



Securitizing the Kurdish Question in Turkey Through the Societal Security Sector : A Constructivist Perspective

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Abstract

The Kurdish question has been one of the most enduring and complex challenges to the nation-state building process in Turkey since the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Historically framed within a realist, state-centric security paradigm that emphasizes territorial integrity and military responses to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) insurgency, the conflict has resulted in profound human costs, political instability, and tensions in Turkey-EU relations. The traditional security approach, however, fails to adequately address the identity-based dimension of the conflict.

This article aims to re-examine the Kurdish question not as a conventional military threat, but as a societal security issue. Drawing on the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, the study seeks to analyze how Kurdish ethnic identity has been constructed and securitized as an existential threat to Turkish national identity.

The study employs a qualitative, theoretical analysis based on the securitization theory developed by Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, grounded in social constructivism. It applies the core components of securitization — securitizing actors (the Turkish state, political and military elites), referent object (Turkish national identity, language, and the principle of indivisibility of the state), existential threat (Kurdish demands for cultural-linguistic rights and political recognition), and extraordinary measures (constitutional bans, Law for the Reestablishment of Order, Resettlement Law, Articles 3, 14, 42 of the 1982 Constitution) — to trace the evolution of the issue from the early republican assimilation policies to the post-Cold War period.

The analysis argues that the securitization of Kurdish identity is a product of the post-World War I nation-state model and the civic-nationalist project that conflated all citizens into a homogeneous Turkish identity. While the post-1999 period witnessed a partial desecuritization attempt through cultural reforms, the societal security dilemma persists, as the state's efforts to sustain its traditional patterns of language and culture directly clash with Kurdish claims for recognition as a founding element of the Republic.

Keywords: Kurdish Question, Turkey, Societal Security, Securitization Theory, Copenhagen School, Constructivism, National Identity, PKK

INTRODUCTION

The Kurdish issue in Turkey has been considered as one of the most difficult and painful problem, which provide a vast moral dilemma for the country. This issue has led to Turkey's continuing inflation and is the major source of human rights violations and the biggest irritant in Turkey's relations with the European Union. The conflict in the southeast against Kurdish insurgents, has led to the death of more than twenty thousand and many hundreds of thousands displaced. Despite the great efforts made by Turkish military and some significant gains in coping with the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK) insurgency, the fighting continues after thirteen years, although it has not reached the

major cities of Turkey. The issue has been with Turkey almost since the beginning of the republic in 1923 (Barkey H & Fuller G, 1998, p.xi).

Modern Turkey has never accepted the notion of a Kurdish ethnic minority with minority rights. Though Turks have readily accepted Kurds as Turks but wouldn't allow Kurds be both Kurds and Turks. This issue has been transformed by a variety of factors in the past twenty years, ranging from demographic, economic, and geopolitical. Perhaps half of Turkey's six to twelve million Kurds have moved out of the southeast and into the western cities of Turkey and have increasingly become integrated into the growing Turkish economy. Large numbers of Kurds have emigrated to Europe, where they finance Kurdish nationalist activity, including the PKK, and promote the Kurdish cause among Western European publics. The insurgency has outside support (Syria and Iran), outside financing, and a refuge inside the internationally policed no-fly zone in Iraq (Barkey H & Fuller G, 1998, p.xii).

Kurdish question has also been regarded as one of the sources of political stability and violence in the country. The Kurds have been a prominent ethnic group in the Middle East for almost two millennia and they had spread into Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and smaller amount in Cacaos. The significant role played by Kurds during the invasion of Iraq in 2003 has given them the opportunity to have gain autonomy n the Northern Iraq. Therefore Kurdish existence has been considered as a threat to the national security issue by some states such as Iran, Syria and Turkey in the region. In naturally, all these countries would anything possible to prevent the autonomy of Kurds in Northern Iraq for protecting of their national integrity. Kurdish problem in Turkey portrayed different context and trend according to some authors. This reflects on the fact that Turks tries to protect national integrity, Kurds tries to have more privilege (Birdisli F 2013, p.1).

Most significant part of this problem is the securitization of ethnic existence of Kurds and their demands. Despite the fact that Turks have not really perceived ethnic diversity as a threat in the political consciousness of the country historically, the securitization of the Kurd ethnicity is related with the new nationalist political culture of Turkey. This is synonymous with some policy implemented in the early period of Republic of Turkey to strengthen the fabric of the nation's State and to improve national conciseness, which led to suppression of Kurds identity. But from 1998 to 2002, the percentage of Turkish citizens who viewed "terror and security" as the greatest threats to the national security of the country dropped from 39.3 to 5.5%. This is as a result of the fact that for the first time since the PKK revolt began in 1984, dynamics instead of violence and considerations instead of state security got a chance to play a role in determining the pattern of this conflict. There were series of laws passed by the Turkish parliament to grant some cultural-linguistic rights to ethnic Kurds, such as broadcasting in and teaching Kurdish. Though the implementation these rights has so far been slow and fell short of politically conscious ethnic Kurds' expectations for change (Somer M, 2004, p.236).

Kurdish question has been considered as a threat to the national security of Turkey, whereby military strength has been used to suppress this threat with different patterns in the history of the country. This was considered as a national security issues based on the prevalent theory in the world when this conflict started, which was realism. But another sector of security has come to prominent at the aftermath of the cold war whereby Kurdish issue in the country can be most suitably examined. This is societal sector of security, which deals with identity conflict. Attempt shall be made in this project to examine how Kurdish issues can be considered as a threat to Turkish society from societal security sector with the use of constructivist theory of international

relations. The project aims at securitizing Kurdish question in Turkey under societal security sector by using constructivist theory of international relations

EVOLUTION OF KURDISH QUESTION IN THE HISTORY OF TURKEY

The Turkish republican project from the historical development of the country was basically aimed at creating a civic nation whereby every citizen would have access to equal rights. This could be traced back to the ideology of the founding fathers of the Republic and in particular Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who blamed contrasting ethnic nationalisms for the fall of the “Sick Man of Europe.” The creation of the Republic conflated all citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity, language, culture or religion into one community: the Turks except the three non-Muslim communities (Greek, Armenian and Jewish) recognized as official minorities in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. One of the reasons behind this ideology was based on the fact that the creation of this new society as a homogenous and unified entity was also deemed necessary to ‘extract recognition as a Western nation from the West’. As put forward by Cizre (2001, p.231) The social diversity, pluralism and the emergence of an autonomous public sphere where this diversity crystallized were seen as disintegrative sapping the strength of the nation; strength deemed to be essential to achieve with the West.

Whereas, there was no problem theoretically on the idea of adopting a civic conception of the nation, the emergence of the problem came in practice as a result of Turkish nationalism, which gradually acquired a distinctive ethnic slant (Tocci 2001). This gave rise to the need for the all non-recognized minorities, first and foremost the Kurds to have access to equal rights in practice only if they can forget about their minority identities. And due to this, many Kurds were denied to be labeled as minority even up unto today, with the fear that this would imply unequal treatment and the failure to be recognized as a founding people of the Republic (Gunther 2007). The general tendency among Kurds was that, they considered themselves to be part of the founding element in the creation of the Turkish nation-state and wouldn't regard themselves as minority. This kind of Kurdish idea does not entail a renunciation of a separate Kurdish identity, but rather the claim for Kurdish identity to be recognized constitutionally as a founding element of the national identity.

Furthermore, It was found out that there were accepted Kurds assimilated into the Turkish nation and they have succeeded in occupying high-ranking positions in the world of politics and business. This is point that was made by staunchly Kemalist organizations such as the Istanbul Solidarity and Aid Association for Martyrs' Mothers or the Ankara Association for Martyrs' Families. However, the refusal of Kurds to be assimilated led to the state's repression against them. Indeed, in response to the Kurdish rebellions of the 1920s and 30s in Turkey's southeast where the inhabited people were predominantly by Kurds, the Turkish authorities destroyed their promises of local Kurdish autonomy, violated their legal obligation (under Article 39 of the Lausanne Treaty) to protect the Kurdish language, banned the use of Kurdish names, enacted the repressive Law for the Reestablishment of Order, and enacted the Resettlement Law designed to dilute the Kurdish presence in the southeast. This led to the resettlement of people, changing of people's name and places, there was restriction against the use of Kurdish language and the existence of a Kurdish identity was constitutionally denied (Tocci N & Kaliber A 2008, p.3-4).

In the year 1970s, there was eruption of Kurdish mobilisation to demonstrate their frustration. In this period, the Kurdish cause was advocated by Kurdish and leftist movements such as the Turkish Workers Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi), youth revolutionary movements (Dev Genç) and cultural clubs (Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths/Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları). The Kurdish cause during these

years was basically a quest for equal social and economic rights in the underdeveloped southeast. There was clash between Kurdish and pro-Kurdish groups with extreme rightwing and nationalist movements, which led to instability that culminated in the 1980 military coup. At the aftermath of this coup, the state's repression of rights and freedoms got worse as reflected in 1982 Constitution.

The preamble of the Constitution stated that 'no protection shall be afforded to thoughts or opinions contrary to Turkish national interests, the principles of the indivisibility of Turkey as a state and territory, Turkish historical and moral values, or the nationalism, principles, and reforms of Atatürk and his embracement of values of modern civilization...'. Articles 312 and 216 of the Penal Code condemned the expression of opinions 'denigrating Turkishness' or 'inciting enmity and hatred'. Article 14 of the Constitution prohibited any political activity based on class, sect, language or race. Article 125 of the Penal Code allowed for capital punishment for those who acted against the state's territorial integrity. The legal system also banned the use of languages other than Turkish. In particular Article 42 prohibited education in languages other than Turkish and Article 3 recognized Turkish as the only language of the state (Tocci N & Kaliber A 2008, p.4).

This constitutional repression increased the flames of Kurdish resentment whereby, the year 1980s, acquired a different nationalist and secessionist flavour. The Kurdish rose to become the greatest challenge to the Turkish state. PKK was considered to be the main actor promoting the nationalist Kurdish cause was the, with the declaration of its objective as establishment, through violent means, a pan-Kurdish state based on Marxist-Leninist principles. The PKK, led by Abdullah Öcalan launched its first attack on the Turkish armed forces in August 1984, and progressively used all means at its disposal, including terrorism and intimidation against the Turkish state, civilian dissidents, feudal lords and rival Kurdish and leftwing groups. This organization has foreign connections by Syria and Lebanon in the 1980s and northern Iraq since 1990-1991 as training grounds and launching attacks against Turkey. The organization also mobilized the Kurdish Diaspora in Western Europe. It used the media and information technology to create a sense of nationhood amongst Kurds in Diaspora and Kurds inhabiting in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria (Tocci N & Kaliber A 2008, p.5).

SECURITIZATION THEORY (SOCIETAL SECURITY)

Securitization theory is a constructivist response to the need of widening and broadening the security studies in Copenhagen School in the aftermath of the cold war. The classical threat perception in the traditional security studies was considered insufficient to the conditions and the requirements of securitization at the post Cold War (Buzan and Hansen, 2009:187). This led to the general argument raised by many academicians on the fact that strategic security approaches and classical threat perception have been weakened because of the post Cold War conditions and globalization (Miller, 2010:639; Bilgin, 2010:619; Ripsman and Paul, 2005:199; Beeson and Bellamy, 2003:341; Newman, 2001:240 etc). This as well requires states to redefine their national security perception and policies in order to incorporate new challenges during the era. It has also been argued that the concept of security has not changed in meaning both during and aftermath of the cold war. What has really changed is the conditions and scope of analysis at which security needs to deal with. Security can be defined as immunity from threats and threat perception.

One of the basic features of post cold war security studies has to with the shift in the nature of conflict from Clausewitzian inter-state conflict during the cold war to intra-state conflict or to "wars of a third kind" civil ethnic wars and wars between small states at the post cold war, which is a more globalized world. This is the same

definition made by Marry Kaldor, in her attempt to review what is meant by a security dilemma and by threats to national security, suggests that there are two kinds of war which are; old wars and new wars. She explains old war to be conflict over territory and sovereignty and usually as conflict between states. While new wars has to do with a matter of fragmentation and/or integration, and a matter of the homogenisation or diversification of society. She further defines the new wars not to be ideological conflicts but conflicts of identity and they are accompanied by ethnic cleansing, rampant and excessive solidifications of identity, fervent criminality within the conflicts, and civil war. Kaldor argues: 'The political goals of the new wars are about the claim to power on the basis of seemingly traditional identities - nation, tribe, religion' (1999, 69) (Saleh A 2010, p.235).

Elie Kedourie explains that nationalism in mixed areas can result in unpleasant and tense relationships between the different inhabitant sub- groups. He concludes that 'nationalism in mixed areas makes for tension and mutual hatred' (1960, 115). It can thus be suggested that 'all wars involve a clash of identities'. In short, the most important facet of ethnic and nationalist conflict is the struggle over identity, recognition and power. This means that Ethnic and identity issues and solutions are more important for national states like the case of Kurdish cause in Turkey. These new security challenges also required the individual and societal security to be at the center of the national security policies. Explaining the security issues of Kurdish identity in Turkey from realist military security studies during the cold war would be an incomplete exercise without considering the societal security. This concept first appears in the list of the threats to human security in United Nation (UN)'s Human Development Report (HDR) in 1994 than in the Sectoral Security approaches of the Copenhagen School. UN approaches summarized in seven main categories; Economic security, food security, healthy security, environmental security, personal security, Community security and political security ("UNDP", 1994:24). But Copenhagen School summarized it in five categories which is called as security sectors; Military security, Environmental security, Economic security, Societal security, Political security (Buzan and Hansen, 2009:212).

Ole Waever developed the notion of societal security in order to explain the conditions of the post-cold war. Societal security rendered the widening of perception of security and threats. Because, it has focused on identity as represent of the ability of a society to maintain its traditional patterns of language, culture, religion, national identity and customs (Booth, 2005:34). Barry Buzan defined societal security as the sustainability of traditional patterns of language, culture, religion, national identity and customs. In societal security, the threats posed to states are not merely external. Societal factors and agencies play important roles in the field of national security.

Securitization theory is considered to be another influential contribution of Buzan, Waver and their collaborators to the security studies. The word securitization is defined as labeling something as a security issue imbues it with a sense of importance and urgency that legitimizes the use of special measures outside of political process to deal with it (Booth, 2005:34). In the societal sector of security, securitization model is based on constructivism in international relation. This theory has become a prominent theoretical approach in the discipline and drawing on insight from cognate disciplines such as sociology, constructivist argues that world is constituted socially through inter-subjective interaction. Besides, norm and identity are also central role to the constitution and dynamic of world politics (McDonald, 2008:63-76). Copenhagen School is basically concern with how security is constructed and function in the world politics. The securitization components according to the school comprises of;

- a) Securitizing actors: these can be government, political elites, military, civil society, etc.
- b) Referent objects: they can as well be states, groups, national sovereignty, ideology, economy etc.
- c) Existential threats for referent objects: they can be sovereignty, integrity, fundamental right etc
- d) Extraordinary measures; the various methods used to (How the question will be deal with) (Birdisli F 2013, p.1-2).

Securitization process is explained from two stages according to Copenhagen school. The first stage has to do with the portrayal of certain issue, persons or entities as existential threats to referent objects. The quality of securitizing is a specific rhetorical structure (Williams, 2003:514). This step can be used by both state and non-state actors, which can be regarded as securitizing actors. And the second stage has to do with the relevant audience (public opinion, politicians, military officers or other elites) must be convinced by the securitizing actors about that emergency and extraordinary measures must be taken for existential threat by way of discourse act and speech act (Booth, 2005:34).

SECURITIZATION OF KURDISH QUESTION

Securitization gives room for an opportunity to use extraordinary measures for a problem beyond the normal political sphere. According to Emmer (2010:141) “*a successful act of securitization provides securitizing actors with the special right to use extraordinary measures.*” Securitization of Kurdish question in Turkey will enable us to use extra ordinary measure to analyze the main issues. In the real sense, the real problem cannot be considered to be Kurdish existence because they have been living in the country for hundred of years in which they have also spread all over many countries like Iran, Iraq, and Syria. But quite unfortunate that the end of World War I marked the beginning of Kurdish identity coming under severe pressure in all the four states due to the fact that these countries turned to nation states. In securitizing this issue, the components of securitization according to Copenhagen School shall be used, which are securitization actors, referent object and extraordinary measures.

Securitizing Actors in Kurdish Question: The question to ask here is that; who or what the main determiner of the securitization process? According to the theory, determiner of the securitization is called “securitizing actors” These could be governments, political elites, military and civic society with the following features:

(1) They have the enablement to use state power. (2) They are in control of mass media and tools of communication in order to convince the public about the existence of threats. In the Kurdish case, securitization actors can be considered as both Turkish government and Turkish army. Though the two units in the country are not homogenous. These institutions comprise of both Liberals and Nationalists. The liberals will respect moral values and pluralism; they are regarded as democrats who argue for the favor of democratic rights and subsidiary according to the imperial heritage and Islamic doctrine. While nationalists advocate for centralization and homogeneity. So, the nationalist elites are regarded to be state elites with rigidity concerning the minority rights for the sake of homogeneity of state. These state elites have been effective in Turkish policy right from the beginning of the country with the use of gravity of the military on society. They are in control of the mass media in the country. According to Arslan, (2005:141) Mass media also has been one of the important power centers outside the Turkish cabinet and parliament in Turkish Society with states and military elites.

Referent Objects and Existential Threats in Kurdish Question: In a simple meaning, the referent object is considered as object or value that is regarded to be under the threat. It may be states, groups, national sovereignty, ideology or economy etc. In Kurdish case, the referent object can be regarded as Turkish state and Society and the Existential threat can be regarded as the Kurdish Identity. Turkish society becomes the referent object due to the issues of considering Kurdish Identity as minority. Most statements made by the Turkey elites were entered on the integrity and unity of Turkey each time in the phrase of the “One state one nation” Kurdish identity is considered to be a threat because it hinders the spirit of oneness, unity and one society according to the nationalist Turkish elites. For example Minister of Education and Chair of the Turkish Association (Türk Ocakı) H. Suphi Tanrıöver declared “Everyone who are Muslims and Turkish speaking and who are in love of Turkish are called Turks. We care that unity of the language, religion and desire” during the teachers college conferences around 1929 (Tanrıöver, 1929:194). And Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü also says “ Our principle is to convert everybody to the Turk in our land. Our goal is to extirpate those who opposed to the Turkishness from our land” (Bali, 2001,106).

Extraordinary Measures for Kurdish Question: This simply means the various preventing methods for threats beyond the ordinary political measures. Extraordinary measures should be related with the perceived threat by securitizing actors. In this case, the two sides of issues shall be examined. When Kurdish Identity becomes a threat to Turkish society, it should be noted that Turkish state also become a threat to Kurdish identity so both parties are referent objects as well as existential threats. And they both engaged in different extraordinary measures to prevent the threats. In Kurdish question case, prominent spark for using extraordinary measures has been local Kurdish uprisings and related official reports. Approximately fifteen official reports have been drafted between 1925 and 1960 (Yayman, 2011). These reports show the fear of Turkish officials about the unity of their society. According to Yayman (2011:34), these reports were classified into two, which are “civic perspective” and “security perspective.”

The civic perspective is explained to be synonymous with liberal democratic approach, which that the problem is related with economic development and offered economic, societal and cultural prevention policies in Kurd populated area in their reports. While Security perspective is explained to regard the Kurdish problem as a challenge to national security and offered the use of military measures to deal with it. In this respect, the extraordinary measure in Kurdish issues is itemized as follows according to Birdisli F (2014, p.7);

- ◆ Suppression of any challenge to state authority with the use of military power;
- ◆ Sending to exile of tribal chiefs sheikhs and leading families from their lands to the other regions;
- ◆ Changing the nature of demography by migration and resettlement;
- ◆ Assimilating the consciousness of Kurds by nationalist education formation.

Interconnectedness of the Security Sectors in Kurdish Case

Barry Buzan explains the five sectors of security to include military, economic, societal, political and environmental but with the addition of human security and cyber security. These sectors are connected with each other and threats to a particular sector will affect the other sectors in one way or the other. In Kurdish case, the affected sector during the cold war was Turkish national security, which is related to military security sector with the use realist theory of international relations. And this is explained to be security perspective according to Yayman (2011). But the Kurdish question can be seen from

societal sector now, which has to do with both Turkish identity according to the nationalist and Kurdish identity as well. Though, Kurdish question affected all other sectors both during the cold war era and at the aftermath of the cold war but the national security agenda from realist theory, which was the dominant approach during the cold war suppressed all other sectors and Kurdish issue was seen as a threat to the survival of Turkish state alone.

In discussing the extraordinary measures for Kurdish questions, the concept of interconnectedness of the security sectors according to Barry Buzan can be found valid by considering the various preventive measures taken by the Turkish government to deal with the Kurdish issues by using political restrictions (political sector), economic restrictions (economic sector), Military power (military sector), change of demography and migration (societal sector). This means that a threat to a particular sector can affect all other sectors and in dealing the threat, other sectors can be instrumentalized.

Military Measures: from Kurdish perspective, the Turkish state is the threat to their identity and different uprising has been a way of preventing their identity. There have been on average 29 Kurdish uprisings (according to some the last one is PKK terror) between 1806 and 1984 in Turkey (Yayman, 2011:53). And on the side of Turkish government, Military power has been used to counter Sheikh Said Uprising (1925) and in Dersim (1937). Both uprisings were suppressed with the use of military measures and also supported with Law of Treason. Dersim uprising was considered to be different from the religion oriented Sheikh Said uprising with its nationalist character. That maybe, Dersim rebellions have demanded more autonomy for eastern part of the Anatoly (Akgül, 2014:19). Sheikh Said Uprising was discussed to be a religious reaction to the new secular reforms of the government (Nur, 2007:84). But both incidents had been confronted with a hard response of using military power. These uprisings were considered to be a threat to national security of Turkish state and Military forces became the solution to it. For example, Dersim uprising is considered as the biggest rebellion in the history of Turkish Republic. Approximately 13,160 people were killed against 110 soldiers in 1938 (Kürkçügil, 2009:59). Military measures continued after 1987 when the PKK has begun the terrorist action until 2012. PKK became the direct opposition organization to Turkish government and Kurdish people were indirectly affected. This is due to the fact that PKK issued a military service law in 1990 by which every Kurdish youth aged 18 to 25 without exception was obliged to join the PKK army. Compulsory recruitment was later ended as due to sufficient voluntary recruitment. In twenty-nine years (1984-2012) military fight against PKK and 11, 785 military lost (martyr) according to the Turkish Parliamentary Inquiry Commission of Human Rights Report about Violation of the Right of Life. This total number epitomized the simple truth that military prevention cannot be a solution for securitizing ethnic problems.

Political Restrictions: In order to deal with the Kurdish question in Turkey, political restrictions were used against them. Approximately 58 political parties had been banned between 1924 and 2009 by Constitutional Courts in Turkish political life and eight of them were related with directly Kurdish problem. The first political party was basically concerned with Kurdish problem was Peoples Labor Party (Halkın Emek Partisi-HEP). The founders of the party were member of Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) and parliamentarian of The Grand National Assembly of Turkey. These parliamentarians had been expelled from party because of attendance to Kurds Conference that was held in Paris in 1989. This Party has been banned in the country with the allegation of “seeking to destroy national and territorial integrity of Turkey” by the Turkish Constitutional Court in 1993 (Birdisli F 2014, p.9). The Court observed that this party

amounted to claims that Kurdish people “were not free to use their own language and were unable to make political demands based on the principles of self-determination. The party was succeeded by the more radical Democratic Labour Party (Demokrasi Partisi – DEP), but in 1994 the Constitutional Court lifted the parliamentary immunity to ban the party itself. The same fate awaited the People’s Democratic Party (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi – HADEP), which was closed in 2003, and the Democratic People’s Party (Demokratik Halk Partisi – DEHAP), that was dissolved in 2005. DEHAP was replaced by the Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi– DTP), founded in 2004 by former DEP members released from jail. the main accusations advanced against these parties were their links with the PKK and their attempts to challenge the unitary nature of the Republic (Tocci N & Kaliber A 2008, p.6).

Demographical and Migration Control: Another extraordinary measure used by Turkish government against the Kurdish issues was sending to exile the prominent Kurdish people after the uprisings. For example many sheikhs and tribal chief has been exiled from East Turkey after the religious oriented Sheikh Said uprising. Nearly twelve thousand people had been relocated at the after Dersin operation according to the official reports. Many Kurdish writers, poets and politicians were forced to leave the country to the Europe after the 1980 military coup. This prevented the Kurdish immigrant to come freely into the country and also reduced their population.

HOW KURDISH QUESTION AFFECTS TURKISH SOCIETY?

Turkish policy towards the suppression of Kurdish uprisings didn't only affect the Kurdish people but also had impact on the Turkish civil society. At the societal level, most of Turkish people do not really consider Kurdish identity as threats to them due to the fact that Kurdish people have been living with them for century and they are part the country' historical development. Kurdish question has been amongst the principal issues occupying civil society’s agenda in Turkey since 1980s. It has defined the way civil society organizations positioned themselves in the domestic political system of the country. There were those supporting the recognition of a separate Kurdish identity and cultural/collective rights, and denouncing the state’s violations of human rights took the sphere of the “anti-establishment”. Others that could be defined as “establishment” CoSOs, adapted, to a fuller or lesser extent, the official state line and blamed anti-establishment civil society groups for being pawns in the hands of the Kurdish separatist movement. In this respect, Kurdish question divided the unity among the Turkish civil society whereby most of the people are in against of human right violations used against the Kurdish by the Turkish government while some are partially in support of this (Tocci N & Kaliber A 2008, p.5-6).

Civil society in Turkey means “*sivil toplum*” which has to do with the idea of a civilian/non-military society. Turkey’s civil society has in fact tended to work against the illiberal features of the Turkish state, strongly influenced by the Turkish military. Particularly since 1980 and the ensuing implementation of a highly restrictive Constitution, “civilian society” in Turkey became closely associated with the push for democratization and the protection of human rights. This explains the fact that Kurdish questions made the Turkish state to go against the will of Turkish society. In the foundation of the Turkish state according to Kemalist ideology, the “social contract” between the state and “establishment” civil society foresaw the protection of the latter’s rights and freedoms alongside their compliance with or non-opposition to the fundamental tenets of the Kemalist regime. In this respect, civil society would become an additional voice at the service of the “father state” (baba devlet) (Kalaycıoğlu 2002). Because of this, establishment of civil society groups have been conceptualized as part

and parcel of the state's national security project (Bilgin 2007), being more willing to ally with the state than with anti-establishment groups.

The strong suppression against the civil society as a response to Kurdish question according to Turkish government led to the establish of PKK, which became a militant organization directly threatening of the territorial integrity of the state and creating space for the emergence and functioning of civil society in the country. PKK became a threat to the national security of Turkey due to the fact that all citizens and civil society groups that pursued the recognition of a separate Kurdish identity, be this through violent or peaceful means, or as part of an inclusive or exclusive understanding of Turkish identity, were lumped together as a threat to the Turkish nation-state. Another point to be considered as an effect of Kurdish question on Turkish society is the underdevelopment of Turkey's southeast also circumscribed the potential for a vibrant Kurdish civil society. This part of Turkey has the highest Kurdish inhabitants and this led to Turkish government punishing the region with both economic factors and military strength. It should be noted however that, not only Kurdish people are living in this part because many Turkish people are also living there facing the same punishment.

Securitizing Civil Society

The main securitizing actor of Kurdish question is CoSOs. It can be categorized as establishment/nationalist Turkish NGOs, the mainstream media and some Kurdish or pro-Kurdish associations. Turkish nationalist/establishment CoSOs supports the assimilationist identity and, in the case of Ankara Association of Martyrs' Families, an ethnocentrist one. Assimilationists make references to the recognition of Kurdish individual rights as long as Kurds consent to being assimilated into the dominant Turkish identity. They are not in support of the existence of a distinct Kurdish identity and the acknowledgment of collective rights to them. These organizations explicitly promote the rights of an exclusive group, such as martyrs' families or secular Turks, and resist any dialogue with or integration of non-Turkish elements in their actions and strategies. The Ankara Association of Martyrs' Families, which prioritizes the primordial rights of ethnic Turks and denies recognition any individual or collective rights to ethnic Kurds instead embraces a racist identity. Turkey's mainstream media has been acting as a voice to dominant state discourse, espousing assimilationist attitudes toward Kurdish question. The second category of CoSOs are regarded as Kurdish nationalist CoSOs playing the role of Human Right Association discourse by securitizing multicultural identity. They advocate for equal collective rights for all communities, yet fail to transcend ethno-centric interpretations of identity (Tocci N & Kaliber A. 2008, p.8).

CONCLUSION

This project starts from analyzing the security issues generally in the world politics whereby the expansion of security agenda from realist state-centric approach during the cold war to multi-actors and sectors perspective at the aftermath of the cold war was firstly discussed. This increased conditions of security agenda led to the recognition of other sectors of security aside military sector, which are political, societal, economic, environmental, cyber and human security sectors. This led to the need to use societal security sector, which has to do with identity issues in analyzing the Kurdish Question in Turkey. The project explains the various ways whereby Kurdish question has been considered as a national security issues to Turkey and treated with the use military forces and suppression strategies. This has not solved this issue rather complicate the situation in the country. In this respect, there is a need to analyze this issues and how it has affected the Turkish society with the use of societal security securitization process.

The project founds out that when using military strength against the Kurdish question in the country, it was unable to resolve the issue and also affected the Turkish society. The recognition of this problem as a societal security issues and the recent liberal response given to it by Turkish government through few constitutional rights given to the Kurdish people has subjected the situation under control to some extent in the country compare with the period when military force is used against them, which led to establishment of PKK as a direct threat to the national security of the country.

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