Giddens also argues that nationalism is the cultural sensibility of sovereignty.²⁷ This concept that Guibernau defines as a modern phenomenon with its dynamic nature which emerges with the common share of the collective characteristics, and the belief of the members of belonging ethnically²⁸, is described by Anderson as “fusing the factual and the ideal one, and immortal and changing one.”²⁹ As a part of daily life, the national identity has the potential that can combine the individual with the nation and the nation-state.

As a tool of emergence of nation-statehood, the national identity is the fruit of the modern era. In another word, the identity of the state and the fictional identity of the citizen who create the state have matched at this period. Until the formation of such modern system of the state, the states did not have a necessity to define itself as in a common identity. It can be simply said that the state did not have such problem to define itself. The identity is a spontaneous concept. It answers the question of “who you are?”³⁰ In this regard, the community is the object of the collectivity. The states of early modern era do not gain their legitimacy in their “common identity” to share their ethnic origins. The base of the legitimacy, as in the terms of Weber, has a traditional ground.³¹ This includes customs and traditions, and most importantly, religion. But the basis and the structure of the modern states could break such concepts and replace them with more cumulative feature that is called national identity.

The role of the “sense of belonging” and its relationship with the “national identity” is undeniable. This appears even more clearly in the countries that are created by different ethnic groups of people. However, including different languages, cultures, traditions, and religions are also important elements to identify the “national identity”, but in fact, in such states, the sense of belonging has

²⁴ SMITH A.D., Milli Kimlik, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul,1999, p31-32

²⁵ TRIANDAFYLLIDOU, A., p.595

²⁶ GIDDENS, A., Tarıhsel Materyalizmin Çağdaş Eleştirisi, Paradigma, İstanbul,2000

²⁷ GIDDENS, A., The Nation-State and Violence, The USA: University of California Press, 1985, p.219

²⁸ Montserrat Guibernau, “Anthony D. Smith on Nations and National identity: a critical assessment”, Nation and Nationalism, p.134.

²⁹ ANDERSON, Perry, Tarihten Siyasete Eleştiriy Yazıları, İletişim Yayınları, Çeviri Editörü: Simten Çoşar, İstanbul, 2003, p.369.

³⁰ BAUMEISTER, R.F., Self-Concept, Self-Esteem, and Identity, p. 248, Available at: [https://research-srttu.wikispaces.com/file/view/self+concept+%2B+self+esteem+and+identity.pdf](https://research.srttu.wikispaces.com/file/view/self+concept+%2B+self+esteem+and+identity.pdf) Accessed: 4/5/2016

³¹ WEBER, Max, “What is An Ethnic Group, *The Ethnicity Reader*, ed. Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex, Polity Press, Reprinted 2011, Second Edition

stronger places of these elements, such as in the United States. Every individual is American, their origins, language or religion does not have any importance in their identity. Therefore, there will be one national language, official language, one common law, and the same standards of citizenship.

From these definitions it is clear that the national identity is a production of nation-states, at its base, rather appears to have cultural and linguistic recognition, and also is the ground of differences and belongings. On one hand, while one side of nation-state form is related to the modern capitalist system, on another hand, the other side is to the pure and common historical entities of the people, which mostly related to the myths, combines the group of people who share this historical lineage. In this regard, two different approaches of national identity can be seen; one is the production of the modern world that has been shaped by the decisions of some states with the treaties among themselves, and the second is that has always had its place in the deep roots of the communities. This can be explained with socio-biologic understanding and most importantly the ethnicity. This approach opposes the modernist understanding of the identity that claims to appear in 18th and 19th centuries. Based on the form of kinship and ethnic similarities even long before the modern era and nation-state system, obviously this identity is a permanent and natural phenomenon. Another idea that opposes the modernist approach is that the collective cultures ties are not only natural, they are also universal. Moreover, such collective units, with their ancient and medieval types, are the primitive forms of modern nations and nationalism and their first small-scale examples.³² That is why the identification of the people by different name comes from this point. And their national identity emerged naturally rather than as an ideological concept or a modern production.

I.III. Nation and Nationalism

The terms of “nation” and “nationalism” have been defined by many scholars. However those definitions are controversial with each other, each scholar has interpreted them in different spectrum with putting different elements and criteria in the core of their definitions. In our observation, the elements which can help to define or to classify the criteria of a nation may go beyond those definitions, or the collection of them in one center which may sound even wider. The reason why I chose to analyze these two terms together is that both are strongly related to each other and their definitions complete one another.

³² SMITH, A., *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Blackwell Publishing, USA, 1987, p. 13

According to many scholars, when a group of people is thought to be nation, the most crucial element comes up as the language which every individual use to communicate with the other individuals of the same group. This language cannot be a fabricated one, neither a common language chosen to communicate. It is a language that comes from the deep roots of its people even though it varies in different dialects but still forms the basic language. Secondly, the cultural boundaries which is a part of the language, creates another criterion of a nation. Same as the language, the culture is also connected to the roots and linked with the history of the nation.

Although the concept of religion may not seem to be very definable source for a nation, but the exception of some religious ethnic groups forms the relation of religion with the nation, such as; Jews and Yazidis. The definition of the nation based on religious belief is firstly suggested by Bernard Lewis. But how this definition is related to the ethnic-religious groups is debatable. Because in both cases; for example a person cannot convert to be Yazidi, but he must born as such, and same goes for Judaism. Our last but not least observation is on the history of a group of people. But this criterion seems to have a weak spot about the nations who shared the same history integrated with each other since their ancient times. Finally; some scholars define the nation as political formation that is related to institutionalized image of the nation and linked with the concept of nationalism. Some other criteria can also be mentioned in this classification, such as; territory and group solidarity. But in fact, this classification seems weaker than others according to our recent time. In the term of territory; a territory may contain different nations or ethnic groups, as well the group solidarity can also be formed by different minorities.

According to Gellner, nation and nationalism are firstly based on political principles. He defines it as a theory of political legitimacy. On another side, again Gellner defines the concept of “nation” as a general imposition of a high culture on society. And more interestingly, according to him, nationalism creates the nation.³³ The definition of Anthony D. Smith opposes the Gellner’s political principles, as he suggests, “we cannot understand nations and nationalism simply as an ideology or form of politics but must treat them as cultural phenomena as well”.³⁴ Smith also closely relates nationalism to national identity as, a multidimensional concept, language, sentiments and symbolism. And also “myths and legends” have another important role of his definition.³⁵ More different than these definitions belongs to G.P. Gooch. Gooch claims that the nationalism is the love of

³³ Gellner, E. , *Nation and Nationalism* (1983), <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~plam/irnotes07/Gellner1983.pdf>

³⁴ Smith, A. D., *National Identity*, Introduction, England: Penguin Books, 1991, p.7

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.8

community. He does not see the nationalism as a doctrine, for him it is an instinctive emotion.³⁶ Gooch washes off all the criteria that are discussed before and concerned only on the emotional side of nationalism. In this regard, the blood line and the language have nothing to do with the sense of nationalism, except the feeling for it. Therefore, any individual who can feel love or sympathy in the term of nation does not really necessary to be related to that nation with blood line, kinship or even historical background. On another hand, the Marxist approach on the nation is totally in a different spectrum. Marxist theory defines nation as a result of historical evolution, emerged with war, invasions, dissolution and emerging new ones. And the theory puts the concept of nation in the center of class division as a tool of capitalist oppression.³⁷

The definitions of a nation however differ from one scholar to another, but the common point about the nationalism is to be politicalized as it emerges to be a nation state. As it was mentioned before, the term of nation is basically related to the culture, language, history, legends, but regarding the concept of nationalism, it is clearly understood as an existence of a political entity based on national boundaries. The idea of nationalism has been used for establishing necessary bases for the boundaries of a sovereign state. Therefore, however the concept of “nation”, with its basic features, does not seem to include any political ties, but in fact when this term is linked with “nationalism” it gains an ideological as well as a political meaning. In order to understand the emergence of nationalism with national state, it is useful to analyze the concept of nation- state.

Defining the “nationalism” is a procedure to be analyzed with the concept of “nation-state”. As it was highlighted before, not only “nationalism” but also all these terms (nation, national identity, and nation-state) should be studied all together. But dividing and studying these terms in different scales would be more useful to understand and to clarify. That is why such division was made. Since the concept of “nationalism” is accepted to be a political and ideological term, its relation with “nation-state” finds its ground in a better way; legitimacy. The legitimacy that is given to the idea of “nationalism” under the protection of law of the nation-state makes it as an ultimate identity of the state. That is how the nation-state comes to its real meaning.

³⁶ Gooch, G.P., *Nationalism*, G.P., 1920, p.5 Available: <https://archive.org/stream/nationalism015075mbp#page/n1/mode/2up> Accessed: 3/4/2016

³⁷ Sewell, R. “ Lenin on National Question”, June 2004 <http://www.marxist.com/lenin-national-question160604.htm> Accessed: 06.10.2015

I.IV. “Nationalist” Identity and Nation-State

The term “nation-state”, like the terms “nation” and “nationalism” also contains many contradictions in itself. The reasons of these contradictions are not like nation and nationalism as in their understating, but it is rather related to its implementation and its historical evolution. Therefore once again it will be useful to analyze the different perceptions about “nation-state”.

When the famous Orientalist Bernard Lewis describes the concept of nation, he takes the word *مِلَّة* “millah” from Aramaic language and claims that the nation is a group of people who gathered around a belief.³⁸ In Arabic terminology, despite the word and belief of “*ummah*”, the term of *millah* is still being used in religious approach. For example the term of “*millah –al Ibrahim*” or “*millat-i Ibrahim*” is being used among Muslim population. Regarding the point of Lewis, the Jewish nation can be an example of his definition. But on another hand, the term of “nation” in our recent time gives more different meanings than just religious terminology. The idea of nation and being a nation, the transition period of ‘people’ to ‘nation’ and more importantly the ‘nationalism’ firstly used by Johan Gottfried Herders in 1774 as the key stone of this process as an ideological tool.³⁹

In both cases, the certain element of both ideas, especially Herders’, create a territory which those ideas can be easily implemented, and that territory is called nation-state. And the key point of nation-state, which is nation and the confusions on this concept, creates different definitions about the discourse of the ‘state’ as well. In 17th century, the movements against the kings and monopolist elitist aristocracy on the name of ‘national sovereignty’ prepared a new base for the revolutions of Europe and Americas. The terms of religion, family, king...etc. were replaced with secularity, nation, and nation-state. Finally the chain was completed by the French Revolution. However the national entities in Europe were ethnic oriented, but on another place a new nation-state was being created in America which is entirely based on different ethnic groups including the locals. This feature that puts America in different category of nation-state can be defined as the creation of ‘super ethnic American’.

The most important term of the nation-state refers to homogeneity.⁴⁰ In the details of this homogeneity it can be seen as; a nation speak the same language, comes from the same lineage, shares the same culture and historical heritage, designed as a community of people who seem to have common enemies, so that the nation-state appears as a structure which all its parts are completed with

³⁸YILDIZ, A., *Ulus Devletin Bunalimi Millet/Ulus*, Istanbul: Etkilesim Press, 2004, p.6

³⁹ IRMSHER, H.D., “Johan Gottfried von Herder,” Biography, Available at: <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Johann-Gottfried-von-Herder>.

⁴⁰ “Nation-State”, Available at: <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Nation-state> Accessed: 3/4/2016

an excellent coexistence. Taking in account the inclusion of these created states, their degree of emergence and the factors affecting their survival can be predicted by analyzing their internal dynamics. In this regard, according to Habermas, the nation states emerge in three different ways; the first one starts with the ethnic groups who have spread to their neighbor communities. The second category is formed by the groups of people who have been oppressed, marginalized, assimilated in the new states. And the third stage concerns on ethno-centric nation-states which have kept the minorities under the extreme oppression or forced them to exile. In another word it can be defined as racist.⁴¹

The discourse of nation-state can be simply described as; the nation-state is the structural form which an institutionalized political power wrapped in a certain historical stage; nation is the fiction, that works as the legitimate source of this structure; and nationalism can be perceived as a political movement that aims to impose this source of legitimacy as the current political view.⁴² Regarding this point, it is difficult to claim that the terms nation, nationalism and nation-state have developed at the same mean or time. Besides, to make a general assumption on which one is before or after another is more difficult. In this context, Erözden claims that, “On a universal scale, showing the prevalence of the nation-state fiction and their structures in accordance can be divided into three basic groups. The first group contains nation-states in Europe and Europe oriented regions. The second group is formed by the nation-states especially observed in the America with the elimination of native peoples and replaced by immigrants. The nation-states which formed as a result of stripping from the decolonization after the second half of 20th century are in the third group.”⁴³

Hans Wicker suggests that in 19th and 20th century’s nation-states’ power comes from three basic concepts:

1. Thought of Republic: its implementation is connected with a public administration and a defined area which the democratic norms are available on the citizens,
2. Capitalism: providing technological advances developed new industries and ensured the issue of capital accumulation abilities, leading to a slow rise in general living standards and provided the new elements of economic development.

⁴¹ HABERMAS, J., “*Kuresellesme ve Milli Devletlerin Akibeti*” Translated: Medeni Beyaztas, Bakis Yayinlari, Istanbul, 2002

⁴² Ulus, Ulus-Devlet, Ulusal Devlet, Available at: <http://akademikperspektif.com/2013/10/20/ulus-ulus-devlet-ulusal-devlet/> Accessed: 3/4/2016

⁴³ ERÖZDEN, O., *Ulus-Devlet*, Ankara:Dost Yayınları, 1997, p.47

3. Nation: formed as a result of interaction between capitalism and the state.⁴⁴

In the contemporary national studies, one of the arguments that have been done by the scholars and yet still being discussed, which is about whether a group of people without a state can be defined as a nation or not. In this regard, some may call as an ethnic group and requires to have a nation-state to complete their level of being nation, and some claims the opposite that being nation does not necessarily need to have a state. As it was seen in the definitions of different scholars above, except Gellner, the other scholars do not mention a state relatively to the nation. As an example, how can the Catalans should be defined? Or the Kurds in Iraq and Syria, since they live in different state formations. Or can we define the Kurds in Turkey or in Iran not a nation but in Iraq as a nation? Indeed, these different structures of the same group of people who share the same language, culture, and history, also with huge number of population shouldn't be based on a state to be called a nation.

⁴⁴ WICKER, H.,R., *Kapitalizm, Devlet ve Milliyetçilik Arasındaki İç Etkileşimler, içinde* SAĞIR, Meral, AKILLI, Serkan *Siyaset Sosyolojisi Yazıları*, Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 2004, p,145

II. KURDS AND KURDISTAN

Kurds are known as one of the ancient nations, and many theories have been written on their origin. Currently, they live in a territory called Kurdistan, which is divided into four parts; Iran (eastern Kurdistan), Iraq (southern Kurdistan), Syria (western Kurdistan) and Turkey (northern Kurdistan). This fictional territory is believed to be the original land of Kurdish people since their ancient history.

Kurds are believed to be one of the largest indigenous groups in the world without a nation-state. Culturally and linguistically they are one of the Iranian groups of nations. The similarities in their languages and mythological events; such as Nowruz shows that they share the same line with Persians however the Kurds have their own national, cultural and linguistic characteristics. Albeit the information about their number is controversial, the estimated number of their population is between 20 to 40 million; 15 to 20 million in Turkey, 7 to 8 million in Iran, 1 to 2 million in Syria, and 5 to 6 million in Iraq. Apart from the region, the biggest Kurdish diaspora is Germany, Sweden, the US and Canada.⁴⁵ It is important to mention that this number does not contain the Kurdish population in Russia, the former Soviet countries, Armenia, Lebanon, Israel, and Faily Kurds who live in and around Baghdad and other territories they live.

Their origin and where they come from has been studied by different scholars including Kurdish and non-Kurdish historians. Besides their history, the social composition of the Kurds shall enlighten us to be introduced by their early and current social and historical positions.

II.I. History and Origin of the Kurds

The origin of the Kurds has been discussed by different scholars. Even though there are not any academic documents, some Turkish nationalist claimed that the Kurds are just another part of the Turks, although they linguistically, religiously and culturally differ in many ways. The general idea about the Kurds is that they are Iranian group of people and linguistically belong to Indo-European language family. From their historical line, Kurds have lived in different times and the regions by different names of the ancestors. However their names are not exactly match with the name of “Kurd”, but historical documents show the linguistic and cultural similarities, as well as myths and religions, accepted to be forming the early Kurdish era. It is also believed that the ancestors of the Kurds have

⁴⁵ *The Kurds: The World's largest stateless nation*, Available: <http://www.france24.com/en/20150730-who-are-kurds-turkey-syria-iraq-pkk-divided> Accessed: 4/3/2016

already existed in from the beginning in the far North (Anatolia, Mesopotamia) and the far North-East (Zagros).⁴⁶

Kurdish scholars and historians divide the history of the Kurds in two parts; before and after Islam. Their history before Islam, starting in 13th century BC with Lulus, following with Gutis, Kassites, Khaldi-Urartu, Subaro, the Mad (Medes), Nayiri, and ends with Kardukhi.⁴⁷ During the Islamic era, the history of Kurdish states starts in 230 by the state of Ravadi, and finished in 1300. From the beginning till the end, they have built different states in different territories or the same and close territories, such as; Salar, Hemedan, Hasnayev, Shadadi, Marwani, Hilvan, Shivankar, Fadlevi, Lor, Ayyubi, Ardalan, and Zand. Besides these small and big states, Kurds have been given the opportunity to build seven emirates.⁴⁸

Famous Kurdish historian Muhammed Emin Zeki Beg, analyzing the research of Vladimir Minorsky in Islamic Encyclopedia, and the plates from early Assyrian era, includes that the Assyrian king Tighlat had the fight *Kurti* people who lived in the area of “*Kar-Daka*”, around the lake Wan (recently in Turkey).⁴⁹ Zeki Beg also mentions on *Anabasis* of Xenophon that he described *Kardukis* and the region where they lived, generally by the river Tigris and around mountain Cudi (Shirnak province of Turkey).⁵⁰

Another theory on the origin of Kurds is suggested by Hassan Arfa. Arfa draws a map where the Kurds lived since their ancient history, from mount Zagros to the lake of Rezaie in the east, from Kirmanshah (now in Iran) to Kirkuk and Mousul in the south, and in the north; from Marjan and Harhal mountains to Mount Ararat.⁵¹

Despite the nonexistent of any precise information about the origin of their first history, but almost all scholars who study their origin agree on the region, so called Kurdistan, where they lived. The word *Kurdistan* was first used by the sultan of *Seljuq, Sanjar*, and referred to the territory between Azerbaijan and Loristan (now in Iran).⁵² The same word *Kurdistan* has been used by different sultans for different regions. The famous *Seyahatname* written in 17th century by Awliya Chalaby clearly indicates broad information about the Kurds and the Kurdish region. The 4th of 10th volume of

⁴⁶ HANNERBICHLER, Ferdinand, “The Origin of Kurds”, *Advances in Anthropology* 2012. Vol.2, No.2, 64-79
Published Online May 2012 in SciRes, Available: <http://www.SciRP.org/journal/aa> , Accessed: 4/14/2016

⁴⁷ ZEKIBEG, M.,E., *Kurdistan Tarihi*, Kurtlerin Mensei ve Kokeni, 8th Edition, Nubihar, 2014, Istanbul

⁴⁸ Ibid., Content

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.58

⁵⁰ Ibid., p59

⁵¹ ARFA, H., *Kurtler*, Kurt Halki ve Bulundugu Bolge, Istanbul: Avesta, 2006, p.10

⁵² CETIN, S., *Kurtler*, Kurtler ve Yasadiklari Cografya, , Istanbul: Nubihar, 2014, p.41

Seyahatname, Chalaby explaining the territory of Kurds, he uses the term “Bilad al Akrad” (The Homeland of the Kurds) and “Diyar-i Kurdistan” (The region of Kurdistan), and describes the towns and cities as such:

“ *Such a big homeland, one top lies from Erzurum to Van, Hakkari, Cizre, Imadiye, Mosul, Shahrezor, Harir, Ardalan, Baghdad, Darna, Dartang, and Basra; found people who speak Kurdish. If there were no 6 thousands Kurdish tribes between Iraq-i Arab and the Ottoman where in high mountains, and if they were not standing like a front, it would be very easy for Ajams (Persians) to invade the Ottoman.*”⁵³

During the Seljuk sultanate and the Ottoman Empire, Kurds have lived as principalities and emirates dependent on the empires. As David McDowall explains their positions in that time he indicates that “*even when they were not in a state of rebellion, many tribes were able to achieve functional independence, even if they were required to give formal recognition either to central government or to local government appointees.*”⁵⁴ Interestingly, their history does not include any attempt of being state at that time. However, the first Kurdish historical book is written by Şerefxané Bitlisi in 1597, *Şerefname*, who was also the emirate of the Bitlis region in the Ottoman Empire, but the book contains only the historical background of the Kurds, and is accepted as the first historical archive of Kurdish lineage. Therefore Kurds did not seem to be appeared in political arena during that time.

During the claseh between Ottomans and Safavis, due the sectarian reasons, while the Shiite Kurds took the side with Safavis, the Sunni Kurds have been under the control of the Ottomans. There was a Kurdish force of 10 thousand people at the disposal of the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁵ Both Ottomans and Safavis have used the Kurds time to time as buffer zone, but mostly with themselves directly against each other for their own supremacy.⁵⁶ But the Ottomans were more successful negotiators and an influential group of Kurdish notables opted to join the expanding empire.⁵⁷

From their ancient history till the recent time, Kurds have been through different stages. All in all, they could manage to keep their existence and protect their language and culture. The vents they

⁵³ Evliya Celebi Seyahatnamesi, Volume 4, Edited: Seyit Ali Kahraman and Yucel Dagli, Istanbul:Yapi Kredi Press, 2010, p.110

⁵⁴ McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, New York: I.B.Tauris Press, Reprinted 2005, p.21

⁵⁵ KALMAN, M., *Osmanli-Kurt Iliskileri ve Somurgencilik*, Istanbul : MED Press, 1994, p.24

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.26

⁵⁷ TAUCHER, W., VOGL, M., WEBINGER, P., “The Kurds”, Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior Herrengasse 7 / 1010 Vienna / Austria, Available:

http://www.bfa.gv.at/files/broschueren/KURDS_Monographie_2015_11.pdf Accessed: 4/14/2016

have encountered in the regions where they live led to the evaluation of their history in a political spectrum and most importantly in nationalist framework. So that they have been aware of the importance of their history. Besides, their ability to preserve their history and culture is an important indicator of how they concern about their culture and history. As a result, even though they have mixed with other nations, but they could still prevent to be dissolved and vanish.

II.II. Social Structure of the Kurds

Unlike any other nations, Kurds have a unique social structure that varies in different ways relatively to the regions where they live. Their society cannot be analyzed as a whole due the reason of containing diversities within themselves. Indeed, their separation to different regions and their interaction with other nations created different formations of social background. The diversities in Kurdish language, accents and dialects; different beliefs and religions, as well as sects and dominations, tribal life, and different mentalities lead us to study their construction separately.

However Kurdish people have lived interactively with other nations, and time to time their cultural rights have been banned by the states, they were able to cherish their cultural features especially their language. Due the reason of disbanding from their unity, and by following several and different unfortunate events in different regions, the Kurdish social construction has been shaped in different ways. That is why this case should be covered in separate ways with major elements. Since this work mostly considers about the situation of the Kurds in Turkey (northern Kurds), I shall particularly evaluate their formation and construction.

II.II.I. Language:

Kurdish language is the fourth mostly spoken language in Middle East. Kurdish is a member of Iranian branch of Indo-European language family. More than “a” language, Kurdish is a language group. Although it is believed that Kurdish language shows similarities with other languages, such as Farsi, but semantically and phonetically Kurdish has its own features. But indeed, like all the other languages, it has been influenced by the languages spoken in the region, and even this has affected on the alphabet they have used and using.

In different stages of the time, Kurdish people have used different alphabets. During the times of Guti, Huri and Mitanis the wedge writing has been used and at the time of Medes this alphabet was

also used by adding 6 more letters.⁵⁸ According to the Kurdish philologist Jamal Rashid Ahmad, in 4th century B.C. Kurds have used Greek and Aramaic alphabets as well.⁵⁹ *Bin u Shad, Masi Surati, Avesta, Pahlawi, Yazidi*, and Arabic alphabets also have been used in different stages of history.⁶⁰

As it is mentioned above, Kurdish language is a language group which contains many dialect and accents. And also these dialects are still being used not only in linguistic frame, but also to address the people who are using them. These dialects are;

1. Kurmanji; spoken by the Kurdish people mostly in Turkey, Syria, Russia, Lebanon, and also Kurds who live in Khorasan (Iran). Kurmanji is also divided into two branches, these are a) *Badini*; spoken in northern Iraq in the region where it is called Badinan (Duhok, Zakho, and Amadiya); and by the people at the border of Turkey and Iraq (Hakkari, Shirnak), b) *Shikaki*; is used by the Kurds who live in the cities by the borders of Iran and Turkey (Orumiyah, Oshnaviyah).

2. Sorani; is mostly spoken in Iraqi Kurdistan and also some parts of Iran (Erbil, Slemani, Kirkuk, Sine, Mahabad).

3. Zaza (Dimli); is used in different part of Turkey, such as; Diyarbakir, Dersim, Bingol and the cities around.

4. Gorani (Hawrami) is less spoken dialect among the Kurds, especially in the northern border of Iran and Iraq (Hawraman, Halabja).

5. Lori, Kalhouri, Lakki, and Kirmanshahi are the least spoken dialects, mostly by the Kurds who live in Iran.⁶¹

The main dialect of the northern Kurds is accepted to be the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish. This has been used and still being used in the journals, books, magazines, and the media. Besides Kurmanji, Dimli (Zaza) dialect is used in different provinces of northern Kurdistan. Even though the main regions are Dersim, Bingol and Diyarbakir, but in present time any particular region cannot be shown in the terms of using this dialect. Latin alphabet is the only way of writing in Northern Kurdistan. This alphabet has been adopted and is being used by both Kurmanji and Dimli accent speakers.

⁵⁸ BOLELLI, Nusret, *Alfabe'nin İcadı ve Tarih Boyunca Kürtlerin Kullandığı Alfabeler*, Bingöl Üniversitesi Yaşayan Diller Enstitüsü Dergisi, p.20

⁵⁹ Cemal Reşid Ahmed, *Zuhuru'l-Kurd fi't-tarih*, Erbil, 2005, p. 122

⁶⁰ BOLELLI, N.,... p.22

⁶¹ BAYRO, Zaza, *Kurt Dil Ailesi* Available: <https://kovaradestar.wordpress.com/2013/03/16/kurt-dil-ailesi/>
Accessed: 3/31/2016

II.II.II. Religion

Historians include that the ancient Kurdish history has been witnessed different religions and different gods. From Huris to Mitanis, and following with the Medes and Urartu, they had paganist belief different gods have been placed.⁶² However this belief had been changed after adopting Zarathustrianism. Although it is believed that Zarathustrianism is an Iranian religion but this does not mean it is a Persian religion, Kurds were also a member of this belief. Nowadays, the Yazidis themselves claim to be called Zarathustrian rather than Yazidi however Yazdanism shows differences from Zarathusrian belief. Islamization of the Kurds is a controversial case that many theories have been written on. Some historians believes that the Kurds have adopted Islam in early age, but most strongly suggested idea is that they adopted Islam at the time of Omar the Caliphate that after conquering Jazira, Harran (Urfa, in Turkey), and Nusaybin in 633.⁶³

As in general, Kurds are Sunni Muslim believers. However Yezidism is known to be their original religion, but nowadays only small population of Kurds follow this belief. In addition Alawism is also recognized by smaller population. Sunni Muslim sect is the major believe of Northern Kurdistan. Besides Islam, Kurdish Alawis forms 4-5 million of the population.⁶⁴

II.II.III. Social and Cultural Life

Cultural life of the Kurds cannot be covered without knowing their traditional and tribal norms. That is how their social life is constructed. The dominance of traditional norms and tribal rules show differences as well as similarities according the countries where they live. Their relations with other nations played an important role in the terms of this traditional dominance.

The importance and the roles of the tribes on the society is an undeniable truth. In 1908, Sir Mark Sykes has prepared a list that included 305 Kurdish tribes.⁶⁵ The social transformation processes in their history following by separations and combining of some tribes, the number of tribes has been decreased to the current time. Such as Barzani federation of tribes is formed by seven different tribes. And these tribes have also set up their own rules for the members.

⁶² TORI, Kurtlerin Din Kulturu Tarihi, Istanbul: Berfin Press, 1998

⁶³ IBN KATHER, Al Bidayah Wa al Nihaya, 1994, Istanbul, Referenced: Dr. Bekir Bicer, *İslam Tarihi Kitaplarında Kurtler*, International Journal of Social Science Volume 5 Issue 6, p. 51-80, December 2012

⁶⁴ “Turkiye’de Alevi Nufusu (Alawi Population in Turkey), Available: <http://sahipkiran.org/2013/08/19/turkiyede-alevi-nufusu/> Accessed: 4/8/2016

⁶⁵ MINORSKY, V.,BOIS, Th., Mc KENZIE, D.N., Kurtler ve Kurdistan(The Encyclopedia of Islam, Kurds, Kurdistan) , Istanbul: DOZ Press, Second Edition, 2004, p.134

Iraqi Kurds are known as the most traditional part of the Kurds. However the establishment of Kurdistan Regional Government and the Iraqi Kurdistan Constitution decreased the role of the traditions on the society, yet the importance of traditions and early social norms are still valid. Family and kinship are also important elements of Kurdish society. For the dominance of traditions and tribal norms, Iranian Kurds follow the Iraqi Kurds, although it is not as influential as in the Iraqi Kurdistan. Unlike the Iraqi Kurds, the community in Turkey and Syria, due the social transformations and the development of social level, tribal life and traditional characteristics do not have such strong influence on the community.

Due to the mountainous region they live, Kurds generally engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry especially eastern and south-eastern Turkey where in the regions that urbanization is less developed. But those who mostly live in the cities have embraced the life of city working in different businesses. For the reasons of unfavorable climatic conditions and petroleum-based economy, agriculture and animal husbandry is not well developed in Iraqi Kurdistan. The community is mostly dependent on the governmental works as well as personal business. The life of western (Syria) and eastern (Iran) Kurds are also dependent on agriculture and different business areas.

Northern Kurdistan is where the Kurdish population has been integrated with other people and been put in the merge of the society more than the other parts. Their social and economic life has a significant place in Turkey as well. The developed social and economic conditions of the country have strong influence on the Kurdish people. With such advantageous circumstances, northern Kurds are taking part in different social frames, such as; economic, academic, cultural and education.

Last of all, Kurds, like every nation, are importantly related to their culture. Even though they are separated in different regions, their culture does not seem that much different from one another. For centuries they could keep their culture alive and therefore they could manage to promote their culture whether as small communities, institutions, or individual basis.

III. AKP AND ERDOGAN’S ERA AND TURKISH POLITICAL SCENE

The era of AKP, also known as the era of the current president Erdogan’s era, is a period of Turkey when the face of the politics and policies have changed into a new and a unique stage. The party which was established by Erdogan has become an alternative door for the replacement of the usual political conjuncture. The party has been found by mostly conservative Muslim elites who have passed through the process of February 28th and the structure to be Islamic-inspired democratic party,⁶⁶ it has appeared to be a political structure which appeal to almost every sectors in the country. Besides, hosting different ideas and ideologies has added more strength to the party. As they declared in their party program: “respecting different beliefs of the people, their thoughts, race, language, expression and their association and all the inherent rights. Accepting the difference not as separation but reinforcing the cultural diversity.”⁶⁷ As a result, it became a sole ruling power in the elections of November 3rd, 2002.⁶⁸

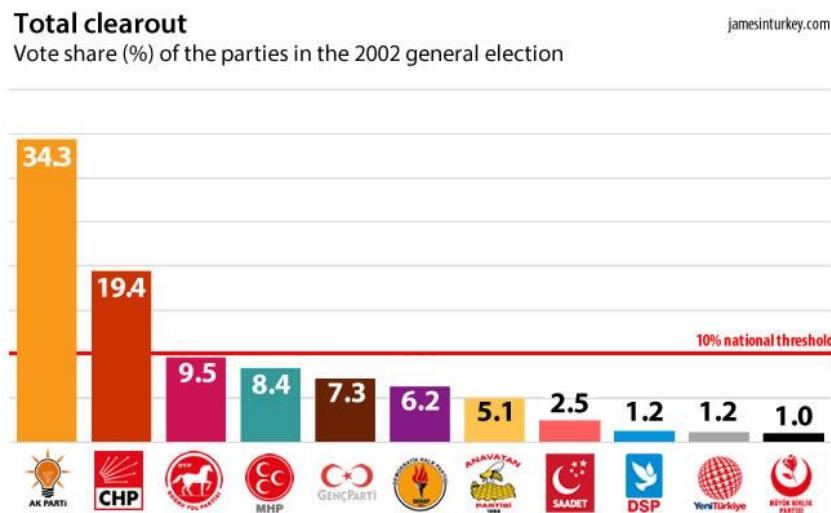


Figure 1: Results of general election 2002⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Justice and Development Party, Available at: <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/organizations/justice-and-development-party-turkey> Accessed: 4/11/2016

⁶⁷ Justice and Development Party programme, Article 4.4 Available at: <https://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme>

⁶⁸ Figure1:Election Results 2002, Available: <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/secimler/2002-genel-secim> Accessed: 4/11/2016

⁶⁹Figure1. <http://www.jamesinturkey.com/turkeys-cruel-election-threshold-a-crash-course/>

As the result of the election in 2002, the AK Party 363, and the opposition group, *CHP* (Republican People Party) has gained 178 deputies.⁷⁰ As no one expected, the AKP had a significant impact on the other political parties, indeed, since it was only a newly founded party and having the majority of the votes in the country was a surprising result. With the principle of “conservative democracy”, the AKP were able to collect people from different sections, ideas, ethnic groups, as well as the Kurds and the Turkish nationalists, under its umbrella.

Collection nine main headings in its *Declaration of Election* in 2002, the AKP firstly mentioned to the “principled politics,” and secondly to the basic rights and freedoms. Mostly concerned to the civil society and democracy and development, and besides, reforms in justice and law, transparent administration and also with other different important elements,⁷¹ the public attention was drawn to the most important issues which the country has been troubled with. On another hand, economy policies, agriculture and animal husbandry, and the foreign policies are also highlighted.⁷² Apart from these principles, the most important core elements of the AKP in becoming a center of attraction were; accommodating political attitude, past municipal activities of the leaders and the cadres, its positive attitude to the fundamental parameters of traditional Turkish foreign policy, its support to the liberal economic integration policies, and its consistent rhetoric for the daily life of the community.⁷³

The success of Erdogan was not limited only by the election in 2002. The elections that have been held in in 2007 were even much bigger success of him. While the rate was around 34.6 % in 2002, this number increased to 46.66% in 2007.

⁷⁰ <http://www.ysk.govtr.org/> Official page of The Supreme Election Board

⁷¹ AKP Declaration of Election, 2002, TBMM (Grand National Assembly of Turkey) Library, Available: www.tbmm.gov.tr Accessed: 4/15/2016

⁷² Declaration of Election

⁷³ ALTUN, Fahrettin, “Degisim ve Statukocu Kiskacinda AK Parti, SETA ANALIZ, March, 2009, Available: <http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/degisim-ve-statuko-kiskacinda-ak-parti.pdf> Accessed: 4/15/2016

22 Temmuz 2007

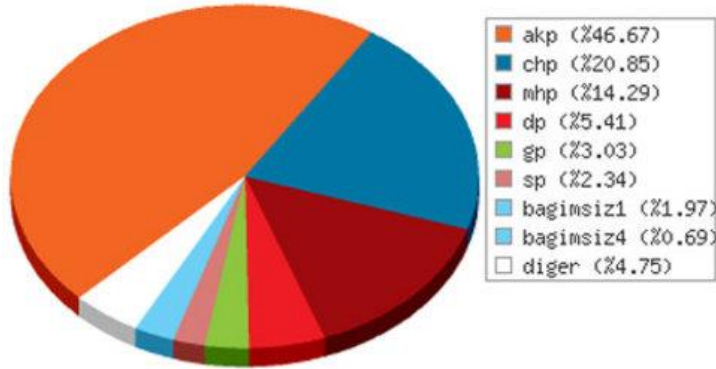


Figure 2: Results of general election, 2007⁷⁴

The transparent policy of the AKP, and especially the services and accomplishments provided for the citizens had an important role in increasing of the voting rates. The services that have been made especially in health, social, and education⁷⁵ proved that the AKP government is keeping its promises. Also with “employment policy”,⁷⁶ many people were able to find jobs compared to the times of former governments. The investments were especially done in the eastern region of Turkey, where mostly the Kurds population is settled, had another important role in its success.

⁷⁴Figure 2, Election Results in 2007

<http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2007/07/23/haber.936406EBE2BA499E980590C0F6DE66FE.html> Accessed: 4/16/2016

⁷⁵ Veri Paylasimina Dayali Capraz Denetim, Available at: <http://www.akicraatlar.com/turkiye/icraat/veri-paylasimina-dayali-capraz-denetim/22496>, Accessed: 4/16/2016

⁷⁶ AKP Istihdam Politikasi, Available at: <http://www.akicraatlar.com/> Accessed: 4/16/2016





İller		2002-2014 Yatırım Miktarı (Bin TL)
Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi	Gaziantep	2.736.327
	Diyarbakır	5.265.320
	Şanlıurfa	5.630.526
	Batman	2.001.778
	Adıyaman	2.072.764
	Siirt	757.456
	Mardin	5.381.588
	Kilis	557.782
Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi	Şırnak	995.558
	Ağrı	1.568.347
	Ardahan	389.917
	Bitlis	747.735
	Bingöl	1.908.114
	Elazığ	1.328.468
	Erzincan	1.045.946
	Erzurum	2.868.985
	Hakkari	815.661
	Iğdır	449.398
	Kars	986.563
	Malatya	1.650.689
	Muş	1.052.130
	Tunceli	518.672
	Van	2.075.604
	TOPLAM	42.805.328

Figure 3: Amount of Investments 2002-2014⁷⁷

As it is seen in the figure, the investments in South-Eastern and Eastern Turkey between 2002 and 2014, is almost 49 thousands Turkish lira. This crucially draws the positive attention of the locals in those regions and consequently makes the AKP more advantageous in the general as well as in local elections.

Growing Power of AKP

Starting with 34 % of the general votes in Turkey and following by a significant increase in 2007, the AKP once again showed a successful result in the elections of 2011:

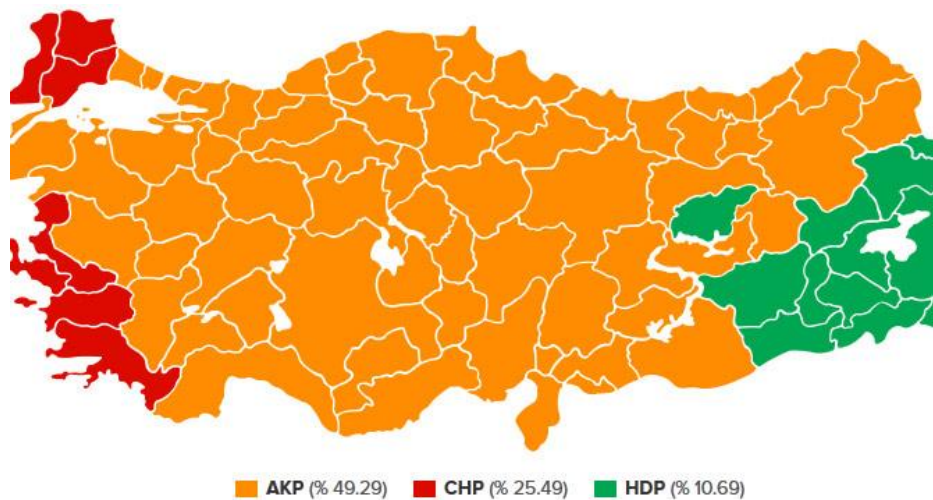
Parti	2002 Genel Seçim	2007 Genel Seçim	2011 Genel Seçim
 AK PARTİ	%34,28 / 365	%46,58 / 341	%49,84 / 327
 CHP	%19,39 / 177	%20,88 / 112	%25,98 / 135
 MHP	%8,36/ 0	%14,27 / 71	%13,01 / 53
 HDP	%6,22 / 0	%5,24 / 22	%6,57 / 35

⁷⁷ Figure 3, Amount of Investments 2002-2014, <http://www.dogrulukpayi.com/beyanat/5559a741a7fb8> Accessed: 4/16/2016

*Figure 4: Elections Results; 2002, 2007, and 2011.*⁷⁸

The rate of the AKP as in general in Turkey has risen from 34 % to 49% in 2011's elections. However the other parties also have shown the increasing figures in this chronology. While CHP (Republican People's Party) and MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) had growing numbers in 2007 and 2011, HDP (Democratic Party of People)'s votes decrease in 2007, compared to 2002, but once again it gains its position even though with a small number in 2011. On another hand, the in the election of 2015, the percentage of the AKP decreased to 40, 9 %, but later on, the government went to an early election and once again the AKP increased this number up to 53, 41 % in November, 2015.

Evaluating the regions where the AKP was voted, it is possible to say that it has gained an enormous success in almost all provinces, except the Kurdish populated region mostly followed the pro-Kurdish party, HDP.



*Figure 5: General distribution of votes.*⁷⁹

As it is shown in the figure, the AKP has influence on almost all the country. However some parts are pointed according to the most influential parties, but in fact, the AKP is still an effective party in these regions.

One of the important remarkable cases to mention which forms the core aspect of the analysis of this paper is the position of AKP and Erdogan among Kurdish people. In fact it would be difficult to answer the question “why the voters chose the AKP?” but all in all, the

⁷⁸ Figure 4, <http://www.internethaber.com/2015-oy-sonuclari-ile-2011-ve-2007-karsilastirmasi-793044h.htm>
Accessed: 4/16/2016

⁷⁹ Figure 5, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/kasim-secim2015/> Accessed:4/16/2016

circumstances of the period between 2002 and 2015 had undeniable effect on this case. Since the AKP started its “Resolution Process” toward the solution of the Kurdish issue, Erdogan owned a respectful position among the Kurdish people. On another hand, while this process seemed fruitful at first, the hope to solve the issue took an important place in the public. Unlike the former government and the parties, the moderate approach of Erdogan to the Kurds also directed the attentions to Erdogan.

Besides the positive attraction to the AKP from the Kurdish side, the disappointing feelings toward the HDP, who seemed the representative of the Kurds, is also worth to mention. The Kurds who were tired of the conflicts between PKK and the Turkish government, in order to solve their issues, by choosing HDP did not give them any satisfactory rhetoric neither an action. However Erdogan seemed to be the only personality who could handle such problem. On another side, the passive approach of HDP to PKK to cope with the expectation of the society and the process led the Kurdish people to find an alternative, which was obviously the AKP. This was also shown in the presidential election when Erdogan was elected as the new president of the country after Abdullah Gul. Obviously the idea that Erdogan has handled this job as prime minister, he can also do much better when he is elected as president has grown among the educated Kurdish population.⁸⁰

The conservative image of Erdogan can also be evaluated at this aspect. This influences both Kurdish and Turkish conservative Muslim feelings. Since the Kurdish people in Turkey is known as traditional or conservatives, a leader who follows his religious paths seems more favorable. In comparison between Erdogan and the former and current leaders of Kurdish parties in the view of some Kurdish people, Erdogan has more chance to win their hearts.⁸¹

Currently the Turkish parliament consists of 550 members. This formation is divided as; AKP with 317, CHP with 133, HDP with 59, MHP with 40, and 1 independent MPs.⁸² Such parliament which is led by the AKP also seems as a parliament with diversities, such as; Ozcan Purcu as the first Roman candidate in Turkish history, three Armenian candidates, one Assyrian, Erol Dora, and finally Feleknaz Uca as a Yazidi candidate who was a former member of

⁸⁰ ZALEWSKI, Piotr, “Erdogan, The Kurds, and Turkey’s Presidential Elections”, Global Turkey in Europe, July, 2014, Available: http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/gte_c_13.pdf Accessed: 4/16/2016

⁸¹ “Turkey’s June 7, 2015: Parliamentary Election”, Turkei Analyse, 8. Juni, 2015, Available: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/tuerkei/11469.pdf> Accessed: 4/14/2016

⁸² Distribution of MPs in Turkish Parliament, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.dagilim Accessed: 4/16/2016

European Parliament.⁸³ Such candidates were elected in different parties and took their roles in the parliament. However, the majority of different ethnic MPs are selected by HDP. All in all, the new Turkish parliament for the first time in its history contains such diversity.

The presidency of the parliament is led by AKP's member, while there are two more members of AKP as deputy chairmen, and one HDP member and one from CHP. Six more AKP members are active as Clerk Member, three members from CHP and one from MHP. And administrative supervisors are also mostly chosen from AKP with four MPs and one from different parties as well. Besides, the parliament contains 81 female MPs. Once again the majority is in AKP with 34, followed by HDP with 23, and CHP with 21, and finally MHP with 3 members.

III.I. Kurds in Turkey's Political Arena

The emergence of the Kurds in the political arena in Turkey is known to be appeared in the early time of the foundation of the republic. Before the foundation, Kurds, with different organizations and cooperatively with *jön-Turkish* movements have stood against the Abdolhamed's regime, such as; *HEWI Kurt Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Hope Society), *Kürdistan Teavunn ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Progress and Development Society), *Kürt Istiklal Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Independence Society), *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Advancement Society), *Teşkilati İctimaiye Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Social Organization Society), and numerous Kurdish newspapers; *Kürdistan* (the first Kurdish newspaper), *Roja Kurd* (Kurdish Day), *Hetawi Kurd* (Kurdish Sun), *Jin* (Woman), and *Bangi Kurd* (Kurdish Call).⁸⁴ Even though during the war of independence, the Kurds, along with other minorities had contributed to effort to maintain the existence of the country.⁸⁵ But after the foundation of the republic, and the agreement of Lausanne, their political and national positions have developed on different basis. However these Kurdish organizations have cooperatively worked with the leader of that time, Mostafa Kamal Atatürk, against the sultan, after their success, those parties have been closed down by the order of Atatürk. Not only closing down of the organizations, together with the Lausanne Treaty,

⁸³ EL CANTO Royal Institute, 10 June, 2015, Available: <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/>, Accessed: 4/16/2016

⁸⁴ SARIGIL, Zeki, "Ethnic Groups at 'Critical Junctures': The Laz vs. Kurds", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2, 269–286, March 2012, Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2011.652778> Accessed: 4/9/2016

⁸⁵ HEPER, Metin, "The State and the Kurds in Turkey", Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p.2, Also available: <http://wiki.zirve.edu.tr/sandbox/groups/economicsandadministrativesciences/wiki/ff77d/attachments/98d22/W10-Heper.PDF> Accessed: 4/16/2016

the national identity of the Kurds also has been denied by the Turkish officials, as there were no provinces made for independent Kurdish state with division Kurdistan into four states.⁸⁶

The constitution of Turkish government as it was adopted since the foundation of the republic and changed with military coup in 1980, but still valid, clearly indicates the non-existence of any other nation, minorities and the language. Article 3 contains that “The state of Turkey with its nation and the state is an unbreakable unity, and its official language is Turkish.”⁸⁷ This article is also supported by the Article 4 which strictly orders to preserve this principle unquestionably.⁸⁸ By this way, the existence of the Kurds along with the other ethnic groups in the country was denied, and furthermore, their origin was related to the Turks as a second class people.⁸⁹

The period after the foundation of the republic was the most difficult stage for the Kurds. The emergence of Kurdish rebellions and the loss of countless lives as a consequence of such movements due the use of disproportionate force by the state against the Kurdish civilians caused the weakening and the collapse of Kurdish national movement. However the Turkish official history has recorded 29 Kurdish rebellions.⁹⁰ With the Dersim and Zilan genocides, many people have lost their lives and many of them were put in exile.⁹¹ However the Kurds with *Sheikh Said* rebellion, *Xoybun* Movement, *Dersim* rebellion, *Ararat* uprising, and with many other small scale movements have worked hard to preserve their national identity and values, but at the end they were not successful in such attempts. Not only suppressing the rebellions, but there was also a significant assimilation process against the Kurds for the favor of Turkish nationalist identity when the situation started to stabilize for them.⁹²

The *DDKD* (Revolutionary Eastern Organization), *Rizgari* (Independence), *PDK-Bakur* (Kurdistan Democratic Party-North), and *KAWA* movements which have emerged between 1970 and 80s have contributed the Kurdish national struggle by their own exertion. But being limited only as student movements, their actions were not in an effective level to surround and cover the whole national movement. These organizations together with other right and left wing movements have

⁸⁶ O'SHEA, Maria T., *Trapped Between the Map and Reality*, *Middle East Study*, New York, 2004, p.124-125

⁸⁷ Constitution of Republic of Turkey, Article 3, Available at: https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf Accessed: 4/9/2016

⁸⁸ Constitution of Republic of Turkey, Article 4

⁸⁹ KAHRAMAN, Ahmet, *Kurt Isyanlari*, Istanbul: Evrensel Press, 2nd Edition, 2004, p.21

⁹⁰ KAHRAMAN, Ahmet, p.22

⁹¹ BRUINSEN, Martin V., “The Suppression of Dersim Rebellion in Turkey”, University of Pennsylvania Press, p.1 Available: http://www.hum.uu.nl/medewerkers/m.vanbruinssen/publications/Dersim_rebellion.pdf Accessed: 4/9/2016

⁹² BARKEY, Henry J., and FULLER Graham E., “Turkey’s Kurdish Question”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No.1, 1997, Available: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329023?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents Accessed: 4/16/2016

ended up with military coup in 1980, and their leaders and effective members were either killed or kept in prison for many years.

The appearance of PKK (Kurdish Labor Party) in 80s constitutes the turning point of Kurdish national movement in Turkey. Being an armed group and covering all the parts of the Kurds in Turkey have provided PKK to gain a strong social ground. Not only the support of the Kurds in Turkey, PKK was also supported by external actors as well, such as; Soviet Union, Syrian government and the Kurds in Iraq and Iran.⁹³ And indeed, the development of Kurdish socialist thought also created a different dimension of the national struggle. The PKK and the other nationalist movements is distinguished but its social basis, that includes a sizable portion of workers and peasants, and also its advocating both socialism and independence of Kurdistan.⁹⁴ According to the conditions, time to time with ceasefire, PKK has continued its armed struggle and preserved its structure until today. Along with the arrest of its leader, Abdullah Ocalan, in 1999, PKK's motivation has weakened, but nevertheless they continued their activities.

Kurdish national movement has gained its legitimacy and legal position in early 90s. From the foundation of *HEP* (People's Labor Party) in 1989 until today, several Kurdish legal political parties have established, and for various reasons they have been closed down by the state. No doubt that the major reason of their closure was their relationship with the PKK, such as; *ÖZEP* (Freedom and Labor Party), *OZDEP* (Freedom and Democracy Party), *DEP* (Democrat Party), *HADEP* (Democratic Party of People), *DEHAP* (Democratic People Party), and *DTP* (Democratic Society Party). The People's Democratic Party (HDP) that is still active in the legal field in Turkey is known to be as a continuation of the closed parties, and recently has 59 members in the parliament of Turkey.

The Kurdish politics have been through a different period in 2000s. It can simple be called as multiparty era of the Kurds. During this period many Kurdish political parties are established and they are still maintaining their political activities in the legal environment. Forming different ideologies and different views for the solution of Kurdish question, generally they act independently, but sometimes they also take common decisions and declare public pronouncements. However, because of the conditions of election in Turkey, some of these parties could not achieve the right to be elected. Such as; *HDP* and *AZADI* (Freedom movement) have created a common list for the last election and could

⁹³ HATEM, Robert, and Dohrmann, Marc, "Turkey's Fix for the Kurdish Problem", Available: <http://www.meforum.org/meq/pdfs/3667.pdf> Accessed:4/16/2016

⁹⁴ HASANPOUR, Amir, "The Kurdish Experience", Journal of Middle East Report, No. 189, Jul-Aug, 1994, p.5 Available: <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer189/kurdish-experience> Accessed: 4/9/2016

gain the place in the parliament; on another hand; *PAK* (Kurdistan Freedom Party), *PAKURD* (Kurdistan Party), *T-KDP* (Kurdistan Democratic Party-Turkey) could not gain the desired level of the votes.

As the consequences of thereof, the Kurds in Turkish political arena have come so far through different stages. They have always declared the existence of their identity, however sometimes they fell into the weakness of legality. Not only concerning the Kurdish question but also to guarantee better social and political conditions, the Kurds have reared several world-renowned politicians. Thence, they have succeeded to announce the Kurdish question to the world's public opinion. As a result, this shows that the Kurdish question is tried to be solved in a peaceful and a diplomatic way, rather than with violence and bloodshed. Because this issue that caused armed conflicts between the state and the Kurds and resulted with civilian casualties from both parts, obviously could not be solved with many years. That is why the Kurds are trying to gain legitimacy for their political activities, and to solve this problem in a peaceful way.

III.II. AKP (JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY) AND KURDISH QUESTION (2003-2015)

The development of the Kurdish problem in this period, like all political situations, has clad in a completely different color. As the opposite of the former governments, the view of Erdogan toward the Kurdish questions has developed differently, and many steps have been taken in order to solve this issue. One of the most important steps taken in this period was granting some cultural rights to the Kurds. In addition, different commissions were created to solve the Kurdish issue. But in any case, it is important to mention that such developments were only for the purpose of distraction. Without any explanation of filling the inside, but just to hope the community will be discussed about the issue, the process was launched, so called "Kurdish initiative," or "Democratic initiative."⁹⁵ With this initiative, primarily, the prohibition on the Kurdish language was razed, a new television channel that broadcasts in Kurdish language was opened, and singing Kurdish songs was allowed. However, weather these initiatives are the basic demands of the Kurdish community or not, it is quite debatable. But in any case, mentioning such cultural rights unlike the former governments showed it as serious steps.

The Resolution process of the AKP that has taken place in 2013 contained several stages.

⁹⁵ Turkiye: Kurt Sorununun Cozumu ve PKK, European Report: NO:219, 11/9/2012 Available: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/turkey-cyprus/turkey/Turkish%20translations/219-turkey-the-pkk-and-a-kurdish-settlement-turkish.pdf> Accessed: 4/11/2016

1. March 21st, 2013; the letter of Abdullah Ocalan calling for the ceasefire was read in public.
2. March 23rd, 2013; PKK declares ceasefire.
3. March 29, 2013; the prime minister of the time, Recep T. Erdogan, claimed that the Resolution process is satisfactory progressing.⁹⁶
4. March 30; Erdogan declared that they would not allow PKK to leave the country with their weapons, but they should leave their weapons in the country.
5. April 1st; PKK claimed that they were not planning to give up the weapons.⁹⁷
6. April 3rd; BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) commission meets Ocalan, meanwhile Erdogan builds “Wise People” consist of intellectuals, actors, actresses, artists and musicians.
7. April 9; “Resolution Process Committee” is established in the parliament.
8. Human Rights and Freedom of Expression in the Context of the Draft Law on the Amendment of Certain Laws' was enacted by Parliament adopted by the General Assembly.
9. May 8; PKK, as it was announced earlier, started to pull out of the borders of Turkey.
10. June 15-16; The Northern Kurdistan Unity and Resolution conference is held, therefore, the main demand of the Kurdish people, such as, autonomy or federative system was declared to be taken under the law and should also be considered.⁹⁸

Acting in such a context, the AKP government, on another hand, did not stop its fights against the PKK movement, although the ceasefire has been declared several times. And besides, declaring as “the denying is over” has gained huge support to the government from different sections, especially the conservative parts of Kurdish people.⁹⁹ As parallel to this, distracting the PKK movement, which was leading the Kurdish liberation movement, was also directed in this process. Because of the intensification of the conflict with the PKK was often breaking the political balances against the AKP, and it has not yet been rendered ineffective enough to gain the status quo leads to military-civil bureaucratic initiatives. It was also causing an issue for the European Union process.¹⁰⁰ In this case,

⁹⁶ “Baslangictan Bu Gune Cozum Sureci” (Resolution Process, from the beginning until today) <http://www.cnnturk.com/fotogaleri/turkiye/baslangictan-bugune-gun-gun-cozum-sureci?page=56> Accessed: 4/12/2016

⁹⁷ “Kronoloji: 2013 Nevruz’undan bugüne” <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/kronoloji/kronoloji-2013-nevruzundan-bugune> Accessed: 4/12/2016

⁹⁸ “Cozum Suresi Acisindan” (At The Aspect of Resolution Process) <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/> Accessed: 4/12/2016

⁹⁹ Turkey Election, Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/07/turkey-election-preliminary-results-erdogan-akp-party> Accessed: 4/12/2016

¹⁰⁰ Turkey-PKK Tensions Continue to Impact Foreign Policy, Available at: <http://pomed.org/blog-post/us-policy/congress/turkey-pkk-tensions-continue-to-impact-foreign-policy-u-s-syria-efforts/> Accessed: 4/12/2016

the steps were taken by the AKP to halt the PKK's action which will reduce the fire of the conflict. Meetings and interviews were conducted with the PKK and Ocalan, and even such meetings were provided for the public attention. Also such meetings were clearly admitted by the government itself.¹⁰¹

All in all, declaring the "Kurdish initiative" in 2009, AKP, in this perspective, neither has taken the public idea of important Kurdish political actors, nor led the main elements of the reform program to a public debate.¹⁰² The details of this program has never been shared with the public, and therefore, it turned out as an empty program however it seemed to be an effective step at first. Besides, the opinions of Turkish nationalist sects were not taken into account and by very fast steps it resulted as a started fast finished fast situation. However, several stages were passed and many steps were taken in order to solve this issue, eventually it put the government and the Kurdish politicians and the people in a deeper dilemma, which was in between solution and dissolution. Thence, the details and the development of this process, its beginning and its ending shall be considered in order to analyze this era in a more fruitful way.

III.III.Toward the End of Solution: Uncertainties and Deadlocks

The solution process of Kurdish issue is also known as the process of the other issues as well. After the speech of Erdogan in Diyarbakir in 2005, as he declared that "Kurdish issue is my issue"¹⁰³, but in fact the concrete solution alternatives were conducted in 2009. Meanwhile, the government was dealing with the problems occurred in the military, eventually the power of the military has been reduced and taken under the government's control. In 2009, the Kurdish broadcast channel has opened by the name TRT 6, and followed by the project called "Democratic Initiative". Later on this project has adopted as "National Unity and Solidarity Project". As it is understood, the idea of the Turkish government which is based on "One Flag, One Country, One Nation"¹⁰⁴ was still valid, however the Kurds could or can have some cultural rights, but they shall not go beyond this idea. Once again the Kurds were indirectly denied to be classified as a nation, but their position were tried to put under the

¹⁰¹ MIT-PKK Gorusmeleri sizdi (MIT-PKK meetings) Available: <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/mit-pkk-gorusmeleri-sizdi.a87SUp4ta0akgKLpkhb5-w> Accessed: 4/11/2016

¹⁰² GUNES, C., Turkey's Kurdish Question: Dilemmas of War and Peace, p.12, Available at: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=turkeys-kurdish-question---dilemmas-of-war-and-peace.pdf&site=12> Accessed: 4/11/2016

¹⁰³ "Kurt Sorunu benim sorunumdur" Erdogan's speech in 2005, Archives of BBC Turkish, Available: http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/news/story/2005/08/050812_turkey_kurds.shtml Accessed: 4/11/2016

¹⁰⁴ Erdoğan: "Tek Millet, Tek Bayrak, Tek Vatan, Tek Devlet", Available: <http://www.haberler.com/erdogan-tek-millet-tek-bayrak-tek-vatan-tek-devlet-7350761-haberi/> Accessed: 4/11/2016

umbrella of solidarity. Also by removing the “emergency case” on some regions and granting some cultural rights, the peaceful ground has been prepared and some hope was given to the Kurds.

The most concrete step of this process was taken when 34 PKK members entered Turkey from Habur border in 2009.¹⁰⁵ However, this was strongly condemned by the opposition in the parliament, and also attracted the reaction of Turkish nationalist sects. On another hand, the representative of Kurdish political movement in the parliament, *DTK* (Congress of Democratic Society) was closed down. And this event was recorded as “the trauma of Habur”.

As it was mentioned above, this process was also distracted by other issues which the government had to deal with. Such as Gezi events, Ergenekon trials and Fethullah Gulen’s community have stopped to take further action for the solution. However, the “Democratic initiative” was still in the agenda of the government. At the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, another step which was meaningful for the Kurdish side was taken. While they were being agitated for the “education in mother tongue”, the government provided Kurdish language as an optional course at schools.¹⁰⁶ On another hand, banning Ocalan to meet his lawyers was still keeping the tension. This has been reacted by the political prisoners as entering on hunger strike. Although by the direct order of Ocalan, these hunger strikes came to an end, and this started another process. By this way, Ocalan was allowed to meet BDP-HDP committees in a regular pattern as well as with his lawyers. And the first fruitful result of these meetings appeared at the Nowruz of 2013.

Ocalan clearly called PKK to give up their weapons and to leave the country:

*“We came to a point where we have to leave our weapons, and let the ideas and politics speak. The modernist paradigms which deny and ignore are collapsed. This is the blood that comes from not only Turks, Kurds, Laz or Charkaz. This blood comes from the heart of this geography.”*¹⁰⁷

For the second time, Ocalan calls PKK to create a congress in order to stop its actions completely in 2015’s Nowruz.¹⁰⁸ With these steps, the Resolution Process starts as both sides expected. However the unstable situation of the region, especially the civil war in Syria, brought a different dimension to the process. One of the events that adversary effected the process was the attack of ISIS to the Kurdish district in Syria, called Kobani. The government was accused to aid ISIS against

¹⁰⁵ “34 PKK 'lı Habur Sınır Kapısı'ndan girip teslim oldu” Available: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/acilim-da-kritik-an/siyaset/siyasetdetay/19.10.2009/1151953/default.htm> Accessed: 4/11/2016

¹⁰⁶ Kurtce Secmeli Ders mi? Available at: <http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/749821-kurtce-secmeli-ders-mi> Accessed: 4/11/2016

¹⁰⁷ MIROGLU, Orhan, “Misak-i Milliden Esme Ruhuna Giden Uzun ince Bir Yol”, Institute of Strategic Thinking, April, 2015, p.11

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.14

the Kurds in Syria, especially to YGP/PYD. This brought an end to the Resolution Process. The government was protested in many Kurdish districts, and these protests caused an enormous tension between the Kurdish people and the government.

The situation in political front was not so much different from the streets. Once in the parties and parliamentary rostrums the speeches was referring to fraternity, this time the parts called each other for reckoning. And such events had strong influence in the elections. As a result of this complex situation, when the government was not established in the elections of June 7th, the decision was taken for an early election in November 1st. Once again the AKP, by the majority of the votes, became the sole ruling party in the government by the premiership of Ahmet Davutoglu.

In addition, blaming PKK for not keeping its words and starting the armed struggle again, the government pointed as the main obstacle of this Resolution Process. Also suggesting to returning back to the period of 2013, Turkish official also declared to the possibility of the Peace process. At this aspect, the Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu emphasized “if there will be any resolution, and national unity and solidarity, the promises that have been given in March 2013 must be kept.”¹⁰⁹

As a result, it is possible to say that the Kurdish initiative had consisted of a fruitless tree. The state of emergency that has been removed from some regions was once again reviewed, and the PKK began its armed actions against the Turkish forces. Another different dimension of the conflict is that once these armed struggles were limited in the rural areas, but this time it has spread to the cities. Turkey, confronting similar situation as in 90s, prepared several action plans with the thought of “finishing terror.” Many operations were done in different parts of the country by giving the full authority to the military and the police in order to ensure the confidence. Besides, a lot of people were detained for aiding the PKK. Coming to the present time, these conflicts had created a chaotic situation in Turkey. And so the process was finished before it was implemented.

III.IV. Kurdish Nationalism versus Democratization of Turkey

Evaluation of the Kurds as a nation and ensuring their national rights and freedoms has always been an important subject which was always uttered. Besides the basic principles of a community to be addressed as a nation, such as; language, culture, history and beliefs, the necessity of achieving national freedom should be put forward in a more open way. Although there have been many theories

¹⁰⁹ Prime Minister Davutoglu’s Speech (July 8, 2015), Available: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/basbakan-ahmet-davutoglu-cozum-sureci-icin-neden-o-tarihi-verdi-29490528> Accessed: 4/12/2016

on the term of “nation”, with and beyond such theories, the position of the Kurds as a nation is an undeniable fact. Especially such a community that forms approximately 20 million population in Turkey, have worked extensively to achieve the basic elements that consists the requirements of being a “nation”, their language, culture, rights and freedoms in both legal and illegal ways. But when it comes to the term of solution of the issues, this case has been interpreted in different ways, especially evaluated in different sizes by the Kurds.

In this sense, in the last elections, HDP, which was supported by the majority of the Kurds, has viewed the Kurdish question as democratic case rather than as a national concern. Therefore, it has changed its party program in this manner, instead of being only a Kurdish party HDP has become a party where other beliefs, ideologies and ethnic groups can find their place.¹¹⁰ By covering different ideas and ideologies from different ethnic groups as well as some Turkish origin members, the Kurdish national left its place to democratic struggle in the parliament of Turkey.

Such changes in the Kurdish national movement did not remain limited by the HDP, it also reflected in the discourse and actions of the PKK. While at the beginning PKK started its action for establishing an independent Kurdistan, after the arrest of Ocalan in 1999, and with the new political stream in 2003, it declared their attention toward the unity of the country and to participate in democratization process of Turkey. In August 2008, the 10th congress, PKK declared that the attraction of the states where the rights of Kurdish people was denied should be drawn toward the democracy and equality.¹¹¹ At this point, it is crucial that the discourses and actions of PKK and as parallel to it HDP, rather than struggling in the concept of Kurdish liberation movement, they are considering to take a part in the democratic struggle of the country relatively respecting the principle of the common homeland. Supporting this idea, the HDP council member Hatip Dicle’s words which indicates that only 5 per cent of Kurdish people would want to have an independent Kurdistan¹¹² was shown the impossibility of an independent Kurdistan in Turkey by HDP.

This case can be evaluated in one point; using which is the Marxist/Leninist ideology that PKK has established its ideological ground toward the feudalists and capitalists in the Kurdish regions and the rise of proletarian with a new theoretical discourse that is called “Democratic confederalism” drawn by Ocalan. However it seems that PKK seems to be being in a paradox of the Marxist

¹¹⁰ HDP Party Program, Available: <http://www.hdp.org.tr/parti/parti-programi/8> Accessed: 4/12/2016

¹¹¹ PKK Program and Initiatives, August 26, 2008, Available <http://www.pkkonline.com/tr/index.php?sys=article&artID=174> Accessed: 4/13/2016

¹¹² “Hatip Dicle: Kurtlerin sadece yuzde 5’I bagimsizlik ister”, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/hatip-dicle-kurtlerin-sadece-yuzde-5-i-bagimsizlik-ister-664046-gundem/> Accessed: 4/13/2016

interpretation of the nation-state, but obviously the Marxist discourse about nationalism crucially matches with its actions, as Lenin claims “the principle of nationality in bourgeois community is an undeniable historical fact, and a Marxist who evaluates the society may support the rightfulness of such movements. But such support must be only toward what is progressive in order not to take the nationalist shape, so that the proletarian belief would not be darkened with bourgeois belief.”¹¹³ Besides with such attitudes, it is going beyond the theories and other interpretations regarding the principles of “nation” and “nation-statehood.” At his point, the armed conflicts between PKK and *Hezbollah* (Islamic organization in Turkey), consequently the negative approach of PKK toward the Islamic sects within the Kurdish community appears to be a great misconception and as a dilemma in the followings of it. On another hand, PKK also stood, and still standing, against the Kurdish nationalist sects who are defending the Kurdish national ideas, identity and national values. At this regard, it is possible to say that PKK and HDP are manipulating the struggle of the Kurds for their national rights, rather than leading. Although demanding the autonomous Kurdish region in Turkey may seem to be separation from Turkey, but PKK council denied such intention.¹¹⁴

As the opposite of the PKK and HDP, the parties which were established on the principle of Kurdish nationalism, such as; *AZADI*, *KDP-T*, *PAK*, *PAKURD*, and *HAK-PAR*, unlike defending the democratization of Turkey, are clearly defending the Kurdish national rights, therefore, they believe that the Kurdish issue would not be solved without giving Kurdistan a legal position and status. Regarding the solution, they claim that this status also can be provided by legal and diplomatic way, rather than with weapons. In the next part of the work, I shall analyze the approaches of these parties in a broader frame. However the main demand of these parties is to establish an independent Kurdistan, but according to the recent circumstance, they believe that this point can be reached in different stages. Also, due the dominance of PKK and HDP on the Kurdish people, and their history in the struggle, such parties could not be as successful as it is desired.

In a general sense, one hand; the new Kurdish parties based on the principles of Kurdish national freedoms and rights, and on another hand; PKK and HDP who have struggled since years but eventually changed their lines. But in fact, there is an important point which all sides did not pay much attention to the public demands. So far, there hasn't been any significant effort to show the public opinion of Kurdish people about the solution of their issue or what they really demand. However

¹¹³ LENIN, V.I., *The Right of Self-Determination*, Ankara: Eris Press, 6th Edition, 2004, p.45-46

¹¹⁴ “Cemil Bayik: Kurtler Ulus-devlete karsi” <http://www.son.tv/haber-199661> Accessed: 4/13/2016.

everybody desires to have a peaceful environment, but in fact there hasn't been any concrete effort which would show the opinion of Kurdish people as a whole. Therefore, the community seems to be stuck between PKK-HDP, new founded parties, and the government. Consequently, since the Kurdish issue was evaluated in political basis, but its social basis was left behind.

IV. KURDISH QUESTION, AUTHONOMY AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE VIEW OF KURDISH POITICAL PARTIES

Since the stages which the Kurdish national movement and the political conjunctures are evaluated, it is crucial to see the approaches toward the issue of Kurdish question to be developed in different parameters. Various interpretations have been made on the issue by variety of sides, as well as it was named in disparate ways. While some fractions identify it as an issue of education, economy or terror, the parts who carry the Kurdish national consciousness emphasize that the question is a certain national issue or an issue of Kurdistan which is related to the national rights and freedoms. However it contains educational, economical and terror issues, but in fact it would not be a condition to change its entire character. Because, if the roots of the problem are observed it clearly appears that neither it is linked to the economic aspects nor the education or terror. On another hand, appraising the case in the terror and security axis would deepen the problem and cause the deadlocks rather than providing solutions.¹¹⁵

Basically, the Kurdish national movements that are emerged during and after the era of Republic and the main purpose of their actions are based on the principles of protecting the Kurdish national values and creating a free Kurdistan in order to live with these values in a free environment. Besides, the movements that have appeared out of the borders of Turkey; such as *Mustafa Barzani*, *Sheikh Mahmoud Barzanji* in Iraqi Kurdistan, and *Simko Shkak* and *Qady Mohammad* in Iranian Kurdistan have served the same purpose. This affair would certainly argue educational, terroristic and economic means of the issue that the Kurdish national movements were and are contributed to preserve the national rights.

¹¹⁵ TODOROVA, Antonia, "Turkish Security Discourse and Policies", Information & Security: An International Journal, p.111, Available: <http://procon.bg/article/turkish-security-discourses-and-policies-kurdish-question>
Accessed:4/4/2016

Some of the foreign scholars who observe the Kurdish question explain this case as a minority problem which the rights of some people are usurped by another nation.¹¹⁶ Also, economic, democratic, human rights, and international aspects are taken in account.¹¹⁷ In addition, the late arising national composition is also uttered.¹¹⁸ According to the report of *Human Right Watch* published in 2015, trials continued of Kurdish political activists, journalists, students, and lawyers on widely used terrorism charges such as “membership of an armed organization.” The evidence against them in most cases concerned nonviolent political association and protest. However, in March the government took the welcome steps of abolishing the Special Heavy Penal courts whose remit was terrorism offenses, and cutting the maximum period for pretrial detention to 5 years (from 10), resulting in the release on bail of many defendants. Among those bailed were hundreds of defendants tried for alleged links to the outlawed Union of Kurdistan Communities (KCK), including human rights defender Muharrem Erbey, bailed in April after spending over four years in pretrial detention on terrorism charges. The abusive application of terrorism charges remains a serious problem.¹¹⁹

However, considering the population of the Kurdish people living in Turkey, defining this case as a minority problem has been argued and opposed. Besikci claims that such definition for such huge number of population, who live in this territory since centuries as locals but not as outsiders,¹²⁰ as a minority issue goes opposite to their beliefs, history, language, and social and cultural structure. At this point, the background of the case does not include any characteristics of minority, but in fact the roots outstretch to the oppression the right of building an independent state of a nation.¹²¹

The steps were taken in order to solve this question with such naming that are resulted with non-solution is a trivial case. Indeed, the violent actions of PKK have drawn the attentions to the security aspects. Additionally, perceiving the case as a terror or security outlooks have generalized and

¹¹⁶ CORNELL, Svante E., “The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics”, 2001 Foreign Policy Research Institute. Published by Elsevier Science Limited, Available:

http://old.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/publications/TURKEY_KURDS.pdf Accessed: 4/14/2016

¹¹⁷ BERIKER, Nimet, “The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey”, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union, Available: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.454.7405&rep=rep1&type=pdf> Accessed: 4/14/2016

¹¹⁸ BARKEY, Henri J, and FULLER, Graham E., “Turkey’s Kurdish Question”, ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC., New York, 1998, p.6, Available:

https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer_public/c5/3f/c53f7ed9-172e-45b0-95a2-88a3d4f19351/cny_book_1998_turkey.pdf Accessed: 4/14/2016

¹¹⁹ Human Rights Report, 2015, Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/turkey> Accessed: May 7, 2016

¹²⁰ BESIKCI, Ismail, Devletlerarasi Somurge Kurdistan, INSTITUT KÜRDE DE PARÍS 106, me La Fayette, 75010 PARÍS Depot Legal : juin 1990, p.17

¹²¹ Ibid., p.18

encompassed all the Kurds in the country, and therefore, it has required taking military actions in order to preserve the security for the aim of solution. Consequently it has ended with tough and unfortunate results. But in reality, the violent actions from both sides could not solve this problem; on the contrary it has deepened the problems and carried its problematic form to the present time.

Examining the Kurdish question in the framework of education, like in the case of terror also was argued as a deficient perspective. Since the educational status of Turkey is not related to the Kurds neither to any other groups of people, it is a general situation that covers the entire population of the country. The arguments that are based on the numbers of the universities in the regions where the Kurdish people live; 30 universities and educational institutions,¹²² besides the number Kurdish students who study in different areas and the Kurdish academics who carry out their duties in past and the present supports this argument.

The gap of economic development of the Kurdish regions compared to the other region is an undeniable fact. For instance, while Izmir is in the 4th raw in terms of human capital and life standards,¹²³ Diyarbakir takes the 67th place.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, observing this issue as a tool of political case is debatable. On another side, any crime that is committed by a Kurdish person who has migrated for purpose of work and lives in other region should be taken as standard level of crime rather than political. Additionally, the investments that are done in Kurdish regions did not bring an end to the issues.

Besides defining Kurdish question by the Turkish government or the officials, the definitions of the Kurdish political parties that are active in Turkey's political arena differ from each other according to the aims and purposes of their activities as well is mentioned in the party programs. Apart from the definition, their perspectives on the question and the alternative ways of solution of this question form the basic principle of their agendas. All in all, the principles which are the parties are founded by, and the political grounds that are being active on build the road where they evaluate the case and solutions they suggest.

At this point, several Kurdish political parties were founded in Turkey and took part in Turkey's political arena. Some of them could achieve the right to be elected and have contributed in

¹²² "Turkiyenin Universiteler Haritasi" (Map of Universities in Turkey),

Available: <http://www.sabah.com.tr/egitim/2011/09/04/turkiyenin-universiteler-haritasi>, Accessed: 4/20/2016

¹²³ IZMIR BOLGE PLANI (Regional Plan of Izmir), 2010-2013, Izmir Development Agency, Available: <http://www.izka.org.tr/> Accessed: 4/20/2016

¹²⁴ DIYARBAKIR BOLGE PLANI (Regional Plan of Diyarbakir), 2014, Karacadag Development Agency, Available: <http://www.urfamemarge.gov.tr/> Accessed: 4/20/2016

the parliament, however some could not reach the level that is required for the election. Such as; HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) and AZADI (Freedom) Movements cooperatively acted for the elections that were held in 2015, and HAK-PAR (Rights and Freedoms Party) was involved independently. PDK-T (Kurdistan Democratic Party), PAKURD (Kurdistan Party), and PAK (Kurdistan Freedom Party) were not able to achieve the desired rate for the election, but they are still actively participating in political activities.

Finally, in order to observe the structures of Kurdish political parties in Turkey, and their perception of the present question, it is worth to analyze their own party programs, charters and the views and thought of the leaders. Therefore, their thoughts shall be analyzed separately in order to serve to clarify the general and specific structures of the Kurdish issue.

IV.I. PKK (Kurdistan Labors Party)

The PKK, as emerged in a sensitive political period in the history of Turkey as a student movement, was founded in 1978¹²⁵ by its founding leader Abdullah Ocalan and the Central Committee including M. Hayri Durmus, Cemil Bayik, Mazlum Dogan, Mehmet Karasungur, Kesire Yildirim, and Sahin Donmez who came from radical political student circles in urban centers.¹²⁶ As the opposite of other Kurdish movements which are founded and led by tribal leaders and clerics, PKK was found as a party based not only the purpose of Kurdish national liberation but also on an ideological ground. Basically aimed to establish the independent Kurdistan, PKK was also interested in the social formation of Kurdish society. Ideologically linked with the Marxist-Leninist thoughts, whether the political developments in Turkey or the social structure of the Kurds, PKK has evolved in in different parameters of Kurdish national movement.

Kurdistan Devriminin Yolu-Manifesto (The Road of Kurdistan Revolution-Manifesto) which was written by Ocalan in 1976 was adopted as the basic ideological source of the organization where the aims and the goal of PKK were clearly mentioned as well as conducting the regional and international policies. Especially mentioning on the concepts of *capitalism*, *imperialism* and *independence*,¹²⁷ as drawing the main purpose and structure and also the political ideology of the organization, the book stands as the manifesto of the organization that is sourced from socialist ideas.

¹²⁵ "PKK'nin Kurulus Oyusu" PKK official website, <http://www.pkkonline.net/tr/index.php?sys=article&artID=189> Accessed: 4/22/2016

¹²⁶ HEVIAN, Rodi, "The Main Kurdish Political Parties, in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey", Middle East Review of International Affairs, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Summer 2013), p.5

¹²⁷ OCALAN, Abdullah, *Kurdistan Devriminin Yolu*, Germany: Serxwebun Press, 5th Edition, 1993, p. 32

On another hand, the structure of its revolutionary movement was built on the principle of National Democratic Revolution.¹²⁸ Ocalan also clearly indicates the PKK's goal as he claims:

*“Due the features and the goals of Kurdistan Revolution, the duties of Kurdistan revolution foresees the creation of an independent and democratic Kurdistan”*¹²⁹

During and after the military coup in 1980, PKK has chosen Syria as the training camp in order to complete its development and reconstruction of. Meanwhile, several leadership cadres and partisans had been executed in the prison. However, the violent policies that have been implemented due to the political conditions of that period strengthened the trust and support of Kurdish people to the PKK. Thus, it has implemented the first armed action as a revolutionary movement in 1984.¹³⁰ However, the PKK's armed structure and its seriousness for its goal had resulted with the supports and new members, the violent actions of PKK against the government and especially against the civilians caused a negative reaction as well. And therefore, PKK was adopted as a terrorist organization.¹³¹ While the tension between PKK and the Turkish government has risen during 90s, the capture of Ocalan put the organization on a different level. Even though, from 1990 to 1999 bilateral and unilateral ceasefires were declared, but at this point, PKK has stopped its attacks to civilians and military centers.

On another hand, the capture of Ocalan has also reflected the rhetoric of PKK. Marxist-Leninist thoughts and the goal of independent Kurdistan were replaced with *democratic republic* and *common land*. This new strategy of PKK has adopted in the 7th Congress in 2000 as “Democratic Republic” which is based on living in one country in a peaceful environment rather than building an independent Kurdistan.¹³² As in such: *“to resolve the congestions and the deadlocks experienced in Turkey, to pave the way for democratic transformation and to take Turkey to the democratic salvation, thus, to remove the oligarchic structure of the Republic, and to create the democratic republic, PKK has been engaged to initiate peace and democratic transformation,”*¹³³ the organization has clearly declared its transformation from a national movement into an international initiative. The congresses

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.120

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 121

¹³⁰ “Responses to Information Requests - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada”, p.1 Available at: <https://www.justice.gov> Accessed: 4/22/2016

¹³¹ “Terrorist Groups”, Annual Report of USA to Congress on terrorism, p.103, Available at: <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/tar2014.pdf> Accessed: 4/23/2016

¹³² “PKK'nin 1999-2005 Donemi Eylem Faaliyetleri” <http://www.terororgutleri.com> Accessed: 4/23/2016

¹³³ PKK 7th CONGRESS, 2000, p.9, Available at: <http://www.serxwebun.org/arsiv/218/files/assets/downloads/publication.pdf> Accessed: 4/23/2016

and the decisions were followed by the 8th congress and eventually by changing the name to *KADEK* (Kurdish Freedom and Democracy Party) in 2002. However this name was changed into *KONGRA-GEL* (Kurdistan People Congress) in 2003; and also new divisions were created within the party, such as *HPG* (People's Protection Power) as military wing, *PJAK* (Kurdistan Free Life Party) in Iran, *PCDK* (Democratic Solution Party) in Iraqi Kurdistan, and *PYD* (Democratic Unity Party) in Syria. Finally PKK initiated the civil role in its democratic transformation and therefore gave more importance to its urban organization.

The relationship of PKK with the Turkish government has shown more positive consequences in early era of Erdogan. Due the initiation of “*Democratic Resolution*” and peace processes, the PKK has directly been addressed and several meetings were arranged for the purpose of solution. As it was mentioned before, however, at the end of the peace process, the tension between two parties once again rose and resulted with the resent situation in Turkey and currently both PKK and the government are in struggle with each other. Finally the conflict between them gained more tension when PKK started to attack the cities and especially to the civilians.

Perspectives of PKK on Kurdish Question; Past and Present

Since its foundation, the observation and the perception of PKK has shown in different ways due the political events and different developments. It can easily be said that the PKK did not show a stable perspective on the Kurdish issue according to its own conditions. As it was mentioned before, while the PKK emerged with the idea of independent Kurdistan, later on this idea was left behind and alternatively different decisions were made. In addition, observing the tactics and ways that are used, new tactics were created for new purposes. Especially, after the capture of Abdullah Ocalan, PKK has entered into completely different transformation, therefore, different proposals for the solution of Kurdish issue has been set.

In the *Kurdistan Devriminin Yolu-Manifesto* (Road to Kurdistan Revolution-Manifesto) which was written by Ocalan in 1978, the establishment of an independent and democratic Kurdistan has been determined as a first goal and as a basic principle. The reason why the perception of PKK is mentioned with the perspectives of Ocalan is that because PKK has never made any decision by itself but only Ocalan has the right to make decision and resolutions, and this is still a valid in the principles of PKK as it always has been. Stemming from the Marxist-Leninist ideology, this revolution has been

emphasized as a proletarian revolution,¹³⁴ and to reach the goal of the united, independent, and democratic Kurdistan, the leftist ideology was clearly indicated.¹³⁵ Another attention point here is also creating alliance with socialist groups and countries.¹³⁶ The PKK's *Declaration of Establishment* which was published at the same period includes that the PKK appoints itself as the leading force of Kurdish national liberation struggle, eventually the circumstances of achievement of the liberation has been recommended. As the Turkish government has shown as a capitalist and colonial power, the revolutionary tactics have been taken as a basis as in such: "For the PKK, the revolutionary terror is an indispensable method of struggle against civil and official police that plagued the organizational entity and agents and agent provocateurs."¹³⁷ Moreover, throwing off the bourgeoisies and feudalism is enumerated as one of the most important principles to reach the national liberation.¹³⁸ Besides, the right of self-determination is also noted as the natural national right in the organization's program.¹³⁹

In the 1st, 2nd, and the 3rd Congresses, PKK did not abandon its orders and methods, moreover its battle was not limited only with the Turkish government, but also different personalities and institutions were targeted. While in the 1st congress, eliminating the Turkish security forces, intelligence officials, influential and popular personalities, and tribal leaders was mentioned as the primary targets,¹⁴⁰ opening new institutions within the organizations was decided and also the battle was expanded to seven fields; Botan, Garzan, Amed, Serhat, Mardin, Gap, and Dersim.¹⁴¹

In the 4th National Congress which was held in 1994, PKK insisted on the independence, and therefore, more attention was given to its restructuring in abroad. According to the decisions, the members who live in the Middle East and in Europe have been distinctly called for this war. And more importantly, the establishment of *Kurdistan Independent Front* was one of the resolutions.¹⁴² By the 5th congress in 1995, on one hand strengthening of the armed struggle was touched upon, and on

¹³⁴ Ocalan, Abdullah, *Kurdistan Devriminin Yolu-Manifesto*, , Germany: Serxwebun Press,6th Edition, 1993, p.6

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.127

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 126

¹³⁷ PKK Kurulus Bildirisi (PKK's Declaration of Establishment), p.38, Available:

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B4HO5r4WOpdzT25HUEZ4ODI1SW8/edit?pref=2&pli=1> Accessed:4/24/2016

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.38

¹³⁹ PKK Party Program, Available: <http://www.sosyalistforum1.net> Accessed:4/24/2016

¹⁴⁰ PKK 1st Congress, Available <http://www.terororgutleri.com/> Accessed:4/24/2016

¹⁴¹ PKK 3rd Congress, Available: <http://www.terororgutleri.com/pkk-teror-orgutunun-3-kongresi/> Accessed:4/24/2016

¹⁴² PKK 4th Congress, Serxwebun Press, 1991, p.27

another hand supporting the legal parties in Turkey was decided, and therefore the development of *DHP* (Democratic People's Party) was concluded.¹⁴³

Ocalan's arrest and bringing to Turkey in 1999 has been a turning point in the history of PKK. During that time the party has had huge losses and is weakened facing the state's operations. Thus, the PKK has experienced some obligations in its charter to enter into a fundamental change. As the purpose as well as the tactics, the party has entered into a path to becoming a different organization. In the 7th congress held in 2000, the terms which are used before, such as; independence and national liberation were replaced with peace and brotherhood. The *ARGK* (Independent Kurdistan Army) that has been established before was dissolved and alternatively a peaceful project was lunched instead of armed projects under the adaptation of "Peace Project".¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, in lieu of *war of people* which has been carried out with the concept of *front line*, the people's democratic organizations to respond the political, social and cultural needs were implemented.¹⁴⁵ It can openly be expressed that the PKK now appeals to the democratic discourse rather than revolutionary discourse. Besides, division of the country and establishment of the independent Kurdistan was replaced with democratization of Turkey and Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood.

The PKK has drawn a new angle with the concept of democratic liberation includes both Kurdish and Turkish people, as well as the other ethnic groups, in place of national liberation. Overcoming the process of resistance and going through the process of democratic liberations as a whole was represented as a basic requirement.¹⁴⁶ Also, one of the most important points is that the PKK's perspective for the solution of Kurdish question was suggested in the aim of democratic solutions, and hereby, the Turkish government was pinned down for the solution processes.¹⁴⁷ The convention that is called *21st Century Kurdish Strategy* was aimed to find solution for the Kurdish question not only in Turkey but also in the other parts as well, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.¹⁴⁸ The change from national liberation into democratic liberation was emphasized by Ocalan as:

"During the revolutionary people war, the dogmas in the PKK that could not pass into scientific and philosophic transformation became complex. At this point, the authoritarian and nation-statist elements came to the fore. As much as it came to the fore, this rooted the dogmatism. The

¹⁴³ PKK 5th Congress, Article 3.4., Serxwebun Press, 1995, p.205

¹⁴⁴ PKK 7th Congress, Part 3, Serxwebun Press, 2000, p.11

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.15

¹⁴⁶ PKK 8th Congress, Serxwebun Press, 2002, p.7

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.14

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.15

authoritarian approaches suppressed the democratic approaches. Party authority led to command authority, and the command authority led to personal power. A sort of micro-nation-states occurred. Rather than democratic, the authoritarian and nation-statist interpretation of Leninist model party affected the PKK as it affected the socialist world. Since such approach was dominant, the government corruption was inevitable. Ultimately, the real social society, hence, the disintegration of nation-states started."¹⁴⁹

Subsequently, the 10th congress held in 2008, the struggle against the social and political issues in the Middle East, and the statist dogmatism, concept of nation-state, colonialism, classic regional status quo, and the exacts of global imperialism, therefore, in order to discard from the issues caused by such elements, the *Democratic Middle East Confederation* project was represented, and consequently, PKK has renounced the goal of independent Kurdistan, and has claimed that not the independent Kurdistan but the *Democratic Confederalism* would be the solution of the Kurdish question.¹⁵⁰

Ocalan explains the uselessness of national struggle and the nation-state as such:

*"The nation-state itself is an adjective, an ideological identification, not the reality itself. Nations cannot have state. Even the classes in the narrow sense cannot have state."*¹⁵¹

Moreover, the concept of Ocalan which the nationalist, leftist, and religious concepts cannot be the solution of the Kurdish issues¹⁵² constitutes an important criterion of the PKK's view toward the Kurdish case. More interestingly, Ocalan claims that the Kurds are not even a nation.¹⁵³ As a result, Ocalan signifies the unnecessary effort of the Kurds to establish the nation-state with his words as:

*"Being state-oriented part itself is the opposite of the ideals of equality and freedom which we qualify as socialism, it is contradictory. The parties intended to state cannot be expected to reach the ideals of equality and freedom."*¹⁵⁴

Finally, at the 11th congress of the PKK, the solution of Kurdish issue with democratic expansions was reported under the principle of Democratic Confederalism.¹⁵⁵ But eventually, PKK came to another resolution, and recently insisting on the principle of Democratic Autonomy. After all,

¹⁴⁹ OCALAN, Abdullah, *Demokratik Ugarlik Manifestosu*, Vol.5, 3rd Edition, Azadi Press, 2013, p.323

¹⁵⁰ PKK 10th Congress, Article 13.

¹⁵¹ Ocalan, Abdullah, *Bir Halki Savunmak*, Istanbul: Cetin Press, 2004, p.189

¹⁵² Ibid., p.190

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.191

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.229

¹⁵⁵ PKK 11th Congress, Available: <http://www.kurdistan-post.eu/tr/siyaset/pkk-11-kongresi-bildirgeyle-aciklandi>
Accessed: 4/24/2016

the recent resolution of the PKK requires creating the autonomous regions in Turkey, and it is worth to mention that the demand of the PKK is not only for the Kurds but it is also for the other ethnic groups as well. The PKK has presented this resolution to the Turkish government via HDP, but later on has faced the negative reaction of the state, PKK appointed its partisans and militias for the declaration of the autonomy unilaterally. In this declaration that recommends the departure of Turkey into autonomous administrations, advocates the solution considering the geographical, social, economic, cultural needs, and democratic participation.¹⁵⁶ Besides, taking rights of the Kurds and other minorities under the legal protection is one of these suggestions.¹⁵⁷ However the ongoing conflict which is taking part in the recent situation in Turkey is the result of declaration of this project. Once again the tension between PKK and the Turkish government has risen and there has not been any agreement yet. Even though, the Peace Process and Kurdish Initiatives were lunched during Erdogan's era, unfortunately the projects did not give any fruitful results. Hereby, the country is going through an inconvenient stage which was not being expected.

Last of all, it is clearly observed that the PKK did not show any stable position for the solution of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. Starting from the principle of independent Kurdistan, and later on initiating new instruments and by making new decisions, the PKK has exhibited different and contrasting approaches. On another hand, linking the solution of the Kurdish issue with the personality of Ocalan in the PKK's perspective deepens the roots of the issue even more and makes the situation more complicated. The recent resolution suggested by the PKK with the principle of Democratic Autonomy is a valid alternative for the Kurdish issue demanded by the party and also supported by the HDP as well. And this resolution also has been expressed by the HDP members both in the parliament and in their own congresses. Such perspective of the party caused the conflict to be carried out in the cities which previously seen in the rural areas. Thence, the armed struggle of the PKK in order to sell the government on this project is being used as the basic strategy which the PKK follows.

IV.II. HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party)

The party which was carrying out its activities under the name of *Peace and Democracy Party* has changed its name and adopted the new party structure as People's Democracy Party in 2013. The

¹⁵⁶ PKK Demokratik Ozerklik Raporu, (Democratic Autonomy Report) Article 2, Available: <http://www.pkkonline.com> Accessed:4/24/2016

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., Article 5

bloc which was adopted with *Democracy Congress of the People*, was established at the behest of imprisoned Kurdish leader, Abdullah Öcalan, as part of his plans to transform the Kurdish political movement into a ‘party of Turkey’ in order to become a legitimate political actor by shedding its ethnic based politics¹⁵⁸ that includes variety of minority groups, such as; Alevis, Armenians, Laz, Arabs and Assyrians. Therewithal, the co-chairman Demirtaş’s consensual style and his pluralist, democratic, and egalitarian rhetoric found him many friendly ears among the Turkish society.¹⁵⁹ The HDP is also known as the continuation of the parties that are opened and closed down from 1990 until the present time.

In fact, considering its perspective on the Kurdish issue, the HDP is not an institution that thinks differently from the PKK. Indeed, the HDP’s understanding of politics has been drawn in the desired way after the meeting of the council members with PKK and Ocalan. Especially during the Erdogan’s Democratic Initiative period, these meetings have been permitted by the government and also held under the observation. Hence, the political conduction of HDP according to Ocalan’s directives became a duty for the party members.

Another subject worth to mention is that the changing name of *BDP* into HDP which is related not only to the name but also to follow entirely a new strategy that addresses the Kurdish population in the country besides the different minorities and different beliefs and ideologies. At this point, at the first congress, the co-chairman of the party, Sabahat Tuncel, expressed this new strategy as in such:

*“From here, we appeal to all the social movements, faith organizations, Alevis, ecology organizations, women, ‘Come and let us rule the HDP together’. Do you wish for another Turkey? Are you tired of AKP and CHP? Don’t just criticize, but let us create it together. We trust ourselves. We can build a new Turkey together. We will change the Turkey’s political manner. We will build the radical democracy together. HDP is a new party. The peoples of Turkey are in need of hope. We are tired of the politics that produce crisis, we want to raise hopes.”*¹⁶⁰

Regarding the structure of the party, the co-chairman Selahattin Demirtas emphasizes that the party will be much more than the unity of the left which also takes the conservative sectors. And these components will take place in decision-making. People from the entire political thoughts of Turkey will gather in this party. Left can be a driving force, left can lead, but the main goal is not to combine

¹⁵⁸ ATLAS, Duygu, “People’s Democracy Party (HDP): A Breath of Fresh Air for the Turkish Opposition?” Tel Aviv University, Moshe Dayan Center, Middle East Developments, Vol.7, 2013

¹⁵⁹ KAYA, Zeynep, “Cautious hope for Turkey: Between a Coalition Government and Early Election”, The London School of Economic and Political Science, Middle East Centre Blog

¹⁶⁰ “Neden HDP Oldular?” <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber-analiz/neden-hdp-oldular> Accessed:4/27/2016

the left.¹⁶¹ From such rhetoric it is well understood that the HDP has grown as a left-wing party rather than a Kurdish party. Withal, it combined the *ESP* (Socialist Party of the Oppressed) and the *Labor Party*.

HDP, mentioning its aims in the party's charter in 13 articles under the name of Purposes, draws the attention to the social issues in the Turkey rather than referring the Kurdish issue as a main goal. And most importantly, the democratic demands of the minorities¹⁶² come at first, such as; education in the mother tongue and protection of the cultures. In addition, fight for different beliefs and freedom of expression are taken on the basis. On another hand, capitalism, imperialism, poverty, and also the rights of *LGBT* are taken in consideration.¹⁶³ Regarding the Kurdish issue, the party foresees struggle for the solution in a democratic way attaining the scope of collective rights.¹⁶⁴ However, the exact solution method is not mentioned, the Article J suggests to improve the discussion of the needs obtained by the peoples including the various forms of governing, as well as autonomy and the right of self-determination, and creating the environment to implement such suggestions within the framework of democratic union of nations living in Turkey.¹⁶⁵

Though the solution of Kurdish issue is not suggested with exact resolutions in the charter, the issue is examined based on the understating of democratization of Turkey with the principle of Democratic Autonomy in the party's program. According to the program, the autonomous and democratic governments which include local management, to fulfill the demands of Kurdish people, and in Turkey's democratization, as well as in realization of social peace and free and voluntary association of peoples, plays an undeniably important role.¹⁶⁶

Discussing the Kurdish question in the axis of other minorities' problems rather than in a different platform, the HDP accepts that they have the right of living under the equal and free citizenship law.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, it advocates the solution of the problem in a peaceful and democratic way based on equal rights and voluntary unity.¹⁶⁸

An important point worth to mention here is that same as the PKK, HDP also does not mention on rhetoric of Kurdish national liberation. On the contrary, it prefers to express the issue as the people,

¹⁶¹ <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/> Accessed: 4/27/2016

¹⁶² HPD Party Charter, Par 2, Article A, <http://www.yargitaycb.gov.tr/documents/hadp.pdf> Accessed:4/27/2016

¹⁶³ Ibid., Article B,C,D and E

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., Article İ.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., Article J

¹⁶⁶ HDP Party Program, p.16

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.17

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p.18

equal citizenship and democratic issue rather than in national manners. Especially in the words of the co-chairman of the party, Figen Yuksekdog, as she claims that “we will not let anyone divide this country,”¹⁶⁹ understood that the solution of the issue is based not on the Kurdish national movement but on the protection of Turkey’s integrity. Another point is that the defended resolution of Democratic Autonomy does not only concerns on the Kurdish people, but its implementation is valid to the other minorities living in the different part of the country. And in order to provide such resolution, improving local governance model to strengthen the local democracy and adoption of the administrative structure based on autonomous council, placing the participatory local governance model in accordance with the principle of democracy, dominate the social gender equality and ecologic social approach in the local governments, using the mother tongue in official places and finally promoting multi-lingual municipality¹⁷⁰ shall be applied.

All in all, the present perspective of the HDP on the Kurdish issue is based on the Turkey’s democratization and implementation the principle of Democratic Autonomy. Consequently, the party attributes the principle of Democratic Autonomy to three main points; democratization of Turkey, realization of social peace, and free and voluntary union of peoples. Finally, it is worth to mention that the perspective of the HDP on the Kurdish issue is not based on the Kurdish national rights but it is related to the rights of other minorities as well. With its leftist view, the HDP considers the Kurdish people in Turkey as a minority groups similarly to the other ethnicities. Herewith, the identity status of the Kurds is being put into a different category or a lesser category which has been changed by the strategy of the party. Last of all, the HDP’s perspective on the Kurdish issue is the perspective of internationalist left-wing approach.

IV.III. PAK, (PARTIYA AZADIYA KURDISTAN) KURDISTAN FREEDOM PARTY

Founded in 18.14.2016 in Diyarbakir, PAK, with the official decision of Ministry of Interior of Turkey, has become a legal Kurdish party in 11.12.2016. The party which was established by the leaders, who previously were active in the DDKD (Revolutionary Eastern Organizations), is the first party in Turkey’s political arena with the name of Kurdistan. The party that is new in the political scene has held rallies and circular letters in a short time and gathered many Kurdish political persons

¹⁶⁹ <http://tr.sputniknews.com/politika/20160412/1022113435/yuksekdag-vatan.html> Accessed: 4/27/2016

¹⁷⁰ HDP, p.13,14

within. However the PAK could not gain the desired level for the election, but it is still carrying out its political activities in the legal ground.

The party founded by Mustafa Ozelik, as a structure, is a libertarian, patriotic, democratic, egalitarian, and aims to embrace the widest social and cultural sectors of the Kurds and Kurdistanis, a mass party that is open to different views.¹⁷¹ Recently, the party is led by its founder, Mustafa Ozelik.* The party adopts the fragmented nature of Kurdistan as a historical and international injustice.¹⁷² Therefore, it invokes the solution of the Kurdish issue to the right of self-determination,¹⁷³ and it has prepared its program according to this purpose. The party that represents a democratic national policy which addresses the widest ethnic, social, religious, sectarian demand of the Kurds and people of Kurdistan,¹⁷⁴ it claims to defend democratic and pluralistic understating of management and organization in its forms of decision-making and administration.

The party, accumulating its resolutions regarding the Kurdish issue with General Democratic Goals, collects the solution steps under 12 main headlines. In order to solve the issue of the Kurds and Kurdistan in democratic and equitable manners, recognition of the existence of the Kurdish nation, and adopting their national rights under the constitutional guarantee¹⁷⁵ is the main factor. Creating the equal, just, democratic and free conditions in Turkey and in Kurdistan, and guaranteeing these conditions under international treaties and agreements¹⁷⁶ is the stipulation of the party for the solution of the question. Additionally, under the headline of *Life and Ruling in Kurdistan*, the party presents its perspectives in different political, social, cultural, and economic matters, such as democracy and institutionalization, economic and social rights, local governments, education and culture, international policy, and rights and freedoms of women.

The goal of independent Kurdistan mentioned at the day of its foundation by Ozelik, clearly denotes the party's perspective toward the Kurdish question. The structure of the question to be the question of Kurdistan rather than the issue of democracy and democratic republic is explained by Ozelik in such:

¹⁷¹ PAK, Party Program. P.2 Available at: <http://rizgari.com/ebook/PAK-program-Turkce...12.12.2014.pdf>
Accessed: 4/29/2016

* Mustafa Ozelik was born in 1965 in Mardin, graduated from Yildiz Technical University, Civil Engineering. He has been involved in Kurdish political life for many years, and recently leads the general presidency of the PAK

¹⁷² PAK, p.2

¹⁷³ Ibid., p.3

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.3

¹⁷⁵ PAK General Democratic Goals, Article 2

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., Article 4

*“The Kurdish question is the question of Kurdistan. We defend the right of statehood of the Kurds. If the federative solution is not accepted by the Turkish government, the Kurds have the right to have a state.”*¹⁷⁷

Concerning the present situation of the Kurds in Turkey and the solution alternatives of the Kurdish question, Ozcelik claims that the PAK defends the right of self-determination of the Kurds. Depending on the principles of equality and fellowship, he suggests that a federative system can be implemented between Turkey and Northern Kurdistan, as he indicates, “There are around 25 million Kurds live in Turkey and in Kurdistan. The 60 per cent of the population lives in Turkey, while 40 per cent in Kurdistan. After the initiation of federative system and win the freedom, we believe that most of the population will return to Kurdistan. Those who will live in Turkey also would have national and democratic rights. This would be possible in the framework of freedom, democracy, justice, and equality.”¹⁷⁸

With respect to the solution of the Kurdish question and the conflict between the PKK and the government, the PAK demonstrate rather a liberal behavior. The party believes that regarding the capitulation of the PKK, this issue can be solved by common strategy between the northern Kurdish parties and the Turkish government under the supervision of international guarantors. In avoidance of war and conflicts, the Kurdish issue should be solved through democratic and peaceful understandings.

Ozcelik emphasizes the party’s perspective for reciprocal solution of the issue as:

*“A wide and an effective program should be lunch to solve the Kurdistan issue. The program should indicate and accept the existence of the Kurds and Kurdistan, with their national and democratic rights. Primarily, there should be a federative system between Turkey and Kurdistan.”*¹⁷⁹

Finally, the perspective of the PAK on the issue is a question of Kurdistan rather than the Kurdish issue. Based on the principle of self-determination, the party advocates the provision of the national rights of the Kurds by the government and the international supervision. However, the party suggests the federative system in the state which would give a legal status to Kurdistan as a first step. In the perspective of the PAK, the Kurdistan question should be solved in peaceful and democratic methods. Therefore, the party calls both parts; the PKK and the Turkish government for a resolution

¹⁷⁷ “Kurtlerin Devlet Hakkini Savunan Pak kuruldu”, *Rudaw Daily*, Available at: <http://rudaw.net/mobile/turkish/kurdistan/191020148>, Accessed: 29 April 2016

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Mustafa Ozcelik, 12 April 2016

¹⁷⁹ Interview, 12 April 2016

process to avoid the conflicts between them, as well as the northern Kurdish parties to take a part in the process with a common strategy.

IV.IV. AZADI (KURDISTAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT)

Founded in 2012 and formalized in 2014, AZADI is the second big and effective party after the HDP in Turkey's and Kurdish political arena established by conservative Muslims Kurdish sect. The party which started as Kurdistan Islamic Movement for Rights Justice and Freedoms has adopted the name of AZADI after the 1st Congress in 2014. During its *initiative*, the party has been organized centrally in Diyarbakir, and later on, the representative offices were opened in different cities of Turkey. After adopting the structure of the *movement*, the party started to work in different cities as well as in Turkey's metropolises.

However, the party represents its libertarian position regarding the Kurdish and Kurdistan case it is an Islamic oriented party and aims to solve the issues based on this perspective. In another word, AZADI is an Islamic Kurdish movement. The party that has taken part in elections of 2015 in electoral alliance with the HDP presented some of its members in Turkish parliament, such as Adem Ozcaner and Huda Kaya.

The AZADI declares its volition in the party program under the headline of *Azadi Hareketinin Temel Esaslari* (basis of Azadi movement). The party that believes in actualizing both its and Kurdistan's specific powers, manifests Kurds and Kurdistan struggle as the origin of its politics.¹⁸⁰ It expresses the existence of its policy which is related to rights, justice and freedom with national, religious and humanistic factors.¹⁸¹ Mainly the independence of Kurdistan, the party also aims to will the natural and political rights and freedoms. In addition, concerning the humanity's common intellectual and conscientious, AZADI adopts the agreements that are related to the human rights which have emerged as mankind unit and the international organizations that are formed for the sake of rights, justice and freedoms.¹⁸²

The AZADI views the Kurdistan case as the struggle of rights, therefore, the party displays its Islamic and Kurdistani structures based on religious and national guidelines rather than ideological perspective. In the manifesto published in December 2014, the party proclaims the justification of its

¹⁸⁰ AZADI, Party Program, Part D, Article 1, Available at: http://tr.hereketazadi.org/hareket_hakkinda Accessed: 30 April 2016

¹⁸¹ Ibid., Article 2

¹⁸² Ibid., Article 3

existence and ultimate aim as the accretion of basic rights and freedoms in Kurdistan at first; and secondly in the whole world.¹⁸³

At this point, it can be evidently said that AZADI chooses its activity fields especially striving for the Kurdish people and also the Islamic, humanitarian, and national rights of all the oppressed peoples. Observing Kurdistan as a part of Islamic geography, the party puts the Kurdish nation at the same category with every nation in the world.¹⁸⁴ In addition, it declares to support the Islamic and humanistic services in Kurdistan. However, the party is known with its Islamic tradition, it also argues for different nations, religions and ethnic groups, and it defends their religious, national, and cultural rights to be protected under the international guarantee.

In order to have more active role in Turkey's political scene, by the electoral alliance with the HDP, the AZADI was able to show its activity for the first time in 2015. Due to the political atmosphere and formalization of the movement, it has adopted this alliance. Recently, by the leadership of Sidki Zilan who is known to be a conservative Islamic personal, the party carries out its political duties in different regions with branches and offices. Generally Azadi supports the peace process and is adamant that civilian politics must replace politics at gunpoint. Although it is not officially a political party yet, as long as it remains committed to nonviolence and promotes its role as a platform for dialogue, it may become a durable actor in regional politics.¹⁸⁵

The AZADI movement was found by Sidki Zilan.* According to Zilan, rather than Kurd and Kurdistan, it is the "right" what is taken as the basis. He believes that if the right is provided so that the issues will be solved. Zilan concerns on the humanity apart from the Kurdistan. As he states, the AZADI movement ensures consensus on the four main elements, the political status of the Kurdish nation in the territory of Kurdistan, adopting the Kurdish language as the official language, education in Kurdish language, and doing politics with the Kurdish identity and creating national institutions.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, he expresses the national unity for the solution of the Kurdish question as such:

¹⁸³ AZADI 2014 Statement, Available at: <http://tr.hereketazadi.org/haberler/view/21> Accessed: 30 April 2016

¹⁸⁴ AZADI, Declaration Text, Available at: <http://www.zaphaber.com/azadi-insiyatifi-deklarasyon-metni-34566h.htm> Accessed: 30 April 2016

¹⁸⁵ OZCELIK, B., Turkey's Other Kurds, Foreign Affairs Magazine, Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2015-05-04/turkeys-other-kurds>, Accessed: 30 April 2016

*Sidki Zilan was born in 1967 in Diyarbakir. He graduated in Dicle University, Faculty of Law in 1992. Currently, he works as attorney of Diyarbakir Bar Association and leading the AZADI movement.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Sidki Zilan, 9 April 2016

“First of all, the Kurdish national unity should be created and to be addressed with the states and the world, and secondly, concerning on justice and interests. It is necessary to have a free Kurdistan and a free society. It is nationality what we need, not the ideology. The case of Kurdistan is not an ideological case it is a national and a political matter.”¹⁸⁷

Last of all, the Islamic Kurdish political understanding of the AZADI is the path that follows and aims the independence of Kurdistan. However, the methods of the party concerning the Kurdish question is not clearly expressed, the party defends to provide a political status to the Kurds and Kurdistan. This is an indispensable criterion of the AZADI. Even though the party is Islamic oriented, it mostly refers its perspective toward the humanistic political approach. Kurdistan as priority, the party also draws attention to the other nations whose rights and freedoms are deprived of. Therefore, the party observes the Kurdish nation as “Mazloun” (oppressed people) along with the others. Defending the peaceful methods based on the negotiations and dialogs, the party declares the solution of Kurdish question away from wars and conflicts, and non-violence.

IV.V. PDK-T (PARTIYA DEMOKRATA KURDISTAN-TIRKIYE) KURDISTAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY-TURKEY

PDK-T, founded in 2014 in Diyarbakir, is one of the parties that officially established with the term Kurdistan. As its title and the goal, PDK-T demonstrates more unwavering commitment regarding the independence of Kurdistan in comparison of the other parties. Establishing its aim to the definitive principle of Kurdistan’s independence, PDK-T is a party which decides the independence as an inevitable condition for the Kurds. However, since its foundation it has decided not to go the elections, the party is still carrying out its political activities on the legal basis in Kurdish and Turkish political grounds. As a liberationist, patriotic, innovative, democratic, pluralistic, participatory mass party,¹⁸⁸ structurally it claims to be a pluralist party that understands the politics as a ground where the peoples of Turkey should have voice in the government and have the right in decision-making.¹⁸⁹ Based on the principle of transparency in its own politics and equality of the members, PDK-T in its party activities is based on collective work and personal responsibility.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Zilan

¹⁸⁸ PDK-T, Party Charter, Article 4, Available at: <http://www.pdkt.org/#!t-z-k/lx9kx> Accessed: 1 May 2016

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., Article 4

As a main goal, it foresees the collective work which would act according to the social interest of the Kurds in the regions where they live during the historical process in the light of political developments in the world. It indicates that the Kurds, from the Ottoman Empire to the era of Republic of Turkey, have been faced to the cultural and political assimilation. Therefore, it seeks to break the loose from such assimilation policies in the political and social transformations. In order to witness such transformation, the party believes that it can be actualized by creating and adopting federalism at first and secondly with the independence. In order to rehabilitate from the historical trauma, the party suggest that the Kurds should rule themselves with all the instruments of governing. Therefore, with economic and socio-cultural restorations the Kurds shall reach their historical reality.¹⁹⁰

Mentioning the principle of federalism in its program, the party accepts the independence of Northern Kurdistan as the second alternative way as a requirement of dignity of humanity.¹⁹¹ The party claims that the independence should be achieved by the experience of federalism with the free will of the people. In order to prevent political and social hostility between the Kurdish and Turkish nations, radical and effective arrangements should be done to implement these principles. Thus, the party perceives the federalism and independence as the solution among the nations. Also, indicating the importance of international law in the program, implementing the European Convention of Human Right upon the Kurdish people in Turkey is proclaimed.

The PDK-T is currently led by the co-founder, Mehmet Emin Kardas.^{***} Mentioning the main goal as the independence of Kurdistan in the opening ceremony of the party, Kardas emphasized that only independence can protect the Kurds, rather than Turkish, Arabic or Persian supremacy.¹⁹² That is why he declared that neither they look for anyone's land nor they let anyone occupy their lands, as he indicates, "All the values of Kurdish nation is important for us. We never make concession about it. As specified in the international agreements, we demand our natural, national and humanistic rights, and shall continue our struggle without violence and conflicts."¹⁹³

Concerning the recent situation in Turkey, Kardas accuses the PKK for causing chaos between Kurdish people and the government. According to him, in these incidents, PKK and Turkish left-wing

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., Article 3

¹⁹¹ PDK-T Party Program, Independence, Available at: <http://www.pdkt.org/#!program/ugubx> Accessed: 1 May 2016

^{***} M. Emin Kardas was born in 1948 in Batman. Kardas has devoted his life for the struggle of Kurdish independence and participated in different political activities in Turkey.

¹⁹² "New Party Name Breaks 'Kurdistan' Taboo in Turkey", *Rudaw Daily*, Available at: <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/25042014> Accessed: 1 May 2016

¹⁹³ Interview with M. Emin Kardas, 6 April 2016

sects are serving Kemalism and destroying Kurdistan. At this point, the awareness should be raised among the Kurdish nation. When the oppressed dominance of the PKK comes to an end, then the voice of the Kurdish nation would rise and the struggle of Kurdistan would be carried to different dimensions.¹⁹⁴

Kardas concludes his perspectives regarding the solution of Kurdish question and the national rights of Kurdistan referring the Kurdish national values:

“As a nation, we should not pass these lines and not give up on them, land, flag, water, culture, history, and language. Every patriotic Kurd must be educated and organized. The consensus of independence must be taught and loved. As a party, our goal is to grow larger and to carry the responsibility of Kurdish nationalism to the new generation of our people.”¹⁹⁵

As conclusion, the perspective of the PDK-T on the situation of Kurdistan and the Kurdish question is based on the principle of self-determination. However, the federalism is taken as a ruling experience at first stage but the main goal is toward to establish an independent Kurdistan. Therefore, it follows the peaceful methods to bring an end to the Kurdish question. The question which causes the tension between the Kurdish people and the Turkish government is attributed to the violent actions of the PKK. And it is believed that such attitudes deepen the issue rather than bringing solutions. Based on the principles of international organizations and treaties, the party predicates the national rights of the Kurds to the right of self-governing and self-ruling.

IV.VI. HAK-PAR (HAK VE OZGURLUKLER PARTISI), RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES PARTY

HAK-PAR was found by the Kurdish cadres who have different ideas and different experiences under the leadership of Abdulmelik Firat in 2002. Immediately after its establishment, the closure case opened for the party, and finally this case was closed in 2008, as 16 February 2007 members of the party were arrested for sending invitations in Kurdish through the mail. Eight of the 13 executive party members were given six-month sentences that have been converted into fines, but the remaining five were convicted and face one year in jail.¹⁹⁶ However, the party has emerged

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Kardas,

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Kardas

¹⁹⁶ Language and Education Rights-Working Session 1, Human Rights Violations against Kurds in Turkey Report Presented by Kurdish Human Rights Project, p.79

alternatively to the PKK's illegal activities in Turkey's political arena it did not have the desired support from the community due to the PKK's violence and earning the enmity of the organization.¹⁹⁷

Despite of being left-wing party, HAK-PAR is a party based on the Kurdish nationalism.¹⁹⁸ As a pluralistic, innovative, democratic and libertarian party, it references the universal principles of the law. The party reclaims the heritage of Kurdish national and democratic struggle, and qualifies itself as the heir of this heritage. Respecting the human fundamental rights and freedoms, and the rights of minorities, the party adopts the rule of law, participatory and pluralistic democracy as a basis.¹⁹⁹

As the main aim, the party indicates to help to solve the problems of the Kurdish people and other minorities in Turkey, primarily the ensuring the freedom of Kurdish language and guaranteeing their various rights and freedoms. Politically, it advocates of Turkey to assume a federal structure. The party that asserts the existence of a society which economically developed, based on equal opportunities, fair and equitable standards, it aims to create a livable environment basically with lasting peace and mutual acceptance of differences.²⁰⁰

HAK-PAR is against all means of authoritarian and monistic understanding. It lines up the democratic and pluralistic values suggested to Turkey to be implemented also on the Kurdish society. It aims to create a pluralistic political structure. Therefore, the party defines itself as the guarantor of the democratic and pluralistic values. Thus, the HAK-PAR claims to be a Kurdish party due to the placing the equitable solution of the Kurdish question in the center of its program. At the same time, it also defines itself as a party of Turkey. From its foundation till the present time, HAK-PAR was led by several chairmen, Melik Firat, Sertac Bucak, Bayram Bozyel, Fehmi Demir, and finally Kemal Burkay who is the founder and the previous leader of *PSK* (Kurdistan Socialist Party).

Even though the party is a left-wing party, it follows a policy based on the Kurdish ethnic identity. Nonetheless, it combines the socialist ideology and Kurdish nationalism in its structure. However, the party is based on the Kurdish nationalism, governing the Turkey's Kurdistan by a federal system lies in the center of party's original purpose. As it is indicated in the party's program, "Different community sectors belonging to different opinions and thoughts on the intellectuals and politicians, the Kurdish issue is fair and equitable solution to reach the democratic rights and social freedoms of the constitution and laws guarantee to receive under the order, political and social system

¹⁹⁷ WATTS, N.F., *Activist in Office*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2010, p.72

¹⁹⁸ "Hak ve Ozgurlukler Partisi" Available at: <http://www.ankaraninvekili.com/hak-par/> Accessed: 2 May 2016

¹⁹⁹ Hak-Par, About, Available at:

http://www.hakpar.org.tr/root/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=62&Itemid=85&lang=en

²⁰⁰ Ibid.,

for restructuring an established party, the Kurdish problem peacefully, democratic and egalitarian approach through dialogue and social consensus is in favor of the solution. For the realization of this state, the Kurds and the Turkish people on the basis of equality of a federal democratic style will restructure. Our party will fight to achieve it.”²⁰¹

On another hand, the party also concerns on the structure of Turkish political formation, and claims that the government needs to make radical changes in its politics. Therefore, Turkey as a party to international conventions in domestic law did not reflect; authoritarian state is the result of understanding the laws and regulations as not changed, ethnic, religious and social differences, tolerance and inter-regional disparities in the costs for volunteers did not act civilized world every day is a little more away.²⁰² Concerning the solution of the Kurdish question, according to the party, the solution of the problem and facilitate a lasting solution is possible to achieve: the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the Paris Charter, OSCE Process, the Accession Partnership Document and the Copenhagen criteria and they also like Turkey's is a party to international conventions and treaties to be observed in case the solution of Kurdish problem Enabling path is possible.

In the *Acilim ve Kurt Sorununa Iliskin Federal Cozum Onerisi* (Federative Solution for Kurdish Question and Initiative) published in 2009 concerning the solution of the Kurdish question, the party emphasized the Initiative as an opportunity which should be implemented by the government and adopted by every sect of the Kurds. Additionally, describing the Kurdish issue also as the issue of Turkey and democracy, it qualifies the Kurdish question as the issue occurred due to extortion the fundamental rights of Kurdish people. By suggesting the universal norms of democracy and law, it necessitates coherent and far-reaching solutions regarding the issue.²⁰³

Finally, suggesting the federative system for the solution of the Kurdish question, the HAK-PAR stands up for making the system legally convenient in order to create an appropriate ground and to discuss and to solve the issues. Additionally, it essentially accepts the conditions of complete freedom of thoughts and of organization, liquidation of militarism, the importance of the European Union process, removing the chauvinistic judgment in the society, providing democratic political culture, and therefore, gaining the public support, thus, making peace with the Kurds in the region. Particularly, it stipulates the democratization of judicially system in Turkey, and besides, accepting the

²⁰¹ HAK-PAR, Party Program, Available at: http://www.hakpar.org.tr/root/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=60&Itemid=86&lang=en
Accessed: 2 May 2016

²⁰² Ibid.,

²⁰³ Hak-Par, Federal Solution Alternative, Article 1, Available at: <http://www.hakpar.org.tr/> Accessed: 2 May 2016

Kurdish language as an official language, initiating amnesty for the political prisoners, and finally withdrawal of the army in internal security.²⁰⁴

Last of all, the perspectives of the Kurdish political parties in Turkey, either the new or the old parties, are based on their ideological background and various way of understandings. While the PKK that has longer historical line had shown different interpretations and suggested different alternative ways of the solution of the Kurdish issue, most of the newly founded parties ensure consensus on much different criteria. The instability in the PKK's decision making depending on its conditions in different circumstances of Turkey, led the PKK to take different actions and to change its policies and its philosophy. Primarily aimed to establish a democratic and a united Kurdistan, the rhetoric and the composition of the party showed significant changes especially after the arrest of the party's leader. Such changes were also followed by the HDP which is more influential in Turkey's arena regarding its pro-Kurdish structure and still depending on this consciousness. However, the newly founded Kurdish parties have common senses and ideas not only for the solution of the Kurdish question but also of the structure of the Kurdish case as addressing the case as struggle of Kurdish national liberation and. Indeed, the interpretation of the parties about the case leads the formation of the alternative solution ways. Consequently, referencing their ideologies and their national consensuses, the parties evaluate different steps and suggest different paths for the sake of solution. All in all, most of the newly established parties agreed on the right of self-determination, but in the current conditions of Turkey, they are willing to adopt the federative system which would be created between the Kurdistan and Turkey. Thus, the Kurdish people and Kurdistan would have their political status and their rights would be protected under the law based on the international agreements.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., Article 2

V. EVALUATION OF KURDISH QUESTION THROUGH THE IDENTITY THEORIES

Observing the Kurdish question in Turkey requires several important analyses in different categories. Such analyses that would explain the question through different theories based on different elements would bring new arguments to explain the question. Especially, the perspectives of the Kurdish political parties in Turkey shall be evaluated according to the theories which are taken as basis. As it is seen, the social, political and intellectual structures of the Kurds have been interpreted differently by the Kurdish political parties in Turkey. Indeed, due to the emergence in different times and carrying different ideological backgrounds led to create such interpretations. Additionally, the party leaders' ideologies and their previous positions in the politics, and consequently creating the party programs at this axis also can be shown as another reason. Besides, offering different alternatives for the sake of solution of the issue and acting in such accordance needs to make further analysis in a wider spectrum.

Evaluating the Kurdish question on the axis of democracy, freedom and human rights by some parties in the political conditions of Turkey is, indeed, appears as a first analysis. Since the issue is related to the oppression of the rights and freedoms of a group of people in the country, it leads to put these basic humanitarian criteria in the center of the solution alternatives. Besides, observing the issue based on the national rights and freedoms by concerning some incidents that occurred previously and presently form another situation to analyze the question. In addition, it is also possible to see some parties which share the common sense suggesting the discussion and implementation of international documents and the agreements over the Kurds.

Therefore, the observations, demands and solution alternatives of the political parties vary based on sharing different senses and ideologies. All in all, the majority of the parties ensure consensus regarding these demands and offering solutions.

Figure 6: General structure of Kurdish political parties and their perspectives:

Political Parties	Ideology	Demand	Solution Alternatives
PKK	Leftist	Autonomy	Democratization of Turkey
HDP	Leftist	Autonomy	Democratization of Turkey
AZADI	Islamist/Nationalist	Self-Determination	National Unity

PDK-T	Nationalist	Self-Determination	National Unity
PAK	Nationalist	Self-Determination	National Unity
HAK-PAR	Leftist-Nationalist	Federal System	Universal norms Democracy and Law

Source: Made by Cihat Yilmaz based on programs and charters of the parties

As it is seen in the figure, while PKK and HDP are sharing the common sense and ideology, demands and solution perspectives, AZADI, Pdk-T, Pak and Hak-Par come to agreement as well as distinguish in some extent. However, Hak-Par ideologically follows the same ideas with the PKK and the HDP it varies trough demand and solutions. On another hand, the other parties share the same consensus concerning steps that should be taken and the systems which they require to implement. Generally, the social, political and intellectual structure can be evaluated by three main elements; democracy, national rights and freedoms, and humanitarian and religious factors. With these factors, different solution alternatives are offered, such as autonomy, federal system, and the right of self-determination. On another hand, the facts that are related to the implementation of these offers in the present time of Tukey should also be taken in account. Therefore, in this context, evaluation of the ideas and the alternatives form an important scale in the terms of factuality and suitability in social and political means.

V. I. The Identity of the Kurds in Turkey

It is certain that the identical structure of a group of people cannot be determined by a political party. Ethnic and national identities are the concepts related to the essence of the people. And the political parties use the identical situation of the people as an instrument in accordance to their political methods and plans. That is why the identical structure of the people goes beyond the perspectives and definitions done by the parties. However, the relation between the Turkish and the Kurdish identity appears to have a modernist approach which is related to self and other.²⁰⁵ Comparing the both identities in the framework of ethnic and ethnicity, as it was mentioned before, due to the dominance of one ethnic class' legitimacy and emotive power, such class becomes the center of cultural and political power.²⁰⁶ It is simply can be evaluated as the Turkish identity is the legitimate power of the Turkish state and the government, and the other identities, including the Kurds and the

²⁰⁵ LUCAITES, J., Louis, Condit, C.,M., Caudill, S.,

²⁰⁶ KAUFMANN, E., Dominant Ethnicity,

other groups become subaltern. If it is returned to the general definition of ethnic identity, as it is taken on the basis of providing intragroup solidarity, it presents a political, cultural and social structure for the group of people who have been able to organize itself around a common language, common ancient beliefs, cosmogony-cosmology and common life rituals.²⁰⁷ Therefore, the distinction between these two identical groups, Kurdish and Turkish, appears in variety of the ways. For instance, this definition encompasses these two identities individually rather than gathering both of them under an identity umbrella. There is simply no intragroup solidarity to collect both identities together.

In regards to the national identity and the nationalist idea, this case also becomes controversial concerning the state structure. If the national identity of the Kurds is evaluated according to Gellner's theory that puts the condition of nation-state in the formation of the nation²⁰⁸, so this principle would take the Kurds out of the definition of nation, in another word, the Kurds are not a nation. But on another hand, Smith's theory recovers this issue, as he emphasizes that nation and nationalism cannot be understood as a form of politics but must be treated as cultural phenomena.²⁰⁹ Therefore, comparing these two ideas regarding the Kurdish national identity, since the Kurds in Turkey does not have national legitimacy in the state which is related to the political form, but as cultural phenomena they fulfill the requirements. Another important point worth to mention is the national difference between the Kurds in Turkey whose national identity does not take part in political formation of the state and the Kurds in Iraq who have their own state establishment. In this case, if the Gellner's idea is taken as basis, then there would be also a distinction in the same ethnic group, that is one became a nation and the other is not.

Regarding the identical structure of the Kurds in Turkey, obviously all the Kurdish political parties share the common consensus. Even though the rhetoric of the PKK and the HDP on the national identity of the Kurds shows weaknesses, in fact these parties were also primarily based on the identical structure of the Kurds and therefore they strictly accept the existence of the Kurds as an entirely different nation unquestionably. As a comparison, Azadi, Pdk-T, Hak-Par and the Pak present their ideas about the Kurdish national identity even more clearly. Likewise, the national identical structure of the Kurds differently from the Turks is accepted by the all parties.

In this regard, in the light of theories and the criteria developed by the scholars in the matter of Kurdish national identity, as Smith emphasizes, owning the collective cultural identity and a historical

²⁰⁷ BOMMAN, E.,

²⁰⁸ GELLNER, E.,

²⁰⁹ SMITH, A. D., *National Identity*

land, homeland and the country, accepted as Kurdistan, and followed by the common myths and historical heritage²¹⁰ can be determined as supporting criteria of this case. Having a different history from the Turks, different myths and even though living in the same country but fictionally dividing Kurdistan from Turkey are the most obvious distinctions of the Kurds to count them as a different nation. Also, as Connorin indicates, the sense of belonging is another crucial element determines the intellectual structure of the Kurds. However, many of them perceive different ideologies but the consensus of being Kurd is a fact and a reality accepted by the entire nation. This point which is also mentioned by Giddens as it emerged by cultural and historical circumstances²¹¹ prove the distinction of national identity of the Kurds. At last, customs and traditions²¹² that are indicated by Weber to determine the national identity also put another difference between the Kurds and the Turks due to the following dissimilar customs and traditions.

Above all, the factor of the language in this regard cannot be denied. While the Turkish language belongs to the Altaic family,²¹³ the Kurdish language comes from Indo-Iranian language family.²¹⁴ Even though, the Kurdish language in Turkey has been influenced by the Turkish language because of the dominance of Turkish, the language family, words and sentence structures of the Kurdish language is entirely different from the Turkish. Also, division of the Kurdish language into different dialect and accents in different regions where the Kurds have lived since centuries bring another prove that distinguish these two nations in linguistic term.

Finally, even though the Kurds and the Turks have lived together on this land since centuries, the historical, linguistic, social and cultural difference between them is an undeniable fact. Especially in the region that is accepted as Kurdistan where the Kurds live the differences can be seen even more obviously. However, those who live in the Turkish provinces have socially interacted with the Turks their differences still can be seen either in their family structure or customs and traditions.

²¹⁰ SMITH, A.D., When is Nation?

²¹¹ GIDDENS, A.,

²¹² WEBER, M.,

²¹³ Language Families, Available at: <http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/family.htm> Accessed: 6 May 2016

²¹⁴ Language families, Available at: <http://www.italiantechicaltranslations.com/language-family-groups.htm> Accessed: 6 May 2016

V.II. Possibility of Political Collaboration between Kurds and Turks

In the Turkey's political history, the Kurds and the Turks has never been collaborated under a rooftop party. The Turkish parties that are mostly founded on their ideological basis aimed to conduct policies according to their own philosophy. Additionally, there are also some nationalist and leftist parties have emerged, such as MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) and CHP (Republican People's Party). The path which the Kurdish parties have generally followed in Turkey's political arena is basically firm by their ethnic identity. In this context, different political formations have risen. However, the HDP's removal the image of being a Kurdish party and its change into the left-wing policy has been welcomed by the Turks who adopted the leftist ideology as well as supported. Thus, the party could include some Turkish members within its formation, such as Sirri Sureyya Onder, Ertugrul Kurkcu...etc.

Acting in such manner, the HDP could achieve votes apart from the Kurdish regions and it also faced the reaction of the Kurdish nationalist sects. A party which is known to be the continuation of the parties founded in 1990 based on the national and democratic rights of the Kurdish people to change into entirely different construction later on indeed is a surprising situation.

*HDP's general voting rate in Turkey

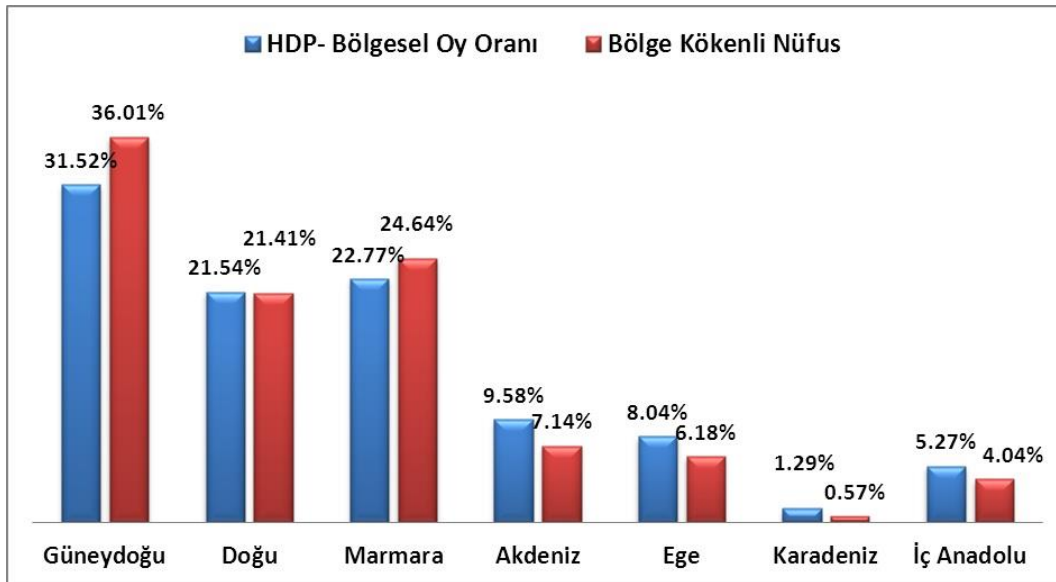


Figure 7: HDP's voting rate in elections of June 7 2015.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ HDP's voting rate in elections of June 7 2015, Available at: <http://www.birikimdergisi.com>, Accessed: 6 May 2016

****The Kurdish provinces and metropolises where the HDP took over 5% of votes**

2015 Legislative Election in Turkey - The Kurdish provinces and metropolises where the HDP took over 5% of votes

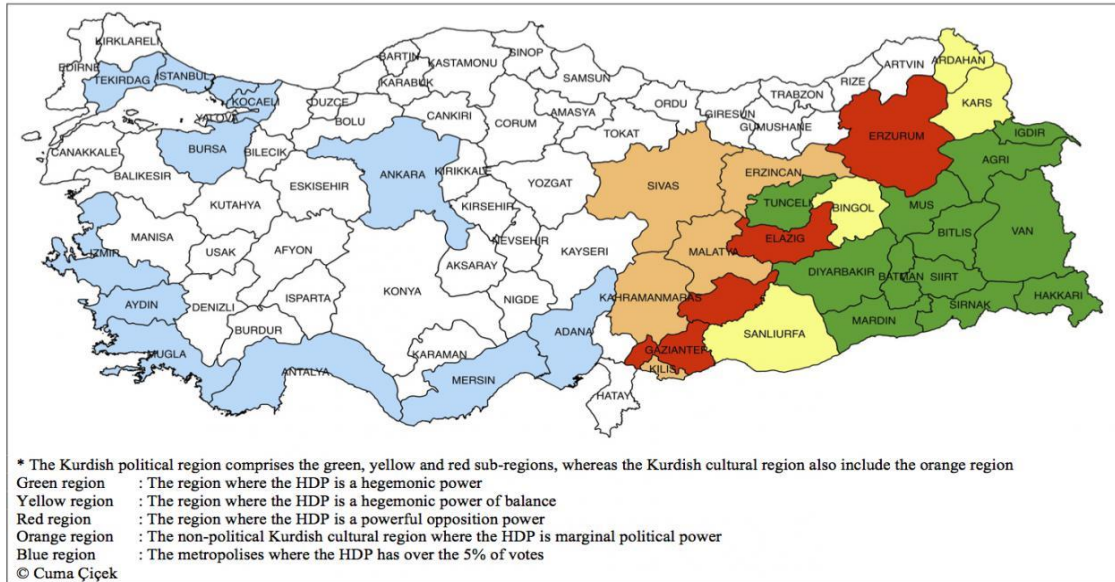


Figure 8: HDP's voting percentage in Turkey, 2015²¹⁶

As it is seen in the both figures, abandoning the policy based on the Kurdish ethnic politics, the HDP's voting rate has risen in the different regions for the first time although as a party to be Kurdish origin. The appearance of the HDP with a leftist image could gain the party more support from Turkish sides. As the opposite the HDP, the parties that are based on the Kurdish national identity and ethnic politics, such as HAK-PAR, PDK-T and the others, attract only the Kurdish people. Supporting them by any Turkish sect or ideological formation in the present situation of Turkey seems to be an impossible situation.

Finally, the political formations of the parties in Turkey are generally divided into two categories; the Turkish parties that are emerged with different ideologies and goals, and the Kurdish parties that follow the ethnic-based politics. While the positions of the ethnic-based parties clearly appear, putting the HDP out of this category by its new appearance with an unexpected political approach leave the Turkish and Kurdish political situation in a huge dilemma. Therefore, the HDP's position in the representation of political structure currently appears to be an ideological Turkey's party rather than an ethnic-based Kurdish party.

²¹⁶ HDP's voting percentage in Turkey, 2015, Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net> Accessed: 6 May 2016

V.III. Ideological and Religious Factors in the Kurdish Movements

Kurdish political movement is generally ethnic-based. When the Kurdish political parties that are active in Turkey compared, this point can be clearly seen in their ideological structures. Their reflection of ideological and religious structure to their perspectives show how the Kurdish question and the movement are evaluated in different platforms. In this regard, the principle of ‘belief’ mentioned by Bernard Lewis²¹⁷ to define the national identity and its position perceived by the Kurds appears in different ways. As for Lewis the nation defined as a group of people which gather around a belief. But in fact, as the result of evaluation of the Kurds’ national and political structure and positions, obviously factor of belief seems to have a weak spot. Indeed, Islam is a fact of the Kurds. But it is worth to mention that it is also important to indicate the Yezidi and Alavi Kurds as well. Therefore, different beliefs can be included in the religious formation of the Kurds. Besides, the conflicts that occurred between the PKK and the Hizbullah, also the experience of the Kurds with ISIS in different regions comes to a conclusion that the traditional Islamic believe is meant to get more traditional.

The Kurds, like every Muslim society, perceives the concept of religion in different ways. This is actually a common situation in Middle-Eastern societies. Therefore, the concept of religion shapes in three different ways in the Kurds, first; a side which has been influenced by the leftist ideology of the PKK that puts distance between them and the religion; secondly, those who adopts the religion in traditional ways and observes it only in prayers; and finally the circle which believes the religion to be at the top and the only alternative of salvation.

In the first category, the circle which is shaped by the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the PKK, their followers and their sympathizers can be observed. Especially the leftist ideology of the PKK could create a part of society which believes that the religion is putting them backward and shows the religion as one of the obstacles of the development of the Kurds. By this way, the PKK went into armed conflicts with the Hizbullah between 1990 and 1999. Thus, the PKK could own the negative view of the religious sects of the Kurds, therefore, appeared to be as a group that stands against Islam and Kurdish Muslims.²¹⁸ On another hand, the religious rhetoric of Turkish-nationalist side has created an Islamophobia in the Kurds against the Muslim or Islamic Turks. At this moment, the structure of the AKP which is formed by Muslim elites and its oppressive attitude toward the Kurds and the PKK

²¹⁷ YILDIZ, A.,

²¹⁸ BAYRAKTAR, E., *Sekulerizm ve Ulusculuk Kiskacinda Kurtler*, Available at: <http://www.anadoluplatformu.org/dosyalar/10522>, Accessed: 5/8/16

has deepened this idea. Finally, the unfortunate incidents occurred between ISIS and the Kurds has strengthened the Kurds negative view toward the Muslims and Islam.

The second group is those who observe the concept of religion only in traditional way and evaluate it in the social basis. As for them, the influence or non-influence of the religion in the Kurdish movement does not seem to have an important role. In fact, the Kurds as a nation have always given an important place to Islam and Islamic knowledges. Especially in the Kurdish schools that are called “madrasa” the Islamic knowledge has been taught in both Arabic and Kurdish languages.²¹⁹ Thus, the Kurds could have many Islamic scholars, such as Bediuzzaman or Melaye Ceziri. On another hand, when the national rights and freedoms matter, these scholars also led the resistance and the rebellions, as in the Sheik Ubeydollah Nehri in 1881 and Sheikh Said movement in 1925. To addition to this category, the Kurdish nationalists can also take part in this regard. Even though they share the same religion with the Turks, the religious matters are classified on different basis and the national matters on another. In another word, this group, while they are religious in social basis they concern more national matters in political case. This case also opposes the theory of Bernard Lewis who defines the nation in religious base.²²⁰ While there is one common religious belief in both the Kurds and the Turks, but there is two divisions in political concept.

Finally, as it is seen in the all Muslim societies, there are also radical Islamic groups appear in the Kurdish people as well. The clearest example of this category indeed is the Hizbullah movement which emerged in 1990 in the Northern Kurdistan. Unlike the Shiite Lebanese and Iranian Hizbullah, the Hizbullah in Turkey is formed by the Sunni Kurdish groups.²²¹ Going into the conflict the government, Hizbullah has lost many of its members by the PKK. After its leader was killed in 1999 in Istanbul, Hizbullah has stopped its armed activities and mostly concerned on its own organizational education. However, the Hizbullah has gathered a big part of Muslim Kurds, believed to solve the Kurdish issue and the better conditions of living in Turkey in the principle of Sharia. At the last stage, Hizbullah appeared in the political arena with a new legal party so called Huda-Par, but yet it did not take any part in the election process.

At this point, comparing the Kurdish parties, except the AZADI movement, all the other parties’ policies are based on national identity. Even though Azadi is a religion oriented movement, it

²¹⁹ YUKSEL, M., *Islamsiz Kurdistan Hayali*, Istanbul: Etkilesim Press, 2015, p. 47

²²⁰ YILDIZ, A.,

²²¹ KURT, M., *Turkiye’de Hizbullah*, Istanbul: Iletisim, 2015, p.22

stills advocates and defends the consensus of being Kurd and the Kurdish national rights and freedoms. In another word; in the political mean the factor of religion shows weakness compared to the Kurdish identity. As in general, the national thought in the Kurdish movements is taken as the basic principle in the movements.

On another side, some parties are also known to be away from the religious and national thoughts as well. Concerning such space, the PKK and the HDP are the best example for this category. Apart from these, the combination of leftist and nationalist ideologies in the formation of the HAK-PAR that composes two opposite ideas conducting the Kurdish politics create even more complicated image. As in the other category, the parties that take the Kurdish nationalism as the basic rule and their distance to the religious and other ideological concepts, such as PDK-T and the PAK, shows that the factor of religion is being related only to the social case, therefore, different methods are being implemented in the political framework.

Concerning the point of Marxism in the Kurdish movements, first of all it is important to note that the Kurds are a nation that has different structure which cannot match with the principles of Marxist ideology. In such society that the traditional norms have strong influence, implementing the Marxist ideology to their social structure as well as political formation causes inconsistency. In the regions where the tribal phenomenon is stronger, such nature that comes from the deep roots of the history may change with a social transformation by a new generation. Therefore, it is possibly to denote that the Kurdish social structure and the Marxist ideology based on class division are quite different concepts from each other. Apart from the social case, politically the Kurdish movements and the Marxist ideology are also two opposite cases. As Lenin indicates, “the principle of nationality in bourgeois community is an undeniable historical fact, and a Marxist who evaluates the society may support the rightfulness of such movements. But such support must be only toward what is progressive in order not to take the nationalist shape, so that the proletarian belief would not be darkened with bourgeois belief.”²²² While the Marxist ideology is based on the principle of internationalism, the goal of the Kurdish national movement is generally aims to establish an independent state to be addressed as a nation-state. However, the function of these two different elements in a movement cannot combine together in the perspectives of the methods and the goals. In another word; a movement is either Marxist or nationalist. Combination of them in one movement or in a party would create ideological and structural dilemmas.

²²² LENIN, V.I.,

As an example, the HDP's leftist ideology and its activities on this axis put the party in a different level rather than a Kurdish party. On another hand, the parties that are founded on the nationalist idea express the Kurdish case not as an ideological issue, and therefore, their solution alternatives are not related to the ideological methods either. Nevertheless, concerning the question in national infrastructure rather than the class division of the Marxist ideology would at least bring the solution of the problems in this parameter. In the reality, the Kurdish question is neither a question of the ideology nor a religious case. The Kurdish question is the issue of a nation which is deprived of the national rights and the freedoms. On another, the Marxist based program and ideology of the PKK and the HDP caused disinclination and aversion from religious and nationalist Kurdish sects.

As in general, the Kurdish national structure and the movements appear to be more secular. Even though, the movements and the resistance occurred during and after the foundation of the republic in Turkey are led by the religious personalities, the main goal was drawn concerning the personalities of the leaders and fact of the belief of the time. Such as Sheikh Said resistance in 1925 emerged as the Kurdish-Islamic movement, the Dersim rebellion led by Sayyid Riza including the Alavi Kurds is the fact that the main goal of the Kurdish movements is to achieve the national values rather than rising with the religious and ideological demands. At the point that is reached, different personalities; secular, religious and ideological, are taking part in the same political party. Finally, the religious rights of the Kurdish people are also considered as a part of the national rights. To conclude, the national identity and the national values are more dominant in the Kurdish movements than the religious and ideological concerns.

V.IV. Autonomy or Independence

In order to understand the main goal of the Kurds, whether autonomy or independence, it is useful to define these terms. The autonomy can be linked with the federal system which is also demanded by some political parties. The federal system can be simply defined as a principle of government that defines the relationship between the central government at the national level and its constituent units at the regional, state, or local levels. Under this principle of government, power and authority is allocated between the national and local governmental units, such that each unit is delegated a sphere of power and authority only it can exercise, while other powers must be shared.²²³

²²³ Federalism, Legal Dictionary, Available at: <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Federal+system>
Accessed: 6 May 2016

Therefore, within the federal system the autonomous region would require to establish its own ruling elements but still dependent on the central government.

The independence case is certainly related to the principle of self-determination. This concept is rather a complicated situation. The United Nation's 1st and the 2nd articles clearly indicate the right of self-determination relatively to promote the international peace not only as a right but also as a principle. The same subject is mentioned also in the article 55 with the equal rights of the people.²²⁴ However, the development of this term and its implementation has been through different stages, such as before the United Nations and during the 2nd World War, later on this principle has strictly concerned on the colonial regions and their right of being an independent state, on another hand, the discussion of the "principle of nations" hasn't been clearly answered. Therefore this principle has become more complex to choose whom to be considered. The collapse of different political entities with the rise of many independent states also justified their actions according to this principle.

The term of "self-determination" has been interpreted in different meanings in different times. Even though it is still valid in the international documents, this term carries the meaning of fear that would disrupt the status quo and the international balances. Giving a meaning to "self-determination" might be simple as well as complicated. In general, self-determination is the right of the citizens to choose its own government. In another word, it is the right of the people to choose the form of their government. At this point, the term "nation" contains contradictions. Another definition can be given as; the right of an ethnic, linguistic, and a religious group, in order to establish their national sovereignty, to reshape the existing national boundaries. Also self-determination can be the separation of a political unit from the federal system and to be an independent sovereign state. Another definition which does not require any separation describes it as the right of the ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups to have a wider autonomy to use and to implement their religious and cultural rights.

Regarding the main goal of the Kurds whether to demand an autonomous state within a federal system or to demand entirely an independent Kurdistan, it wouldn't be a fruitful approach to make a generalization. On another hand, some political parties clearly addressed their approach toward the governmental system they demand, such as, in the present time the PKK and the HDP which have close relations demands the autonomy as a solution alternative. But it is important to mention that such demand of these parties are not related only the Kurds. As it was mentioned before, their charter and

²²⁴ Charter of the United Nations, Articles,1,2,55, Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ae6b3930.pdf>
Accessed: 6 May 2016

the program are designed toward the autonomous system for all the minorities; ethnically, religiously, as well as linguistically.

On another hand, the parties that follow the principle of nationalism, PDK-T, HAK-PAR, AZADI, and the PAK, clearly present their demands toward the right of self-determination. However, their common sense about the federal system forms the first to the solution of the question it is only concerned to achieve the experience of self-ruling. But in fact, their consensus about the independent Kurdistan is an indispensable point.

Above all, the suitability of these criteria with the political conjunctures and the social structure of the Kurds living in Turkey bring another argument in the state case as well as social. Therefore, this case shall be concerned by the government and also by considering the Turkish public reaction. And also the methods to achieve the goal should also be taken in account. All in all, it is possible to observe through the actions of the PKK as it started with the goal of independent Kurdistan with armed struggle, the situation has turned into a chaotic case. That is why using violent methods would not bring any solution neither would help to gain the demands. Additionally, it creates a negative reaction from the state and the public. Whence, unlike the PKK's way, the new methods should be conducted based on diplomatic relations on democratic and peaceful ground. On another hand, the Kurds in Turkey do not have the experience of governing. Due to the living under the power of Turkish government, they were unaware of such practice. That is why the federal system suggested by some parties seems to be more convenient understanding. To sum up, as in general, the Kurdish political parties are divided into two groups; the parties which strictly demand the autonomy, and the parties that aimed to achieve to goal of independent Kurdistan and suggest to having the experience of federal system.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Since the Kurdish question has been at the top row of the Turkey's agenda and interpreted in different ways, the question has been brought on different dimensions especially in the terms of defining and solution alternatives. However, this case also caused problems for the solution of the issue. Therefore, the question should be analyzed in the terms of all the criteria to encompass the whole. On another hand, the Kurdish question is rather related to the issue of a nation who are deprived of national rights and freedoms. In this regard, the Kurdish political parties should come on a common sense and act together.

2. The solution of the Kurdish question could not be achieved by military actions or violent attitudes for decays, neither from the government side nor from the Kurdish side. The violent actions would not serve the Kurds to achieve their national rights, as they demand autonomy or independence. That is why diplomatic, democratic and peaceful ways and methods should be implemented by both sides.

3. The Solution Process and other projects launched in Erdogan's era have created an important ground to discuss the Kurdish question in a perceptible platform. Thence, peremptory steps were taken by the Turkish government as well as contributed by the Kurdish sides. However, the solution plans were once again replaced with the conflicts and the Kurdish question is recently going through in more difficult stages. Hereof, it is necessary for both sides that are strongly affected by the conflicts to return to the discussion of the solution initiatives and bring peaceful solutions for the issue.

4. One of the most important cases for the Kurds is the problem of interlocutor and representation. Being a voice of the Kurds in the term of their representation by different political personalities and the parties who and which carry different ideologies and goal is a point that stalemates the issue. This subject is mostly related to the Kurds to decide rather than the Turkish government. In this regard, the duty that the Kurds should deal with is to make certain decisions. Regarding the state side, if the state is willing to bring solutions to the question, stipulating to the Kurds in the terms of representation is the natural right of the government. This matter is also related to the actual demands of the Kurds.

5. Another internal question of the Kurds is being based on different principles and expressing different demands of the Kurdish parties, in another word, the issue of national unity. In fact, the national rights and freedoms is a case that is above the interests of the parties. At this

matter, an important step should be taken by the parties is to create a common sense and act with a common strategy for the sake of common demands. What comes at the top of this strategy should be, first of all, is defining the Kurdish question including its all means, and therefore, conducting a policy which would serve for the benefit of the Kurds. In this way, they would solve the problem of interlocutor and would create an alternative for the parties that monopolize the Kurds and the Kurdish issue.

6. Besides the representation of the Kurds in the region, another important step should be taken is creating an international organ to represent them in international arena. At this point, there is not any institution to be the voice of the Kurds in international space. Thus, the Kurds are falling to weakness and loneliness in the problems they face. In this regard, the Kurdish political parties in Turkey should ensure consensus concerning to build a liberal organ to represent them and to create relations with international organizations. Thus, they shall have an international status as well as achieve a chance to solve their problem in international circles.

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ANNEXES

Table No.1:

General structure of Kurdish political parties and their perspectives:

Political Parties	Ideology	Demand	Solution Alternatives
PKK	Leftist	Autonomy	Democratization of Turkey
HDP	Leftist	Autonomy	Democratization of Turkey
AZADI	Islamist/Nationalist	Self-Determination	National Unity
PDK-T	Nationalist	Self-Determination	National Unity
PAK	Nationalist	Self-Determination	National Unity
HAK-PAR	Leftist-Nationalist	Federal System	Universal norms Democracy and Law

Source: Made by Cihat Yilmaz, on the basis of the party programmes, charters, and interviews.

Interview No.1: Perspectives of Kurdish Parties on the Kurdish Question

12/04/2016: Made by Cihat Yilmaz with Mustafa Ozcelik, co-founder and leader of PAK

1. How does your party believe and act in the term of serving the Kurdish rights and politics?

- PAK says Kurds are a nation and Kurdistan is a homeland. PAK struggles for freedoms of Kurdistan. It is neither a class party nor a sect or a religious party. PAK is also not an ethnic party. It is the party of all ethnic, religious, sectarian and diversities of Kurdistan society. It is the party of the Kurds, Assyrians, Armenians, Arabs, Turkomans, and Azeris. We believe that the Kurdish question should be solved based on civic, democratic and political methods, rather than war and conflicts. We are a legal party and we follow our path in accordance of legality.

2. How do you evaluate the general structure of the Kurdish question in Turkey?

- Unfortunately Kurdistan is a divided country. This division creates difficulties and causes problems for the Kurds. However, in the northern Kurdistan we support the right of self-determination of the Kurds. According to the present conditions there should a federative system between the Kurds and Turkey. By implementing this system, the Kurds would return to their homes living with their own national rights, and those who stay in Turkish regions would also have their national and democratic rights.

3. What is the difference between Erdogan's era and the previous governments regarding the development of the Kurdish question?

- At first, very positive steps were taken for the solution of the question, concerning the freedom of Kurdish language and Kurdish broadcasting. This was also related to the EU process of Turkey. However, after 2010, the situation has changed into more chaotic conditions. With the rhetoric of 'one nation, one flag, one country' Erdogan wants to implement his racist ideas in the politics.

4. According to the incidents taking place in Turkey, how do you presume the future of the Kurds?

-Turkish government wants to solve the Kurdish question based on the actions of the PKK. This would not bring any solution to the Kurds. Therefore, the Kurdish political parties must make a national unity to find solution for their own problems. Otherwise, this situation will remain as a frozen conflict for many years.

5. What do you suggest about the solution of the Kurdish question?

- The Kurdish question is the question of Kurdistan. That is why the Kurds and Kurdistan should have a legal position. We simply suggest that a federative system should be implemented between the Kurds and Turkey.

Interview No.2: Perspectives of Kurdish Parties on the Kurdish Question

9/04/2016: Made by Cihat Yilmaz with Sidki Zilan, co-founder and leader of AZADI movement

1. What is the principal of your party concerning the Kurdish rights and freedoms?

-We do not take 'being Kurd' as basis, what we take is the 'right'. In this regard, we perceive 'Kurdistan' as the basic principle of our policy, but we do not forget the world and humanity. Property belongs to God, and this land is named as Kurdistan. And every citizen of Kurdistan has equal rights on this land. We demand equality in humanity, and brotherhood in Islam. Justice is our principle.

2. How do you generally evaluate the Kurdish question in Turkey?

-a) Our people need a political status in Kurdistan, b) formality of Kurdish language, c) education in mother tongue, d) and conducting policy with our national identity. There are lots of issues and demands, but these are the political demands that come first.

3. What is the difference between Erdogan's era and the previous governments regarding the development of the Kurdish question?

- A new process should start, and there must be two sides, Kurds and Ankara, under the supervision of international communities.

4. According to the incidents taking place in Turkey, how do you presume the future of the Kurds?

- We do not see any benefit of the Kurds neither of the Turks in this war. War is obscurantism. The government might be invader, but the Kurds should act smart, and follow diplomatic and peaceful paths.

5. What do you suggest about the solution of the Kurdish question?

-First of all, there is a need of Kurdish national unity. Secondly, law, justice and interest should be taken in account. A free Kurdistan needs a free society. Neither Baathist nor Kemalist perspectives would bring us solutions. We do not need any ideology, we need nationality and nationalism. The case of Kurdistan is the case of nationality. That is how we should act.

Interview No.3: Perspectives of Kurdish Parties on the Kurdish Question

06. 04. 2016: Made by Cihat Yilmaz with Mehmet Emin Kardas, co-founder and leader of PDK-T

1. How does your party believe and act in the term of serving the Kurdish rights and politics?

-Our party is established based on the philosophy of Mustafa Barzani, the Kurdish national leader, and aims to have freedom for our people to live in their land.

2. How do you generally evaluate the Kurdish question in Turkey?

- This is not a Kurdish question. This is the struggle of Kurdistan. The Kurds, like all the nations in the world are a nation, and they have the right to achieve their national rights. We do not fight for anyone's land, but we also do not let anyone to invade our land. We, according to the international agreements, demand our natural national rights.

3. What is the difference between Erdogan's era and the previous governments regarding the development of the Kurdish question?

-Compared to the previous governments, the Erdogan's era seems to be more equitable. Today, Erdogan clearly can utter the word 'Kurdistan' and address the Kurdish people. This was impossible in previous time.

4. According to the incidents taking place in Turkey, how do you presume the future of the Kurds?

-The biggest actor putting the Kurds in problematic situation is the PKK. New structures should be developed to be alternative. We have to organize our people and educate them. Therefore, the dominance of the PKK will be released and the Kurds would freely express their ideas.

5. What do you suggest about the solution of the Kurdish question?

- We should not give up our national values, (land, flag, water, culture, history, and language). We suggest to educate our new generation based on the national ideas and national values, and most importantly imposing the love of independence of Kurdistan.