

**REPRESENTATION OF THE KURDISH QUESTION IN  
HURRIYET AND CUMHURİYET (1990-2006)**

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## ABSTRACT

### REPRESENTATION OF THE KURDISH QUESTION IN HURRIYET AND CUMHURİYET (1990-2006)

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The aim of this study is to analyze the transformation of the official discourse and perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds through its representations in Turkish media since 1990. Ottoman period and the Republican period till 1990s are studied in the first phase, in order to provide the historical background of the Kurdish question and state's perception of the issue. In the second phase, representations of state's perception of the Kurdish issue in *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers are analyzed by using Critical Discourse Analysis techniques. The transformation of the official discourse of the Kurdish issue is examined through eight cases: the Gulf War I in 1991, events occurred during the Parliamentary Oath Ceremony in 1991, Nevruz of 1992, HADEP congress in 1996, capture of Şemdin Sakık in 1998 and Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, the Gulf War II in 2003, Nevruz of 2005, Şemdinli incident and debates on identity in 2005 and 2006. In this study, it is claimed that state's perception and discourse of the Kurdish issue has transformed since 1990s without a total detachment from its traditional perception and discourse of the issue.

**Keywords:** Kurdish issue, Official discourse, Discourse analysis

## ÖZ

### KÜRT MESELESİNİN HÜRRİYET VE CUMHURİYET’TE TEMSİLİ (1990-2006)

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Kürt meselesi ve Kürtlere dair resmi söylem ve algıdaki dönüşümü 1990’dan itibaren Türk mediasındaki temsilleri üzerinden incelemektir. İlk aşamada, Osmanlı dönemi ve 1990lı yıllara kadar Cumhuriyet dönemine odaklanılarak, Kürt meselesinin ve devletin meseleye dair algısının tarihsel arkaplanı incelenmiştir. İkinci aşamada Eleştirel Söylem Analizi teknikleri kullanılarak devletin Kürt meselesine dair algısının *Hürriyet* ve *Cumhuriyet* gazetelerindeki temsilleri incelenmiştir. Kürt meselesine dair resmi söylemdeki dönüşüm sekiz vaka üzerinden incelenmiştir: 1991 yılındaki birinci Körfez Savaşı, 1991 yılındaki Meclis Yemin Töreninde meydana gelen olaylar, 1992 Nevruz’u, 1996 yılındaki HADEP kongresi, 1998 yılında Şemdin Sakık’ın ve 1999 yılında Abdullah Öcalan’ın yakalanması, 2003 yılındaki ikinci Körfez Savaşı, 2005 Nevruz’u, 2005 ve 2006 yıllarındaki Şemdinli olayları ve kimlik tartışmaları. Bu çalışmada, 1990’lardan itibaren devletin Kürt meselesine dair algı ve söyleminin dönüşüm geçirdiği fakat geleneksel algı ve söylemlerinden tamamen kopmadığı iddia edilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kürt meselesi, Resmi söylem, Söylem analizi

In Memory of my Mother  
JALE BAYINDIR

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The Kurdish question of Turkey is a highly complex issue that economic, social and political factors on both domestic and international levels are significant to grasp its nature. The Kurdish issue can properly be studied in relation to experiences of two centuries of social history.<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, therefore, all social and political events that transformed the nature of the Kurdish issue, beginning with the period of Ottoman Empire, will be discussed in parallel with the examination of progress of Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish movement, in order to reach a better understanding of the discourse on Kurdish question.

The initial base of progress of the Kurdish issue was set with Ottoman Empire's struggle of modernization that initiated policies of 'centralization'. The administrative 'exception' –independent and semi-independent emirates– exercised in Kurdish regions was gradually eliminated in accordance with these 'centralization' efforts and led to 'discomfort' in the region. The second base was set with the 'liberty' period beginning with the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. The Kurdish culture, literature, and nationalism gained ground during this pre-World War I period. With the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the most significant phase for the Kurdish issue began. The Constitution of 1924 made the definition of 'Turkishness' that excluded non-Muslim citizens but included the Kurds. After this phase, the Kurds who were perceived as 'Turks to be' were subjected to oppression and state's assimilation policies. The gradual economic progress of eastern regions during 1950s led to

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<sup>1</sup> Yeğen, M., *Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2003, p. 15

migration of Kurdish population to metropolitan areas where they had access to education. With the rise of political liberties in 1960s, the Kurdish issue and Kurdish nationalism began to be represented in the left-wing political struggle. During 1970s the Kurdish nationalist movement also radicalized just as the left-wing movement, where both of them transformed into underground organizations following the 1980 coup d'état.

The Kurdish issue entered a new phase with the escalation of PKK's terrorist activities by early 1990s. It is argued that the Turkish state began to perceive the Kurdish issue and Kurds through PKK terror after this point. Considering this major shift in the focus of state's perception of the Kurdish issue, domestic and international developments such as Gulf War in 1991 and Nevruz of 1992, the 1990s were the years that state's conventional and historical stance on the issue transformed. This study focuses on this transformation by examining its representations in the Turkish media for the period of the sixteen years; until 2007.

In order to display the course of the above-mentioned transformation, historical background of the Kurdish issue must be examined. The second chapter will address the methodology of textual analysis that will be applied in analyzing the data that is collected from two newspapers: *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*. In this respect, significance of the press and critical discourse analysis approach will be evaluated. Van Dijk's micro-level (textual) and Fairclough's macro-level (discursive practice and social practice) analysis techniques will be examined thoroughly.

The third chapter will present an analysis of the Ottoman period with the aim of comprehending the historical background of the Kurdish question. Firstly the situation established in the 16th century, which conditioned the patterns of political relations between the Ottoman state and the Kurds for three centuries will be evaluated. In this respect, peculiar administrative structure that Ottoman state implemented in the regions inhabited by the Kurds will be examined. Secondly, the significance of 'centralization' policies of the Ottoman Empire will be evaluated by focusing on the *Tanzimat* period. The Imperial Rescript of Gülhane (1839), the Reform Edict

(1856), the Land Code (1858), and the Vilayet (Province) Law (1864) will be examined within that context. Thirdly, the rise of the Kurdish nationalism will be examined along with an analysis of the period covering the reign of Abdülhamid II regarding the establishment of Hamidiye Regiments and Tribal Schools. The period of Second Constitutionalism that began with the 1908 Revolution will be analyzed in respect of the environment of ‘liberties’ and of ‘Turkification’ policies. Finally, in the third chapter, the World War I period and its effects on the Kurdish nationalism -namely its role in increasing the possibility of an independent Kurdish state in eastern regions- will be evaluated.

In the fourth chapter, with the objective of identifying the nature and progress of the state’s perception of the Kurdish issue and the Kurds, the period beginning with the National War of Independence and ending in 1990s will be analyzed. First of all, the period of transition, between 1919 and 1923, will be examined considering policies on Kurds’ future in the newly established state. Secondly, the Constitution of 1924, as the basis of newly established ‘nation state’, will be analyzed. This analysis is facilitated through examining the definition of ‘Turkishness’ and citizenship in the Constitution of 1924. As the next step in examining the Turkish state’s perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds, the three Kurdish rebellions, the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925, the Mount Ararat Rebellion between 1929 and 1930, and the Dersim Rebellion in 1937, that outbreak during the early years of the Republic will be analyzed. These rebellions are argued to have established the backbone of state policies of Kurds. Therefore their reasons and consequences, or equivalently the pre- and post-conditions will be examined. More explicitly, state’s policies of assimilation, repression, and the denial of Kurdish existence following these rebellions will be identified. The multi-party period, beginning with Democratic Party rule in 1950s will be examined through its policies of economic integration in the country and outward migration from eastern regions inhabited by Kurds. Next the rise of left and Kurdish nationalism in 1960s will be examined. Also the political radicalization in the country during 1970s and the situation of the Kurdish

movement will be taken into consideration. The post-1980 military coup period will be examined in two levels in order to display the perception of the Kurdish question and situations conditioning it: state policies as a return to early-Republican period and the activities of PKK started in 1984.

The transformation of the perception on the Kurdish question and the Kurds will be analyzed in the fifth chapter, through examining data (news reports, interviews and opinion articles) collected from *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers covering a period of sixteen years between 1990 and 2006. In consideration of the transformation of the perception on the Kurdish issue and Kurds and of state policies were shaped by developments in the national and international political scene, the analysis will be done by examining eight cases, which were marked as the milestones of this ‘transformation’. The first case is the Gulf War in 1991, the most significant international event, as a result of which Turkey had to ‘modify’ its policies of Kurdish issue. The second case that will be examined is the events occurred during the oath-taking ceremony in the Parliament in 1991. In this oath taking ceremony, some SHP – Social Democratic People’s Party-deputies (HEP – People’s Labor Party- originated Kurdish deputies) took their oaths in Kurdish and afterwards were protested by some deputies in the Parliament. These events in the ceremony became a major topic in the country’s agenda and a milestone in the perception of the Kurdish deputies and the Kurdish issue. Withdrawal of immunities of these HEP deputies in 1994 will also be examined in this second case considering its effects to Turkey’s relationship with the ‘west’.

The third case will be the Nevruz of 1992 because of its effects on state’s policies and perception of the Kurdish issue. Following the Nevruz of 1992, state’s perception and policies of the issue began to be shaped through the PKK terror. The second congress of HADEP in 1996 will be the fourth case to be examined considering the rise of Turkish nationalism in relation to the perception of the Kurdish issue. The fifth case; the capture of Şemdin Sakık in 1998 and Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, will also be examined as a part of rising Turkish nationalist reflexes in evaluating the Kurdish issue. The

Gulf War II in 2003, which is the sixth case, will be examined through Turkey's increasing fear of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq and policies on Turcoman population in the region as an indicator of rising Turkish nationalism. As the seventh case, the events occurred during Nevruz of 2005 but more significantly state's reactions to these events will be examined in order to display the 'transformation' on the official level. As the last case, Şemdinli incidents and debates on 'identity' between 2005 and 2006 will be examined. This final case has several layers as impact of rising Turkish nationalism and state's policies of both reformation and assimilation considering the Kurdish issue.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In Turkey, today the perception of the Kurds and the Kurdish issue is undergoing a transformation. So, in order to grasp the nature of this transformation, in following chapters, foundations of this perception, especially its construction over the years will be examined. Parallel to our hypothesis, it is contended that the transformation began in 1990s and continued until [2007] the present time. In the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter, the nature of this transformation of the perception of the Kurds and the Kurdish issue by focusing on news and articles in two mainstream newspapers, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* will be pursued. Our data consists of these written texts in these two newspapers which were examined systematically day by day for the period covering from the beginning of 1990 until the end of 2006. However, in the first round, as the main focus of this chapter; the reason behind choosing news and newspaper articles as our data, specifically *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers, and critical discourse analysis (CDA) techniques to analyze these data will be discussed.

In order to examine the significance of newspapers, in the first phase, it is crucial to identify what newspapers reflect, represent and inform the community about; and in the second phase, what newspapers reproduce and manufacture must be identified. According to Van Dijk, “ideologically news implicitly promotes the dominant beliefs and opinions of elite groups – of ‘dominant groups’ in Helleiner’s and Szuchewycz’s words- in society.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Helleiner, J. and Szuchewycz B., “Discourses of Exclusion: The Irish Press and the Traveling People” in Riggins S. H. (eds.) *The Language and Politics of Exclusion*, SAGE

Newspapers in a way contribute to “the reproduction or legitimation of power of elites” and “reproduce the attitudes of the powerful.”<sup>3</sup> As van Dijk stressed; the ‘white’ press is a part of the overall system and sustains the white group dominance considering the social, economic, and cultural positions of the major newspapers.<sup>4</sup> Newspapers represent an ideological world –a socially constructed model of the world-<sup>5</sup> Hartley argues that “news values are neither natural nor neutral, they are an ideological code; they form a code which sees the world in a very particular way”.<sup>6</sup> As Fowler underlines; “newspapers reproduce the beliefs and paradigms of the community”; -in Hall’s and Hartley’s terms- a ‘consensual’ view of society.<sup>7</sup> The institutions of news reporting and presentation are socially, economically, and politically situated therefore, according to Fowler and Hartley, all news is always reported from some particular angle.<sup>8</sup> As Bell identified, the media is an important social institution and crucial presenter of culture, politics, and social life, shaping as well as reflecting how these are formed and expressed.<sup>9</sup> In other words, newspapers are social institutions representing an ideological world in a particular way that reproduce a ‘consensual’ view of society, that promote the power and attitudes of dominant groups, and reflect the presenting of formation and expression of

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Publications, 1997, London-New Delhi, p. 112; Van Dijk, T.A., *News As Discourse*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1988, New Jersey, p. 83

<sup>3</sup> Fowler, R., *Language in the News*, Routledge, 1991, London & New York, p. 23; Van Dijk, T.A., *Racism and the Press*, Routledge, 1991, London-New York, p. 45

<sup>4</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., *Racism and the Press*, p. 33

<sup>5</sup> Fowler, R., *Language in the News*, pp. 92-93

<sup>6</sup> Hartley, J., *Understanding News*, Routledge, 1988, London-New York., p. 80

<sup>7</sup> Hall, S., “The Social Production of News” in Hall, S., Crichton, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., and Roberts, B. (eds.) *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*, Macmillan, 1978, London, pp. 55-57; Hartley, J., *Understanding News*, Methuen, 1982, London, pp. 81-86 cited in Fowler, R., *Language in the News*, p. 124

<sup>8</sup> Fowler, R., *Language in the News*, p. 10

<sup>9</sup> Bell, A., “The Discourse Structure of News Stories” in Bell, A. and Garrett, P. (eds.) *Approaches to Media Discourse*, Blackwell Publishers, 1998, U.K., p. 64



culture, politics, and social life. So, by examining some Turkish newspapers and breaking their ideological codes, we may identify the mainstream discourse on the Kurdish issue in Turkey that represents the official ideology.

According to van Dijk, the mass media manufacture popular consent, especially in the domain of ethnic relations because have nearly exclusive control over the symbolic resources.<sup>10</sup> He argues that, from the news reports in the press, people are engaged in communication, and they acquire the mental models, the social knowledge, the attitudes, and the ideologies.<sup>11</sup> According to Hartley, news has an active and a productive role: the media produce and reproduce the common sense and its notions.<sup>12</sup> As Fowler suggests, news is not a value-free reflection of facts; on the contrary they carry ideological distinctions that could be perceived through differences in expressions.<sup>13</sup> For Fairclough, mass-media discourse is interesting because the nature of the power relations enacted in it is often not clear, and there are reasons for seeing it as involving hidden relations of power.<sup>14</sup> Power exercised in newspapers is the power to disguise power. It is a form of hidden power, for the favored interpretations and wordings are those of the power holders in our society, though they appear to be just those of newspaper.<sup>15</sup> As it was mentioned above, newspapers manufacture popular consent and reproduce the common sense; from the mass media people acquire the mental models, the social knowledge, the attitudes, and the ideologies. Namely, by examining newspapers –particularly news

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<sup>10</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., *Racism and the Press*, p. 43

<sup>11</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., “Political Discourse and Racism: Describing Others in Western Parliaments” in Riggins S. H. (eds.) *The Language and Politics of Exclusion*, SAGE Publications, 1997, London-New Delhi, p. 31

<sup>12</sup> Hartley, J., *Understanding News*, p. 105

<sup>13</sup> Fowler, R., *Language in the News*, p. 4

<sup>14</sup> Fairclough, N., *Language and Power*, Longman, 1992, London-New York, p. 49

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 52

discourses- the popular consent and the common sense on the Kurdish issue, which newspapers foster, would be exposed.

*Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers were decided to be examined in order not to be detached from mainstream discourse on Kurdish issue and Kurds. As it was mentioned before, the aim of this thesis is to identify the perception of Turkish nationalism on Kurdish question. *Hürriyet*<sup>16</sup> and *Cumhuriyet*<sup>17</sup> newspapers, which are at the ‘center’ according to ideological affiliations of newspapers<sup>18</sup>, were chosen because of the fact that they present founding elements of Turkish nationalism and its variations. The study covers sixteen-year time period (1990-2006) for the reason that most significant, historic and distinct developments considering the Kurds and the Kurdish issue was occurred during this epoch. All editorials, news reports, interviews and opinion articles in these two newspapers related to Kurds and the Kurdish issue were examined. The data from *Hürriyet* were collected from original copies of the newspaper between January 1, 1990 and July 7, 1997. Data belonging to the period after July 7, 1997 until December 31, 2006 were collected through *Hürriyet*’s online archive. The data from *Cumhuriyet* were collected from original copies of the newspaper between January 1, 1990 and May 7, 1998. Data belonging to the period after May 7, 1998 until December 31, 2006 were collected through *Cumhuriyet*’s online archive.

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<sup>16</sup> *Hürriyet* newspaper has a daily circulation of 600.000 as the largest daily in Turkey. SFN Flash, November 2004, No. 9 Vol. 2, [http://www.wan-press.org/IMGpdf04.11\\_SFN\\_Flash-FullText.pdf](http://www.wan-press.org/IMGpdf04.11_SFN_Flash-FullText.pdf) (accessed 24 August 2007)

<sup>17</sup> For more than decades *Hürriyet* newspaper is one of the three most-widely circulated newspapers nation wide. *Cumhuriyet* newspaper is generally ranked between 15th and 20th. For detailed information on circulation ratios of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper after 1980s see Köktener, A., *Bir Gazetenin Tarihi Cumhuriyet*, YKY, İstanbul, 2004, pp. 158-162 For more information on nationwide newspaper circulations see <http://www.medyatava.com/tiraj.asp> (accessed 25 August 2007)

<sup>18</sup> According to Yumul’s and Özkırımlı’s determination of ideological affiliations of newspapers in Turkey, ‘centre right’ newspapers are *Günaydın*, *Hürriyet*, *Pazar Postası*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, *Son Havadis*, *Takvim*, and *Tan*. ‘Centre left’ newspapers are *Cumhuriyet* and *Radikal*. Yumul, A. & Özkırımlı, U., “Reproducing the Nation: ‘Banal Nationalism’ in the Turkish Press”, *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 22: 787-804, 2000, p. 793

## 2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

As it was mentioned before, the aim of this thesis is to identify the transformation in state's perception of the Kurds and the Kurdish issue. Considering that newspapers represent and reproduce the official discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis approach presents adequate techniques to identify the building structures of the discourse on the Kurdish issue. As overlapping with the concern of this thesis; the discipline of critical discourse analysis aims to "go beyond the sentence boundary and study the structures of discourse as a whole, while using data derived from naturally occurring text and talk".<sup>19</sup> Critical discourse analysis, attempts to "uncover and de-mystify certain social processes...to make mechanisms of manipulation, discrimination, demagoguery, and propaganda explicit and transparent" through its focus on language use in situations of inequality and injustice.<sup>20</sup> According to Wodak the critical discourse analysis "regards 'language as social practice', and takes consideration of language use to be crucial" and interested in the relation between the language and power.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, the critical discourse analysis "provides theory and methods for the empirical study of the relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains".<sup>22</sup>

As O'Halloran cited, Fairclough and Wodak isolate a number of common tenets in critical discourse analysis: "(1) CDA addresses social problems, (2) power relations are discursive, (3) discourse constitutes society and culture, (4) discourse does ideological work, (5) discourse is historical,

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<sup>19</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., *Racism and the Press*, p. 46

<sup>20</sup> Wodak, R. (eds.), *Language, Power and Ideology*, 1989, Philadelphia: John Benjamins cited in Helleiner, J. and Szuchewycz B., "Discourses of Exclusion: The Irish Press and the Traveling People"

<sup>21</sup> Wodak, R., "What CDA Is About – A summary of Its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments" in Wodak, R. And Meyer, M. (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Sage Publications, 2004, London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi, pp. 1-3

<sup>22</sup> Jorgensen, M. And Phillips, L., *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, Sage Publications, 2002, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, p. 60

(6) the link between text and society is mediated, (7) discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory, (8) discourse is a form of social action.”<sup>23</sup> According to Jorgensen and Phillips, “the critical discourse analyst should explore patterns in and across the statements and identifying the social consequences of different discursive representations of reality.” “It is precisely the common-sense understandings that are to be investigated: analysis focuses on how some statements are accepted as true or ‘naturalized’, and others are not.”<sup>24</sup> In this study, in order to examine the representations of the Kurdish question and Kurds in the newspapers that official discourse visualized, critical discourse analysis techniques of van Dijk and Fairclough will be used owing to their effective and strong technical stances.

### **2.1.1. Van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis**

Meyer defines van Dijk’s approach of critical discourse analysis as one which is based on socio-cognitive theory that understands linguistics in a broad ‘structural-functional’ sense; that “defines discourse as a communicative event, including conversational interaction, written texts, as well as associated gestures, facework, typographical layout, images and any other ‘semiotic’ or multimedia dimensions of signification.”<sup>25</sup> According to van Dijk, the goal of critical discourse analysis is “to provide a detailed description, explanation, and critique of the textual strategies writers use to

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<sup>23</sup> Fairclough, N. and Wodak, R., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in Van Dijk, T.A., *Discourse as Social Interaction. Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, Sage, 1997, London, pp. 258-284 cited in O’Halloran, K., *Critical Discourse Analysis and Language Cognition*, Edinburgh University Press, 2003, UK, p. 12

<sup>24</sup> Jorgensen, M. And Phillips, L., *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* , p. 21

<sup>25</sup> Meyer, M., “Between Theory, Method, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA” in Wodak, R. And Meyer, M. (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 20

‘naturalize’ discourses, that is, to make discourses appear to be commonsense, apolitical statements.”<sup>26</sup>

In van Dijk’s perception, CDA tries to bridge the gap between micro approaches that cover the language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication, which belongs to the micro level of social order, and macro approaches, the concern of which is the power, dominance, and inequality between social groups.<sup>27</sup> In van Dijk’s words, discourse analysis aims;

to show how the cognitive, social, historical, cultural, or political contexts of language use and communication impinge on the contents, meanings, structures, or strategies of text of dialogue, and vice versa, how discourse itself is an integral part of and contributes to the structures of these contexts.<sup>28</sup>

According to van Dijk, critical discourse analysis requires “multidisciplinarity, and an account of intricate relationships between text, talk, social cognition, power, society and culture”.<sup>29</sup> Van Dijk mainly and significantly focuses on and uses micro level analysis of discourse analytical approach that is “a multidisciplinary approach to the study of language use and communication in their socio-cultural contexts” without neglecting the power and dominance structures of social order.<sup>30</sup> Hence, in analyzing news reports and newspaper articles in the fifth chapter, van Dijk’s micro level analysis, which presents a considerably powerful technique for detailed textual analysis, will be used.

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<sup>26</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., “Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis”, *Discourse & Society*, 4 (2), 1993 cited in Riggins, S.H., “The Rhetoric of Othering” in Riggins S. H. (eds.) *The Language and Politics of Exclusion*, SAGE, London-New Delhi, 1997, p. 2

<sup>27</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in Tanmen, D., Schiffrin, D., and Hamilton, H. (eds.) *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Blackwell, 2001, Oxford, p. 354 (main page: <http://www.discourses.org> downloaded from:[http:// www. discourses.org/OldArticles/Critical%20discourse%20analysis.pdf](http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Critical%20discourse%20analysis.pdf))

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 45

<sup>29</sup> Van Dijk, T. A., “Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis”, *Discourse & Society*, 4 (2), 1993, p. 253.

<sup>30</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., *Racism and the Press*, p. 44

Van Dijk presents two types of analysis, *structural* and *contextual* analysis, of discourse analytical approach. The ‘surface’ structure levels in *structural* analysis (expressions of underlying meanings) are as follows: ‘structural’ descriptions of texts themselves, *syntax* and *style*, concrete *lexical items*, clause and sentence structure, *syntactic* categories, sound structures, word formation and order, discourse intonation, graphical presentations, and organization of macrostructures in canonical schemata.<sup>31</sup> In the second step of discourse analysis, the *contextual* analysis, the relationship with the context is established. The concern of this step, in van Dijk’s words, is the “actual processes of decoding, interpretation, storage, and representation in memory, and the role of previous knowledge and beliefs of the readers in this process of understanding”.<sup>32</sup> In this thesis, the *structural* analysis techniques of van Dijk will be used in analyzing discourse in order to identify the ‘underlying meanings’ expressed in the texts.

According to van Dijk, in order to examine how ideologies and opinions are expressed in the text from a discourse analytical approach, the various levels and dimensions of discourse; *global* (macro) and *local* (micro) levels of news discourse, must be examined. First dimension of global news discourse is *graphical structures: headlines* and *bold characters*. According to van Dijk, *headlines* in the Press have important textual and cognitive functions. They “construct the overall meaning, and activate the relevant knowledge in memory the reader needs to understand the news report” and they “often have ideological implications, they are a subjective definition of the situation; which may bias the understanding process”.<sup>33</sup> For van Dijk, the information in the *headline* is also the information that is best recalled by the readers. In van Dijk’s words, headlines have a particularly important function in influencing the use that readers will make of this information on

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 45

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 47

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, pp. 50-51

later occasions.”<sup>34</sup> According to van Dijk, *headlines*, as *topics*, have a strategic function in a way to construct the overall meaning of texts.<sup>35</sup> Van Dijk defines *topics* as *semantic macro-structures*; the summarization of macro-propositions expressed in *headlines* and *leads*.<sup>36</sup> They are “subjective definitions of the situation”, which also “express and reproduce the concerns and the agenda of the white majority”.<sup>37</sup>

Van Dijk underlines that, *topics* are structured by abstract underlying forms called *superstructures* or *textual schemata*. *Schemata* are significant because, for van Dijk, “it may manipulate the topical organization in news reports, and therefore may have ideological implications”.<sup>38</sup> *Superstructures* consist of conventional categories, which exhibit a special linear order and hierarchical organization.<sup>39</sup> According to van Dijk, news reports begin with a *summary* category that summarizes the topic of the news reports, which is sub-divided into a *headline* category and a *lead*. *Background* information is another category in the schema of news reports. There are two basic types of *background* information: *context* information that places the event in a broader framework of current events and the information about the *history* of the current events.<sup>40</sup> According to van Dijk, comments, columns and editorials have their typical schematic organization different than news reports’ schema. These news genres have a persuasive function and usually exhibit various kinds of *argumentative* structure.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 51

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 50

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 72

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp. 71-73

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 121

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 118

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, pp. 118-119

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 124

Van Dijk defines micro levels of news discourses as the *meaning*, *style*, and *rhetoric* of words and sentences. The ‘meaning’ is related with the *semantic structures* which are another level of discourse analysis. Van Dijk underlines significance of the analysis of *implicit meanings* in studying underlying ideologies in news texts. He claims that “words, sentences or propositions may have different types of *implications* and indirectness, with strategic use of verbs or adverbs”.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, van Dijk claims that, *presuppositions* are a special case of implications. In his words, “*presuppositions* convey information that is supposed to be known and shared by the writer and the reader, and which therefore needs not to be stated”; in this way “the press subtly state things that are not known by the reader as the common knowledge”.<sup>43</sup> As another form of implicitness and indirectness, van Dijk stresses the significance of various types of *vagueness*. This semantic strategy in texts is used “when it is essential to conceal responsibility for negative actions”; by use of sentences in the passive voice, or the use of *nominalizations* (for example, using the word of ‘shooting’ instead of ‘x shot y’).<sup>44</sup> *Vagueness* is mostly the case while describing the actions of the police. *Irrelevance* is the last form of implicit meanings that van Dijk examines, which is another example of biased perspectives in news. According to van Dijk, news stories may vary between lower and higher levels of description. These different levels of description may be used to convey different perspectives, evaluations, and weights of relevance to information. In van Dijk’s words, “a description may add an ‘irrelevant’ detail’, but this detail is irrelevant within a more general negative portrayal of a person or group”.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For example, if a newspaper reports comments of person X on a subject as “X claimed that..”, the use of word of ‘claimed’, suggests that X is perhaps lying, in a way discrediting and lowering the status of X. Ibid, p. 181

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 183

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 184

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 185



Besides these *local semantic structures* described above, van Dijk examines various *semantic strategies* exhibited in texts, which are ideological strategies of positive self-representation and negative other-representations implemented in sentences. *Disclaimers* are one of these *semantic strategies*; realizing one strategy with one clause expressing a proposition (the tolerance of the writer), and realizing other strategy with the next clause expressing a proposition (a negative stance). Van Dijk examines four kinds of *disclaimers*: *Apparent Denial* (for example; “I have nothing against blacks, but...”), *Apparent Concession* (for example; “There are also intelligent black students, but...”), *Apparent Empathy* (for example; “Of course refugees have problems, but...”), and *Apparent Admission* (for example; “Of course most blacks are OK, but...”).<sup>46</sup> For Van Dijk, as another *semantic strategy* for positive self representation, best strategy is to *mitigate* ‘our’ negative action, or to use *excuses* in order to soften them. For example; with the sentence “the police were forced to act in this harsh way” the newspaper *mitigated* the actions of the police and created *excuses* for their behavior.<sup>47</sup> Together with softening ‘our’ negative actions, ‘their’ negative actions need to be exaggerated; usually by *hyperboles*.<sup>48</sup>

Different than *semantic structures* mentioned above, *style* and *rhetoric* are the surface structures of discourses. There are two kinds of *styles* as van Dijk identified: *lexical style* and *syntactic style*. *Lexical style* is the choice of words in a text mostly used as *negativization*, which expose the underlying opinions and ideologies of the writer. According to van Dijk, the analysis of the *lexical items* is the most ‘obvious’ way of analyzing ideology and language. According to this analysis, words were considered to be chosen in order to reflect values or norms, and therefore used to express a

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<sup>46</sup> Van Dijk, T. A., “Opinions and Strategies in the Press” in Bell, A. & Garrett, P. (eds) *Approaches to Media Discourse*, Blackwell Publishers, 1998, UK & USA, p. 39

<sup>47</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., *Racism and the Press*, p. 190

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p. 192

value judgment.<sup>49</sup> For example; using the word ‘thug’ rather than ‘demonstrator’ signals underlying opinions about the people referred to.<sup>50</sup> The *syntactic style*, structures of sentences, is also significant in analyzing discourse as *lexical style*. According to van Dijk, “the word order as well as transactional structures of sentences may code for underlying *semantic agency*”.<sup>51</sup> For van Dijk, “ideologically monitored opinions about responsibility for socially positive or negative acts may be differentially expressed in different *syntactic forms*”; especially in the *headlines*, “negative properties attributed to ‘outgroups’ and positive actions of ‘us’ will be focused and be the subject and topic of the sentence and negative actions of ingroups members will be syntactically played down by the use of passive voice”.<sup>52</sup>

The last level of micro levels of news discourses is the *rhetoric*. According to van Dijk, *rhetorical structures* of discourse are “a function of ideological control when information that is unfavorable to ‘us’ is made less prominent whereas negative information about ‘them’ is emphasized”.<sup>53</sup> He uses *rhetoric* “in a more restricted sense as the theoretical subcomponent of discourse analysis that explicates specific, *rhetorical structures* only.”<sup>54</sup> *Repetition, rhyme, alliteration, litotes, hyperbole, understatement, irony, mitigation* and *metaphor* were some of semantic operations of *rhetoric*. However; *hyperboles, understatements, ironies* and *metaphors* are more

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<sup>49</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., “Opinions and Ideologies in the Press”, p. 31 Van Dijk identifies eleven types of opinion expression in newspaper articles: polarization, opinion coherence, attribution, description, interest, implicitness, meta-opinions, expression, unmentionables, arguments, and using history. Ibid, pp. 57-61

<sup>50</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., *Racism and the Press*, pp. 210-213

<sup>51</sup> Van Dijk, T. A., “Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis” in C. Schäffner & A. Wenden (Eds.), *Language and Peace*, 1995, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishin, p. 24, downloaded from <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Discourse%20analysis%20as%20ideology%20analysis.pdf> (consulted 20 August 2007)

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 29

<sup>54</sup> Van Dijk, T. A., *News as Discourse*, p. 28

significant than other rhetorical figures considering low possibility of striking upon them in the Turkish newspapers. According to van Dijk, *hyperboles*, *understatements*, *irony* and *metaphors* are semantic operations of rhetoric that have a closer relation to underlying models and social beliefs.<sup>55</sup> For him, *dramatization*, *exaggeration*, and *hyperbole* are the main rhetorical tricks of the Press to make news more exciting.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, van Dijk underlines that, negative actions of ‘us’ against ‘them’ are neither dramatized nor exaggerated but understated by the Press: *understatement* of negative actions of ‘us’ is another *rhetorical* trick.<sup>57</sup> *Metaphors* have ideological functions that mostly “derogate the ‘enemy’”, which two newspapers that will be examined in this thesis will present several examples of these kinds of *metaphors*. Van Dijk gives the example of the usage of ‘flow’ metaphor by the British press while reporting about the refugees in order to emphasize “the catastrophic and threatening nature of the immigration of the refugees”.<sup>58</sup>

As it was mentioned before, van Dijk accepts *headlines*, *story structures*, *arguments*, *graphical arrangements*, *syntactic structures*, *semantic structures* of *coherence*, and overall *topics* as complex ways to express opinions and ideologies.<sup>59</sup> Also as mentioned before, parallel to focusing on *semantic structures* as van Dijk outlined in critical discourse analysis, the ideology behind the discourse must also be examined. Van Dijk identifies five steps in doing ideological analysis: “(a) the context of the discourse must be examined, (b) which groups, power relations and conflicts are involved must be analyzed, (c) positive and negative opinions about Us and Them must be searched, (d) the presupposed and the implied must be

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<sup>55</sup> Van Dijk, T. A., “Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis”, p. 29

<sup>56</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., *Racism and the Press*, p. 219

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p. 220

<sup>58</sup> Van Dijk, T. A., “Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis”, p. 30

<sup>59</sup> Meyer, M., “Between Theory, Method, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA”, p. 26

spelled out, (e) all formal structures that (de)emphasize polarized group opinions must be examined.”<sup>60</sup>

### **2.1.2 Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis**

Fairclough describes language use as “a form of *social practice*, rather than a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables”; implying that: discourse is a mode of action and mode of representation, and there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure.<sup>61</sup> Fairclough’s further arguments on discourse are also significant in examining his three-dimensional framework, which will be examined later on, for analyzing discourses. According to Fairclough, “discourse, which is ‘socially constructive’, is shaped and constrained by social structure at all levels: by class and other social relations at a societal level.”<sup>62</sup> In Fairclough’s words:

Discourse contributes to the constitution of all those dimensions of social structure which directly or indirectly shape and constrain it: its own norms and conventions, as well as the relations, identities and institutions which lie behind them. Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning.<sup>63</sup>

He distinguishes three aspects of constructive effects of discourse that are mentioned above: construction of ‘social identities’ and ‘subject positions’, construction of social relationships between people, and construction of systems of knowledge and belief.<sup>64</sup> More importantly, he examines discourse

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<sup>60</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., “Opinions and Ideologies in the Press”, p. 61

<sup>61</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity Press, UK & USA, 1993, pp. 63-64

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*. However, Fairclough admonishes that neither the social determination of discourse nor the construction of the social in discourse should be overemphasized. *Ibid*, p. 65

as a mode of a political and ideological practice, which are not independent of each other. According to Fairclough, discourse as a political practice “establishes, sustains and changes power relations and the collective entities between which power relations obtain”; discourse is “not only a site of power struggle, but also a stake in power struggle.” On the other hand; discourse as an ideological practice “constitutes, naturalizes, sustains and changes significations of the world from diverse positions in power relations.”<sup>65</sup>

Fairclough’s three-dimensional conception of discourse unites three analytical traditions for analyzing discourse. These are, in his words, “the tradition of close textual and linguistic analysis within linguistics, the macrosociological tradition of analyzing social practice in relation to social structures, and the interpretivist or microsociological tradition of seeing social practice as something which people actively produce and make sense of on the basis of shared commonsense procedures.”<sup>66</sup> If we discuss the three-dimensional conception of discourse combined with three procedural stages of CDA, identified by Fairclough; the textual and linguistic analysis corresponds to the *description* stage which is concerned with formal properties of the text,<sup>67</sup> analysis of discursive practice corresponds to the *interpretation* stage that concerned with discourse processes and their dependence on background assumptions and with the relationship between text and interaction by seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation, and the analysis of social practice corresponds to the *explanation* stage which is

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 67

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 72

<sup>67</sup> In the *description* stage, Fairclough offers ten main questions to be raised under areas of vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures: “(1) What experiential values do words have? (2) What rational values do words have? (3) What expressive values do words have? (4) What metaphors are used? (5) What experiential values do grammatical features have? (6) What rational values do grammatical features have? (7) What expressive values do grammatical features have? (8) How are (simple) sentences linked together? (9) What interactional conventions are used? (10) What larger-scale structures does text have?” Fairclough, N., *Language and Power*, pp. 110-111

concerned with the relationship of discourses to processes of struggle and power relations and the relationship between interaction and social context together with social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects.<sup>68</sup> As it was mentioned before, in this thesis the textual analysis techniques of van Dijk will be used in analyzing discourse because of its detailed framework. Hence, Fairclough's techniques for analyzing *discursive practice* and *social practice* will be applied in order to examine the social scene at large.

According to Fairclough, *discursive practice*, which belongs to the *interpretation* stage of CDA, involves three processes: text *production*, *distribution* and *consumption*.<sup>69</sup> As he noted, nature of these processes of discursive practice varies between different types of discourse according to social factor. According to examples that Fairclough gave; texts may be *produced* collectively (in example; production of a newspaper article) or individually (in example; production of a letter), they can have a simple (in example; casual conversations that belong to the immediate context of the situation) or a complex (in example; texts of international arms negotiations that are distributed across a range of different institutions) *distribution*, and they can be *consumed* collectively (in example; administrative records that are recorded, transcribed, preserved, and re-read) or individually (in example; casual conversations are transitory and unrecorded).<sup>70</sup>

Fairclough argues that analysis of *discursive practice* should involve a combination of 'micro-analysis', which is the "explication of precisely how participants produce and interpret texts on the basis of their members' resources" and 'macro-analysis', which is recognition of "the nature of the members' resources (including orders of discourse) that is being drawn upon in order to produce and interpret texts, and whether it is being drawn upon in

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, pp. 108-168

<sup>69</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, p. 78

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, pp. 78-79

normative or creative ways”.<sup>71</sup> At this point, Fairclough’s conceptualizations of ‘members’ resources’ and ‘orders of discourse’ must be examined. Fairclough defines members’ resources as people’s knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs and assumptions that they draw upon when they produce or interpret texts. In Fairclough’s words:

The members’ resources which people draw upon to produce and interpret texts are cognitive in the sense that they are in people’s heads, but they are social in the sense that they have social origins – they are socially generated, and their nature is dependent on the social relations and struggles out of which they were generated- as well as being socially transmitted and...unequally distributed. People internalize what is socially produced and made available to them, and use this internalized members’ resources to engage in their social practice, including discourse.<sup>72</sup>

The *order of discourse*, on the other hand, is defined as “the configuration of all the discourse types which are used within a social institution or a social field.”<sup>73</sup> They are the underlying conventions of discourse that determine actual discourses.<sup>74</sup> Analysis of *discourse practice*, in Fairclough’s words, “involves both the detailed explication of how participants produce and interpret texts and analysis that focuses upon the relationship of the discursive event to the *order of discourse*, and upon the question of which *discursive practices* are being drawn upon and in what combinations.”<sup>75</sup> Conceptualizations of *interdiscursivity* and *intertextuality* are significant in analyzing *discursive practice*. Fairclough defines *interdiscursivity* as “the constitution of a text from diverse discourses and

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<sup>71</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, p. 85

<sup>72</sup> Fairclough, N., *Language and Power*, p. 24

<sup>73</sup> Fairclough, N., *Media discourse*, Edward Arnold, London, 1995 cited in Jorgensen, M. And Phillips, L., *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, p. 67

<sup>74</sup> Fairclough, N., *Language and Power*, p. 28

<sup>75</sup> Fairclough, N., *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, Longman, 1999, London-New York, p. 134

genres (use of language associated with a particular social activity).”<sup>76</sup> The concept of *intertextuality*, on the other hand, “points to the productivity of texts, to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones.”<sup>77</sup> According to Fairclough, “the concept of *interdiscursivity* is modeled upon and closely related to *intertextuality* it highlights a historical view of texts as transforming the past –existing conventions, or prior texts– into the present.”<sup>78</sup>

According to Fairclough, “the dimension of *discursive practice* mediates the relationship between the dimensions of *social practice* and *text*: it is the nature of the *social practice* that determines the macroprocess of *discursive practice*, and it is the micro-process that shapes the *text*.”<sup>79</sup> At this point, the third dimension of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework in analyzing discourse must be identified; the *social practice*. As Fairclough identified, “the analysis of the discursive event as *social practice* may refer to three levels of social organization: the context situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal context (‘context of culture’).”<sup>80</sup> Fairclough discusses discourse as *social practice* in relation to *ideology* and *power*”, and he “places discourse within a view of *power* as *hegemony*, and view the evolution of power relations as *hegemonic struggle*.”<sup>81</sup> He describes *ideologies* as “significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities), which are built into various dimensions of

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 135

<sup>77</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, p. 102

<sup>78</sup> Fairclough, N., *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, p. 134

<sup>79</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, p. 86

<sup>80</sup> Fairclough, N., *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, p. 134

<sup>81</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, p. 86. Fairclough claims that “possibilities of creativity in discourse practice (seemingly limitless) suggested by the concept of interdiscursivity are in practice limited and constrained by the state of hegemonic relations and hegemonic struggle.” Fairclough, N., *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, p. 134



the forms/meanings of *discursive practices*, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation (which is the ideological struggle as a dimension of discursive practice that reshape discursive practices and the ideologies built into them in the context of the restructuring or transformation of relations of domination) of relations of domination.”<sup>82</sup>

Fairclough views *ideology* as “located both in the structures (i.e. orders of discourse) which constitute the outcome of past events and the conditions for current events, and in events themselves as they reproduce and transform their conditioning structures.”<sup>83</sup> According to Fairclough, “the *ideologies* embedded in *discursive practices* are most effective when they become naturalized, and achieve the status of ‘common sense’.”<sup>84</sup> Fairclough claims that, *meanings, propositions, coherence*, and even the *style* of a text may be ideologically invested.<sup>85</sup> He underlines that “*ideologies* built into conventions may be more or less naturalized and automatized.”<sup>86</sup> He suggests that “*discursive practices* are ideologically invested in so far as they incorporate significations which contribute to sustaining or restructuring power relations.”<sup>87</sup> Fairclough argues that “discourse conventions may embody naturalized *ideologies* which make them a most effective mechanism for sustaining *hegemonies*.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, pp. 87-88

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p. 89

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 87 At this point, Fairclough’s perception on the ‘common sense’ must be identified. Fairclough considers the common sense as in the service of sustaining unequal relations of power: the common sense functions ideologically, works invisibly as background assumptions not explicit elements of the text. Ideologies come to be ideological common sense to the extent that “the discourse types which embody them become naturalized; what comes to be common sense is thus in large measure determined by who exercises power and domination in a society or a social institution.” Fairclough, N., *Language and Power*, pp. 84-92

<sup>85</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, pp. 87-88

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 90

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 91

<sup>88</sup> Fairclough, N., *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, p. 91

On the other hand, *hegemony* is described as “...domination across the economic, political, cultural and ideological domains of a society...a focus of constant struggle around points of greatest instability between classes and blocs, to construct or sustain or fracture alliances and relations of domination/subordination, which takes economic, political and ideological forms.”<sup>89</sup> *Hegemony* is “the predominant organizational form of power in contemporary societies.”<sup>90</sup> According to Fairclough, *discursive practice*, the production, distribution, and consumption of texts, is a facet of *hegemonic struggle* (that takes place on a broad front including the institutions of civil society – education, trade unions, family) which contributes in varying degrees to the reproduction or transformation of the existing *order of discourse* through that of existing social and power relations.<sup>91</sup> *Hegemonic struggle* is the “denaturalization of existing conventions and replacement of them with others.”<sup>92</sup> Fairclough argues that the concept of hegemony helps us to trace the explanatory connection for particular instances of discourse between the nature of the *social practices* and the nature of their *discursive practice*. The concept of *hegemony* provides discourse “a *matrix* –a way of analyzing the *social practice* within which the discourse belongs in terms of power relations, in terms of whether they reproduce, restructure or challenge existing *hegemonies*- and a *model* –a way of analyzing *discourse practice* itself as a mode of *hegemonic struggle*, reproducing, restructuring or challenging existing *orders of discourse*.”<sup>93</sup>

As it was mentioned before, according to Fairclough, the critical discourse analysis aims to explore the links between language use and the *social practice*; the focus is the role of *discursive practices* in the

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<sup>89</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, p. 92

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 92-93

<sup>92</sup> Fairclough, N., *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, p. 94

<sup>93</sup> Fairclough, N., *Discourse and Social Change*, p. 95

maintenance of the 'social order' and in 'social change'.<sup>94</sup> Jorgensen and Phillips abridge Fairclough's research design and methods as choice of research problem, formulation of research question, choice of material, transcription, and analysis.<sup>95</sup> In the analysis section, the analyst should look for each level of Fairclough's three-dimensional framework: discursive practice, text, social practice. Analysis of the *discursive practice*, as it was mentioned before, focuses on how the text is produced and how it is consumed. Jorgensen and Phillips exemplify analysis of newspaper articles. According to this exemplification, the researcher can examine newspaper production conditions (what kinds of processes does a text go through before it is printed, and what changes does it undergo during these processes?), can analyze intertextual chain, and can carry out an audience research in order to find out how readers interpret texts. However, in this thesis the production and consumption processes of texts will not be analyzed. Instead, as Fairclough does, we will work from a linguistic starting point: identify what discourses do texts draw on (*interdiscursivity*) and how do texts *intertextually* draw on other texts.<sup>96</sup>

The textual analysis is the detailed analysis of the linguistic characteristics of a text using particular tools: interactional control, ethos, metaphors, wording, and grammar.<sup>97</sup> However, as it was mentioned before, van Dijk critical discourse analysis techniques will be used in analyzing linguistic characters of texts. The last step is the analysis of the social practice. According to Jorgensen and Phillips, there are two aspects of this analysis: "(a) the relationship between the discursive practice and its orders of discourse is to be explored (To what kind of network of discourses does

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<sup>94</sup> Jorgensen, M. And Phillips, L., *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, pp. 69-70

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 76-88

<sup>96</sup> According to Fairclough, high level of interdiscursivity (articulation of different discourses in the text) is associated with change (manifesting wider societal change) and low level of interdiscursivity signals the reproduction of the established order (maintaining the traditional discourse order). *Ibid*, pp. 82-83

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, p. 83

the discursive practice belong? How are the discourses distributed and regulated across texts?) and (b) the aim is to map the partly non-discursive, social and cultural relations and structures that constitute the wider context of the discursive practice (the social matrix of discourse).<sup>98</sup> According to Jorgensen and Phillips, “it is in the analysis of the relationship between discursive practice and the broader social practice that the study arrives at its final conclusions.” “It is here that questions relating to change and ideological consequences are addressed: (1) Does the discursive practice reproduce the order of discourse and thus contribute to the maintenance of the status quo in the social practice? (2) Has the order of discourse been transformed, thereby contributing to social change? (3) What are the ideological, political, and social consequences of the discursive practice? (4) Does the discursive practice conceal and strengthen unequal power relations in society, or does it challenge power positions by representing reality and social relations in a new way?”<sup>99</sup>

## 2.2 Summary

In this study, in order to analyze the data on the Kurdish question that collected from *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers, covering the period between the years 1990 and 2006, critical discourse analysis approach will be used. As it was mentioned before, the critical discourse analysis provides theory and methods for the empirical study of the relations between discourse and social and cultural developments, which will facilitate to analyze our data in relation to transformations in the perception of the Kurdish question. Van Dijk and Fairclough present technically strong and effective positions of critical discourse analysis approach to substantiate the aim of this study.

As it was mentioned before, for detailed textual analysis van Dijk’s structural analysis techniques will be used. Van Dijk suggests six steps in

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 86

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, pp. 86-87

critical discourse analysis: (1) analysis of *semantic macrostructures* (2) analysis of local meanings (3) analysis of ‘subtle’ formal structures (4) analysis of global and local discourse forms or formats, (5) analysis of specific linguistic realizations and (6) analysis of context.<sup>100</sup> In order to identify ‘expressions of underlying meanings’, first five steps will be followed, which oblige the examination of *graphical structures* (headlines, bold characters), *semantic macro-structures* (topics, headlines, leads), *textual schemata* (summary, background, history, argumentations), *implicit meanings* (implications, presuppositions, vagueness, irrelevance), *semantic strategies* (disclaimers, mitigations, excuses, hyperboles), *lexical style* (choice of words, negativization), *syntactic style*, and *rhetorical structures* (hyperboles, understatement, ironies, metaphors, dramatization, exaggeration).

On the other hand, for Fairclough, the critical discourse analysis aims to explore the links between language use and the *social practice*; the focus is the role of *discursive practices* in the maintenance of the ‘social order’ and in ‘social change’. In order to identify and examine the social order and social change, the relationship between discursive practice and the broader social practice will be analyzed. In specific, the transformation or the reproduction of the order of discourse and the status quo in the social practice, and ideological, political, and social consequences of the discursive practice will be questioned.

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<sup>100</sup> Meyer, M., “Between Theory, Method, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA”, p. 26

## **CHAPTER III**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE OTTOMAN PERIOD**

It is significant and crucial to discuss the early-Republican period in order to examine the state's perception and the official discourse on the Kurdish issue and Kurds. As far as the impact of the nation building process on the discourse is considered, this seems to be an acceptable approach. Nevertheless, detaching the developments of the early-Republican period from the Ottoman era may be inappropriate. Indeed, the Ottoman period should be examined in relation to the policies on the Kurds and the Kurdish issue; the effects of which reached the Republican period. A historical examination of the Ottoman foundations of the Kurdish issue will be of help.

The period that begin with the conquest of Kurdish lands bring forth the formation of state policies on these regions inhabited by Kurds. The relationships that resulted from wars and searches of 'balance of power' affected the 'reforms' of Ottoman State in a later phase. Additionally, the relationships and balance of power will continue to change on the road to the collapse of the Empire, with the 1908 Revolution. The evaluation of Ottoman state's relationship with the Kurds, its effects and differences, is significant in examining the Republican period considering the Kurdish issue.

#### **3.1 From Sixteenth Century to Seventeenth Century: Efforts to Maintain 'Balance'**

Conditions established in the 16<sup>th</sup> century determined the pattern of political relations between the Ottoman state and Kurds for the following

three centuries.<sup>101</sup> With the battle of *Çaldıran* in 1514 between Ottoman Empire and Safavids a new era for Kurdish regions began. Safavids abandoned their capital Tabriz to Ottoman forces thereby large part of this region inhabited by Kurds became Ottoman territories. In van Bruinessen's words, Kurds were looking for help that might liberate them from Safavid domination before the battle of *Çaldıran*; some twenty Kurdish *mirs* had already sent declarations of submission to Sultan Selim even before his campaign against Safavids began. After the battle, Kurds recognized Sultan Selim as their sovereign.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, two problems came along with these newly acquired border marches: a danger of Safavid invasion and difficulty in application of direct administration and taxation. Therefore, Sultan Selim authorized İdris Bitlisi on winning over Kurdish princes and chiefs. İdris Bitlisi, in McDowall's terms, reinstated rulers dismissed by Shah İsmail – the Safavid ruler-, and confirmed chiefs in 'semi-independence' in return for their acknowledgement of 'nominal' Ottoman suzerainty.<sup>103</sup> Most of the Kurdish leaders willingly accepted these arrangements, which gave them the benefit of Ottoman recognition and relatively independent status.

Despite Ottoman's victory over Safavids in the battle of *Çaldıran*, the region became the stage of power struggles between the two empires that would last until the end of Safavid Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During these ongoing power struggles between two rival empires Kurds enjoyed some privileges.<sup>104</sup> Administrative framework for Kurdish tribes which were mentioned above came along with Ottoman Empire's need of Kurds as a

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<sup>101</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, I. B. Tauris, 1996, London, p. 25

<sup>102</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State - The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, Zed Books L.t.d., 1992, USA, p. 142-3

<sup>103</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 28

<sup>104</sup> According to Özoğlu, in second half of the sixteenth century, the two empires competed for the loyalty of each other's Kurdish subjects by offering the material gains. See Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, State University of New York Press, 2004, U.S.A., p. 49

buffer zone. The Ottoman Empire left Kurdish leaders semi-independent with the expectation of political loyalty against Safavids. Ottomans created a ‘quasi-feudal system’ of administration while trying to eliminate such practices elsewhere in the empire.<sup>105</sup> This form of administration that introduced in 1500s remained in force with small scale changes for three centuries.<sup>106</sup>

The classical Ottoman administration varied in Kurdish regions. According to Özoğlu, there were three primary conditions affecting the degree of autonomy granted to Kurdish tribes: the accessibility of the land, the degree of geopolitical significance, and the internal strength of a Kurdish tribe.<sup>107</sup> Özoğlu mentions two different types of administrative units in Kurdish regions besides the traditional Ottoman *sancak*; *Yurtluk-Ocaklık* (*Ekrad Beyliği*) and Kurdish *hükümet*s (governments). These *Yurtluk-Ocaklık* contained *timar*, *zeamet*, and *has*, and were liable to military obligations as ordinary *sancaks* in the empire. These *sancaks* were ruled by hereditary Kurdish rulers. The Kurdish *hükümet*s were independent in the Ottoman administrative system, which did not have *timar*, *zeamet*, or *has*, did not paid taxes to the Ottoman state and did not have the liability to provide regular military forces to the army.<sup>108</sup> On the other hand, foregoing administrative structure existed until nineteenth century while the autonomy

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<sup>105</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 28

<sup>106</sup> The classical Ottoman administrative system made up of two components, namely the central government and provincial administrations. The provincial government included two authorities appointed by the center to administer the district (*sancak*); the *sancakbeyi* (member of the military class, representing the executive authority of the sultan) and the *kadı* (member of the *ulema*, representing the legal authority of the sultan). In Özoğlu’s words, several *Sancaks* composed of an *eyalet* or *beylerbeylik* (province) that administered by the *beylerbeyi*. *Sancakbeyis*, but not the *beylerbeyi*, were directly responsible to the sultan. There were three categories of Ottoman lands: *mülk* (freehold land), *vakıf* (land granted for pious or charitable purposes), and *miri* (agricultural land that belonged to the state). Özoğlu, Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, pp. 51-52

<sup>107</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 56

<sup>108</sup> On identifying this administrative variance, Özoğlu cites a –non-dated- *kanunname* prepared for the *eyalet* of Diyarbakır that Evliya Çelebi mentioned. Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 56



granted to Kurdish tribes diminished gradually in the course of time. As it was mentioned before, the relative degree of autonomy enjoyed by some parts of Kurdish regions was mainly based on delicate ‘balances of power’ between two rival empires; Ottomans and Safavids. With the de-escalation of Safavids’ power and finally the collapse of the Safavid Empire, Kurdish region lost its significance as a ‘buffer zone’ in border marches. Still, because of the region’s strategic importance Ottoman state cherished the intention to integrate Kurdish tribes fully into the ‘system’.<sup>109</sup> For instance, in Ciment’s words, where direct Ottoman rule was feasible, it was imposed and where it was not, local emirs were still made to understand the consequences of rebelliousness.<sup>110</sup>

By nineteenth century, the era of ‘reformation’ began with the purpose of retrieving the empire from collapsing. Institutional restructuring and military rectifications were realized –not in the proper sense until mid-1800s- in order to remove reactionary elements of the government. Regions inhabited by Kurds were about to get its share from this ‘exertion of control’ among the empire.

### **3.2 The *Tanzimat* Period (1839-1871)**

Efforts of reformation began before the *Tanzimat* period; starting with military reforms of Selim III, as a consequence of ideas of the French Revolution during the years 1792-1807.<sup>111</sup> These efforts of reformation began with a ‘sense of urgency’, in view of rising nationalism in territories of the Empire, to ensure the imperial ‘survival’.<sup>112</sup> The main objective of

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p. 53

<sup>110</sup> Ciment, J., *The Kurds-State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran*, Facts on File, Inc., 1996, U.S.A., p. 38 Bruinessen delineate ‘rebellions’ of that period as refusal to pay tribute or to send military assistance when demanded. Bruinessen, M.V., *Agha, Shaikh, and State - The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, p. 159

<sup>111</sup> Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford University Press, 1968, London, p. 55

<sup>112</sup> Altunışık, M. B. And Tür, Ö., *Turkey-Challenges of Continuity and Change*, Routledge, 2005, U.S.A., p. 2

strengthening the authority of the state was facilitated through ‘centralization’ measures. Mahmut II, the successor of Selim III, aimed at retrieving the Empire by complete institutional restructuring, in Ahmad’s words, with the goal of increasing the authority of the official class right along with restoring central authority.<sup>113</sup> Mahmut II suppressed almost all *derebeys* of Anatolia by 1820 and those of Balkans by 1830 in concordance with his aim of removing all reactionary elements of government.

According to Feroz Ahmad, the creation of a new bureaucratic class was the most significant outcome of these reforms. Ahmad determines this class as follows:

This class, though loyal to the sultan and the Ottoman dynasty, possessed a higher sense of loyalty to the state which its members no longer saw as being manifested only in the person of the sultan. These new officials, who launched a new programme of reform and reorganization known as the *Tanzimat*, were steeped in Western ideas and looked to Europe as their model and inspiration.<sup>114</sup>

Along with reforms on strengthening ‘centralization’; conditions of Kurdish region -as well as other parts of the Empire- had been reshaped. Actually it should not be esteemed that there was a continual absence or weakness of central governance in Kurdish region. The imposition of *timar* system<sup>115</sup> in this region (in sixteenth century), which led to more central control – contrary to the *iltizam* (tax-farming) system introduced in Arab lands that led to greater autonomy- indicate the significance of the region and importance of controlling the authority of Kurdish *mir*s for the Empire. However, until

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<sup>113</sup> Ahmad, F., *The Making of Modern Turkey*, Routledge, 1993, U.S.A., p. 25

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. Also see Alkan, M.Ö., “Modernization From Empire To Republic and Education in the Process of Nationalism” in Karpat, K. H. (eds.) *Ottoman Past and Today’s Turkey*, Brill, 2000, Lieden-Boston-Köln, pp. 66-67

<sup>115</sup> For more information on Ottoman land regime See Karpat, K.H., “The Land Regime, Social Structure, and Modernization in the Ottoman Empire” in Polk, W.R. & Chandlers, R.L. (eds.) *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, University of Chicago Press, 1968, U.S.A

the reign of Mahmut II, Kurdish local notables vastly enjoyed political power as a consequence of more decentralized policies of the Ottoman Empire as its territories expanded after seventeenth century. The Deed of Alliance is a significant indicator of the rising authority and the power of local notables as the consequences of these decentralization policies.

The Deed of Alliance of 1808 was sometimes regarded as the primary milestone in the establishment of a constitutional government in the Ottoman Empire. The deed was a result of a series of meetings of local notables of the empire organized by Alemdar Mustafa Pasha, notable of *Ruşuk*, for the purpose of reviewing states crises. According to İnalçık, the Deed of Alliance was an (traditional) attempt of local notables to have a grip on state power.<sup>116</sup> In the first four articles of the deed the absolute authority of the Sultan was ratified; the necessity of acting in compliance with Sultan's orders, and his exclusive jurisdiction in levying taxes and army was affirmed. However, in the proceeding articles local notables' acquired rights and positions (hereditary administration) were demanded to be 'secured' from state's arbitrary actions. Some parts of assurances and sanctions of the deed had the attribution of securing the 'ordinance', some of securing the 'central authority', and other parts had the attribution of safeguarding interests of local notables.<sup>117</sup>

According to Heper, the Deed of Alliance was *not* the product of a confrontation initiated by the periphery.<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, for İnalçık, the Deed of Alliance was a document *imposed* by local notables, whose authority increased in a situation of 'war and disorder', with the aim of securing their own 'positions' under the absolute authority of the sultan.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> İnalçık, H., "Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-i Humayunu", *Belleten* 28 (October): 603-622, 1964, p. 604

<sup>117</sup> Tanör, B., *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri*, YKY, 2005, İstanbul, p. 48

<sup>118</sup> Heper, M., "Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire", *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 1, No.1, 1980, p. 89

<sup>119</sup> İnalçık, H., "Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-i Humayunu", p. 607

There are numerous interpretations on the significance of the Deed of Alliance. İnalçık evaluated the deed as “a phase of political struggle” representing a formation contradicting with the ‘perception of modern state’ on the other hand deserving its place among movements cherishing the intention of curbing “despotism and absolutism”.<sup>120</sup> According to Ortaylı, it is an overestimation to qualify the Deed of Alliance as a *Magna Carta* that restrains ‘absolute sovereignty’. The subscription of the deed by local notables did not yield to the progress of “freedom and constitutionalism” in the empire instead conducted reaction of the sultan and bureaucracy. Ortaylı sees ratification of the Deed of Alliance as a period of sultan’s “transitory submittal”.<sup>121</sup> The deed was never put into practice, and after Alemdar Mustafa Pasha lost his power, the document was “forgotten”.<sup>122</sup> In 1812, after the war between Ottoman Empire and Russia ended, Mahmut II took action against local notables to eliminate them and revive ‘centralization’; their military support was not required anymore indeed.<sup>123</sup>

Considering Ottoman Empire’s relationship with the Kurdish regions, the Deed of Alliance is significant from two aspects. First of all, albeit there are not any evidences found that supports Kurdish notables’ involvement in this Deed; the Deed of Alliance is significant in presenting the nature of the relationship between the Sultan and local notables.<sup>124</sup> The center’s relationship with the periphery, through local notables, also presents

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, pp. 604 -608

<sup>121</sup> Ortaylı, İ., *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, İletişim, 2005, İstanbul, p. 36

<sup>122</sup> İnalçık, H., “Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-i Humayunu”, p. 604, Tanör, B., *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri*, p. 49

<sup>123</sup> İnalçık, H., “Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-i Humayunu”, p. 609 Additionally, in 1831 Mahmut II abolished ‘completely dysfunctional’ *timars*. After his ‘unsuccessful experiment’ of centralizing the tax system, Mahmut II was forced to revert to the use of *mültezims* (civilian intermediaries) or tax farmers. Karpas, K.H., *The Politicization of Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2001, U.S.A., p. 93

<sup>124</sup> However, according to Oya Gözel, Kurdish notables were among the provincial notables that Sultan recognized with the Deed of Alliance in 1807. Gözel, O., *The Implementation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 in Eastern Anatolia*, unpublished Master Thesis, April 2007, Department of History, METU, p. 26

main features of Empire's Kurdish policies. The Deed of Alliance, which recognized during war time and period of crisis of the empire, and left aside after local notables' alliance and assistance was not required anymore, is the best indicator of states policies of considering 'balance of interests' by utilizing local notables from border territories of the empire, such as using Kurdish regions against the Safavid threat.

### **3.2.1 Imperial Rescript of *Gülhane* - 1839 & Reform Edict – 1856**

The aim of *Tanzimat* (reforms), as Heper signified, "was to establish a uniformed and centralized administration linked directly with each citizen, and working with its own rational principles of justice, applied equally to all".<sup>125</sup> Ortaylı defines *Tanzimat* period as the 'reign of sublime Porte'; stressing modernization of bureaucracy by increasing hegemony of Porte conducting the establishment of 'modern centralism'.<sup>126</sup> On the other hand, according to Shaw; *Tanzimat* was a period of reform that modernized Ottoman state and society, by which 'centralization' furthered and state control over the society increased.<sup>127</sup> Main objectives of *Tanzimat* were strengthening of state, progress of the country, and solidly entrenchment of peace.<sup>128</sup>

The promulgation of the Imperial Rescript of *Gülhane* (*Gülhane Hatt-ı Humayunu*) in 1839 is usually seen as the beginning of *Tanzimat* period. According to İnalçık, the Rescript was the expression of 'Westernizer' administrators' ideals that accepted to represent central state's interests at an optimum level.<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, as İnalçık noted, the Sultan had stated in his *ferman* notifying the governors on the adoption of

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<sup>125</sup> Heper, M., "Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire", p. 92

<sup>126</sup> Ortaylı, İ., *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, pp. 89-90

<sup>127</sup> Shaw, S. J., *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, Cambridge, p. 55

<sup>128</sup> İnalçık, H., "Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-i Humayunu", p. 620

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, p. 604

the Imperial Rescript that the aim was first of all “to eliminate the general distress caused by malpractices in taxation and to alleviate the tax burden of the populace, so as to bring about a ‘happy’ solution to this question”.<sup>130</sup> Proclamation of the equality of all ‘citizens’ in the empire regardless of their ethnicity and religion was usually seen as the foremost point of the Imperial Rescript of *Gülhane* and Reform Edict of 1856 . As a matter of fact, right along with its significance in imposition of improved relations between state and its ‘citizens’, the motive behind this imposition by the Imperial Rescript of *Gülhane* and the Reform Edict was of more importance. As Heper quoted from Karpat, Imperial Rescript and Reform Edict were considered to be political means of mobilizing the masses behind the state and against the local notables by the ‘center’.<sup>131</sup> Heper underlined the expectations of Reşit Pasha, who prepared the Imperial Rescript of *Gülhane*, expectations as follows: “(He)...hoped that the people would now identify with their state, would not rebel, that the economy would develop, and that the revenues of the state would thereby increase.”<sup>132</sup>

In this period of reformation, Ottoman statesmen supposed that they would create the ‘consciousness of being Ottoman’ (*Osmanlılık*) by ‘fusing’ large variety of cultural units among the empire with presenting nationwide administrative, judicial (*hukuksal*), and economic measures.<sup>133</sup> İnalçık delineates the ‘policy of Ottoman unity’ as the most significant front-line of *Tanzimat* period, which was the main point of the Reform Edict in 1856 and subsequently of the Imperial Rescript in 1839.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> İnalçık, H., “Application of Tanzimat and its Social Effects”, The Peter DE Ridder Press, 1976, Belgium, p. 21

<sup>131</sup> Karpat, K. H., “The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1909.”, *Int. J. Of Middle East Studies* 3, (July) cited in Heper, M., “Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire”, p. 92

<sup>132</sup> Heper, M., “Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire”, p. 92

<sup>133</sup> Mardin, Ş., “Batıcılık” pp. 9-21 in Türköne, M. And Önder, T. (eds.) *Türk Modernleşmesi –Makaleler 4*, İletişim, 2007, İstanbul, p. 12

<sup>134</sup> İnalçık, H., “Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-i Humayunu”, p. 621

The Bedirhan Pasha rebellion of 1847, which was the first significant revolt from the Kurdish regions against the empire's new administrative policies of centralization, can be accepted as an indicator of straining relationship between the state and the Kurdish regions. According to Özoğlu, the authority of Bedirhan Pasha, who became the ruler of the *Botan* emirate in 1835, began to challenge the authority of the centrally appointed governors in the region.<sup>135</sup> A relationship of 'mutual compensation' between the 'center' and Bedirhan Pasha had existed until the rebellion in order to preserve delicate elements of 'balance of power'.<sup>136</sup> According to Özoğlu, Bedirhan Pasha was promoted by the centralization policies of the empire in the *Tanzimat* period. Considering Ottoman archives, Özoğlu claimed that Bedirhan Pasha's rebellion stemmed from "a new administrative system enforced by the Ottoman central government that aimed at dividing Bedirhan's land and weakening his authority"; but not from Kurdish nationalism.<sup>137</sup>

### **3.2.2 Land Code – 1858 & Vilayet (Province) Law – 1864**

The 1858 Land Code and the 1864 *Vilayet* Law were the continuation of *Tanzimat*'s objective of centralization; by which the attempts of center to increase its control over the periphery furthered.<sup>138</sup> Van

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<sup>135</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 71

<sup>136</sup> Kalman, M., *Osmanlı-Kürt İlişkileri ve Sömürgecilik*, Med Yayıncılık, 1994, İstanbul, p. 113

<sup>137</sup> Sevgen, N., *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri*, pp. 61-134, cited in Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 71

<sup>138</sup> Davison, R., *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963, Princeton, cited in Heper, M., "Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire", p. 95 Karpat claims that the Land Code in 1858 was the consequence of the idea of "facilitating the circulation of state lands and of expanding their use as a means for increasing state revenue". Karpat, K. H., *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, Brill, 2002, Lieden-Boston-Köln, p. 45 It was accepted as the first milestone in the movement toward legalization of private land ownership. Karpat, K.H., *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 94 Ortaylı argues that the Land Code was the most significant step of *Tanzimat* period towards secularism and standardized juridical execution that includes important secular provisions on property ownership and inheritance. Ortaylı, I., *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 183

Bruinessen lists the effects of the execution of 1858 Land Code in regions inhabited by Kurds concerning tribal features as follows:

1. Reduction of the communal features of the tribal economy; individualization.
2. Increased economic stratification, within the tribe. Many aghas became landlords, their followers becoming their sharecroppers. In the course of time this was to give some aghas inordinate power over the commoners.
3. A new class, with a new life-style, emerged: the urban based landlords.
4. New forms of cooperation and patronage developed between the urban-based landlords and tribal aghas who remained in the villages.
5. In many cases the actual cultivators lost some of their traditional rights and became sharecroppers or even hired laborers.<sup>139</sup>

According to Gözel, because of the dominant disorder and anarchy within the eastern Anatolia, the implementation of the Land Code was negatively affected that “large holdings became widespread land patterns throughout the region”. As an outcome of disorder and anarchy, the state power was absent in many districts of the region that in order to sustain their authority and application of the regulations, government officials relied on local notables, *aghas* and *sheikhs*. As Gözel claimed, this absence of state authority and great level of notables’ power, peasants’ devotion to sheiks and aghas increased; they registered of the lands in name of their *sheiks* and *aghas*.<sup>140</sup> For Kutlay, after the adoption of the Land Code, Muslim land owners and local notables became more independent and supposed that they can –even partially– resist the ‘palace’.<sup>141</sup>

On the other hand, the 1864 *Vilayet* Law was adopted in order to actualize the aims of the 1858 Land Code. The Law also aimed strengthening the center’s power over the periphery with bringing organized

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<sup>139</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State - The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, p. 184

<sup>140</sup> Gözel, O., *The Implementation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 in Eastern Anatolia*, unpublished Master Thesis, April 2007, Department of History, METU, pp. 144-145

<sup>141</sup> Kutlay, N., *İttihat Terakki ve Kürtler*, Beybün Yayınları, 1992, Ankara, p. 19



and efficient administration to provinces.<sup>142</sup> With The *Vilayet* Law “a hierarchical system of provinces and subdivisions, from the *vilayet* (province) through the *sancak* (county) and *kaza* (district) to the *nahiye* (rural community) and the *kariye* (village)” was introduced.<sup>143</sup> Despite these two legal arrangements that intent to eliminate local notables’ power and abuse of land regime, “local notables found a way to use these arrangements to their own advantage by bribing officials and obliging peasants to give false accounts in the courts”.<sup>144</sup> As Kutlay emphasized, in accordance with the *Vilayet* Law, Kurdish regions became more ‘centralized’ under the administration of centrally appointed governors.<sup>145</sup>

With the *Tanzimat* period, in which efforts of centralization became the permanent policy of the state, a new era for the Kurds live within the territories of the empire irreversibly began. According to Bozarşlan, the 19<sup>th</sup> century came with three important developments considering Kurds:

1. The application of the arrangements to eliminate Kurdish emirates...with the aim of strengthening central administration.
2. The failure of this arrangement and governments facing with tribal dynamics, which used to be controlled by Kurdish emirates, that pioneered the formation of hundreds of political units as opposition focuses.
3. The rise of movements among Armenians, as among Christians, those aim equality with Muslims and even independence, which will affect the formation of the Kurdish nationalism at the end of the century.<sup>146</sup>

As it was mentioned earlier, the relative autonomy of some Kurdish regions, and their conditions of ‘slight attachment’ to the center de-escalated in the

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<sup>142</sup> Heper, M., “Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire”, p. 96

<sup>143</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1998, London – New York, p. 63

<sup>144</sup> Heper, M., “Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire”, p. 95

<sup>145</sup> Yıldız, H., *Aşiretten Ulusallığa Doğru Kürtler*, Heviya Gel Yay., 1989, Stockholm, p. 45 cited in Kutlay, N., *İttihat Terakki ve Kürtler*, p. 19

<sup>146</sup> Bozarşlan, H., “Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)” in Bora, T. (eds.) *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik-Cilt 4*, p. 844

course of time. However, *Tanzimat* was the period when the maximum effort of centralization was made in order to attach Kurdish regions to the center. *Tanzimat* reformations that realized in order to prevent the collapse of the Empire were founded on the common denominator of the ‘consciousness of being Ottoman’ (*Osmanlılık*). The common denominator of ‘*Osmanlılık*’, free from religion, language, and ethnicity, marked the last period of Ottoman Empire and eventually redefined and reshaped the relationship between state and Kurdish regions. The policies and reforms of the *Tanzimat* period set the foundations of different dimensions of the state’s relationship with the Kurds.

### 3.3. The Reign of Abdülhamid II

The evaluation of this era will cover the period between the first Constitutional Monarchy (1876) and the 1908 Revolution of Young Turks. The reign of Abdülhamid II, was the period of prolongation of states strict control over the regions inhabited by Kurds.<sup>147</sup> According to Özoğlu, as a continuation of this level of control introduced by *Tanzimat*, in the period of Abdülhamid II, policies of ‘assimilation’ were put into practice in order to manipulate and ‘watch’ Kurdish tribal forces and Kurdish nobility.<sup>148</sup> Together with the economic and political crises the empire struggled during 1870s, in Zürcher’s words, “a group of Ottoman politicians carried out a *coup d’état* deposing Sultan Abdülaziz on May 30, 1876”.<sup>149</sup> In Abdülaziz’s place Murat V -who was close to the Young Ottomans- came to the throne, and afterwards replaced with Abdülhamid II. Period of First Constitutionalism began with the proclamation of the Constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*) on December 23, 1876. As indicated in the Constitution; the

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<sup>147</sup> For detailed information on ‘state and nation’ during the reign of Abdülhamid II, see Deringil, S., *Simgeden Millete – II. Abdülhamid’den Mustafa Kemal’e Devlet ve Millet*, İletişim Yayınları, 2007, İstanbul

<sup>148</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 67

<sup>149</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 77

Parliamentary elections launched in December 1876 and January 1877 and the Parliament opened on March 19. The Parliamentary representatives had been elected by the provincial and county councils, not by the public. Zürcher stressed that “the parliament almost totally failed in its legislative functions, partly because the constitution allowed the sultan and his ministers to govern by decree”; hence he accepted the parliament as “an effective forum for criticism of the government’s conduct of affairs”.<sup>150</sup> In 1878, Abdülhamid II prorogued the Parliament for an indefinite period and suspended the Constitution.<sup>151</sup>

Furthermore, arise of the political opposition that mark this period of constitutionalism and following era should also be mentioned. The constitutional movement of the period was accomplished by a small group of opposition, called Young Ottomans. Young Ottomans were a community of civil servants that resisted against upper stratum of bureaucracy.<sup>152</sup> They were instrumental in formation and propagation of the notion of constitution and besides they were interested in fields of literature, journalism, education, history, and economy.<sup>153</sup> According to Lewis, “Young Ottoman’s understanding of the problems of change in Ottoman society was deeper than of the ‘technicians of the *Tanzimat*’ and their ideal”.<sup>154</sup> Most importantly, Young Ottomans were the pioneers of ‘thought and action’ of the following generations.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 80

<sup>151</sup> According to Tanör, together with Sultan Abdülhamid II, who was uncomfortable with the system of constitutionalism and constitution itself, ‘foreign states’ were not pleased with the activities of the Parliament. These states -that put pressure on the Ottoman Empire for years on the realization of reforms- be abhorrent of constitutionalism because of the parliamentary reforms conflicting with their own interests. Tanör, B., *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri*, p. 159

<sup>152</sup> Ortaylı, İ., *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 270

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, pp. 271-272

<sup>154</sup> Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 173

<sup>155</sup> Ortaylı, İ., *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, p. 272, Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 173

As it was mentioned before, period of reforms in the Empire accelerated with the nineteenth century. Facile military reforms had been replaced by more comprehensive and profound reforms covering fields of administration, taxation, education and everyday life in the empire. The Ottoman Empire experienced a process of restructuring in order to cope with economic and military predominance of the West and threats coming from Russia and Iran. Administrative reforms with the incentive of centralization led to the gradual reduction and weakening of Kurdish principalities and establishment of centralized bureaucracy in regions inhabited by Kurds. By the mid-nineteenth century, the last Kurdish principalities had been abolished by military operation.<sup>156</sup> This period of the abolition of Kurdish principalities corresponds to the empire's struggle for surviving through profound reforms processes, subordination of Western states, internal and external unrest, and economic difficulties.

As van Bruinessen identified, the gradual removal of Kurdish principalities as a consequence of central governance refers to the gradual diminishing of local Kurdish notables' power that used to keep Kurdish tribes under control.<sup>157</sup> According to van Bruinessen, the new administrators that were centrally appointed could not hold the tribes in check; the result was anarchy and chaos in the region. Most of the Kurdish *mirs* resented losing their preexisting powers and privileges; they disapproved the implementation of centralization and rebelled.<sup>158</sup> In the absence of *mirs* that used to act as mediators; conflicts among Kurdish tribes began.<sup>159</sup> Within

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<sup>156</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism Versus Nation-Building States*, Isis Press, 2000, İstanbul, p. 46

<sup>157</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazılar*, İletişim, 2005, İstanbul, p. 108

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, p. 109

<sup>159</sup> McDowall, D., "The Kurdish Question: A Historical Review" in Kreyenbroek, P.G. & Sperl, S. (eds.) *The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview*, Routledge, 1992, UK, p. 15

this climate of disorder and absence of authority religious *sheikhs* appeared as unifying leaders and mediators.<sup>160</sup>

The Sheikh Ubeydullah rebellion in 1880 was an indication of the rise of sheikhs' authority and appearance as unifying political leaders. As Özoğlu expressed; after the removal of Botan emirate from power -the last semi-independent emirate in Kurdish regions-, until the end of war with Russia in 1878 there was no record of a powerful Kurdish leader in the region.<sup>161</sup> Following the end of this war Sheikh Ubeydullah filled the political and military power vacuum and appeared as a Kurdish leader.<sup>162</sup> Considering the rebellion's generally admitted significance in the evolution of Kurdish nationalism, debates on reasons and results of the rebellion must be examined.

There exist diverse views on motivations and consequences of the rebellion of Sheikh Ubeydullah outbreak in 1880. According to Kirişçi and Winrow, Sheikh Ubeydullah initiated a local rebellion as a reaction to Ottoman state's struggle in enforcing the central administration.<sup>163</sup> Jwaideh argues that, considering his correspondences and speeches, Sheikh Ubeydullah "dedicated himself to the aim of establishing unity among Kurds and founding an independent Kurdish state based on Kurds' distinct nationality". Jwaideh presented two reasons for the rebellion: poor administration of Turks and Iranians in the Kurdish region that conduce to corruption and the fear of Armenian ascendancy in *Kurdistan*"<sup>164</sup> especially after the Treaty of Berlin that was signed in 1878 by the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, Özoğlu define the rebellion as a 'transtribal revolt' rather than a national one. According to Özoğlu, "Ubeydullah entertained the idea

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<sup>160</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 50

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, p. 74

<sup>162</sup> Ibid

<sup>163</sup> Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G.M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict*, Frank Cass, 1997, U.S.A, p. 78

<sup>164</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, İletişim, 1999, İstanbul, p. 153

of an independent principality, yet he was ready to settle for the recognition of his authority in *Kurdistan* within the Ottoman state”.<sup>165</sup>

### **3.3.1 Hamidiye Light Cavalry Regiments and Tribal Schools**

The foundation of Hamidiye Regiments and Tribal Schools were the institutionalization of the pattern of Abdülhamid’s relation with the Kurds that based on ‘manipulation and control’. As Olson quoted from Kodaman, “Abdülhamid’s creation of *Hamidiye* Regiments reflected four major objectives of his regime: centralization, Islamic unity, the politics of balance, and the politics of reform”.<sup>166</sup> However, Van Bruinessen regarded the creation of these regiments as “a relapse towards indirect rule”.<sup>167</sup> *Hamidiye* Regiments were established as an effort to “tie the empire more firmly to its Muslim roots, to provide a defense against Russia and Armenians<sup>168</sup>, and to stop the Great Britain’s policies considering the eastern Anatolia, and to use Kurds as a balance against the urban notables and the provincial governments”.<sup>169</sup> Shaw underlined that the *Hamidiye* Regiments were founded in 1891, which was composed of Kurdish and Turcoman tribesmen from eastern Anatolia. Regiments were first formed in the areas neighboring Russian border, with some 50,000 men in service. The regiments were commanded by the Kurdish tribal chiefs, but regular army officers also went

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<sup>165</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 76

<sup>166</sup> Kodaman, B., *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 1980, İstanbul; Dersimi, M. N., *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim*, Ani Matbaası, 1952, Aleppo; Fırat, M. Ş., *Doğu İlleri Varto Tarihi*, Saka Matbaası, 1948, İstanbul; Duguin, S., “The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 9, (May 1973) cited in Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925*, University of Texas Press, 1989, U.S.A., p. 7

<sup>167</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism Versus Nation-Building States*, p. 47

<sup>168</sup> Despite several significances of *Hamidiye* Regiments, its actions of violence against Armenians seemed noteworthy for many scholars. Quataert, D., “The Age of Reforms, 1812-1914” in İnalcık, H. & Quataert, D. (eds.) *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, U.S.A., pp. 877, 880, 883; Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 87; Bruinessen, M.V., *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism Versus Nation-Building States*, p. 47; McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, pp. 59-63

<sup>169</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 8

along to train the men and carried out the overall commands. The *Hamidiye* tribal force grew rapidly, to 40 regiments in 1892, 56 in 1893, and 63 in 1899.<sup>170</sup> The *Hamidiye* Regiments continued after Abdülhamid II's deposition by Young Turks revolution in 1908, with their names changed to Tribal Regiments. They kept growing under Young Turks' administration, total number of them reaching 64 by 1910.<sup>171</sup>

The creation of *Hamidiye* Regiments affected the evolution of Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish movement both negatively and positively. The most significant negative consequence of *Hamidiye* Regiments experience was the cultivation of hostility and divergence between *Alevi* and *Sunni* Kurds. The regiments were enrolled merely from Sunni tribes in line with Abdülhamid's Pan-Islamic policy.<sup>172</sup> Van Bruinessen argues that, this situation generated significant short-term political consequences. *Alevi* Kurdish tribes, under the repression of regiments, were inclined to embrace the Young Turk movement against Abdülhamid.<sup>173</sup> Secondly; the regiments served as “a fulcrum of Kurdish power for over two decades”. Lastly, according to Olson, Kurdish power and authority reached an extreme level of concentration (more than 50,000 men under arms between 1895 and 1915) for the first time in the region since 1847.<sup>174</sup> As a response to van Bruinessen and other scholars' arguments on negative effects of *Hamidiye* Regiments on the unity of Kurdish population, Olson asserts that “Hamidiye era was a necessary interlude in emergent Kurdish nationalism”. According to Olson, “regiments contributed to the feelings of solidarity among Sunni

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<sup>170</sup> Shaw, S. J., *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, p. 246

<sup>171</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 10

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11

<sup>173</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazılar*, p. 135

<sup>174</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 12

Kurds, offered leadership opportunities for many young Kurdish men, provided many Kurds with military know-how.<sup>175</sup>

In 1902, Tribal Schools (*Aşiret Mektepleri*) - in Istanbul and Baghdad- were founded.<sup>176</sup> In the beginning, the school admitted only Arabian children, afterwards Kurdish and Albanian children were accepted as well. As Alkan mentioned, this school was founded with the main objective of creating “a unifying institution to civilize the rebellious tribes of Anatolia”. In this school, children who were potential leaders of their tribes received an education that defines ‘their relations with the state’.<sup>177</sup> As it can be identified from ethnicities of accepted students, “the goal was to use the ‘Muslim nation’ as a sacred and unifying umbrella identity in an age of divisive ethnic identities”.<sup>178</sup> After all they were perceived as the children of those who were rebelling out of ‘ignorance’ with ‘Islam, the Caliph and the Sultan’”.<sup>179</sup> On the other hand, Kutlay claims that as an effect of interaction between students of differing ethnicity, Kurdish students hesitated between realizing their *Kurdishness* and integrating into Ottoman Empire.<sup>180</sup> For van Bruinessen, as a side effect of these schools, a class of educated people had been formed which will cherish Kurdish nationalist ideologies in the future.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>176</sup> Kutlay, N., *İttihat Terakki ve Kürtler*, p. 32

<sup>177</sup> Akpınar, A., *Osmanlı Devletinde Aşiret Mektebi*, Göçebe Yayınları, 1997, İstanbul, cited in Alkan, M.Ö., “Modernization from Empire to Republic and Education in the Process of Nationalism”, p. 72, Van Bruinessen, M., *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazılar*, p. 135

<sup>178</sup> Alkan, M.Ö., “Modernization from Empire to Republic and Education in the Process of Nationalism”, p. 73; Karpas, K.H., *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 228

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, p. 108

<sup>180</sup> Kutlay, N., *İttihat Terakki ve Kürtler*, p. 54

<sup>181</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazılar*, p. 135 According to Baskın Oran, neither the enforcement of centralization policies nor Tribal Schools directly created ‘Kurdish nationalist feelings’ but only laid the groundwork for maturation of these ‘feelings’. Kurdish intellectuals; that arise in between Yong Turks, gather nationalism from them and appeared as their antitheses, contributed to the creation ‘Kurdish nationalist feelings’. Furthermore; children of Kurdish tribes who received education in Istanbul took cognizance of their



### 3.4. Second Constitutionalism and the Period of Liberties

With the Young Turk revolution in 1908, the Constitution of 1876 had been restored and Parliamentary regime reestablished. Young Turks were against absolutism and regime of oppression, supporting reinforcement of the constitution, and demanding justice for the whole imperial community. The main target of Young Turk revolution was to “remove a fumbling and incompetent ruler and replace him by a government better able to maintain and defend the Empire against the dangers that threatened it” in order to ‘save the state’.<sup>182</sup> According to Tanör, the essence of Young Turk ideology was based on the notions of ‘Ottomanism’ (*Osmanlıcılık*), ‘Ottoman nation’ (*Osmanlı Milleti*), and ‘Ottoman Homeland’ (*Osmanlı Vatanı*) that stem from the ideology of ‘brotherhood of all Ottomans’.<sup>183</sup> Zürcher defines Ottomanism as follows:

(It)...was the idea that all the different ethnic and religious communities of the Empire would coalesce into one Ottoman citizenry and remain loyal to the Ottoman dynasty if only Muslims and non-Muslims were granted full equality before the law and parliamentary representation. Its adherents themselves called it the ‘Unity of the Elements’.<sup>184</sup>

According to Ahmad, “first five years of constitutional government were marked by a constant struggle for political power in which the Committee of

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‘Kurdishness’ by attending ‘Turkist conferences’ of intellectuals like İsmail Gasprinski and Hamdullah Suphi. Oran, B., “Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Diyalektiği” in Bora, T. (eds.) *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik-Cilt 4*, p. 874

<sup>182</sup> Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 212

<sup>183</sup> Tanör, B., *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri*, p. 169

<sup>184</sup> Zürcher, E.J., “Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists: Identity Politics 1908-1938” in Karpas, K. H. (eds.) *Ottoman Past and Today’s Turkey*, p. 153 On the other hand, Zürcher also denotes that, after the revolution the ideal of ‘union of peoples’ taken the form of forced Ottomanization of the minorities. See Zürcher, E.J., *The Unionist Factor*, E. J. Brill, 1984, The Netherlands, p. 23

Union and Progress finally emerged victorious”<sup>185</sup> in 1913, after the country’s defeat in the Balkan War. The entire European portion of the Empire had been lost to the Balkan powers. This excessive territorial loss with the war had shaken the ‘foundations of the Empire’; that was to be Ottomanism.

Even before the Balkan Wars, Young Turks’ ideology of Ottomanism began to impoverish. In Lewis’s terms, “Young Turks implemented repressive and centralist policies not only through the Christian ingredients of the Empire but they followed a policy of *Turkification* both in Rumelia and the Asian provinces, and attempted to impose the Turkish language on Arabs, Albanians, and other non-Turkish Muslims”.<sup>186</sup> However, according to Ahmad’s assertions; the loss of Rumelia, which had given the Empire its multi-national character, “immediately affected Young Turk ideology and the center of gravity began to shift to Anatolia”.<sup>187</sup> The realization of the malfunctioning of ‘Ottomanism’, which was accepted to be the ‘unifying component’ of the Empire, “led to a trauma among Young Turks”.<sup>188</sup> According to Quataert, the Islamist component of the Ottoman identity became more important after territorial losses.<sup>189</sup> Yeğen asserts that during this period, a project was put into practice to ensure Turks, which perceived as the ‘fundamental element’ (*Unsur-i aslı*) of the Empire, to be the ‘supreme nation’. While forming associations on the ethnic inducements were prohibited; institutions like the National Library, the National Archive, the National Cinema, the National Music Organization, Turkish Force

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<sup>185</sup> Ahmad, F., *The Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 37

<sup>186</sup> Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 219

<sup>187</sup> Ahmad, F., *The Young Turks*, Oxford University Press, 1969, Great Britain, p. 153

<sup>188</sup> Çetinkaya, Y.D., “Orta Katman Aydınlar ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kitleleşmesi” in Bora, T. (eds.) *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik-Cilt 4*, p. 98

<sup>189</sup> Quataert, D., *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, U.K., p. 188, Ahmad, F., *The Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 39

(sports organization), and Turkish Hearths<sup>190</sup> (cultural organization) had been formed.<sup>191</sup>

According to Jwaideh, during the period between Young Turk Revolution and World War I; conflict between ‘two parties’, the state and Kurds, came into existence based on four reasons: The primary bond of Islam between the Ottoman state and the Kurds was damaged by Young Turk policies against the religion and the caliph and Kurds’ loss of ‘privileged’ positions with the overthrown of Abdülhamid. Secondly, Kurdish community resisted Young Turk policies of ‘centralization’, ‘Turkification’, and oppression of non-Turkish communities. Ottoman authority diminished as a consequence of Young Turks’ diplomatic and military defeats, and anarchy in the empire fomented Kurdish ‘separatist’ ideals. Finally; corruption and poor administration of Young Turks encouraged Kurds’ to rebel.<sup>192</sup>

On the other hand, the period that experienced after the Revolution of 1908 -prior to Young Turks’ gradual commitment to the ideology of Turkification- worth mentioning considering flourishing environment of liberties. According to Lewis, the proclamation of the constitution released a vast surge of ideas and self-expression; a whole series of new literary, political, and other periodicals began to appear.<sup>193</sup> Özoğlu regards this period as the era of Kurdish enlightenment in terms of cultural and intellectual activism of the educated Kurds in Istanbul. According to Özoğlu, the purposes of this activism was to systematically examine and promote Kurdish language, literature, history, and culture and create a form of

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<sup>190</sup> Turkish Hearths were closely linked to CUP. See Zürcher, E.J., “Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists: Identity Politics 1908-1938”, p. 154

<sup>191</sup> Yeğen, M., “Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1, January 2007, p.124

<sup>192</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, p. 205

<sup>193</sup> Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, pp. 230-231

Kurdish consciousness by educating illiterate Kurdish society.<sup>194</sup> The Kurdish elite also formed a number of Kurdish societies, which were appraised as “nationalist organizations” as well as “societies that could not go beyond functioning essentially as cultural clubs for the Kurdish nobility”.<sup>195</sup>

Three of these societies are significant in examining the progress of Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish movement; The Society for the Mutual Aid and Progress of Kurdistan (SMPK) (*Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) The Kurdish Hope Society (KHS) (*Hevi-i Kürt Cemiyeti*), and The Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan (SAK) (*Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*). The Society for the Mutual Aid and Progress of Kurdistan that formed in 1908 brought together different Kurdish notable families and their most illustrious sons. The society published a newspaper sharing the same name with the organization<sup>196</sup> and published a magazine; *Kürdistan*.<sup>197</sup> Considering the first article of SMPK’s constitution that “very carefully worded to reiterate the positions of the Kurds as an inseparable part of the Ottoman Empire”, Özoğlu’s claims that “the society did not pursue secessionist or even autonomist policies”.<sup>198</sup> However, “the society was very vocal in drawing the government’s attention to the problems in Kurdish regions, such as the land dispute between Armenian and Kurdish parties”.<sup>199</sup> The SMPK was shut down in 1909 by the Young Turks, in Olson’s terms, because they did not see any advantage in allowing Kurds to organize.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 77

<sup>195</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 15; Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 78

<sup>196</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 78

<sup>197</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 15; McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 95

<sup>198</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 78

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, p. 79

<sup>200</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 15

The Kurdish Hope Society, an organization of Kurdish students, was founded in 1912 with the objectives of “providing solidarity among Kurdish students and organizing Kurdish language and literature”.<sup>201</sup> According to Olson, founders of KHS “were quite divorced from their people in eastern Anatolia, who were still traditional and religious and whose idea of nationalism was still tied to the caliphate”.<sup>202</sup> For McDowall, the Kurdish Hope Society enjoyed a wider membership compared to other societies, whom were mostly sons of urban notables and of Hamidiye chiefs.<sup>203</sup> Özoğlu emphasizes the ‘non-nationalistic structure’ of KHS because of “the absence of aims at forming a Kurdish state and propagating Kurdish autonomy or secession”.<sup>204</sup> After the World War I, the KHS was “reactivated with a pronounced nationalist agenda”.<sup>205</sup>

The Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan was founded in 1918 right after the Mudros Armistice, by “the same Kurdish notables prominent in the earlier Kurdish organizations”.<sup>206</sup> In its regulation, the SAK was defined as a Kurdish nationalist organization with the purpose of ensuring the general well-being of the Kurds and working towards the advancement of ‘Kurdistan’ and the Kurdish people.<sup>207</sup> Many scholars accept the SAK as a Kurdish nationalist organization, especially considering society’s newspaper *Jin*’s<sup>208</sup> publications.<sup>209</sup> With additional consideration of the society’s search

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<sup>201</sup> Kutlay, N., *Kürt Kimliği*, Belge Uluslararası Yayıncılık, 1997, İstanbul, p. 98

<sup>202</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 16

<sup>203</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 94; Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 16

<sup>204</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 81

<sup>205</sup> *Jin*, 3 September 1335 (1919) cited in *Ibid*, p. 80

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid*, p. 81

<sup>207</sup> Tunaya, T. Z., *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler*, vol. 1, 1984 cited in *Ibid*, p. 82

<sup>208</sup> *Jin Newspaper* began publishing in 1918 and discussed Kurdish law and Kurdish identity. Kutlay, N., *Kürt Kimliği*, p. 93 The newspaper accepted ‘creating a national history’ as the most significant aim of Kurdish nationalism. Bozarıslan, H., “Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p. 847

of international assistance for its national designs and meetings between the Ottoman government and SAK members, Özoğlu categorizes the SAK as the first 'nationalist' Kurdish organization that seeks independence or at least autonomy for the Kurdish region.<sup>210</sup>

### 3.5. World War I (1914-1918)

In 1914, the Ottoman Empire stumbled into a major European war, in Lewis's terms, which ended with the defeat of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria, and Ottoman Empire) in 1918.<sup>211</sup> The Armistice of Mudros signed on October 30, 1918, implied provisions like "the military occupation of the straits, control by the Entente of all railway and telegraph lines, demobilization and disarmament of the Ottoman troops, and most importantly Entente's right to occupy and place in the Ottoman Empire if it considered its security to be under threat".<sup>212</sup> The wartime leaders of CUP left the country right after the conclusion of the armistice. Mehmet Vahidettin, the new Sultan had succeeded the throne in July 1918. With the Armistice of Mudros, victorious Allies started the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire. According to Ahmad, "deportation and massacre of the Armenians during the World War, committed the allies to establish an Armenian state in Anatolia". Furthermore, Britain decided to create a Kurdish state to act as "a buffer between the new Turkey and their mandate in Iraq".<sup>213</sup> The Sultan and his government signed the Treaty of Sévres on August 10, 1920, with the intention to stay in power. In Ahmad's words,

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<sup>209</sup>Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G.M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, pp. 83-85; Bozarlan, H., "Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)", p. 847; Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 82

<sup>210</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, pp. 82-83

<sup>211</sup> Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 237

<sup>212</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 138

<sup>213</sup> Ahmad, F., *The Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 46

“the Treaty of Sévres carved up Anatolia and permitted only a truncated Turkish state”.<sup>214</sup>

On the other hand, the position of Kurds after the World War until the Treaty of Sévres was described by Olson as a period of dilemma of Kurds “centered on the question of autonomy or independence”.<sup>215</sup> The Treaty of Sévres provided for an independent but not unified Kurdish region. According to Olson, Britain conducted a policy of “encouraging Kurds to think that they would support Kurdish independence efforts” until the middle of 1921.<sup>216</sup> Despite the high probability of realization of an independent Kurdish state, Kurds actually participated in the War of Independence. According to Bozarslan, Kurds strongly participated in the war<sup>217</sup>, with the exception of Koçgiri Rebellion in 1921.<sup>218</sup> They mostly joined to the nationalist forces because of their interests “to get rid of the remaining Armenians to implement article 64 of the Treaty of Sévres”, and the appeal of Muslim solidarity, which meant cooperation with Ottoman and Turkish nationalist forces”.<sup>219</sup> Bozarslan and Somel claimed that, Ankara’s utilization

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid, p. 48

<sup>215</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 24

<sup>216</sup> Ibid, p. 25

<sup>217</sup> On the other hand, for Kutlay; “when national movement of Mustafa Kemal began most of ‘Kurdish patriots’ left the country, rest of them either punished or deemed ‘silence’ appropriate”. Kutlay, N., *Kürt Kimliği*, p. 144

<sup>218</sup> Koçgiri Rebellion was the most significant Kurdish resistance that Ankara government encountered. At the beginning of the rebellion a ‘temporary Kurdish Government’ established, which evoked the Kurdish nation to resist against the Kemalist government. Bozarslan, H., “Türkiye’de Kürt Milliyetçiliği: Zımnı Sözleşmeden Ayaklanmaya (1919-1923)” in Zürcher, E.J. (eds.) *İmparatorluktan Cumhuriyete Türkiye’de Etik Çatışma, İletişim*, 2005, İstanbul, p. 100 Kutlay claims that, Kurdish leaders addressed their “advanced and determined” declaration to Kemalist government. Kutlay, N., *Kürt Kimliği*, p. 157 According to Bozarslan, the rebellion was ‘local’ because its objective was neither independence nor Kurdish autonomy in a broader sense but to gain local autonomy for Dersim region in order to protect ‘Kurdish and Alevi’ elements. The rebellion weakened with ‘intertribal divisions’ and ‘silence’ of Sunnite Kurds and remained as an ‘isolated event’ that could not threaten the Kemalist rule. Bozarslan, H., “Kürt Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p.101

<sup>219</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, pp. 26-27

of the ‘saving Caliph Sultan’ theme and of Kurds concern on Armenians’ ‘return’ according to the Treaty of Sévres, were the ground of high Kurdish participation of National Independence War.<sup>220</sup> According to Özoğlu’s assertions, “Mustafa Kemal was cautious but relatively confident of his ability to contain Kurdish separatism in the region, mainly by playing the card of Islam”, and “prior to the opening of the Grand National Assembly in 1920, the loyalty of the Kurds did not appear to be a great concern”.<sup>221</sup>

### **3.6 Concluding Remarks: Relationship between the Ottoman Rulers and the Kurds**

As a feature of Ottoman administration, the Empire did not follow the policy of crushing and absorbing the previous administration or life style in the lands they conquered but rather preserve them.<sup>222</sup> The Ottoman Empire practiced a decentralized system of relationship with its distant territories. According to this political arrangement of decentralization, the centre “accepted the local influence of provincial notables and tribal leaders as a fact of life, a datum, but, whenever possible, tried to dilute it with officials who were appointed from the centre”.<sup>223</sup> Until the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire implemented a ‘quasi-feudal system’ of administration in regions inhabited by Kurds. For three centuries, until the reformation period for the Empire begins, reciprocal struggle to ensure balance of power continued between the Ottoman state and Kurds. *Tanzimat* period’s policies of enforcing centralization and Ottomanism ended the tradition of ‘reconciliation’ between the centre and Kurds.

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<sup>220</sup> Bozarslan, H., “Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p. 875; Somel, S.A., “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Türk Kimliği” in Bilgin, N. (eds.) *Cumhuriyet, Demokrasi ve Kimlik*, Bağlam, 1997, İstanbul, p. 79

<sup>221</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, pp. 126-127

<sup>222</sup> Hourani, A., “Ottoman Reforms and the Politics of Notables” in Polk, W.R. & Chandlers, R.L. (eds.) *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, p. 48

<sup>223</sup> Mardin, Ş., “Freedom in an Ottoman Perspective” in Heper, M. & Evin, A. (eds.) *State, democracy, and the military : Turkey in the 1980s*, W. de Gruyter, 1988, Berlin-New York, p. 28



By promulgating the Imperial Rescript of *Gülhane* in 1839 and the Reform Edict in 1856 the centre aimed mobilizing the masses behind the state and against the local notables. The policies of reestablishment and strengthening of ‘Ottoman unity’ combined with the Land Code of 1858 and the Province Law of 1864 pursuing the goal of centralization, the Ottoman state’s political relationship with Kurdish regions had changed. The region became more attached to the ‘centre’ and expected to become ‘Ottoman’. The gradual removal of Kurdish principalities as a consequence of central administration policies diminished local notables’ power, and they rebelled against the state. In an atmosphere of disorder and absence of authority sheikhs appeared as unifying leaders and mediators. While the Bedirhan *Bey*’s rebellion in 1847 was an example of uprising against the Empire’s new administrative policies of centralization, Sheikh Ubeydullah’s rebellion in 1880 signify the appearance of sheiks as political leaders in the region.

The creation of *Hamidiye* Regiments and tribal schools by Abdülhamid II had indirectly but strongly contributed to the development of Kurdish nationalist movement than any rebellion. With *Hamidiye* Regiments, Kurds reached an extreme level of power and authority in the region since mid-1800s and Kurdish men got the opportunity for ‘leadership’ and education on military technology. The tribal school contributed to the Kurds’ realization of their ‘Kurdishness’ and to the creation of an educated class of Kurdish notables, who will be the pioneers of Kurdish nationalism. As a result of the flourishing environment of liberties after the Young Turk revolution of 1908, Kurds founded and organized several societies that will began to pursue nationalist goals in addition to cultural and intellectual activities after the World War I. Following the extreme territorial loss with the Balkan War, Young Turks’ efforts on implementing repressive and centralist policies of Turkification increased.

It can be argued that, with this period of Turkification marked by the absence of unifying bond of ‘Ottomanism’ and Islam, relationship between the Ottoman state and Kurds became as tense as never been before. The Kurdish question that was not constituted a problem to the Ottoman

administration until that time. After this point the Kurdish question began to be perceived in relation to the reforms for centralization which aimed to strengthen the state power. In Yeğen's words, "the unrest of the Kurds were believed to be nothing more than a reaction of the forces of periphery annoyed by the programme of *islahat*".<sup>224</sup> With the exception of *Koçgiri* Rebellion in 1921, Kurds strongly participated in the National War of Independence. There were several motives behind this high level of participation, most significantly: Kurds apprehension on Armenians 'return' according to the Treaty of Sévres, the desire to 'save' the Caliph Sultan, and "promises of autonomy made by the nationalist leaders, including Mustafa Kemal"<sup>225</sup>.

In sum, until the nineteenth century, Kurdish regions experienced Ottoman administration through decentralization. A 'quasi-feudal system' of administration applied and variant levels of autonomy granted to local notables in Kurdish regions in accordance with the interests of the Ottoman Empire. This state of 'reconciliation' came to an end with states efforts to implement centralization policies. The decline of Kurdish region's relative autonomy, and diminishing of privileges and power of local notables; followed by uprisings firstly led by *beys* and then by *sheikhs*. With the Young Turks' policies of Turkification, Kurds became 'Muslim elements' of the Empire that needed to be assimilated. Together with these policies of centralization and Turkification, Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish nationalist movement progressed. After the National War of Independence the Ottoman Empire transformed into a nation state. The transformation of the perception of the 'Kurdish element' in this newly formed nation state, its motives and consequences will be the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>224</sup> Yeğen, M., "Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question", p. 122

<sup>225</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 177

## CHAPTER IV

### REPUBLICAN ERA

The last century of the Ottoman Empire was marked by state's efforts to carry out reforms mainly aiming centralization. The relative autonomy of the Kurdish regions (the periphery) that continued for three centuries in a diminishing manner came to an end with the center's struggle to regain and maintain power. During this period, some Kurdish rebellions occurred in the region mostly motivated by resentments on losing previous privileges. Together with the Young Turk revolution in 1908, a new epoch for Kurdish nationalism began. Kurdish notables, whom took part in *Hamidiye* regiments and educated in tribal schools, founded several Kurdish communities, published newspapers and periodicals with cultural objectives. As Özoğlu claimed, the emergence of Kurdish nationalism corresponded to the post World War I period.<sup>226</sup> However, Kurds strongly participated in the War of Independence because of the bond of Islam and fear of an Armenian state. After the victory in the War of Independence, the Lausanne Treaty was signed with the Allied Powers in July and the Republic was proclaimed on October 29, 1923. Hereafter, it was the beginning of a new period for Kurds and Kurdish region, which was signified with a detachment from the Ottoman heritage.

This chapter delineates the relationship between the Kurds and the state, and progress of Kurdish nationalism, parallel to Turkish nationalism, from the early-Republican period to 1990s. The foundation of the nation-state's perception of Kurds and the Kurdish issue, the transformation of

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<sup>226</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, pp. 117-120

Kurdish nationalist movement parallel to the transformation of the political agenda in Turkey will be analyzed.

#### **4.1 The Transitional Period (1919-1923)**

From the end of the War of Independence until the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, Kemalists' actual perception of Kurds and nature of their relationship remained ambiguous. McDowall presents various cases displaying this 'different stance' of Kemalists considering the Kurds. According to McDowall, Mustafa Kemal was aware of Kurdish separatist tendencies, but during the National war of Independence, he reinforced the idea of "Kurdo-Turkish unity" based on Islam as "the linchpin of the struggle against the Christian invader".<sup>227</sup> McDowall stresses that during these couple of years, leaders of Turkey were admitting the existence of Kurds as a separate group in the country but "vague on the future relationships between the two groups of Turks and Kurds".<sup>228</sup> The leaders of the new state took steps towards referencing autonomous Kurdish region. According to McDowall, on 10 February 1922, the Assembly "undertook to establish an autonomous administration for the Kurdish nation in harmony with their national customs", which approved in draft form but "never saw the light of day".<sup>229</sup> Gunter also argues that Mustafa Kemal supported the idea of Kurdish autonomy in the newly established state. According to Gunter, "the minutes of the *Amasya* interview and the proceedings of *Erzurum* and *Sivas* Congress in 1919, as well as two other occurrences in

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<sup>227</sup> McDowall quotes Mustafa Kemal's speeches and statements made in the Grand National Assembly on September 1919 and May 1920 from *Sancak* no. 39, April 1987. McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, pp. 187-188

<sup>228</sup> McDowall takes Mustafa Kemal's speech in the Assembly on April 1920 as the basis of his argument. According to this speech, Mustafa Kemal claims that the future relationship between the two groups could be decided later after the external threat had been repelled. McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 188

<sup>229</sup> Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, p. 40 cited in McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, pp. 188-189

1922 and 1923, make this clear”.<sup>230</sup> Considering an interview Mustafa Kemal made with the press in İzmit in January 1923, for McDowall, “he was still thinking in terms of special status for the Kurdish region”, “and inclined to allow some form of Kurdish identity, albeit one stripped of political power”.<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, during negotiations on Treaty of Lausanne, Turkish side did speak of Kurds as a distinct group within Turkey, but later on they modified their discourse.<sup>232</sup>

McDowall argues that within couple of weeks the government’s policies and stance of the Kurdish issue had changed. References to the Kurds that Mustafa Kemal made in his speech to the *İzmir* Economic Congress in February 1923 were removed when it was published.<sup>233</sup> As another indicator of abandoning the policy of accepting ‘separate Kurdish identity and existence’, as McDowall identified, in Lausanne, İnönü told Curzon that “the Kurds were of *Turanian* origin and as regards of manners they do not differ in any respect from the Turks”.<sup>234</sup> However, acts of the new Assembly after the proclamation of the Republic in 1923 absolutely displayed the future policies of the state considering the ‘Kurdish issue’ distinct from four-years that mentioned above.

#### 4.2 The Early-Republican Period (1924-1945)

The legislative year of 1924 of The Grand National Assembly marked the beginning of a new era of ‘estrangement’ for the Kurds and the

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<sup>230</sup> Gunter, M.M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, St.Martin’s Press, 1997, U.S.A, p. 5

<sup>231</sup> As McDowall noted, this statement was in reply to a journalist. McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 190-191 Yeğen also underlines these policies of ‘recognizing’ Kurds as a ‘society’ prior to 1924 Constitution. See Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türk’ten Sözde Vatandaşa - Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler*, İletişim, 2006, İstanbul, pp. 49-52

<sup>232</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 190

<sup>233</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 190 Also See Gunter, M.M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 5

<sup>234</sup> The Treaty of Lausanne that signed in July 1923, made no mention of an independent Kurdistan (similarly no Armenia). Great Britain, *Lausanne Conference*, Public Record Office cited in McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 190

state.<sup>235</sup> The caliphate was abolished, the caliph was deposed, and all members of the Ottoman dynasty were exiled. According to McDowall, the abolishment of caliphate cut the last ideological tie Kurds had with Turks.<sup>236</sup> Simultaneously, with the Law on Unification of Education, all Kurdish schools, organizations, and publications, as well as religious fraternities and *medreses* were banned.<sup>237</sup> However, despite all these legislative acts, the Constitution of 1924 is the most significant indicator of new Republic's perception of the Kurds and the Kurdish issue.

#### **4.2.1. The Constitution of 1924**

The Constitution of 1924, in Yeğen's words, proclaims that the '(physical) existence of Kurds' will not be forensically interpreted: Kurds legally became Turks as other citizens of the country. According to Yeğen, this perception was evident in the preamble of 1924 Constitution introduced to the Assembly: "Our state is a nation state. It is not an international or a supranational state. The state does not recognize a nation other than Turks..."<sup>238</sup>

Besides the 'legal inexistence' of Kurdish society, the ethnic definition of Turkishness in the Constitution of 1924 envisages the future

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<sup>235</sup> The steps to built up a new state were started to be taken during years of War of Independence. In 1920 The Grand National Assembly had been opened, in 1921 the assembly passed the Law of Fundamental Organization, the Constitution of 1921(*Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu*), and abolished the Ottoman Sultanate in 1922. According to the Constitution of 1921, the position of the Assembly had been established as "the only real representative of the people, and as the holder of both legislative and executive power". Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 256 According to Kirişçi and Winrow, this law signified a detachment from the Ottoman administrative system by declaring that "sovereignty, without any preconditions, belongs to the nation". Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G. M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, p. 93

<sup>236</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 192 In Ahmad's words, these acts were "the prelude to the programme of radical secularism". Ahmad, F., *The Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 54

<sup>237</sup> Gunter, M.M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 5

<sup>238</sup> Gözübüyük, Ş. A. & Sezgin Z., *1924 Anayasası Hakkında Meclis Görüşmeleri*, Ankara Üniversitesi siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayını, 1957, Ankara, p. 7 cited in Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa - Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler*, p. 53

policies on assimilation of Kurds. According to the article 88 of the 1924 Constitution; “The people of Turkey regardless of their religion and race are Turkish in terms of citizenship.” Tanör claims that, with this article the Constitution stressed that Turkishness was defined in terms of geographical (“the people of Turkey”) and political (“citizenship”) parameters rather than racial parameters, despite the existence of racial and religious differences.<sup>239</sup> Mustafa Kemal’s statement of “The people of Turkey who promulgated the Turkish Republic are called as the Turkish Nation” that made during the same period was the formulation of the Constitutional approach at a different level.<sup>240</sup> Accordingly, as Tanör quotes from Turan, “the core of nationality is not race, but political loyalty”.<sup>241</sup>

On the other hand, Yeğen makes a detailed reading of the Article 88 of the Constitution of 1924 by making comparisons with articles designating citizenship in 1876, 1961, and 1982 Constitutions in order to test its meaning. According to Yeğen; the Article 88 affirms the idea that “Turkishness is defined in political terms and Turkish citizens are not only those who are of Turkish descent, but also those who do not have a Turkish ethnic origin yet reside on Turkish territory”.<sup>242</sup> Compared to counterpart articles of the 1876 and 1961 Constitutions, the Article 88 of 1924 Constitution include an ‘extra’ phrase; ‘in terms of citizenship’. According to Yeğen, this ‘extra’ phrase brings forth some questions: “what is meant by ‘Turkishness in terms of citizenship’? Does this imply that for the Turkish state there is Turkishness other or more than Turkishness in terms of citizenship?”

Considering the records of Parliamentary sessions on the Article 88, Yeğen asserts that; “the Assembly was not content to understand

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<sup>239</sup> Tanör, B., *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri*, p. 309

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, p. 310

<sup>241</sup> Turan, İ., *Cumhuriyet Tarihimiz*, Çağlayan Ktb., 1969, Istanbul, p. 73 cited in ibid, p. 310

<sup>242</sup> Yeğen, M., “ ‘Jewish-Kurds’ or the New frontiers of Turkishness”, *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 2007, p. 8

Turkishness as a ‘political status’ achieved by citizenship”.<sup>243</sup> According to Yeğen, “the founding constitution of the Turkish Republic enshrined a political definition of Turkishness only by virtue of implying Turkishness, more authentic than the political one.”<sup>244</sup> Yeğen suggests that, Islam was put at the center of the definition of Turkishness by the Parliament; meaning “Kurds considered inside the boundaries of circle of ‘being Turkish’, as ‘future Turks’ who are able to be assimilated.” According to Yeğen, the ‘extra’ phrase mentioned above underlined the requirements of ‘the quality of being Turk’ and identified Turkishness’ distance with the non-Muslim community.<sup>245</sup> This perception of state on Kurds as ‘future Turks’ and assimilation practices through this direction will reach a climax during the period of ‘Kurdish resistance’ beginning with the Sheikh Said rebellion and set the foundation of the ‘official discourse’ on Kurds.

#### ***4.2.2. Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925): A Landmark in History of Turkey***

It is generally accepted that, the Kurdish nationalist organization *Ciwata Azadi Kurd* (Society for Kurdish Freedom), a secret organization found in Anatolia in 1923<sup>246</sup>, was responsible for the Sheikh Said Rebellion. Sheikh Said, a leading *Nakşibendi* Sheikh, was invited to the first congress of *Azadi*, convened in 1924,<sup>247</sup> “because of his great influence among the

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<sup>243</sup> Yeğen examines two deputies’, Ahmet Hamdi’s and Hamdullah Suphi’s, speeches during Parliamentary sessions on the Article 88. Ahmet Hamdi suggested that “people those who admit the Turkish culture would be called Turkish”. Hamdullah Suphi stated that “...the word citizenship does not remove what exists in our minds, and in our hearths. Verbally, we may adopt this...but there is a truth. They [Greeks and Armenians] may not be Turkish.” Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid, p. 9

<sup>245</sup> Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türk’ten Sözde Vatandaşa - Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler*, pp. 69-73

<sup>246</sup> Olson asserts the possibility that *Azadi* might have been founded in Erzurum in 1921 considering Kurdish soldiers’ reports to British intelligence. Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 41

<sup>247</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 178



Sunni Zaza-speaking tribes in northeast of *Diyarbakır*”.<sup>248</sup> Two important decisions were made in this congress: “a general rebellion would take place, at which time a declaration of independence would be made and foreign assistance will be needed”.<sup>249</sup>

On February 8, 1925, the rebellion broke out<sup>250</sup> and until the beginning of March the Turkish military forces in the east, in van Bruinessen’s terms, were inadequate for dealing with the revolt.<sup>251</sup> In one month the rebellion had spread to the region (Sheikh Said’s forces had overrun one-third of the Kurdish region)<sup>252</sup> and “seemed to offer a serious threat to the republican regime”.<sup>253</sup> It is significant to highlight that in the meantime a Committee of League of Nations was in the region in order to assess inclinations of people of Mosul *Province* rather rejoin Turkey or stay as a part of Iraq.<sup>254</sup> The Turkish government considered the Mosul question important. In fact in a Turkish-Kurdish congress held in *Diyarbakır* on August 1, 1924 the government promised to consider Kurds’ demands and in return asked for their support for its policies regarding the Mosul issue. Olson lists Kurdish demands that Turkish government promised to consider and to rectify as follows: (1) a special forum of administration should be established in designated areas of Kurdish majority; (2) the Turkish government would provide a loan to the Kurds; (3) a general amnesty was to be declared for the Kurds in prison; (4) there would be no conscription in *Kurdistan* for a period of five years; (5) the Turkish government would restore the Sharia courts and all the arms confiscated in the country; and (6)

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<sup>248</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 280

<sup>249</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 47

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid*, p. 107

<sup>251</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 289

<sup>252</sup> Ahmad, F., *The Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 45

<sup>253</sup> Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 266

<sup>254</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, p. 395

certain specified obnoxious Turkish military officers and officials would be removed from their positions in *Kurdistan*.”<sup>255</sup> Obviously, neither side kept their promises.

As soon as Ankara noticed the extent of the uprising strong countermeasures were taken. On February 25, martial law was declared in fourteen eastern provinces for one month and High Treason Law of 1920 was amended.<sup>256</sup> On March 3 Fethi Okyar was dismissed and İsmet İnönü, whom expected to act in a more determined manner, was appointed as the Prime Minister. The next day, the Assembly passed the Law on the Maintenance of Order, “empowering the government for two years to ban any organization or publication which it considered to cause disturbance to law and order”.<sup>257</sup> At the same time “two independence tribunals were reinstated, one for eastern provinces and one for the rest of the country”.<sup>258</sup> According to van Bruinessen’s assertions; “the government deployed at least 35,000 well-armed Turkish troops against the rebels, and Turkish Air Force

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<sup>255</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 48 It is significant to note this congress in 1924 because the compromises the state willing to and promised to make, points out state’s ‘ambiguous perception and policies’ on Kurds and the Kurdish issue. As it will be identified later, state’s perception on the Kurdish issue and the Kurds will become definite following the outbreak of the Sheikh Said Rebellion.

<sup>256</sup> Zürcher, E. J., “The *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası* and Political Conservatism”, in *Turkology Update Leiden Project Working Papers Archive*, November 2002, p. 5 <http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/tcimo/tulp/Research/ejz17.pdf> (accessed November 15, 2007) The High Treason Law imposed the sanction of capital punishment political use of religion. Mumcu, U., *Kürt-İslam Ayaklanması (1919-1925)*, Um:ag Vakfı, 1997, Ankara, p. 70

<sup>257</sup> When the law was adopted, the Parliament had 287 assemblymen. During the session on the draft law there were 144 assemblymen present; 122 of them ratified the law and 22 of them opposed to it. According to Beşikçi, “absence of 143 assemblymen indicates the existence of significant opposition against the government”. Beşikçi, İ., *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, Belge Yayınları, 1989, p. 163 Mumcu also stressed the same point; especially Rauf Orbay, Kazım Karabekir, and Ali Fuat Cebesoy -founders of Progressive Republican Party- emphasized the unconstitutionality of the Law on the Maintenance of Order, asserted that “it will cause disorder”, and considered the law as an arrangement of period of oppression”. Mumcu, U., *Kürt-İslam Ayaklanması (1919-1925)*, pp. 69-70

<sup>258</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 179 As a significant note, on June 3, on the report of the Independence Tribunal in Ankara, the opposition party –the Progressive Republican Party- was outlawed. Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 266

continuously bombed the region”.<sup>259</sup> As an end to the rebellion, Sheikh Said and some of his followers were captured in mid-April. However “several rebel leaders escaped to the mountains and carried on small-scale guerrilla warfare until 1930s”.<sup>260</sup> According to the order of the Martial Court, Sheikh Said and other forty-seven leading Kurds were executed.

The motives of the Sheikh Said rebellion and measures taken by the state in the post-rebellion period must be examined in order to identify the nation-building process that Kemalists undertake and the creation of the state policies considering the Kurdish issue. As the most significant motive behind the rebellion, the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 removed the most significant bond, the religious symbol between the two communities.<sup>261</sup> Together with the abolition of the Caliphate, as another motive, Zürcher points out the nationalist republic’s repressive policies towards the Kurdish identity while working to construct a new national consciousness.<sup>262</sup> As Kirişçi and Winrow quoted from Arfa; Kurds’ resentment of government’s centralization policies, poor economic condition in the region, tribal chiefs’ discomfort, which did not get into the Parliament with 1923 general elections, and their fear of losing privileges were the reasons behind the uprising.<sup>263</sup> Bozarslan identifies four reasons for the outbreak of the Sheikh Said rebellion. Firstly, Kurds realized that dominant doctrine in the country, ‘religious brotherhood’ will be replaced by ‘Turkish nationalism’. Secondly,

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<sup>259</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 290

<sup>260</sup> Ahmad, F., *The Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 45

<sup>261</sup> Bozarslan, H., “Türkiye’de Kürt Milliyetçiliği: Zimni Sözleşmeden Ayaklanmaya (1919-1923)”, p. 105; Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 281; Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 178; Kutlay, N., *Kürt Kimliği*, s. 183, Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, p. 395; Bozarslan, H., “Kürt Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p. 848; Somel, S.A., “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Türk Kimliği”, p. 80

<sup>262</sup> Zürcher lists these policies as the prohibition of the public use of Kurdish and the teaching of Kurdish. Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 178 See Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 281; Kutlay, N., *Kürt Kimliği*, p. 183; Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, p. 395

<sup>263</sup> Arfa, H., *The Kurds: A Historical and Political Study*, Oxford University Press, 1968, London cited in Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G.M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, p. 104

they accepted the partitioning of Kurdish region between Turkey and Iraq, conceding the Mosul province to Iraq, as Kemalist government's betrayal. Thirdly, Islam, as a spiritual basis, was abandoned by the Republic. Lastly; Kurds were afraid of 'sharing the same fate' with Armenians.<sup>264</sup>

After the suppression of the rebellion the government acted decidedly to deal with the 'Kurds'. Many Kurdish leaders were executed and the population of the rebellion district, as van Bruinessen noted, were deported from the south-east and forcibly settled in the west of the country.<sup>265</sup> In 1925, right after the Sheikh Said Rebellion, the Eastern Reform Program (*Şark Islahat Planı*) was designed by a Prime Ministry Commission, following three reports drafted by the Assembly, the Ministry of Interior, and the General Staff.<sup>266</sup> According to this plan, Turkification of Kurds was envisaged by means of forced settlements and boarding schools. The plan proposes 'precautions' of settling in Turkish speaking population - Albanians and Turks from Yugoslavia and Turks from Iran and the Caucasus- to the regions inhabited by Kurds, removing Kurds, who participate in the rebellion, to the east of Turkey, enter their properties, and repeal of the tribes in ten years. Together with these precautions, prohibition of speaking Kurdish, foundation of boarding schools, and teaching Turkish, especially to women, was suggested in the plan.<sup>267</sup>

The policies of suppression and assimilation in the post-rebellion period must be discussed in terms of two issues: the official ideology concerning Kurds and the nation-building process. According to Bozarslan,

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<sup>264</sup> Bozarslan, H., "Zımnî Sözleşmeden Ayaklanmaya (1919-1923)", p. 107-111

<sup>265</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 291

<sup>266</sup> Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa - Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler*, p. 56 According to Kalman the Eastern Reform Program was the consequence of a necessity to take precautions in order prevent similar 'uprisings'. Focuses of the plan were 'things need to be done in Kurdish zone, implementations that will yield results.; namely questioning prescriptions of strengthening state dominance'. Kalman, M., *İngiliz ve Türk Belgelerinde Botan Direnişleri (1925-1938)*, Med Yayınları, 1996, İstanbul, p. 13 For Parliamentary sessions on the Sheikh Said Rebellion and debates on precautions proposed to be taken, see Mumcu, U., *Kürt Dosyası*, Tekin Yayınevi, 1995, İstanbul

<sup>267</sup> Bayrak, M., *Kürdoloji Belgeleri*, Özge Yayınları, Ankara, 1994, pp. 259-260

the Sheikh Said rebellion represents the end of the Ottoman Empire's tradition of 'tacit contract'.<sup>268</sup> According to the 'tacit contract' tradition of Ottoman state, the rebellions perceived as mediums of negotiation and bargaining of periphery groups in order to improve their status within the state. In Bozarslan's words, the rebellion was the instrument that elicited the restoration of the 'unwritten contract' on obedience, legitimacy, and rights.<sup>269</sup> Bozarslan asserts that, on the contrary to Kemalists, for most of the rebels the 1925 rebellion was a traditional Kurdish uprising and it was not different than any rebellions that outbreak during the Ottoman Empire period.<sup>270</sup> However, this time there was not any negotiation or reconciliation after the outbreak.<sup>271</sup> According to van Bruinessen, in the post-rebellion period, policies of Kurds' assimilation became state's official ideology.<sup>272</sup> The Kemalist government characterized the rebellion as "intrigues of enemies aiming the Turkish nation", and as "a reactionary and degenerated movement leaded by primitive religious and tribal leaders whom were partisans of illiteracy".<sup>273</sup>

According to Olson, the Sheikh Said rebellion was significant in "representing a challenging nationalism in competition with Turkish nationalism and, hence, threatening to the Turkish state".<sup>274</sup> On the other hand, Olson agrees with Toker on the rebellions' significance in terms of domestic Turkish politics, namely the process of the nation-building.<sup>275</sup> Olson suggests that, the vehicles created (independence tribunals) and the

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<sup>268</sup> See Mardin, Ş., "Freedom in an Ottoman Perspective"

<sup>269</sup> Bozarslan, H., "Zimni Sözleşmeden Ayaklanmaya (1919-1923)", p. 116

<sup>270</sup> Ibid, p. 115

<sup>271</sup> H. Bozarslan, "Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)", p. 849

<sup>272</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazılar*, p. 166

<sup>273</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, p. 401

<sup>274</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 157

<sup>275</sup> Toker, M., *Şeyh Said ve İsyanı*, Rüzgarlı Matbaası, 1968, Ankara cited in Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, pp. 157-160

laws passed (i.e. Law on the Maintenance of Order) for the suppression of the rebellion was used in order to crush the opposition against Kemalists. In June 1926 after the discovery of a plot in Izmir to assassinate Mustafa Kemal, twenty-one members of the Progressive Republican Party were arrested and some of them condemned to death. A government that was armed with extraordinary, and 'dictatorial' powers, in Lewis's terms,<sup>276</sup> created the adequate atmosphere for the actualization of three 'revolutions': the Code of Civil Law (*Medeni Kanun*) of October 1926, the Dress and Hat Law (*Kıyafet Kanunu*) of November 1925, and the Alphabet Law (*Harf Kanunu*) of 1928.<sup>277</sup> Olson asserts that, "these laws were passed in an atmosphere of political consciousness on the part of Turkish public that their implementation and acceptance would reduce the threat of Kurdish nationalism".<sup>278</sup> According to Olson, in aftermath of the Sheikh Said rebellion it was relatively easy to label the opposition to Kemalist government as treason. As Olson mentioned; "the suppression of the Sheikh Said rebellion contributed to the consolidation of the new Turkish Republic, the evolution and domination of the Republican People's Party and the one-party state it represented up to 1950, and the greater articulation of the Turkish nationalism on which the party and the state were based".<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Lewis, B., *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 266

<sup>277</sup> Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 158 It is also important to note that in November 1925, all *tarikats* (orders), *tekkes* (lodges), *zaviyes* (cells), and *türbes* (religious tombs) were closed, religious titles were abolished and wearing of clerical garb was prohibited. Olson, R., *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion*, p. 159

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, p. 159 Additional to the threat of Kurdish nationalism, the overemphasized 'religious' nature of the rebellion by the government served pointing out the necessity of 'laicism'.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid, p. 160

#### 4.2.3. Mount Ararat Rebellion (1926-1930)

In 1926, a new uprising broke out in Kurdish region on the slopes of Mount Ararat that lasted for four years.<sup>280</sup> *Khoybun*, a party that founded in 1927, was identified with the organization of the Mount Ararat rebellion. As Özoğlu suggests, the suppression of the Sheikh Said rebellion failed to silence the Kurdish opposition against Kemalists but pushed its base outside Anatolia; mainly into Syria.<sup>281</sup> Confirming this assessment, as it was noted above, the *Khoybun* organization was found outside Turkish territories in 1927.<sup>282</sup> In McDowall's words, "in order to avoid the mistakes of the past and to put together a viable liberation movement, the organization formally subsumed the old parties within the identity of *Khoybun*, and stressed the necessity of a properly conceived, planned and organized military enterprise that would be non-tribal."<sup>283</sup> In the first congress of *Khoybun* in 1927, five resolutions were adopted: the struggle will continue until the last Turkish soldier left Kurdish territories, 'order and command' will be united under 'one center', arsenals will be built, reconciliation will be searched in struggle between Kurds and Armenians, and the '*Kurd Ava*' at the Mount Ararat will be announced as the temporary capital city of *Kurdistan*.<sup>284</sup>

According to Jwaideh,<sup>285</sup> in 1928 a 'miniature Kurdish state' was established in Ağrı Mountain with its army of thousands of soldiers, its

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<sup>280</sup> According to documents of the general staff; three military operations were organized in the area because of 'Mount Ararat rebellions': first on May-June 1926, second on 13-18 September 1927 and third on 7-14 September 1930. *Genelkurmay Belgelerinde Kürt İsyanları 3*, Kaynak Yayınları, 1992, İstanbul, pp. 80-83

<sup>281</sup> Özoğlu, H., *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 127

<sup>282</sup> According to McDowall, *Khoybun* was founded in Lebanon, by exiles of 'Istanbul nationalists' who left the city as Kemalist troops approached in 1922. McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 203 On the other hand, for Kutlay, *Khoybun* was founded by tribal families that escaped to Syria and Lebanon because of their participation in Sheikh Said rebellion and execution of forced settlement in the west of Turkey. Kutlay, N., *Kürt Kimliği*, p. 199

<sup>283</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of The Kurds*, p. 203

<sup>284</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, p. 409

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 410-413

arsenals, local administrations, fully established organization of 'order and command', and its Kurdish flag on the flag pole. As Jwaideh asserted, this time Turkish government tried to solve the problem with reconciliation. As the first step, all deportations of Kurds were stopped and an Amnesty Law issued for three months. The governor of *Beyazıt* province charged with full authority to negotiate with rebels. In the meeting between İhsan Nuri Pasha, the operational commander, and 'Turkish side' in September 1928; government forces offered amnesty and private benefits if rebels lay down their arms. These offerings were rejected because of "Turkish delegation's total disregard of nationalist Kurdish enthusiasm".<sup>286</sup> İhsan Nuri Pasha demanded Turkish forces' evacuation of '*Kurdistan*', so there was no prospect of a settlement.<sup>287</sup> In autumn of 1930, the rebellion was suppressed and rebels were driven out of Turkey.

During the post-rebellion period –similar to the period after Sheikh Said rebellion- many of rebellion leaders were executed, and large number of Kurds, more than 20,000 in all for Zürcher, were deported from the region and settled in the west of Turkey.<sup>288</sup> In 1932, Law of State Inspectorship (*Umumi Müfettişlik Kanunu*) (No. 1850) was passed in the Assembly.<sup>289</sup> As McDowall specified, the province of Van was divided into four zones and "each zone was under the watchful eye of a co-opted local chief authorized to arm his own tribe in order to keep the order".<sup>290</sup> More importantly, in 1934 the Law of Settlement (No. 2510) was enacted. According to this law,

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<sup>286</sup> As it was mentioned, Jwaideh indicates that before negotiations between rebels and government forces, the deportations were already stopped and an amnesty was issued for three months. However, according to McDowall, during negotiations Turkish government offered the cessation of deportations in addition to amnesty. McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 204

<sup>287</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 204

<sup>288</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 179

<sup>289</sup> Kalman presents this law as the 'new law of banishment' (*sürgün*), which was the most convenient way of practicing assimilation. Kalman, M., *Ağrı Direnişi*, Peri Yayınları, 1997, İstanbul, p. 272

<sup>290</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 206



“Turkey was divided into four zones: (i) localities to be reserved for the habitation in compact form of persons possessing Turkish culture; (ii) regions to which populations of non-Turkish culture for assimilation into Turkish language and culture were to be moved; (iii) regions to be completely evacuated.” “All previous recognition of tribes, their aghas, chiefs and sheikhs were abrogated, with the automatic sequestration of all immovable property pertaining to tribes or to their leaders, any kind of association or grouping in which the majority was non-Turkish speaking was forbidden.”<sup>291</sup> According to Yeğen, “this law was a part of state’s assimilation politics oriented towards non-Turkic elements.”<sup>292</sup>

#### **4.2.4 Dersim Rebellion (1937)**

It is generally accepted that, the Law of Settlement of 1934 that aim the assimilation of Kurds was the main reason behind the outbreak of the Dersim rebellion in 1937.<sup>293</sup> In the spring of 1937, Dersim leaders sent emissaries with a letter to the military governor of the province to demand their self-administration. General Alp Doğan executed the emissaries in reply. The rebellion began after Kurds took their revenge by an ambush, killing ten officers and fifty troops.<sup>294</sup> The rebellion was suppressed with an extensive enclosure of military operation.<sup>295</sup> As McDowall indicate, “some

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid, p. 207

<sup>292</sup> Yeğen, M., “Citizenship and Ethnicity in Turkey”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 6, November 2004, s. 57 also See Yeğen, M., “Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question”, p. 129

<sup>293</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, s. 417, McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 207 According to Beşikçi, Law on Tunceli Administration (No. 2884) –known as Tunceli Law- that amended by the Parliament in 1935 authorized the military governor of Tunceli to assign provincial officers, punish judicial officers and clerks, etc. For Beşikçi, this law and ‘provocations of the government’ were reasons of 1937 rebellion. Beşikçi, İ., *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, p. 20

<sup>294</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, s. 417, McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 208

<sup>295</sup> For detailed information on the military operations see Beşikçi, İ., *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi* and *Genelkurmay Belgelerinde Kürt İsyanları* 3.

40,000 Kurds perished, three thousand notables and others were deported, and the remainder population was put under the supervision of local garrison". At the end of 1946, the state decided to lift the special emergency regime for Dersim, and allow deported families to return home.<sup>296</sup>

Prime Minister İsmet İnönü announced the uprising as "hostility to the introduction of compulsory education".<sup>297</sup> After the repression of the rebellion; in a Parliamentary session Celal Bayar, the Prime Minister, stated that "there is no Kurdish problem left and bandits become civilized by force".<sup>298</sup> In fact, Beşikçi makes an ascertainment that indicates states continuous efforts to 'implement civilization'. According to Beşikçi, after the Sheikh Said rebellion, the state show more interest in eastern provinces, especially to Dersim, and initiated investigations to determine essentials of reforms. As Beşikçi quoted from the report of civil service inspector Hamdi Bey that submitted in 1926 to the Ministry of Interiors that:

Dersim becomes increasingly Kurdish, idealist, and accordingly danger enlarges...Dersim is pus for the government... A definite operation on this pus is a necessity for homeland's peace...This populace which is extremely intelligent, crafty, and trickster; be aggressive or obedient if the government is weak or strong...Efforts on reforms improvements by founding schools, building roads, constructing factories which will yield welfare, providing industrial jobs that will keep them busy; briefly by making them owns of houses or civilizing them is nothing but a dream...<sup>299</sup>

According to Beşikçi, by asserting reforms acts as 'nothing but a dream'; this report suggests the necessity of 'repressive precautions'. At this point; in

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<sup>296</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 209

<sup>297</sup> Ibid. On the other hand, as Ciment mentioned, the government said that the revolt was sparked by reactionary religious leaders opposed to Turkish road-building in the area. Ciment, J., *The Kurds-State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran*, p. 47

<sup>298</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi*, p. 419

<sup>299</sup> Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde Ayaklanmalar (1924-1938), Genelkurmay Harp Tarihi Başkanlığı Resmi Yayınlar Seri No 8, Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1972, Ankara, p. 499 cited in Beşikçi, İ., *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, p.25

Beşikçi's terms, 'reform' is the name of 'efforts to destroy Kurdish national features'.<sup>300</sup> Van Bruinessen claims that, this report proves the continuous validity of 'metaphor of disease and treatment' considering explanations on the need of Law of Dersim.<sup>301</sup> In the Dersim campaign, for van Bruinessen, "there was a deliberate intent to destroy rebels and potential rebels, and this was part of a general policy directed toward the Kurds as such".<sup>302</sup> Yıldız claims that Kemalist discourse named the Kurdish issue as 'reformation of eastern provinces'. The idea of 'reformation of the east' had shaped around the problematic of progress and civilization, which is the principal reflex of Kemalism.<sup>303</sup>

On the other hand, the Dersim Rebellion can be treated on a separate line when it is compared to the two previous Kurdish rebellions. Namely, the Dersim Rebellion emerged as a reaction to the execution of oppressive laws specifically designated for Dersim province and the official denial of the Kurdish identity after the Mount Ararat Rebellion.<sup>304</sup> The earlier rebellions, however, originated from a more general understanding and perspective of Kurdish identity and Kurdish independence. In addition, the religious perspective was absent in the Dersim Rebellion, which signifies a clear distinction with the earlier movements.

The period between 1920s and 1930s was an era of the establishment of the Republic; its reformation process as a nation-state, and its struggle for survival. Founders of the republic embraced the aim of "states organization around 'nation-state' ideology, and organization of political unity around 'nation' ideology; rather than enabling Turks as the

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid, p. 26

<sup>301</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., "Genocide in Kurdistan? The Suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in Turkey (1937-1938) and the Chemical War Against the Iraqi Kurds (1988)" in Bruinessen, M.V., *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism Versus Nation-Building States*, p. 81

<sup>302</sup> Ibid, p. 76

<sup>303</sup> Yıldız, A., "*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*" *Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)*, İletişim, 2004, İstanbul, p. 243

<sup>304</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p.179

dominant nation in a multi-ethnic political unity.”<sup>305</sup> By abolishing the Caliphate in 1924, the new republic cut off the last bond with the Ottoman heritage but also with the Kurdish population. Additionally, as a step for assimilation, religious fraternities and *medreses* –which were the last source of education for most Kurds-, were banned.<sup>306</sup> The Constitution of 1924 was also another indicator of Kemalist Republic’s mentality. In 1924 Constitution, the definition of Turkishness was made and the condition of ‘loyalty’ was implicitly set.

The assimilation and suppression of Kurds accelerated and institutionalized as a result of Kurdish rebellions. Kemalist state identified and introduced the Sheikh Said rebellion as a direct threat to the regime.<sup>307</sup> In fact, the rebellion contributed to the establishment and empowerment of an authoritarian administration. Dictatorial powers given to the government were used as means to terminate the opposition against Kemalists and also, they created the atmosphere for the implementation of crucial reforms. In Ahmad’s words, Kemalists used the opportunity to enact these radical reforms, which would otherwise have been resisted both by the opposition and by the mass of the people.<sup>308</sup> The Sheikh Said, Mount Ararat, and Dersim rebellions signified Kurds’ failure in fulfilling the ‘loyalty’ requirement of the Constitution. The Turkish state realized that Kurds – whom assumed as ‘future Turks’-<sup>309</sup> would not willingly be assimilated. As the foundation of the ‘long lasting’ official ideology; whole rebellions occurred in Republican period perceived as “‘nonexistence’ of Kurds,

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<sup>305</sup> Yeğen, M., “Türk Milliyetçiliği ve Kürt Sorunu”, in Bora, Taml (eds.) *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik-Cilt 4*, İstanbul, İletişim, p. 883

<sup>306</sup> Gunter, M.M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 5

<sup>307</sup> As Çağaptay indicated, the government responded to the rebellion with ‘force’ because Kurds were expected to be assimilated as it was predicted with the Constitution of 1924. Çağaptay, S., “Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3, May 2004, p. 87

<sup>308</sup> Ahmad, F., *The Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 58

<sup>309</sup> For the concept of ‘future Turks’ See Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türk’ten Sözde Vatandaşa Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler*, İletişim Yayınları, 2006, İstanbul.

reactionary attempts, resistance of tribal connections, banditry, foreign provocation, acts of hostility, and/or underdevelopment” by the government.<sup>310</sup>

### **4.3 Transition to Democracy: The Democratic Party Period (1945-1960)**

The general elections held in May 1950, marked the end of twenty-seven years of RPP’s one-party rule; Democratic Party (DP) won 408 seats in the parliament against 69 seats of the RPP. It was the beginning of a new era for the country. This period of the DP rule yielded small scale changes in the state’s perception of the Kurdish issue but laid the foundations of major transformations of Kurdish nationalism of the near future.

According to Jwaideh, ‘change’ began before the Democratic Party rule. As it was mentioned before; after the repression of the Dersim rebellion, the region was declared as the restricted area and kept under strict military control. In the winter of 1945, the assembly agreed on the extension of the ‘special administrative form’ effective in Tunceli –official name for Dersim- province. One year later the same topic was discussed in the Assembly again and the Assembly enacted a law that ends the administrative form in force in Tunceli province since 1937. In addition, as another indicator of the ‘change’, Jwaideh points out a speech of the Prime Minister in March 1947 that praised Kurds as good citizens and underlined their ‘loyal services’ in the army. In 1948 and 1949 unjust acts of

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<sup>310</sup> Yeğen, M., *Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu*, pp. 129-170. The establishment of national unity through ‘Turkishness’ by the Republic; did not tolerate preservation and embracement of any other identities. The Kurdish nationalist feelings, which became visible and threatening to the regime by rebellions, were the main problems of state to deal with in order to preserve the ‘national unity’. In addition to taking military measures, the state struggled with the existence of ‘Kurdish identity’ by taking ideological measures. The Turkish Historical Thesis (first propounded during the first congress of Society for Turkish History in 1932) not only ‘proved’ the superiority of Turkish race but also ‘proved’ the ‘inexistence’ of Kurds. According to van Bruinessen, the state tried to impose the ideology that, ‘tribes of the East’ were pure Turkish stock, and their language was Turkish, through somewhat corrupted due to their close proximity to Iran. Van Bruinessen, M., “Genocide in Kurdistan? The Suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in Turkey (1937-1938) and the Chemical War Against the Iraqi Kurds (1988)”, p. 79.

government units and breaches of duties in eastern provinces deliberately discussed in the assembly and in the press. As Jwaideh stressed; these discussions cover both specific issues (i.e. General Mustafa Muğlalı incident)<sup>311</sup> and general issues (i.e. mismanagement, inadequacy of administration).<sup>312</sup>

Preliminary years of multi-party period correspond to ‘tranquility’ on the Kurdish oppression. According to Bozarıslan, years between 1940s and 1960s were ‘years of silence’ for the ‘Kurdish movement’.<sup>313</sup> For Jwaideh; reason behind ‘liberal and indulgent’ attitudes towards Kurds was the practice of multi-part system in Turkey as a reflection of ‘developments and currents of ideas’ arise after World War II.<sup>314</sup> Kirişçi and Winrow declare that Kurdish ethnic identity rose after World War II, as a product of modernization of society in Turkey.<sup>315</sup> According to Yeğen, in 1950s ‘political integration’ as a part of ‘nation building’ was completed but ‘economic integration’ was weak in the regions where Kurds live. Hence, Yeğen asserts that, the ‘Kurdish issue’ was defined as problem of ‘economic integration’ by mainstream Turkish nationalism that represented by Democratic Party and its heir Justice Party for almost two decades.<sup>316</sup> During

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<sup>311</sup> On July 30, 1943; 33 Kurds picked up from their villages in Özalp county of Van, and executed by shooting of soldiers on the orders of General Mustafa Muğlalı for ‘connections’ with the people on the Iran side and smuggling. The incident was cover-upped until 1946 general elections and became public when Democratic Party put pressure on Republican People’s Party. In 1946, General Mustafa Muğlalı was tried in military court and condemned to death. The Supreme Court of Appeal quashed the judgment and convicted the general to twenty years of imprisonment. Muğlalı died in 1951 in prison while serving his time. As a significant note to identify circumstances of 2000s and state policies on the Kurdish issue; in May 2004, the Gendarme border battalion in Özalp county of Van, named as ‘General Mustafa Muğlalı Barrack’; which, in general, accepted as a restoration of General Mustafa Muğlalı’s credit by the military.  
<http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=116496> (accessed 21 July 2007)

<sup>312</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi -Kökenleri ve Gelişimi-*, pp. 419-420

<sup>313</sup> Bozarıslan, H., “Kürt Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p. 850

<sup>314</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi -Kökenleri ve Gelişimi-*, p. 422

<sup>315</sup> Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G.M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, p. 106

<sup>316</sup> Yeğen, M., “Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question”, p. 132

the early-Republican period, the state “impeded the development of eastern provinces out of fear that economic and educational progress might rekindle the Kurds’ nationalist demands”<sup>317</sup>; the region became ‘area of deprivations’.<sup>318</sup> As another reason for ‘tranquility’ in Kurdish issue and Kurdish nationalism; the Democratic Party -new candidate for government- showed special effort to canvass Kurdish votes.<sup>319</sup>

According to Bozarslan; as a consequence of the Democratic Party rule, repression on the Kurdish rural elite relatively reduced and tribes and religious sects built clientalist relationships with the ‘center’ by integrating into the political system.<sup>320</sup> As Jwaideh quoted from Kinross; Democratic Party government granted permission to ‘rebellious Kurdish Sheiks’, who were deported by the RPP government, of returning their regions.<sup>321</sup> With the multi-party period ‘economic integration’ in the country became the primary initiative. During the Democratic Party government, economic integration more or less realized in comparison to one-party period. As it was mentioned above, state did not take any actions to ‘rehabilitate’ underdeveloped eastern regions with fear of ‘contributing’ the development of Kurdish separatist movements.<sup>322</sup> Starting in 1950s, these policies had changed; many roads were built, hydroelectric dams were constructed and schools were

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<sup>317</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism Versus Nation-Building States*, p. 225

<sup>318</sup> As Yıldız indicated; Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, the Chief of the General Staff in 1930s, averted economic investments (road constructions, factories and schools) in the region inhabited by Kurds. Yıldız claims that, because of his ‘paranoia of security’, Marshal Çakmak prevented improvements on educational facilities by reason of “probability of pioneering ‘birth’ of a nationalist-intellectual group of people that might reinforce ‘Kurdish separatism’.” Yıldız, A., “*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*” *Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)*, p. 260

<sup>319</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi -Kökenleri ve Gelişimi-*, p. 422

<sup>320</sup> Bozarslan, H., “Kürt Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p. 850

<sup>321</sup> Jwaideh, W., *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi -Kökenleri ve Gelişimi-*, p. 422

<sup>322</sup> See Yıldız, A., *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene – Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları*, İletişim Yayınları, 2004, İstanbul, Bruinessen, M.V., *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism Versus Nation-Building States*, Isis Press, 2000, İstanbul

established in the region.<sup>323</sup> By the Democratic Party ruling, ‘internal dynamics’ of Kurds began to function slowly; deputies from eastern provinces started to talk in Kurdish in Parliament coulisses, Kurdish youth went to universities in big cities and edited publishing on problems of eastern regions.<sup>324</sup>

The foundation of the progress of Kurdish nationalism was laid by DP government’s economic liberation policies. In 1950s, as a consequence of the massive agricultural mechanization in the Kurdish region, hundreds of thousands of Kurds abandoned the land. They migrated to big-cities and, in McDowall’s words, “joined those who had been resettled during the revolts of 1920s and 1930s, and those whose pastoralism had been deliberately disrupted by the state during 1930s”.<sup>325</sup> As McDowall identified, there were three consequences of these migrations. Firstly, “they tended to live in close proximity with each other, which established permanent strongholds of Kurdish identity. Secondly, “existence of these communities made the Kurdish question a visible reality outside the east”. Lastly, as a voluntary assimilation, those who migrated to big-cities had to learn Turkish in order to find jobs.<sup>326</sup>

#### **4.4 Improvement of Liberties and the Rise of Left (1960-1980)**

On May 27, 1960, a military *coup d’état* took place in the country. According to the statement of the Turkish Armed Forces, the administration of the country was taken over “to prevent fratricide and to extricate the parties from the irreconcilable situation into which they had fallen”.<sup>327</sup> All DP deputies were arrested, on 31 August the DP was suspended and on 29

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<sup>323</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism Versus Nation-Building States*, p. 225

<sup>324</sup> Oran, B., “Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Diyalektiği”, p. 876

<sup>325</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 401

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 401-402

<sup>327</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 253



September, it was dissolved. It was announced that power was in the hands of 'National Unity Committee' (NUC) headed by General Cemal Gürsel, who was appointed as the head of the state, prime minister and minister of defense.

According to Kirişçi and Winrow; "the army was indisposed by Democratic Party rule; especially by 'liberalization' in eastern regions which would lead to increase in Kurdish nationalist consciousness."<sup>328</sup> Accordingly, in June 1960, "the military government arrested some 485 Kurdish notables and detained them for several months; and 55 most influential Kurds –54 of them were the members of DP- were exiled to western Turkey for five years".<sup>329</sup> Additionally, "by Law No. 1587 the NUC started to change Kurdish place names into Turkish, 'names which hurt public opinion and are not suitable for our national culture, moral values, traditions, and customs'."<sup>330</sup> In January 1961, the NUC "enacted another law providing for the establishment of regional boarding schools as had been recommended back in 1935", for McDowall, with the intention of assimilating Kurds.<sup>331</sup>

One year after the *coup d'état*, the NUC enacted the most liberal constitution of the country –as an attempt to prevent the unbridled concentration of majority power again in the future-<sup>332</sup> that permitted "freedom of thought, expression, association and publication, promised social and economic rights, granted trade unions limited rights to strike".<sup>333</sup> According to Bozarlan, this period following the Constitution of 1961, represents the transition from 'Kurdish nationalism' to 'Kurdish movement'

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<sup>328</sup> Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G.M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, p. 107

<sup>329</sup> Gunter, M.M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 8

<sup>330</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 404

<sup>331</sup> Ibid

<sup>332</sup> Gunter, M.M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 8

<sup>333</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 405

as social opposition.<sup>334</sup> As a consequence of migration to the big cities in western Turkey during 1950s; “many Kurds became aware of both the cultural differences between eastern and western Turkey and of highly unequal economic development, and moreover, increasing numbers of young Kurds found the opportunity to study and became politicized.”<sup>335</sup>

According to Bozarslan; the Kurdish movement gained ground by publishing periodicals and newspapers and by political activities. The Kurdish issue became a part of ‘left discourse’ in Turkey. During 1960s Kurdish movement stand ‘attached’ to dynamics of ‘*Kurdistan*’ of Iraq – mainly to Barzani rebellion that began in 1961- and to Turkish left.<sup>336</sup> The Workers Party of Turkey (WPT)<sup>337</sup>, which happened to be one of the sources that the later Kurdish movement of Turkey sprang from, “took up the issue of underdevelopment of eastern Turkey, which it attributed in part to anti-Kurdish policies of the past; and found many followers among educated Kurds.”<sup>338</sup>

Most significant development in the Kurdish movement during this period was the ‘Eastern Meetings’ that organized between 1967 and 1969 and foundation of Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths’ (DDKO)<sup>339</sup> in 1969. In 1967, “certain Kurds in the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Union (*DISK*), in WPT, in The Federation of Revolutionary Youth (*Dev-Genç*) and in student associations organized mass meetings, crowds of 10,000 in Silvan and 25,000 in Diyarbakır, protesting the repression of

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<sup>334</sup> Bozarslan, H., “Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p. 852

<sup>335</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 32

<sup>336</sup> Bozarslan, H., “Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p. 853

<sup>337</sup> It is worth to note that the WPT had the chance to represent itself in the Grand National Assembly as a consequence of the libertarian provisions of the 1961 Constitution. Despite the WPT could not win any seats from any provinces, the new Electoral Code allowed it to obtain 15 seats based on the party’s total votes consolidated on a country-wide basis.

<sup>338</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 32

<sup>339</sup> According to Oran; Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths was the very first legal and genuine organization of Kurdish nationalism that under the umbrella and influence of Turkish left thus far. Oran, B., “Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Diyalektiği”, p. 877

Kurds and demanding democratic rights”.<sup>340</sup> In general it can be said that; Eastern Meetings were organized to draw attention to problems of eastern Anatolia.<sup>341</sup> As Kirişçi and Winrow claimed, these meetings raised public consciousness to problems of the region.<sup>342</sup> On the other hand, according to McDowall, these meetings “signaled the critical shift in social mobilization away from the aghas and semi-tribal peasantry, towards urban-based, modestly educated students and young professionals”.<sup>343</sup>

Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths, a network of cultural clubs, was established in 1969 across regions inhabited by Kurds in the east of Turkey, Ankara and Istanbul. According to Bozarşlan, this organizational development indicated the shift of mottos from ‘people of Turkey’ to ‘peoples of Turkey’ and from ‘problematic of socialist revolution’ to ‘problematic of wars of national liberation’. The DDKO criticized ‘progressiveness’ depending on ‘Kemalist tradition’ and accused some leftist intellectuals of being ‘volunteer missionaries of western capitalism and imperialism’.<sup>344</sup> According to McDowall, the DDKO stood for civil liberties and national awareness of the state’s neglect of the east, and sought to establish education programme for peasants and women, which laid emphasis on political, civil, and economic rights”.<sup>345</sup> In 1964 Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan (DPTK) was founded under the influence of Barzani’s Kurdistan Democratic Party. As van Bruinessen indicated; mostly Kurdish elites supported this conservative party. The success of Barzani’s

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<sup>340</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 408 On the other hand, Oran asserted that Eastern Meetings were organized as a reaction to an issue of *Ötüken* periodical – supporting racist right ideologies-, which perceived as ‘defamation of Kurds’. Oran, B., “Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Diyalektiği”, pp. 876-877

<sup>341</sup> Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G.M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, p. 109 As Yeğen asserted; “Kurdish discontent occurred as a component of leftist movement and materialized with Eastern Meetings”. Yeğen, M., “Türk Milliyetçiliği ve Kürt Sorunu”, p. 888

<sup>342</sup> Ibid

<sup>343</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 408

<sup>344</sup> Bozarşlan, H., “Kürt Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p. 856

<sup>345</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 409

rebellion affected Kurds of Turkey. While left wing of Kurdish movement was interested in 'cultural rights' and social equality and economical equality; DPTK aimed 'autonomy' and even 'independence for Kurds in Turkey'.<sup>346</sup>

As a significant turning point in perception of the Kurdish question; in its fourth congress in October 1970, the TWP passed a remarkable resolution affirming that:

There is a Kurdish people in the east of Turkey...The fascist authorities representing the ruling classes have subjected the Kurdish people to a policy of assimilation and intimidation which has often become a bloody repression.<sup>347</sup>

According to Gunter, this resolution was significant in terms of the recognition of the existence of Kurdish people for the first time by a political party in the Turkish Parliament. However, for McDowall, "in so doing TWP sounded its own death knell".<sup>348</sup>

#### **4.4.1 Military Intervention of 1971 and Political Radicalization**

On March 12, 1971, the army intervened and took the control of the country. Martial Law was introduced in twelve provinces, and WPT was closed down. The Interior Minister gave three reasons for military intervention, as McDowall identified: the rise of the extreme leftist and urban guerillas; the response of the extreme rightists and 'those wants dictatorship'; and finally, the separatist question in the East where number of

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<sup>346</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazılar*, p. 344

<sup>347</sup> Kendal, N., "Kurdistan in Turkey" cited in McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 407

<sup>348</sup> Gunter, M.M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 8, McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 407 Yeğen indicates that, TWP, which was the 'host' for 'left's meeting with Kurds', will be abolished by the Constitutional Court in 1971, because of its resolution on Kurdish question in its fourth congress. Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaş - Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler*, pp. 164-167

weapons had been found”.<sup>349</sup> As Van Bruinessen claimed, “the military intervention was followed by many arrests and forced the remaining activists underground”.<sup>350</sup> In 1973, the army allowed a general election and a return to unsupervised civil administration; however, causes of the unrest were not resolved.<sup>351</sup> Political radicalization and violence gradually increased in the country.

As van Bruinessen asserted, with the general amnesty issued in the mid-1970s, “Kurdish organizations proliferated and rapidly became radicalized; and there was a general drift towards separatism.”<sup>352</sup> According to van Bruinessen, there were two factors that contributed this radicalization. Most significant factor was that, “the Turkish left, formerly the closest ally of the Kurdish movement, shied away from the Kurdish question and took at best a patronizing attitude”. Second factor was the influence of strengthened Kurdish organizations during the relative weakness of the central government between 1975 and 1978.<sup>353</sup>

The young generation of immigrants of 1950s constituted the ‘engine power’ of Kurdish movement in 1970s. This generation of youth struggled to mobilize peasantry with new political ideologies; “down to the smallest towns, branches were open, political tracts read and discussed.” Despite 1971 amendments in Constitution and criminal law with the aim of punishing Kurdish activities harsher, repressive measurements against Kurdish activities could not be taken until the proclamation of martial law in 1979.<sup>354</sup> According to Bozarslan; period between 1971 and 1984 were years of fragmentation for the Kurdish movement. As Bozarslan underlined,

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<sup>349</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 410

<sup>350</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 32

<sup>351</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 410

<sup>352</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Agha, Shaikh, and State*, p. 32

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33

<sup>354</sup> Van Bruinessen, M., *Kürdistan Üzerine Yazılar*, pp. 344-346

Kurdish organizations –including *Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan* (Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK) - moved towards a discourse centering ‘Kurds’ without totally abandoning the leftist discourse.<sup>355</sup>

#### **4.5 The Post-1980 Period (Until the 1990s)**

On September 12, 1980, Turkey witnessed another military takeover. With the *coup d'état* the army made a radical ‘cleansing’ among the country. Together with mass arrestments and military operations, all political organizations -as well as Kurdish organizations- were ‘demolished’. According to McDowall,

The army was galvanized what they perceived as the imminent disintegration of certain core values of Atatürk’s legacy: national unity, ethnic Turkism, populism and secularism, all of which now under the assault from the war between leftist and rightist groups, from Kurdish nationalists, Marxists and from Islamic revivalists.<sup>356</sup>

According to Kirişçi and Winrow; the army cherished the reapplication of ‘real *Atatürkism*’ as they perceive. Political discourse that derived from these policies clearly emphasized the ‘*Turkishness* of Turkey’ and ‘solidarity of Turkish nation and territorial integrity of Turkey’.<sup>357</sup> Bozarslan indicates that; ‘September 12’ perceived ‘*Kurdishness*’ as a disease, which will be cured by medicine of ‘*Kemalism*’.<sup>358</sup>

##### **4.5.1 The Constitution of 1982**

The Constitution of 1982 was the manifestation of extended power of state. With the new constitution, the power of the executive president strengthened, the Assembly reduced to one chamber, role of political parties

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<sup>355</sup> Bozarslan, H., “Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, pp. 856-860

<sup>356</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 413

<sup>357</sup> Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G.M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey* p. 110-111

<sup>358</sup> Bozarslan, H., “Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898-2000)”, p. 861

reduced, civil liberties, freedom of the press and trade union rights were limited.<sup>359</sup> Reactions against appearance of ‘*Kurdishness*’ were also reflected in the Constitution of 1982. Article 5 of the Constitution defined one of Turkish state’s fundamental tasks as ‘to safeguard the independence and integrity of the Turkish nation, the indivisibility of the country, the Republic’. For Kirişçi and Winrow; this article restrained the verbalization of any idea that might be rephrased as a will on the recognition of a separate Kurdish ethnic identity’.<sup>360</sup> As Gunter identified, two articles of the constitution banned the spoken and written usage of the Kurdish language without specifically naming it. Article 26 of the Constitution reads as follows: “no language prohibited by law shall be used in expression and dissemination of thought.” Article 28 stated that “publication shall not be made in any language prohibited by law.” Additionally, Law No. 2932 published in October 1983 reinforced these constitutional provisions regarding Kurdish language by declaring that “it is forbidden to express, diffuse or publish opinions in any language other than the main official language of states recognized by the Turkish state.”<sup>361</sup> Kirişçi and Winrow claimed that; the constitution regenerated Turkish Language Institution<sup>362</sup> and Turkish History Institution<sup>363</sup> with the intention to “bring back discourse of 1930s asserting Kurds are Turks”.<sup>364</sup> The Constitution was approved by 91.4 percent of the voting electorate of November 7, 1982 referendum.

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<sup>359</sup> McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 414, Gunter, M.M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 9

<sup>360</sup> Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G.M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, p. 111

<sup>361</sup> Gunter, M.M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, pp. 9-10

<sup>362</sup> Formerly, Society for Turkish Language.

<sup>363</sup> Formerly, Society for Turkish History.

<sup>364</sup> Together with assertions on non-existence of a Kurdish language, suddenly number of books and articles advocating ‘common ancestors of Kurds and Turks’ aggravated. Kirişçi, K. & Winrow, G.M., *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, p. 111

Though, a significantly high ‘no’ votes came from the Kurdish region in the southeast Turkey.<sup>365</sup>

#### **4.5.2 After the Coup D’état**

The Motherland Party (ANAP) won the general elections which were held in November 1983 and Turgut Özal became the Prime Minister. The slow process of further democratization went on, as well as the current form of Kurdish problem constituted. On August 15, 1984, attack of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which announced its creation in 1978, to the military barracks in vicinity of Eruh and Şemdinli was marked as the first visible Kurdish movement after the 1980 military takeover. The very first reaction of the political authority was to neglect the attacks by publicly marking them as solitary actions lacking an ideological root.<sup>366</sup> On the contrary, the Kurdish nationalist movement has been largely associated with the PKK from then on. The low-intensity war between the Turkish Armed Forces and the PKK occupied the political agenda in Turkey.

In this political climate, when PKK attacks were perceived as isolated events, it is neither surprising nor difficult to pinpoint that the Kurdish question did not regain its former significance at all. From 1980 to 1983 the Kurdish movement was stagnant, mainly due the strict implementation of martial law and the severe oppression of the time. However, it is hard to say that the movement was totally at rest. Oppositely, the earlier supporters of the movement were either already imprisoned or mostly silenced, yet they were mobilizing the future human capital, the people that would act either PKK members or sympathizers during 1980s and 1990s.<sup>367</sup> Finally, the political rights of the left-wing politicians –who could possibly be considerate of the Kurdish issue–, were also suspended

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<sup>365</sup> Zürcher, E.J., *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 296

<sup>366</sup> Pirim, O. & Örtülü, S., *PKK'nun 20 Yıllık Öyküsü*, Boyut Kitapları, 1999, İstanbul, p. 37

<sup>367</sup> Bozarlan, H., “Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi: 1898-2000”, p.861.



since 1980. The sudden rise of PKK as the sole defender of the Kurdish identity, consequently, is not beyond comprehension.

#### **4.6 Summary: State's Perception of the Kurdish Question**

The Kemalist nation-building process set the foundation of the state's discourse and perspective on the Kurdish question, which was preserved, with some modifications, until the recent time. Experiences of the early-republican period were as significant as to condition the present time. The early-republican period was marked by Kemalist revolutions that realized incentives of nationalization, secularization, modernization, and democratization. The assimilation and the suppression of Kurds and Kurdish identity - the most significant obstacle in front of national unification-accelerated after the Kurdish rebellions.<sup>368</sup> After the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925 and the Mount Ararat rebellion in 1930, the Kemalist state initiated the discourse that denies the existence of the Kurdish identity. The State also set the frame of the official perception of the Kurdish issue and the Kurds; as reactionary attempts, resistance of tribal connections, banditry, foreign provocation, acts of hostility, and/or underdevelopment.<sup>369</sup>

The political period Turkey got through –mostly determined by military interventions- shaped the development of Kurdish nationalism parallel to the development of Turkish nationalism. During the Democratic Party rule the official discourse mainly remained unchanged except adopting a perspective that accepts the Kurdish question as a matter of economic integration. However, the economic policies introduced by the DP government induced the Kurdish migration to big-cities indirectly contributed to the progress of Kurdish nationalism. The migrant Kurds got

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<sup>368</sup> In fact, as it was argued before; it is significant that Dersim rebellion had an Islam-free nature and it was mainly against government's policies of suppression that accelerated after Sheikh Sait and Mount Ararat rebellions.

<sup>369</sup> See Yeğen, M., Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu. The creation of institutions like Turkish Hearths, People's Houses, Society for Turkish Language, and Society for Turkish History by the state in order to introduce Turkish identity as the collective identity of the masses of Anatolia, and to procure public embracement of revolutions, also served as mediums to struggle with the existence of 'Kurdish identity' right along with taking military measures.

access to education and realized their *disadvantaged* situation. Together with the 1960 military takeover the assimilation of Kurds continued but after the Constitution of 1961, Turkey began to experience most libertarian period of the Republican era. Kurdish nationalist movement also got its share of this liberal environment. The acknowledgement of the Kurdish question, Kurdish identity, and Kurdish nationalism blossomed within the leftist movement. For instance, the Eastern Meetings of 1967-1969 drew attention to the Kurdish question as the oppression on Kurds was protested and democratic rights were demanded. In a similar manner, the resolution that was passed in the fourth congress of the Workers Party of Turkey (October 1970) underlined the *existence* of the Kurdish people and state's assimilation policies. These events increased *consciousness* on the Kurdish question and made the Kurdish *entity* evident.

The military intervention in 1971 intended to trim liberties which assumed to be the reason for disorder in the country. However, the intervention led the organizations to function underground and failed to prevent radicalization of political movements. The 1980 *coup d'état* signified a turning point for all political movements in the country but more importantly for the Kurdish nationalist movement. Right along with readopting strict policies of assimilating and suppressing Kurds; the military government called forth the reorganization of Kurdish nationalists under PKK within the prisons. PKK's Eruh and Şemdinli raids in August 15, 1984 signified the beginning of a new era for the Kurdish nationalist movement and for state's perception of the Kurdish question.

During the past two decades, there exist a continuing transformation of the perception on the Kurdish question and the official discourse. However, this ongoing transformation is not detached from political developments of 1990s. The next chapter will try to identify the transformation of the state's perception of the Kurdish issue by examining its reproduction and representation in two mainstream newspapers, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*, focusing on significant *traumatic* events.

## CHAPTER V

### OFFICIAL DISCOURSE IN TRANSFORMATION: A TALE OF EIGHT CASES

The predominant perception of the Kurdish issue is largely rooted in the early Republican period, which is characterized by a massive effort to build a national identity for the newly established state. During this period, the official discourse on Kurds and the Kurdish issue basically rested on the denial of the existence of Kurds and the Kurdish issue. Kurds were regarded as ‘Turks to be’, in Yeğen’s terms, who have access to ‘Turkishness’. In this way, discourse of denial was accompanied with practices of assimilation.

Nevertheless, the official view that the Kurds have a potential to be assimilated seems to have eroded in the last two decades, in a way marking a detachment from state’s former policies on Kurdish issue. As a matter of fact, the state did not completely abandon its former stance considering the Kurdish issue, like perceiving Kurdish ‘discontent’ as reactionary attempts, resistance of tribal connections, banditry, foreign provocation, acts of hostility, and/or underdevelopment,<sup>370</sup> but some of these perceptions were modified as a direct outcome of the changing world, as in the example of ‘bandits’ became ‘terrorists’. As a consequence of internationalization of the Kurdish issue after the Gulf War in 1991 and accelerating terrorist attacks of PKK after 1990s, the Turkish state adjusted its perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds to conditions of the period. A total denial of the Kurds’ existence and the Kurdish issue seems no longer to be a sustainable perspective; transformation in the state’s perception of the Kurdish issue became necessary.

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<sup>370</sup> See Yeğen, M., *Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu*

This study investigates the official ideology in order to reveal the change in the discourse on the Kurdish issue. Methodologically, the discourse is followed from two mainstream newspapers as they regenerate and represent the state perception of any issue. News, news reports and columns published from January 1990 to December 2006 in *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* are hence examined. In this chapter, developments in the international political scene and in the national agenda will be examined by focusing on newspaper coverage of sixteen years. The state's discourse on the Kurdish issue and Kurds and its transformation over the time will be examined by focusing on specific case studies of noteworthy events occurred in the national and international political scene by using discourse analysis techniques of Van Dijk and Fairclough. Choice of these eight cases is not arbitrary or random. Indeed, it can be argued that with events occurred between 1990 and 2006, the Kurdish issue became attached to various socio-political dimensions. These eight cases that will be examined reflect these dimensions that recall the discussion of the Kurdish issue.

Pre-eminently, eight events were accepted to be the most substantial milestones in the course of Kurdish issue in Turkey. These events are: (1) the Gulf War I in 1991, (2) the Parliamentary Oath Ceremony in 1991, (3) the *Nevruz* celebrations in 1992, (4) the second congress of Peoples Democracy Party (HADEP) in 1996, (5) the capture of Şemdin Sakık in 1998 and the capture of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, (6) the Gulf War II in 2003, (7) the *Nevruz* celebrations in 2005, and (8) the *Şemdinli* incidents in 2005 which were followed by the debates on 'identity'.

### **5.1. The Pre-1990 Period**

There were three significant developments before 1990s that put Kurdish issue on the agenda of the country and affected the perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds. The most significant development was PKK's initiation of its terrorist attacks on August 15, 1984 with raids in Eruh-Siirt and Şemdinli-Hakkari. Needless to mention, PKK's unending and increasing

terrorist attacks, casualties of the Turkish Armed Forces and citizens, and economic burden of military operations that Turkey organized are highly significant.

Considering the concern of this study, examining the transformation of the perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds, effects of continuing PKK terror and low-intensity war between parties are more of significance. As a consequence of PKK terror, Turkey delayed dealing with the Kurdish issue and accepted struggle with terror as the priority of the state. In other words, the state presented terror as an ‘obstacle’ and an ‘excuse’ for not initiating democratic reforms considering the Kurdish issue. The transformation of the state’s perception of the Kurdish issue during reforms period of short duration in beginning of 1990s, put aside as terror accelerated. Adoption of military measures became state’s primary policy in dealing with the Kurdish issue that is identified with PKK terror. Besides above mentioned effects of PKK terror; Turkey’s relationships with its historical and new ‘enemies’ like Greece, Armenia and (Northern) Iraq began to be based on suspicions and claims that these countries support PKK. Namely, PKK terror has been the most significant factor that, both domestically and internationally, shaped and influenced Turkey’s perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds.

The second case that affected Turkey’s perception of Kurds and the Kurdish issue is the mass migration of Iraqi Kurds in Turkish border following the massacre in *Halepçe* (Kurdish town in northern Iraq) in March 16 and 17, 1988. The Iraqi army organized a major military operation in this Kurdish region; thousands dead in bombardment and hundred thousands of Kurds escaped towards Turkish and Iranian borders. Turkey opened its borders to these Kurdish immigrants. After the migration of thousands of Iraqi Kurds to the southeast region of Turkey that inhabited by Kurds strengthen the solidarity and kinship ties between these two populations. After *Halepçe* massacre, Kurds in both countries became concerned and sensitive to each other’s ‘experiences’.

The third case that will be examined is the attendance of seven Kurdish deputies of SHP to the Kurdish Conference (entitled “Kurds,

Human Rights, and Cultural Identity”) which was organized by the Paris Kurdish Institute and Foundation of Freedoms in October 1989. These seven deputies that attended the conference despite the objection of Erdal İnönü, chairman of SHP, were expelled from the party in November 1989 was that followed by resignation of ten other SHP deputies. Some of these deputies that detached from SHP founded HEP in 1990. SHP accepted to form an alliance with HEP in 1991 general elections and nineteen HEP members became members of the Parliament. Attendance of Kurdish originated deputies to the Paris Conference affected the evaluation of the incidents in 1991 that occurred during the oath-taking ceremony in the Parliament negatively. In other words, suspicions on ‘loyalty’ of Kurdish deputies began with the Paris Conference. Besides these consequences, the Paris Conference generated feelings of solidarity among Kurdish deputies and Kurdish population.

## **5.2. The Gulf War – 1991**

The process that moves towards a war started with Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait in August 1990. On January 17, 1991, USA initiated a massive air strike against Iraq, starting the Gulf War which ended in March 1991. Saddam Hussein remained as the ruler of Iraq, who accepted terms of cease-fire. During March and April of 1991, Iraqi government struggled to suppress Shiite uprising in the south and Kurdish uprising in the north of the country, which ended with an exodus of millions of refugees. In April 1991, the United Nations established a safe-zone (‘no-fly-zone’) for Kurds in northern Iraq and ordered Iraq to cease military operations in that region.

The outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991 put Turkey’s and world’s perception of the Kurdish issue into a totally different orbit. Besides the internationalization of ‘a Kurdish issue’, Turkey began facing an emerging Iraqi Kurdish state. In these circumstances, first of all, in Gunter’s words, Turkey perceived and evaluated a possible Iraqi Kurdish state in Northern Iraq as a potential threat, which might ensure a relatively unconstrained

environment for PKK to re-organize itself and to set an example for the Turkish Kurds.<sup>371</sup>

What bothered Turkey was “the creation of an autonomous area in Northern Iraq for Iraqi Kurds, under the protection of the allied Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) housed in Turkey” after Saddam’s defeat.<sup>372</sup> The OPC began on April 5, 1991 and ended in 1996. At one time or another, coalition forces from thirteen different states participated in OPC. As Gunter identified, “its original mission was to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees who had fled the mountains of northern Iraq and across the border into southern Turkey to escape repression from Saddam”.<sup>373</sup> Additionally, a Military Coordination Centre (MCC) team was stationed in Zaho, Iraqi Kurdistan, “to monitor conditions, and several thousand local Kurds were employed in relief and intelligence operations.”<sup>374</sup> The existence of MCC raised a disturbance in Turkish politics and public opinion than any other consequences of Gulf War because these formations were perceived as mediums for the establishment of an independent or autonomous Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Still, Turkey took part in these formations in order to prevent an ‘unfriendly’ Iraqi Kurdish state that might aid PKK, and win respect and support of the West. However, considering these developments, as it is argued, Turkey’s position in the post-war period was a “no-win situation”, as Gunter agreed with.<sup>375</sup>

Turkey’s perception and position on the Gulf war is divided into two periods: before and after the Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq against Saddam. Before this rebellion in northern Iraq, Turkey was confident in involving with decisions on Iraq’s future as one of ‘Western allies’. As

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<sup>371</sup> Gunter, M. M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 98

<sup>372</sup> Ibid, p.59

<sup>373</sup> Ibid, p.98

<sup>374</sup> Ibid

<sup>375</sup> Ibid, p. 99

*Hürriyet* newspaper reported, president of USA, defined Özal as a ‘reliable ally’, who “became one of the important actors in ‘crisis diplomacy’” (“ABD, ‘Müttefik’ini Hatırladı”, *Hürriyet*, August 5, 1990). Turkey’s intentions on the post-Gulf War period became more apparent in the following month. According to a news report in *Hürriyet*, some ministers in the government claimed that President Özal is planning to vary Turkey’s options while demanding the authorization of the government to enter into war considering that Mosul and Kirkuk might be issues in the bargaining table after the war (“Kerkük’ü Konuşmak Yasak”, *Hürriyet*, September 7, 1990). Couple of months later, Özal announced his plans on the future of Iraq. According to this plan, Özal was claiming Turkish (including Mosul and Kirkuk) and Kurdish (including Arbil and Sulaimaniya) autonomous regions in northern Iraq and anticipate Turkey, Iran, and Syria as guarantor countries (“Özal’ın Kafasındaki Yeni Irak Haritası”, *Hürriyet*, February 4, 1991).

On the other hand, Turkey’s above-mentioned position began to shift following the Kurdish uprising in northern Iraq against Saddam in March and April of 1991 and the establishment of ‘safety-zone’ for Kurds in northern Iraq by the UN. After these developments Turkey began to express its worries on establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq under supervision of western powers. Representations of Turkey’s concerns on establishment of Kurdish state in the press were based on the exposition of untrustworthiness and ‘hidden objectives’ of northern Iraqi Kurdish leaders, Talabani and Barzani, and of Western ‘allies’.<sup>376</sup> As an example of

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<sup>376</sup> The tendency to display how Iraqi Kurds are dependent on Turkey is another perspective adopted after the Gulf War, which naturally coexists with ‘tones’ of scolding in discourses. According to *Hürriyet*’s news article titled “Telecast for Kurds from Turkey”; “they (Iraqi Kurds) will follow TRT channels...and in order to introduce democracy to Iraqis, Kurdish leaders demanded broadcasts in Kurdish too...” (“Türkiye’den, Kürtlere Televizyon Yayını”, *Hürriyet*, October 5, 1991). In May 1993, Saddam Hussein’s decision of the withdrawal of Iraqi Dinar from circulation put Iraqi Kurds on the spot, who officially applied for using Turkish Lira. *Hürriyet* reported this situation on its front page with the heading “Cry for help from northern Iraq” (“Kuzey Irak’tan İmdat Çağrısı”, May 15, 1993). According to the news article, Talabani’s representative declared that “...we can not trade...only Turkey can help us...” *Hürriyet* newspaper of June 24, 1993, published a news reporting that Iraqi Kurds will communicate with the world through Turkey, whose communication with the world by



above mentioned tendencies; the *Hürriyet* of February 28, 1991, presented the Iraqi Kurdish leaders visit to Washington, under the heading “*Diplomatic Move of Iraqi Kurds*” (‘Irak Kürtleri’nin Diplomatik Atağı’, *Hürriyet*, February 28, 1991). The article notes that “leaders of Kurdish opposition parties to the regime *appeared* (‘ortaya çıktılar’) in the US Congress, while disputes on the future of Iraq are continuing”. As examined in the theory chapter, Van Dijk underlines ideological implications as most significant function of headlines, which are the subjective definition of the situation that may bias the understanding process. According to this headline, the news report implies that Iraqi Kurds were ‘suddenly appeared’ in the US Congress in order to involve with the decision making process of future of Iraq, namely cherishing establishment of an autonomous Kurdish state in northern Iraq and put diplomatic pressure on ‘allies’.

The information note, with bold characters, under the photo related to the news article indicates more about ‘what is meant to be said’. According to this note, “in the photo Celal Talabani is seen together with Senator Edward Kennedy, known as ‘*enemy of Turks*’, and Danielle Mitterrand, the spouse of President of France.” This subjective portrayal of Senator Kennedy as ‘enemy of Turks’, is an indirect characterization of Talabani and Danielle Mitterrand as other ‘enemies of Turks’ because of their ‘coexistence’, which is proved by the photo. Sentences examined above were not from the news text, but headlines and information of the news report that will be first noticed by the reader. In van Dijk’s terms, the information embedded in these headlines is recalled by readers in later occasions. So according to this news article, Iraqi Kurds are enemies of

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telephone or postage connection was cut off for two years because of their dispute with Baghdad (“Irak Krütlerinin Yeni Adresi: PK. 16, Silopi”, *Hürriyet*, June 24, 1993). According to another newsreport of *Hürriyet*, Turkey is preparing for an economic “landing operation” in northern Iraq, which is significant for her security. In the same news it is sarcastically noted that “...the Peshmerga will enjoy Turkish bakery” and “northern Iraqi people to eat a la Turca bread and patisserie” (“Kuzey Irak’a Türk Fırını”, *Hürriyet*, January 24, 1996). It is significant to note that, these news reports also imply a conspiracy theory, which was popular for a short period of time after the Gulf War; the possibility of unification of northern Iraq with Turkey or the annexation of northern Iraq territories by Turkey (Ertuğrul Özkök, “Gevşek Hatay Modeli”, *Hürriyet*, April 21, 1991).

Turks, who aim to establish an autonomous Kurdish state (which automatically presented as a ‘formation’ that will harm Turkey) under the supervision of western powers.

A news report of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper also alludes ‘hidden objectives’ of the West together with Iraqi Kurds. According to this news report “Washington is in the *mood* of ‘I do not want independence, but I cannot prevent if it happens’ (‘ABD’nin Kürt Politikası Bulanık’, May 17, 1992). When the lexical style of this article is analyzed, the choice of the word ‘mood’ in this news article expresses a value judgment. With this word, *Cumhuriyet* implies the untrustworthiness and alterability of the USA policies on the issue of possible establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq and taking Turkey’s expectations into consideration. As a perfect example of stressing ‘hidden objectives’ of ‘our enemies’; Cüneyt Arcayürek writes in his column in *Cumhuriyet* on October 9, 1992, that:

...what are Turkey’s policies of northern Iraq?...They (Iraqi Kurds) are already *spoiled*. Dizayi, representative of Barzani in Ankara, speaks of us as ‘our neighbors’, as if he is the ambassador of an independent Kurdish state...we are surrounded with *liars*...we can not trust anyone...there is a *deception* going on...Turkey’s territorial integrity is at the crossroads... (Arcayürek, “Oyun İçinde Oyun”, *Cumhuriyet*, 1992)

In his column Arcayürek refers to Western powers and Iraqi Kurds as enemies of ‘us’, which is, in Van Dijk’s conceptualization, inducing polarizations. According to the writer’s opinions, people who are not accepting ‘them’ as ‘spoiled liars’ or enemies of Turkey are not one of ‘us’ who’s interests are to protect the interests of the country.

Among many others, one of *Hürriyet*’s front page reports in 1993 was highly striking considering the language used. Both the wording and definiteness regarding the adduced ‘untrustworthiness’ of Talabani and Barzani were noteworthy. According to the news report, titled “*Betrayal of Talabani*”, “...*once again* he (Talabani) is *unmasked*...Talabani who seems to be *our friend*, *yet again* stabbed Turkey in the back by making

collaboration with Apo (Abdullah Öcalan) *again...he always* played a double game...he *deceived us...*” (“Talabani’nin İhaneti”, November 8, 1993). It is noted under Talabani’s photo that Turkey issued him a passport as if he was a Turkish citizen, trusted him and accomodated him in Ankara. Given this information, the sentence that “*Talabani deceived us*” sounds even stronger. Besides the strong emphasis on ‘us’, which is another example of inducing polarization, this news report stresses and supposes that ‘Talabani deceived Turkey as he always did’.

As it was mentioned above, Turkey’s concerns of establishment of an autonomous Kurdish state in northern Iraq increased after Kurds uprising against Saddam. In this period Turkey’s ‘ulterior concerns’, namely vicinity of country’s southeastern region’s -that inhabited by Kurdish citizens- with an autonomous or independent Kurdish state might increase alienation between these citizens and the Turkish state, became more apparent. Newspaper articles and reports of that period reflect Turkey’s fears and reactions based on those fears, which in a way reflecting Turkey’s perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds. A news article in *Hürriyet* on March 16, 1991, reports on the continuing armed clashes between Kurdish rebels and Saddam’s forces. According to the news, the ‘Kurdish flag’ hoisted in the mountains of *Hayırsız* can be seen from borders of Turkey (“Habur’un Dibinde ‘Kürt Bayrağı’”, *Hürriyet*, March 16, 1991). On the very same day, *Cumhuriyet* also reports on this situation. According to *Cumhuriyet*’s report, “Iraq’s police headquarters at the Turkish border were seized by rebels” and “red-yellow-green colored Kurdish flags appeared in these headquarters” (“Kürtler Zorluyor”, “Kürt İsyancılar Habur’a Dayandı”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 16, 1991). As it can be seen, both newspapers significantly focus on the existence of ‘Kurds with their flags’. According to the news reports, Kurds gained control nearby Turkish territories which presented a threat and danger to Turkey.

As different from *Hürriyet* newspaper, Ali Sirmen expressed these ‘fears’ of Turkey in much clearer terms in his column in *Cumhuriyet*. In this article, Sirmen claims that:

...any Kurdish state that might be established in the region will inevitably be anti-Arab and anti-Turk...a Kurdish state that is connected to Israel and USA will provide the chance for putting pressure on Turks and Arabs...both Talabani and Şevki (spokesman of Kurdish Institute of Paris) put it bluntly that the solution proposed for Iraq can be valid for Turkey considering population of Kurds in Turkey...in accordance with its nature, it is inevitable for Kurdish state to be expansionist...yes, lets find solution for Kurdish problem but without being framed up by imperialism's tricks in the region... (Sirmen, "Kürt Sorunu", *Cumhuriyet*, March 13, 1991)

Sirmen assuredly asserts that a possible Kurdish state in northern Iraq will pursue the goal of annexing Turkey's territories where Kurdish population resides together with implying that Kurdish population in Turkey might favor this situation. But most importantly, Sirmen presents a possible Kurdish state in northern Iraq as a reason to delay the solution of Kurdish issue in Turkey. Uğur Mumcu also wrote on the possible consequences of the foundation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. According to Mumcu, "...first of all an autonomous Kurdish state will be established in the region...this autonomous state might become independent...might join Turkish territories...another possibility is that Kurds who live in Turkey might make some attempts on the international stage in order to join this Kurdish state...the region is an oil territory; that is why the West takes a strong interest in the Kurdish question..." (Mumcu, "Özerk Kürt Devleti...", *Cumhuriyet*, March 14, 1991).

On the other hand, Turkey's fears of establishment of an independent or an autonomous Kurdish state in northern Iraq and doubts on Western powers' stance on this issue increased after thousands of Kurdish refugees that escaped from Saddam's forces hit the borders of Turkey in April 1991, which was followed by the establishment of a safe-zone for Kurds in northern Iraq by the UN. Turkey began to question the 'West' because of their pressure on Turkey to open its borders to Iraqi refugees. *Hürriyet* reports West's pressure on Turkey with the heading "West, that closed Its Doors to a few Albanian Puts Pressure on Us: 'Open Your

Borders” (“Bir Avuç Arnavuta Kapılarını Kapatın Batı, Bize Baskı Yapıyor: ‘Sınırlarınızı Açın’”, *Hürriyet*, April 5, 1991). Oktay Ekşi also stressed the ‘hypocrisy’ of West in his column on April 4, 1991 in *Hürriyet*. According to Ekşi, “...we should show our humanity (by opening the borders) and collect evidences to display west’s hypocrisy and tell off when necessary...” (Ekşi, “Duyarsız Kalamayız Ancak...”, *Hürriyet*, April 4, 1991).

In parallel with the ‘refugee issue’, establishment of the ‘safe-zone’ was interpreted in newspapers as the ‘internationalization’ of the Kurdish issue in Turkey and the road to an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq that is supervised by Western powers. Hasan Cemal examines possible consequences of creation of a buffer-zone in northern Iraq considering Turkey and its Kurdish issue (Cemal, “Tampon...”, *Cumhuriyet*, April 12, 1991). Cemal stresses that “with the tragic events occurred in northern Iraq, the Kurdish problem included in the international political agenda... The problem became internationalized... Hereafter, besides Cyprus and human rights issues, Turkey will be faced with the Kurdish issue on the international stage.” *Cumhuriyet* newspaper also reports on this problem of ‘internationalization’ of the ‘issue’. According to its news article, the government is concerned with the West’s relief of refugees becoming a ‘sympathy to the Kurdish question’ (“Ankara’da Kürt Çelişkisi”, *Cumhuriyet*, May 14, 1991).

On the other hand, *Hürriyet* newspaper reported the ‘safe-zone’ as “the first step to foundation of a federal Kurdish state” (“Federe Kürt Devleti İçin İlk Adım”, April 19, 1991). According to *Hürriyet*, “America’s intentions are bad”, because “it dispatches troops and weaponry together with aid supplies” (“Amerika’nın Niyeti Bozuk”, *Hürriyet*, April 30, 1991). As *Hürriyet* claimed, “America is settling on Northern Iraq territories under pretense of aiding refugees”. On May 4, 1991, *Hürriyet* reports that “Ankara concerned with weapon dispatch to Kurds” with the headline “Strict Control for Foreign Soldiers in Our Borders” (“Sınırlarımızda Yabancı Askere Sıkı Kontrol”, *Hürriyet*, May 4, 1991). According to Mumcu, this safe-zone

would lead to an “embryo state, which will become an autonomous or independent Kurdish state in the future” (Mumcu, “Embriyo Devlet...”, *Cumhuriyet*, April 12, 1991). Additionally, *Hürriyet* newspaper reports that, Europe aims the foundation of a Kurdish state based on Jacques Poos’s, European Community President, speech in the European Parliament ‘implying’ that they will make attempts to establish a Kurdish state (“Batı Avrupa, Baklayı Ağzından Yavaş Yavaş Çıkıyor. Hedef, Kürt Devleti”, *Hürriyet*, May 17, 1991).

In the post-war period, Turkey realized that it would not be involved in the decision making process of Iraq’s future held by western allies. After this point, state’s perception of the Kurdish issue was based on the possibility of establishment of an autonomous or independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq. The state perceived this ‘possible’ Kurdish state in northern Iraq as a threat because of its possible logistic support to PKK and its existence as a ‘center of attraction’ to Turkey’s Kurds. It is arguable that the main perception on Kurds, which accepts them as ‘Turks to be’, began to be ‘challenged’. In other words, subconsciously Turkish state expressed Kurds’ unwillingness to attach to the national unity. Some domestic political events after the Gulf War triggered this ‘subconscious’ concern of the Turkish state. However, prior to these domestic political events, the reform period that President Özal initiated as a necessity of Gulf War must be examined.

The early-1990s were not only the period of ‘increasing fears’ of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq and disregarding existence of a Kurdish issue in Turkey but also of the most liberal measures introduced to handle the Kurdish issue despite its short duration. Turkey entered a new era in terms of coping with the Kurdish issue, an era which was shaped by several factors. Ataman claims that several internal and external developments in the 1980s and early 1990s encouraged Özal to change the traditional Kemalist ethnic policy. According to Ataman, these developments are “the change of the leadership group in 1983, the dramatic comeback of the Kurdish nationalist movement and the rising power of Islam both in the domestic and in the regional and developments in the

Middle East.”<sup>377</sup> As an important condition of this new era; the impossibility of continuing conventional strategies of the Turkish state to deal with the Kurdish issue was realized. More explicitly, assimilation and treatment of the issue solely as a matter of internal politics became infeasible. At this point, it is necessary to examine the key characteristics of that reformation period which cannot be treated in isolation from the Gulf War.

According to Gülistan Gürbey, “the first change in Turkish policy towards the Kurds occurred –at a later phase– during the era of Turgut Özal (1983-93)”.<sup>378</sup> In Ataman’s words, Özal’s leadership recognized the existence of ethnic groups –other than Turks- and the multi-ethnic structure of the country, and defined the Turkish ethnicity based on the cultural and ethnic dimensions.<sup>379</sup> In Gürbey’s words, Özal tried to implement the liberalization of the policy toward the Kurds...he took the initiative during the Gulf Crisis in 1991...his was a policy aimed primarily at dialogue.<sup>380</sup> The “smooth transition” into a policy regarding the Kurdish issue, signaled before the Gulf War in 1991. By claiming that he “might have Kurdish blood” on June 4, 1989, Özal took the first step through this transition.<sup>381</sup> The second signal came with his response to a question on the existence of Kurdish minority in Turkey in September 1989; Özal admitted that it was necessary to recognize the possibility that the state might have committed mistakes on this matter in the first years of the Republic.<sup>382</sup> The next step was much more dramatic and decided than the previous ones. As Gürbey

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<sup>377</sup> Ataman, M., “Özal Leadership and Restructuring of Turkish Ethnic Policy in the 1980s”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No.4, October 2002, pp. 123-142, p. 128

<sup>378</sup> Gürbey, G., “The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since the 1980s” in Olson, R. (eds.) *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s – Its Impact on Turkey and the Middle East-*, The University Press of Kentucky, 1996, USA, p. 13

<sup>379</sup> Ataman, M., “Özal Leadership and Restructuring of Turkish Ethnic Policy in the 1980s”, p. 128

<sup>380</sup> Gürbey, G., “The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since the 1980s”, p. 14

<sup>381</sup> Birand, M. A., *APO ve PKK*, Milliyet Yayınları, 9th edition, 1992, İstanbul, p. 263

<sup>382</sup> Gunter, M. M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 61

identified, the repeal of the Law 2932 (put in force in 1983 and banned the usage of Kurdish language) on April 12, 1991 was a significant milestone reorienting the state's policies considering the Kurdish issue.<sup>383</sup> However, the effect of the Gulf War in this transition should not be ignored.<sup>384</sup> In the National Security Council meeting on January 25, 1991, Özal started the process for permitting the usage of Kurdish language and most importantly underlined the inextricability of the Kurdish issue and international political developments in the region. Özal said that; "Turkey must be prepared for new developments in the region following the Gulf War. Turkey must be ready when the Kurdish question becomes an issue."<sup>385</sup> Additionally, Özal's statement about the meetings with representatives of Northern Iraqi Kurdish leaders in Ankara on March 8-9, 1991, was the official announcement of this transition in Turkey's policies on the Kurdish issue.<sup>386</sup> According to *Hürriyet's* news report, Özal stated that "...there is nothing to hesitate. Because in the end anything happening there (northern Iraq) concerns us...they (northern Iraqi Kurds) were not our enemies in the past. We should become allies with them as much as we can. I always mentioned this...if we became enemies others might use this against us" ("Ankara'da Gizli Zirve", *Hürriyet*, March 12, 1991). Moreover, Özal stated that "Turkey must not be afraid of ethnic problems" ("Etnik Sorunlardan Korkmayalım", *Hürriyet*, March 15, 1991).

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<sup>383</sup> Gürbey, G., "The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since the 1980s", p. 14. However, the use of Kurdish language was legalized in a limited way with this law. The Kurdish language could now only be used in everyday conversation and folkloric music recordings but using the language in official agencies, publishing, or teaching was still a crime. Gunter, M. M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 62.

<sup>384</sup> According to Ataman, besides the Gulf War, transnational (Kurdish nationalism and political Islam) and regional developments (the emergence of the independent Turkish states in Caucasus and in Central Asia) also helped the new leadership to achieve success in changing the discourse of Turkish ethnic policy. Ataman, M., "Özal Leadership and Restructuring of Turkish Ethnic Policy in the 1980s", p. 128.

<sup>385</sup> Birand, M. A., *APO ve PKK*, p. 263.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.



The Press interpreted these steps of reformation with reservation. *Hürriyet* newspaper reported the decision of the Council of Ministers on ‘allowing the usage of Kurdish language’ in the front page; “Council of Ministers adopted the Kurdish reform while the war is continuing” (“Kürtçe Serbest Bırakılıyor”, *Hürriyet*, January 26, 1991). By drawing attention to the ‘war continuing nearby Turkey’, which is an irrelevant information in Van Dijk’s conceptualization, the newspaper imply the ‘delicacy’ of the possible consequences of Cabinet decision; how it may ‘encourage’ Kurds in Turkey while the future of northern Iraqi Kurds is ‘undetermined’. Uğur Mumcu evaluated the decision of council of Ministers in relation with the Gulf War. He draws attention to Özal’s ‘underlying intentions’ on Turkey’s role and influence in the future of Iraq. According to Mumcu, the intention in putting this law repeal on the agenda is to soften relationships with a potential Kurdish state, which will be established in the post-war period by the assistance of USA in a region covering Mosul. (Mumcu, “Önlem...”, *Cumhuriyet*, January 27, 1991).

Reactions to these ‘policy changes’ and questioning President Özal’s ‘underlying intentions’ increased after he confirmed that meetings took place between Turkish authorities and northern Iraqi Kurdish leaders in Turkey. *Hürriyet* reported this meeting as “secret Kurdish summit in Ankara” in the front page and more importantly represented Talabani as “one of the Kurdish leaders in Iraq was struggling against Saddam”, which is again irrelevant information considering the topic of the news (“Ankara’da Gizli Kürt Zirvesi”, *Hürriyet*, March 12, 1991). With this irrelevant detail, the newspaper implied that Iraqi Kurdish leaders can not ‘be evil as believed’ while they are fighting against the ‘leading evil’, Saddam. Oktay Ekşi criticizes Özal of not consulting to any institution or politician before taking action on matters in relation to Turkey’s Kurdish issue. According to Ekşi, “...an autonomous Kurdish state is a situation that Turkey should endure...what matter is; this autonomy should not turn into a source of threat for Turkey’s unity” (Ekşi, “Önemli olanı Tartışmayız”, *Hürriyet*, March 13, 1991). *Cumhuriyet* also criticized Özal and report his statements on meetings

with Kurdish leaders as an effort to shift agenda of the country from permanent political and economic problems of the country (“Özal’in Gündem Oyunu”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 15, 1991).

Following general elections of October 20, 1991, on 21 November 1991, the coalition government of the Social Democratic People’s Party (SHP) and True Path Party (DYP) came to power. During negotiations between two coalition parties in forming the government, on November 15, 1991, leaders of two parties agreed on making modifications in Turkey’s Southeast policies. *Hürriyet* reported the agreement between two parties as follows:

Here is the Agreement...that based on four basic principles: official language is Turkish, borders of the country is not arguable, it is a unitary state with one flag...: everyone will be able to say ‘I’m Kurd’ freely, publishing and music recording in Kurdish will be unrestricted but for the present there will be no Kurdish television or Radio,...the ‘village guard’ system will be abrogated in the course of time, the separatist organization will be fought to the end, sensitivity will be showed to the innocent citizen, the local governments in the region will be strengthened (“Hükümetin Kürt Protokolü”, *Hürriyet*, November 16, 1991).<sup>387</sup>

The coalition government took another step towards breaking the perception of the Kurdish question. During their journey to five southeastern provinces –Diyarbakır, Siirt, Batman, Şırnak, and Mardin– on December 7 and 8, 1991, organized in order to ‘boost Southeast people’s morale’; Demirel declared that “Turkey recognized the Kurdish reality” (“Cesur Mesajlar”, *Hürriyet*, December 9, 1991). This statement was made by a prime minister who meant a great deal in a country that assumed Kurds as ‘nonexistent’ for decades. The following messages came along within the ‘morale tour’ –

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<sup>387</sup> However, Gürbey claims that there was essentially no change in the coalition governments legal view of the Kurdish question even though the government program explicitly mentions its aim to adjust the Kurdish minority status to the European standards, as well as to find a peaceful solution; implying that change was only ‘on paper’. In Gunter’s words; “they were more apparent than real”. Gürbey, G., “The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since the 1980s”, p. 15 Gunter, M. M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 73

solidarity, unity, brotherhood, etc.- were far from creating any difference from the past state policies and discourses.

On the other hand, it is significant to underline that another process –during which strict measures taken on terrorism- that was not so different from that of the past also continued to operate in a contradicting manner yet parallel to the reformation. In Gunter’s terms, this process was exactly overlapping with the failure of the ongoing reforms.<sup>388</sup> Gunter underlines three main cases signifying the contradicting nature of reforms period as: the proclamation of the anti-terror law –recognizing the further pursuit of Kurdish cultural rights to be a terrorist act- in spring of 1991 together with the language bill -legalizing the Kurdish language and culture-, the closing down of HEP in July, 1993, and the withdrawal of six DEP deputies’ immunities in March, 1994.<sup>389</sup>

Together with these three main cases, the implementation of security measures in the southeastern Turkey was intensified. The emergency rule (OHAL) which was put in force in 1987, the institution of the village-guard system, and the Decree 413 issued in April 1990 that granted extraordinary powers to the regional governor in the southeast were some of the measures taken. The beginning of the period of Tansu Çiller’s Prime Ministry, in 1993, corresponds to an attempt to implement a new perception of the Kurdish issue. In October 1993, *Hürriyet* newspaper reported in its front-page that “Çiller initiated the beginning of a new plan to implement the Spanish model in local governments” with the aim of precluding terror (“Güneydoğu’ya BASK Modeli”, *Hürriyet*, October 10, 1993). Three days later, anticipating the mainstream reactions, Çiller stated that she “does not know what BASK model is”.<sup>390</sup>

The reasons behind the slowing down of reform process are significant in revealing the political reflexes of state. Developments that

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<sup>388</sup> Gunter, M. M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 73

<sup>389</sup> Ibid, pp. 73-74

<sup>390</sup> “Bask Modeli Yattı”, *Hürriyet*, October 13, 1993

prevented the completion of reforms and developments that induced questioning of reforms might offer important insights. A potential Kurdish State that strengthened its roots in Iraq and the developments in relation with the HEP deputies' attitudes in oath ceremony are only two most important milestones. Of even more importance, the PKK terror during that era accelerated and the violence was apparently escalated. Security reflexes also rose in line with accelerating of violence. The idea of the essence of reforms was gradually abandoned. The period of increasing military measures following reforms, was identical with the early Republican period of struggle with Kurdish rebellions; reforms, cultural rights and even human rights were removed from the country's agenda.

After the Gulf War, Turkey embraced a multidimensional perception of the Kurdish issue. Following Turkey's realization of its lack of power and capacity to intervene in Iraq's future, state focused on a possible Kurdish state in Iraq. Mainly the focus was on 'secret' incentives of western allies and Iraqi Kurds. However, besides suspicions about West's and Iraqi Kurds' support to PKK, it was mainly Turkey's mistrust to its Kurds' 'feeling of attachment' to the state. During this period, Turkish state questioned the official ideology; whether Kurds can be assimilated into 'Turkishness' or not. In order to strengthen Kurdish citizens' 'feeling of attachment' reforms were initiated. Kurds, who were officially 'nonexistent' for decades, 'recognized' in 1991 by a Prime Minister. With reforms it is implied that the state trusts in 'loyalty' of its Kurdish citizens. However, the state perceived the domestic political events occurred during this period as a ground to question this 'loyalty'. The next case, actions of Kurdish deputies in the parliamentary oath ceremony in 1991, laid the foundation of state's disbelief in loyalty of Kurdish citizens that is still effective.

### **5.3. HEP Incident (Oath-Taking Ceremony in the Parliament) – 1991 and Withdrawal of Immunities - 1994**

The consequences of the events occurred during the oath ceremony in the Parliament in 1991 were momentous considering Turkey's perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds. State's discourse of 'betrayal' became stereotyped. However, in order to analyze the discourse on this event the whole chain of events must be identified. In 1990, some former members of Socialist Democratic Peoples Party (SHP) founded Peoples Labor Party (HEP), which was a legal political organization of the Kurdish movement.<sup>391</sup> However, in Gunter's words, "HEP's founding congress could not be held in time for it to qualify for the 1991 elections and in order to run for the Parliament, 22 HEP members rejoined SHP and were elected to the new Parliament in October 1991." During the oath taking ceremony in the new Parliament, two of these former HEP members, Hatip Dicle and Leyla Zana, took their oaths 'differently' than other deputies. As Gunter identified, the oath they took included the words: "I swear...before the great Turkish nation...indivisible integrity of the country and nation...". "Dicle, who held a scarf with the Kurdish national colors, prefaced these words by declaring that he took the oath under duress. Zana, wearing Kurdish national colors on her headband, added in Kurdish at the end of her oath that she took this oath for the brotherhood of the Turkish and Kurdish communities. As Gunter mentioned, following these oaths of Kurdish deputies, "a number of deputies began to beat their desktops in order to protest, and several deputies angrily approached the rostrum."<sup>392</sup> In March 1994, the Assembly annulled immunities of six DEP deputies (former HEP members); Hatip Dicle, Ahmet Türk, Leyla Zana, Sırrı Sakık, Orhan Doğan, and Selim Sadak. On March 3, 1994 these deputies were taken into custody as soon as their

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<sup>391</sup> As it was mentioned before, these HEP founders were expelled from SHP in 1989, for attending a conference on "Kurdish National Identity and Human Rights" in Paris. Gunter, M. M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 65

<sup>392</sup> Gunter, M. M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 66

immunities were lifted and the judicial procedure started immediately. On June 16, 1994, the Constitutional Court banned the DEP and on December 8, 1994, five of these DEP deputies were sentenced to 15-year prison terms.<sup>393</sup>

Evaluations of the events in the oath taking ceremony in the Parliament reported by *Hürriyet* newspaper with a binary headline combination; at the top it was said that “[*We Were*] Gladdened in Football Fields” referring to country’s two soccer teams success in European Cups. Under this headline there was the second headline referring to the events in the Parliament during the oath-taking ceremony; “[*We Were*] Saddened in the Assembly” (“Futbol Sahalarında Sevindik. Meclis’te Üzüldük”, *Hürriyet*, November 7, 1991). According to the news, “some former HEP members, who did not comply with the oath, embroiled the general meeting”. In these headlines, *Hürriyet* induced polarization between ‘us’ and ‘them’; ‘they’ afflicted ‘us’ by not ‘following our rules, demands, etc.’ Sub-headlines of this article were also significant: “They did not participate in the Turkish National Anthem”, “Disrespect to Atatürk”, “Generals were already left”, and “Koran oath”. With these sub-heads, former HEP deputies were presented as not the only ones that cause “scandals”. According to this news, besides “Kurdish deputies”, Necmettin Erbakan, the chairman of the Welfare Party (WP) –an Islamist party- also did not attend the ceremony of the National Anthem, a deputy of WP did not stand up during the homage for Atatürk, and another deputy of WP took his oath by holding Koran in his one hand. As it can be seen, all the ‘provocative’ deputies that caused scandals in the first general meeting of the new Assembly, were also presented by the newspaper article as the ‘threats’ against the two basic foundations of the Republic: ‘secularism’ and ‘the indivisible unity of the nation’. For *Hürriyet* it was significant that “the Chief of the General Staff and commanding officers of the army had already left” the protocol lodges while the incidents

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<sup>393</sup> As Gunter mentioned, “on October 26, 1995, the High Court (*Yargıtay*) upheld the 15-year sentences of Zana, Dicle, Sadak, and Doğan, while reducing the remaining two sentences to time served. The court argued that the aims of four DEP deputies were one and the same as those of PKK”. Gunter, M. M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 15

were “initiated by Hatip Dicle”; in a way alluding to ‘soldiers’ possible ‘just’ reactions if they witness the incident and more importantly redefining the boundaries of two parties: *us* and *them*.

*Cumhuriyet* newspaper also adopted a similar utterance on reporting the events. According to *Cumhuriyet*’s front-page news report, “some HEP originated SHP deputies attended the oath-taking ceremony as they carried accessories in Kurdish national colors of green, red and yellow”, and Zana “chanted slogan in Kurdish” who “protested by the *majority* of the Assembly” (“Kürtçe Krizi”, *Cumhuriyet*, November 7, 1991). The emphasis on the accessories carried by SHP deputies and the information that they are in the color of Kurdish national colors in the news article imply that these deputies are Kurdish nationalists. Also the emphasis on ‘majority’s protest’ is a reference to the ‘justness’ of protesting and disagreeing with these Kurdish deputies.

*Hürriyet* newspaper’s reporting on Erdal İnönü’s, chairman of SHP, re-demand of Zana’s and Dicle’s resignation under the main headline of “Zana and Dicle Kicked Out” was a clear example of presenting ‘them’ as an enemy (“Zana ile Dicle Kapı Dışarı”, *Hürriyet*, November 8, 1991). The usage of ‘being kicked out’ metaphor is functioning ideologically; ‘derogating the ‘enemy’ as Van Dijk claimed. The newspaper also defined the reactions of politicians against the events in the Assembly as “continuing”; in a way justifying all reactions against the incident, on the other hand, eliminating rightness and possibility of any moderate reactions (“Zana ve Dicle’ye Tepkiler Sürüyor”, *Hürriyet*, November 8, 1991). In his column that was published in *Hürriyet* on the very same day, Oktay Ekşi, in the proper sense, summarizes the newspaper’s perception of the HEP event (Ekşi, “Hem de Meclis Kararıyla...”, *Hürriyet*, November 8, 1991). According to Ekşi,

these SHP deputies of Kurdish origin acted as *betraying* to basic foundations of the country and the state, like they do not know which country’s Parliament they had elected to...*they* should not expect *us* to believe in their promise of honor and chastity to protect the indivisible

unity of the nation after *they* shoved up in the Parliament with their handkerchiefs and headbands in colors *they* perceive as ‘symbols of Kurdish nationalism’... (My emphasis)

Ekşi ascertains two sides of ‘them’ in the Parliament as implied in *Hürriyet*’s news report on oath-taking event: Kurdish originated deputies and WP deputies that are opponents to the Turkish Republic because of principle of secularism. According to Ekşi, “one part of *them* mind being deputies and enjoying legislative immunity; intending to partition the country while delivering harangues of ‘brotherhood’ and other part aim to destroy the secular Republic and establish a state of Sheria”. In his another column Ekşi adds that, by declaring they had previously decided and discussed on their acts during the oath-taking ceremony, “Dicle declared that, the scandal happened that day was not an impulsive childish sentimentality but an already planned *setup*” and “their shows on the parliament rostrum was the staging of the first part of a *long-term plan*, which will *continue* in following days and months” (Ekşi, “Açık Konuşana Ne Denir?”, *Hürriyet*, November 11, 1991). Ekşi induces a polarization between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and creates ‘their’ profile as ‘separatist betrayers’ who have long-term plans and as ‘unreliable liars’ who do not believe in ‘brotherhood’. He implies that ‘they’ are ‘our’ enemies who will not be ‘reliable’ in the future, too.

Until the removal of former HEP deputies’ immunities on March 2, 1994, chains of events strengthened the perception on the Kurdish issue, some examples of which were mentioned above. Every news on HEP deputies took place in newspapers following the oath-taking ceremony were in form of displaying evidences of ‘their’ betrayal. The interpretation of actions, behaviors, and speeches of former HEP deputies’ were multi-dimensional, which were embellished with discourses of degradations, and libelous portrayals. In other words; consequences of the events in the oath-taking ceremony are more large-scaled than, as Gunter suggested, causing an “uproar in Turkey”.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Gunter, M. M., *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, p. 66.



First of all, deputies of HEP were identified with PKK; presented -at least- as sympathizers of its ideologies and activities, and as agents of terrorism, not as actors of the legitimate political scene. For example, *Hürriyet* newspaper reported HEP Congress of 1991 with the headline “Apo’s mother honorary guest of HEP’s Congress” (“HEP Kongresinin Onur Konuğu Apo’nun Annesi”, *Hürriyet*, December 16, 1991). According to this news report, “...the National Anthem was not chanted, the Turkish flag was not hanged, and the Kurdish flag was unfurled in the Congress. Delegates lined up in order to show their respects to Öcalan’s mother...she was introduced as ‘icon of mothers’ and applauded by the crowd for minutes.” *Cumhuriyet* newspaper reported the HEP Congress with the headline “PKK Show in HEP” (“HEP’te PKK Şov”, *Cumhuriyet*, December 16, 1991). *Cumhuriyet* also emphasized the attendance of Abdullah Öcalan’s mother and ‘respect’ paid to her, especially by printing three sizable photos of Zana and Sakık kissing her hand and Işıklar while shaking hands with her. By these news reports, both newspapers, considering topics focusing on the presence of Öcalan’s mother, indicated HEP as an illegal organization and deputies, members, and supporters of HEP, namely high percentage of Kurdish people in Turkey, as sympathizers of PKK.

Emin Çölaşan mentioned in his column that “what happened in the general meeting of HEP were the things that a group of people who were enemies to this country would do...or are we enemies to each other? *We* do not cherish hostility. I wonder if HEP members and Kurdish originated friends perceive *us* as enemies” (Çölaşan, “Kürt Meselesi”, *Hürriyet*, December 17, 1991). He concludes his column by warning ‘them’ because “*they* can not accomplish anything by generating hostility against Turks, by cussing on Turkish Republic, and giving rise to feeling of reaction in Turkish originated people.” Çölaşan writes that “Kurds’ acts of hostility will call forth the hostility of Turk’s against Kurds”. Considering opinion article of Çölaşan, like Ekşi’s that examined above, patterns of polarization is quite noticeable: creation ingroups and outgroups and representations of *us* and *them*. Together with the emphasis on *their* actions and *our* frustration and

anger, Çölaşan sets the foundations his discourse on the Kurdish issue on Kurds' 'betrayal' and 'hostility' against Turks, the state, and the Republic.

According to another report in *Hürriyet*, which also identify these deputies with PKK, "Dicle, *Yet Again* Stood for PKK" because of his speech delivered to *La Libre Belgiue* Newspaper; in which Dicle (HEP originated SHP deputy) stating that "we have to support armed guerrilla forces considering existing conditions" ("Dicle, Yine PKK'yı Savundu", *Hürriyet*, January 10, 1992). With using the phrase 'again', *Hürriyet* newspaper presents Dicle's position as continual in the background information of the news report. Moreover, Dicle's definition of PKK as a "belligerent party' not a terrorist organization" was reported in *Hürriyet* as "Yesterday, Hatip Dicle Continued to Twaddle", which is an example of 'derogating the 'enemy'" ("Hatip Dicle, Dün De Saçmalamayı Sürdüdü", *Hürriyet*, May 27, 1992).

As an example of polarization between 'us' and 'them'; a mass meeting –called "All peoples are brothers-End massacres" – in Istanbul that was organized by HEP on March 1, 1992, reported by *Hürriyet* with a news report headlined; "What Kind of Fraternity is this?" ("Bu Nasıl Kardeşlik?..", *Hürriyet*, March 2, 1992). According to the news article, "people cried for war in the mass meeting of HEP" by declaring that "they will fight until they establish their state" in speeches given. With the headline of this news report, the newspaper construct the overall meaning of the text unquestionably on HEP members and supporters 'enmity'. Ekşi also discusses HEP meeting in his column that reads as follow:

First of all, if we seriously believe in **freedom**, we should accept that people speaking in a meeting –with the condition of respecting the law- should express their opinions that you and I disapprove without fear and hesitation. Likewise it is other peoples, for instance yours and mine right to express opinions that they do not approve...considering speeches given in the meeting, slogans chanted, and flags unfurled...no one can defend this meeting as a meeting aiming 'brotherhood'...for this reason who ever organized this meeting should announce if they support the 'image emerged' during the meeting or stand against it...although **hypocrisy** became one of basic

rules of **Turkish** political life...that is why...people who promised to protect the **unity of the country and the nation**, support **separatist** organization and activities...and then talk about **brotherhood** somewhat pretentiously...very well but...nobody is believing (Highlighting is by Ekşi) (Ekşi, “Kardeşlik Mitingi Bu Mu?”, *Hürriyet*, March 2, 1992).

A critical reading of the text above reveals a couple of inferences which worth mentioning. First of all, bold character words, which might bias the understanding process of the reader as van Dijk claimed, manifests Ekşi’s perspective on the issue. Secondly, repetitions in the text, ‘opinions of them you and I do not approve’, ‘yours and mine opinions they do not approve’, are clear examples of polarization and proposition. The author constantly assumes that the readers agree with him. In general, he refers to HEP members and its supporters as disingenuous and separatist. He presents HEP as neither reliable nor legitimate but most importantly supposes and emphasizes that it is right of ‘nobody’ to believe in their ‘brotherhood’ and ‘goodwill’.

Secondly, together with references to HEP’s ‘illegitimacy’, the concern of international community on the Kurdish issue, specifically in HEP deputies, was presented as a party of ‘betrayal’ to Turkey. For example, *Hürriyet* newspaper reported Zana’s, Dicle’s, and Zübeyir Aydar’s contacts with Fischer –President of Austrian Assembly- with the headline “The Last Scandal of HEP Deputies” (“HEP’lilerin Son Skandalı”, *Hürriyet*, February 11, 1992). According to the report, HEP deputies lodged complaint about Turkish Grand National Assembly to Fischer by asserting that the Turkish Grand National Assembly excluded them. It can be identified from the topic of the news that, the newspaper does not point out Zana’s ‘complaints’ on Turkey but making her complaints to a ‘Westerner’ as the scandal; in other words implying that she is a ‘traitor’. Similarly, the newspaper reports that during her contacts with members of European Parliament in Brussels; “Leyla Zana, Yet Again Lodged Complaint against Turkey” by asserting that Turkey will initiate an attack in Southeast region by March (“Leyla Zana, Yine Türkiye’yi Şikayet Etti”, *Hürriyet*, February 28, 1992). According to

an 'ironic' news article *Cumhuriyet* published, "Kurdish originated deputies of HEP, who carried out task distribution among themselves and visiting European countries, try to manufacture the public opinion in the West by criticizing the Turkish government on its approach to Kurdish issue and human rights violations in the Southeast" ("Kürt Sorununa Duyarlı Avrupa", *Cumhuriyet*, May 20, 1992). As Van Dijk identified, ironic expressions in the press are closely related with underlying models and social beliefs. There is irony in *Cumhuriyet*'s headline "Europe sensitive to Kurdish question" because in the news the newspaper indicates the artificiality and thereby the 'non-existence' of the 'Kurdish question' by emphasizing 'organization' among HEP deputies to 'manufacture' public opinion in the West.

Actually, the suspicion of parties of 'betrayal' –constituted by West, Kurdish politicians, and PKK- that organized against Turkey became more apparent during and after the trial of DEP deputies. Together with following up the course of law suit, newspapers heavily interested in 'reactions of the West'.<sup>395</sup> Together with reporting these reactions in news reports, newspapers intended to expose 'ulterior motives' of the West. Oktay Ekşi's opinions in his column in *Hürriyet* are striking and significant in exemplifying this 'intention'. In his column on March 11, Ekşi criticizes

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<sup>395</sup> Some of these news reports on Western reactions are as follows: *Hürriyet*: "DEP Repression from Europe" ("Avrupa'nın DEP Baskısı", March 9, 1994), "Memorandum on Kurds from Europe" ("Avrupa'dan Kürt Muhtırası", March 11, 1994), "Support from European Council to DEP" ("Avrupa Konseyi'nden DEP'e Destek", April, 14, 1994), "DEP warning from USA", ("ABD'den DEP Uyarısı", December 7, 1994), "Western Pressure for DEP", ("DEP için Batı Baskısı", December 8, 1994), "The West Stand for DEP" ("Batı DEP için Ayakta", December 10, 1994); *Cumhuriyet*: "Europe Censured Turkey" ("Avrupa Türkiye'yi Kınadı", March 11, 1994), "DEP Admonishment from Europe" ("Avrupa'dan DEP Uyarısı", December 8, 1994), and "European Union Censured Turkey" ("AB, Türkiye'yi Kınadı", December 10, 1994). On the other hand, it is significant that *Hürriyet* newspaper kept the track of the relationship between Madame Mitterrand –wife of Françoise Mitterrand, President of France- and Zana day by day. Here are the headlines of *Hürriyet* newspaper: "Madame Called Zana Over the Telephone." ("Madam Zana'yı Telefonla Aradı", March 3, 1994), "Madame's Representative Did Not Left Zana's Side." ("Madam'ın Temsilcisi Zana'dan Ayrılmadı", March 4, 1994), "Letter of Support from Madame to Zana." ("Madam'dan Zana'ya Destek Mektubu", March 24, 1994), "Second Letter from Madame Mitterrand to Zana." ("Madam Mitterrand'dan Zana'ya İkinci Mektup", May 4, 1994), "Madame Wrote the Third Letter to Zana." ("Madam Zana'ya Üçüncü Mektubu Yazdı", August 4, 1994), "Fourth Letter from Madame to Zana." ("Madam'dan Zana'ya Dördüncü Mektup", September 8, 1994), and lastly from *Cumhuriyet* newspaper: "Madame Mitterrand Called Zana as 'My Daughter'" ("Madam Mitterrand Zana'ya 'kızım' Dedi", March 24, 1994)

Siegfried Martsch, a Green Party deputy in Parliament of Germany, who claimed that “Turks have no idea what kind of a process they are running into” (Ekşi, “Bu Küstahlık Yetti Artık”, *Hürriyet*, March 11, 1994). Ekşi calls Martsch as “abhorrent, impudent, impertinent, and loony” and responds to ‘West’ as follows:

Martsch says that...if do not follow his advices...Turkish soldiers would activate armed combat cars but could not finance them. To Hell with you!...If what matters is the *national integrity*, then damn West!...they do not care about human rights...but they want to play the Kurdish card...we are people who embraces Western civilization but it is our liability to taunt the West with their abhorrent attributions.

In this article, Ekşi presents West and DEP deputies as threats to Turkey’s national unity. As *Hürriyet* newspaper defines West as “hypocritical” because they “connived at the trial of eight MPs of Batasuna Party but stirred a storm on DEP issue” (“Avrupalıların İkiyüzlülüğü”, *Hürriyet*, March, 12, 1994); Ekşi also refers to ‘west’ as “hypocritical and abhorrent” in his column on March 12 in *Hürriyet* (Ekşi, “Bunlar, İkiyüzlü ve İğrençtirler”, *Hürriyet*, March 12, 1994). Ekşi claims that ‘west’ do not have the right and nerve to criticize Turkey on human rights, democracy, and rule of law because they supported Yeltsin’s coup d’état in 1993, and France ignored Corsican people’s existence. According to this article, by claiming west as indifferent from Turkey, Ekşi admits that Turkey is an antidemocratic country, which ignores the existence of Kurds, disregards human rights violations and principles of rule of law.

Displaying evidences of HEP deputies’ and HEP’s connection with PKK was apparent in the press during and after trial of HEP deputies; as attempts of ‘justifying’ the judicial process and exposing their ‘guiltiness’. Two days after DEP deputies were taken into custody; *Hürriyet* newspaper reported in the front page that French Agency of AFP announced that five of DEP deputies applied England, Germany, France, Belgium, and Holland for right of asylum under the headline: “They would escape” (“Kaçacaklardı”, *Hürriyet*, March 4, 1994). Together with presupposing certainty of DEP

deputies' intention of escaping to Europe, the newspaper implies the 'guiltiness' of deputies. *Hürriyet* newspaper's news report on Nizamettin Toğuç's (a DEP deputy who escaped Europe) attendance to Nevruz celebration in Belgium organized by PKK in April 1994 was a manifestation of the 'discourse of betrayal' ("İşte DEP Gerçeği", *Hürriyet*, June 18, 1994). According to the news, "his (Nizamettin Toğuç) picture taken on a rostrum covered with PKK flag in front of Abdullah Öcalan's poster revealed DEP's true colors." Additionally *Hürriyet* newspaper reported the declaration of the establishment of 'Kurdish Parliament in Exile' by former DEP deputy Remzi Kartal and ERNK (military formation of PKK) spokesman in Brussels as the 'officialization of DEP as a fraction of PKK' ("DEP, Resmen PKK", *Hürriyet*, January 13, 1995). However the clearest example of presenting DEP as formation of PKK was expressed by the Prime Minister Tansu Çiller in November 1993, months before the arrest of DEP deputies. Çiller claimed that "we come to the end of our endurance to PKK in the Assembly. I will vote for revoking some DEP deputy's privilege of immunity" ("PKK'yı Meclis'ten Atacağız", *Hürriyet*, November 14, 1993). It is also significant that *Hürriyet* newspaper reported the news from the front page without quoting Çiller's claim. The newspaper presented Çiller's words as 'society's' common opinion; DEP is related with PKK.

It is not the first time, in 1991, that Kurdish deputies were elected to the Parliament. There were several Kurdish originated deputies of many political parties elected into the Parliament since the proclamation of the Republic. Also, as it was mentioned before, some HEP deputies elected as SHP deputies into the Parliament in 1991 were also former deputies of SHP that expelled from the party because of their attendance to Paris Kurdish Conference in 1989. However in 1991, it is for the first time, some Kurdish originated deputies expressly displayed their detachment from the 'official discourse' on the Kurdish issue. It is arguable that evaluations of events occurred during the oath taking ceremony in the Parliament represented in newspapers, reflects state's perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds during that period. These two-dimensional evaluations of events are based on

‘betrayal’: Europe’s stance considering events and identification of DEP and its deputies with PKK. The first dimension that based on Europe’s stance was shaped under the influence and affect of Gulf War and based on West’s hidden objectives considering establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. The second dimension is domestic. According to this dimension, DEP deputies were identified with PKK, which is the indication of Turkey’s perception of the Kurdish issue mainly identified with PKK terror. It is arguable that, after this event state began to realize the representation of the Kurdish issue in the Parliament through terrorism and separatism; in other words realized as ‘illegal’. However it is also significant that it was the period that PKK popularly supported in southeastern regions, Kurdish citizens openly displaying their ‘discontent’, and the state and security forces were ‘nonexistent’ in the region. The next case that will be examined was the turning point for Turkish state to face with above mentioned ‘discontent’; Nevruz of 1992.

#### **5.4. Nevruz-1992**

By 1990s, Nevruz -a national fest that Middle Eastern and Asian peoples, including Kurds, celebrate the beginning of spring on every March 21- became a day that represents the “trial” of Kurdish people’s loyalty to the state and the country. Even though it is commonly interpreted in association with the activities, propaganda and provocations of the PKK, Nevruz is a subliminal symbol related to the Kurds and their stance as a community. Turkey still suffers from its Nevruz syndrome, which is originated in early 1990s that reappear at the beginning of March in every year. According to this ‘syndrome’ based on ‘tension’ and ‘display of level of betrayal’, it is highly possible that celebrations of Nevruz will be the stage of demonstrations of PKK terrorists, PKK partisans and people who are ‘deceived by provocation’, in which case security forces obliged to ‘intervene’. All Nevruz celebrations since 1990 are significant from different points –extensive armed conflagrations, revision in state’s policies and

state's trial of different tracks, increasing interests of foreign countries, etc.- yet they are always significant. Above all, Nevruz celebrations in 1992 were the occasion of 'Nevruz syndrome' to be confirmed; Nevruz celebrations are rehearsals of uprising with the intension of 'rupture'.

The tension was already dominating the southeast region of Turkey; many events occurred in the region days before the Nevruz. Until Nevruz events, newspapers reported news on the circumstances and conditions in the region that reflect tension among the public, PKK, state, and security forces. For example, coalition government's deputies visiting the region were protested by a group of people carrying PKK flags and Öcalan posters in İdil-Şırnak in March 4 ("Milletvekilleri İdil'de PKK Bayrağı İle Karşılandı", *Hürriyet*, March 5, 1992). Most importantly, a group of polices (around hundred men) organized a demonstration of protesting murder of their colleague Ahmet Özer by PKK on March 5 in Şırnak, which is the unique example of security forces demonstration in the southeast region of Turkey. *Hürriyet* newspaper reported that demonstrators chanted slogans as "Şırnak will be a grave of Kurds" and harassed people who "provoked them" ("Şırnak'ta Olaylı Polis Yürüyüşü", *Hürriyet*, March 6, 1992). According to this news, subtitled "Demonstrators Could Not Control Their Nerves"; friends of the police officer Ahmet Özer, who protest the murder of their friend, act in a way helping terrorists inadvertently. The Policemen shouted 'Şırnak will be grave for Kurds', after they delivered the body of their friends to his pregnant wife to send to Adana". ("Şırnak'ta Polisin Olaylı Gösterisi", *Hürriyet*, March 6, 1992) This news of *Hürriyet* is an example of 'understatement' as Van Dijk conceptualized. The newspaper understated actions of the police with their attitude caused by 'nervousness'. Also with irrelevant details, like the pregnancy of murdered officer's wife, the newspaper created a discourse of 'justifying' polices' actions. Considering *Cumhuriyet* newspaper's report, claiming that demonstrators attacked, chastised and arrested people in the streets and demolished shops and offices; it can be argued that *Hürriyet* is not impartial while reporting the event.



A news article of *Cumhuriyet*, reports ‘grouping’ between the public and security forces with a quotation from a local person answering why all Cizre people are walking in the streets: “everyday armed policemen and soldiers are making show of force by roaming the streets. Therefore we are constantly roaming out. We do not do anything but point out our existence and that this place belongs to us” (“HEP’in Güneydoğu Gezisinden İzlenimler. Nevruz’da PKK’lılar Eşliğinde Kutlama”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 12, 1992). In a news series of *Hürriyet* newspaper, “‘Hot Spring’ in Southeast”, involving interviews with HEP county chairman and representative of Human Rights Association; Cizre was described as ‘irascible’ because “for the first time in its history the beating of ‘Ramadan drums’ were forbidden by reason of security” (“Cizre Barut Fıçısı”, *Hürriyet*, March 16, 1992). *Cumhuriyet* newspaper reported that armed clashes between PKK and security forces continued until *Sahur* in Cizre (“Cizre’de Sahura Kadar Silahlar Konuştu”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 17, 1992). These news reports mentioned above are unique examples of ‘impartiality’ of two newspapers considering oppressive attitudes of security forces in the region and Kurdish citizens’ complains. Following the Nevruz of 1992; newspapers –especially *Hürriyet*- stopped reporting on grievances of Kurdish people in the region, human rights violations, and repressive actions of security forces.

During Nevruz events of 1992 tens of people were dead and more than thousand people were taken into custody in Şırnak, Cizre, Van, Adana, Mardin, and Istanbul. *Hürriyet* newspaper reported Nevruz events with the heading of “Bloody Result: 31 Dead. Feast or Insurgence?” (“Kanlı Nevruz’un Bilançosu: 31 Ölü. Bayram mı, İsyan mı?”, *Hürriyet*, March 22, 1992). *Hürriyet*’s evaluation of the events as an insurgence was also emphasized by politicians; Minister Sezgin and Erdal İnönü, who evaluated the Nevruz incidents as attempts and rehearsals of insurgence (“Ayaklanma Provası Yapıldı”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 23, 1992; “İnönü: Ayaklanma Girişimi Var”, *Hürriyet*, March 24, 1992). According to *Hürriyet*, “what is feared has happened in Nevruz...provocateurs reached their goals...” *Cumhuriyet*

Newspaper reported Nevruz events under the heading “Calls of Rebellion Announced by PKK for Weeks Turned into Conflict. Bloody Nevruz: 38 Dead” (“Kanlı Nevruz: 38 Ölü”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 22, 1992).<sup>396</sup> As it can be seen from news reports above, the newspapers maintained dual attitude in interpreting Nevruz events. Considering the extents of participation in demonstrations; it is arguable that most of the Kurdish people were part of the events. In other words, with evaluating events as an attempt of rebellion newspapers and politicians presented Kurdish people in the region as rebels. On the other hand, it is implied by newspapers and politicians that the ‘people’ did not have the intention and desire to rebel with emphasizing the events were triggered by a group of provocateurs.

*Hürriyet* newspaper’s pro-state approach on reporting Nevruz events continued in the following days of events. The newspaper reported continuing events in the southeast of Turkey with referring the situation as insurgence and called for strict measures for its termination (“Bu Böyle Gitmez”, *Hürriyet*, March 23, 1992). The way *Hürriyet* represented the post-Nevruz period presents the discourse of distinguishing ‘the people’ from terrorists, which will be the ‘motto’ of the state during its struggle with terrorism in following years. According to *Hürriyet*, security forces were “determined to distinguish between the public and terrorists during the operation” (“Teröriste Yumruk Halka Şefkat”, *Hürriyet*, March 27, 1992). On March 27, *Hürriyet* newspaper reported the military operation in Cizre with the heading “Cizre is done too” (“Cizre de Tamam”, *Hürriyet*, March 27, 1992). Considering the heading of this news, *Hürriyet*’s news reports were not addressing Kurdish people in the southeast of Turkey; which is also creating polarization between ‘us’, who will support military operations in the region, and ‘them’, who will suffer from consequences of these operations. It is also significant that, only one week after Nevruz events

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<sup>396</sup> *Cumhuriyet* newspaper also reported on unjust acts of security forces in the region during collisions. According to Demirel’s consultant İlnur Çevik, “some members of security forces besieged by ignoring orders of civilian authorities, [considering] the bloodshed during the events in the southeast” (“Bazı Güvenlik Güçleri, Bölgede Sorun Yarattı”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 23, 1992).

*Hürriyet* newspaper reported that “after the curfew lifted, life in Cizre became normal again” (“Cizre Hayata Döndü”, *Hürriyet*, March 28, 1992). *Hürriyet* newspaper asserted that “people of Cizre sallied to the streets... brought enthusiasm of feast on the streets... enjoyed the day, the sun, and walking...”; implying that there was not any question on the discontent or suffering of the public in the region.

There are two distinguishing dimensions of Nevruz events of 1992: the degree of participation in celebrations that reflected the size of discontent and the priority given to [anti-]terror following the events. After Nevruz of 1992, state’s struggle with terrorism became the primary goal. The military initiated the territorial superiority against terror and the new motto of “first terror than reform” was introduced<sup>397</sup> and did not fade away even after the decline of terror in 1995-96. On the other hand, human rights violations and unjust treatments to the public of the region began to be disregarded and unmentioned as a part of ‘fight against terrorism’.<sup>398</sup> It is then inescapable to argue that the southeastern people were seen, at least, as potential terrorists, despite the prevalence of the discourse on ‘terrorist-people separation’.

As it was mentioned before, all Nevruz feasts are significant for different points.<sup>399</sup> In 1990, events following the funeral of a PKK terrorist in Nusaybin, which began on March 15, made its mark on the Nevruz celebrations. People who attended the funeral ceremony fought security forces and more than five hundred people were taken into custody. For days shops in Nusaybin were closed, and tension in the region gradually increased.<sup>400</sup> On the eve of Nevruz, four people died and nine people were

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<sup>397</sup> Cemal, H., *Kürtler*, Doğan Kitap, 2005, İstanbul, p. 163

<sup>398</sup> In his column in *Cumhuriyet*, Uğur Mumcu mentions that “the Nevruz events were the beginning of a continuing process of insurgency initiated by PKK, which will block the process of democratization” (“Nevruz ve Ötesi”, *Cumhuriyet*, May 31, 1992).

<sup>399</sup> Nevruz feast of 2005 will be discussed separately in the end of the chapter considering its significance integral to the conditions of that period.

<sup>400</sup> “Nusaybinliler Tedirgin”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 17, 1990

injured in collisions in Cizre following the protest of Nusaybin events.<sup>401</sup> As a result of the curfew order among southeastern regions, Nevruz passed without conflict.

After events and demonstrations in some cities in the southeast ended; Özal made a statement after the meeting of National Security Council on March 28, 1990, mentioning that “events in the southeast region were part of a plan that attacks on Republic of Turkey’s territorial integrity...there is no doubt that state loves and shows kindness to its equal and free citizens without any discrimination, it is state’s right to expect loyalty from its citizens...” (“‘Ülkemizi Bölmek İstiyorlar’”, *Hürriyet*, March 29, 1990). Özal re-emphasized the importance of loyalty while evaluating his meeting with political party leaders. Özal stated that “in the meeting we emphasized that public in the region will be supported and be treated with kindness. However, we have one condition...Loyalty to the state...We are relentless to the ones who fall outside this loyalty...” (“‘Terörle Mücadelenin Şiddetini Arttıracamız’”, *Hürriyet*, April 7, 1990).

In 1991, state claimed Nevruz feast for the first time by asserting that it is ‘the new day of Turks’. The Ministry of Internal Affairs “called for the celebration of Nevruz in primary schools in east and southeast Anatolia within the framework of official programs” (“Nevruz’a Genelgesi İzin”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 13, 1991).<sup>402</sup> According to *Cumhuriyet*’s news report “people in the region react against the adaptation of Nevruz into an ‘official’ character by relating to the Myth of *Ergenekon*.” This news report of *Cumhuriyet* is an example of impartiality that corresponds to pre-1992 Nevruz events. As it was mentioned before following Nevruz of 1992 newspapers stopped reporting on Kurdish people’s complaints. Armed

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<sup>401</sup> “Cizre’de Olaylar 4 Ölü 9 Yaralı”, *Hürriyet*, March 21, 1990

<sup>402</sup> In his column, Çölaşan criticized the statement of Ministry of Culture on announcing that Nevruz was actually a Turkish feast. According to Çölaşan, “it is disrespectful to hauling down the Turkish flag...[in Nevruz celebrations], so does this announcement...[of Nevruz as a Turkish feast]” (Çölaşan, “Nevruz”, *Hürriyet*, March 23, 1991) However, in his column two years later, Çölaşan claimed that he did not know that Nevruz was a Turkish feast, which must be celebrated as a national feast (Çölaşan, “Nevruz”, *Hürriyet*, March 16, 1994).

conflict between people and security forces occurred in the southeast region during Nevruz celebrations of 1991. During these events, one person was dead and five people were injured, and hundreds of people were taken into custody.<sup>403</sup> *Hürriyet* newspaper reported Nevruz events as ‘terror’ and as a ‘dangerous game’ (“‘Nevruz’ Terörü”, *Hürriyet*, March 21, 1991, “Tehlikeli Oyun”, *Hürriyet*, March 22, 1991). The newspaper claimed that, provocateurs are using Nevruz as a pretext to escalate events (“Tehlikeli Oyun”, *Hürriyet*, March 22, 1991).

Due to Nevruz events in 1992, the Nevruz feast in 1993 was anticipated with apprehension. Nevruz of 1993 was significant on the discourse of ‘peaceful environment’ and existence of foreign committees in the region. Nevruz celebrations of 1993 ended without any conflict compared to the previous year; newspapers reported these celebrations as ‘bloodless Nevruz’. *Hürriyet* newspaper emphasized that Nevruz was celebrated in a peaceful environment (“Nevruz’da Barış”, *Hürriyet*, March 22, 1993). *Cumhuriyet* reported Nevruz celebrations as an evidence of people’s common sense (“Sağduyu Ağır Bastı”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 22, 1993). On the other hand, *Hürriyet* reported Siverek governor Kılıçdoğan’s attendance to Nevruz celebrations in the district with ‘exaggeration’, in van Dijk’s terms. According to the news report, “...the governor shared out people’s enthusiasm...danced with citizens for a long time and enlivened the atmosphere...” (“Şen Ola Nevruz Şen Ola...”, *Hürriyet*, March 22, 1993). With this ‘exaggerated’ news report, *Hürriyet* aim to strengthen the model of state as ‘supporting its citizens’ in society’s consciousness. *Cumhuriyet* newspaper also reported similar news. According to *Cumhuriyet*’s news, “In Diyarbakır, dance, drum and horn meet Nevruz. Even Governor Ünal Erkan danced...entertained children. HEP deputies Leyla Zana, Sedat Yurttaş, Hüsamettin Toğuş were at the other side of the dancing group...the timpanist was tipped...and Nevruz ended like this” (“Davulcunun Nevruz Bahşişi”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 23, 1993). These two news reports of *Hürriyet* and

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<sup>403</sup> “Nevruz’da Kanlı Gün”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 21, 1991

*Cumhuriyet* display examples of semantic strategies, which van Dijk identified, of positive self representation. Actually, behind these positive news on ‘peaceful and bloodless Nevruz’, there were other news giving a hint on the tension in the region. According to *Cumhuriyet*’s news report more than four hundred people were taken into custody during Nevruz celebrations, and security forces disallowed celebrations in Cizre (“Sağduyu Ağır Bastı”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 22, 1993). In Cizre, security forces made announcements to people that the state own the streets, and they should go home (Hoşgörü, Kanı Durdurdu”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 22, 1993). As the second significant point of Nevruz of 1993, the domestic and foreign committees’ interests in the region and Nevruz celebrations were underlined by *Hürriyet*. According to its report, “the region was overrun by domestic and foreign committees [that will observe Nevruz celebrations]...it was specified that there were 81 foreigners among arrivals...” (“Güneydoğu’ya Heyet Akını”, *Hürriyet*, March 21, 1993).

In 1994, Nevruz debates were concentrated around the celebration of Nevruz feasts officially. *Hürriyet* newspaper reported Prime Minister Çiller’s statement that she will make Nevruz an official feast as a “holiday surprise” (“Nevruz Resmi Bayram Oluyor”, *Hürriyet*, March 15, 1994). In the news report, Çiller’s statement was supposed as ‘joyful’ news. Considering the lexical style and the word choice, the newspaper took a pro-state stance on ‘officialization project’ of Nevruz. *Hürriyet* also reported that Çiller’s statement was “positively met in the southeast” (“Güneydoğu’da Sevinç Yarattı”, *Hürriyet*, March 16, 1994). It is significant that, the source in this news is anonymous and actually ‘the whole region’. According to the news, “people in the region agreed on the idea that Çiller’s ‘National Nevruz’ idea is very appropriate and these traditional celebrations will not be used for political aspirations and blood would not be shed.” In this news events in previous Nevruz celebrations were defined as ‘tension’ and claimed number of deaths in 1992 Nevruz events as 18, not 38; which are both influencing the reader with ‘understated’ background information.

In 1995, Nevruz began to be celebrated ‘officially’ by the state. After this year, newspapers heavily reported on ‘official’ programs of Nevruz celebrations with the company of top executives of Turkic Republics that become more and more referencing the ‘Turkic’ origin of Nevruz. As *Hürriyet* reported in detail that Ministers of Culture from Turkish Republics and Turkey’s minister of Culture, Timurçin Savaş, attended to Nevruz celebrations. According to the news report, “Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tatarstan, and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus signed a joint declaration and decided to celebrate Nevruz as ‘the common day of the Turkish world’ (“Resmi Nevruz”, *Hürriyet*, March 20, 1995 “Nevruz Kutlu Olsun”, *Hürriyet*, March 21, 1995). With these news reports of detailed information on ‘official’ Nevruz celebrations, state’s claim of Nevruz as a Turkish feast was naturalized and supported.

With 1996, efforts to ‘officialize’ Nevruz feast increased; the army appeared on the scene. General Karadayı, the Chief of the General Staff, issued a Nevruz message declaring that “Nevruz represents the first day of liberation in the history of Turks, which is celebrated with great enthusiasm...our public should celebrate this happy day of Turkish world together...” (“Ordudan İlk Nevruz Mesajı”, *Hürriyet*, March 22, 1996). As *Cumhuriyet* newspaper reported, “The government continued its policies to officialize Nevruz feast” in 1997 too (“Devlet güdümünde Nevruz”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 20, 1997). Moreover, governorship of Batman donated free tires for burning during Nevruz celebrations (“Çiller’li Nevruz Kutlaması”, *Hürriyet*, March 20, 1997 – “Resmi Lastikler Hazır”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 21, 1997). In 1998, religion became a part of ‘policies to officialize’ Nevruz. Department of Religious Affairs delivered ‘national unity’ sermon, which “underlines the necessity of not allowing domestic and foreign enemies the opportunity to exploit Nevruz celebrations” (“Diyanet’ten Nevruz’da Milli Birlik Hutbesi”, *Hürriyet*, March 20, 1998). Next year, Director of Religious Affairs announced that Nevruz was an old Turkish tradition, one of local feasts (“Diyanet: Nevruz Eski Türk Geleneği”, *Hürriyet*, March 18, 1999). TRT began to broadcast Nevruz

celebrations in Central Asia live from Uzbekistan (A.T. Kışlalı, “Nevruz’un Yaktığı Işık”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 24, 1999). In 2000, the Nevruz reception organized by IKDP, which ambassadors of European Union member states showed warm interest, was not welcomed by the state (“Diplomaside Nevruz Gerginliği”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 22, 2000).

After 1994, state began to use Nevruz feast as a means of Kurds’ assimilation. This state policy can be identified by examining the agenda of the country before and after Nevruz celebrations in years following 1992. The 1993 Nevruz was ‘peaceful’ compared to Nevruz celebrations in 1990, 1991, and 1992. As it was mentioned before, a new phase begin after 1992 Nevruz; the military presence of the state in the southeast region and struggle against terror intensified. In 1994, Nevruz was celebrated couple of weeks after the court decision on imprisonment of DEP deputies for fifteen years. As from this year, the state began to claim Nevruz as a Turkish feast that was used to be celebrated in Central Asia. By 1995, state’s efforts of ‘officializing Nevruz’ continued and accelerated. Military and Department of Religious Affairs issued statements on Nevruz, which is defined as a national feast that must be celebrated by ‘all’ citizens. As a part of state’s assimilation policies, these Nevruz ‘massages’ implied that Kurds can celebrate Nevruz only by becoming ‘Turks’. Turkish state reacted against IKDP’s (Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq) Nevruz reception which was organized in Ankara in 2000 because it ‘invalidated’ state’s policies of ‘officializing Nevruz’. With this Nevruz reception, northern Iraqi Kurds defended the ‘Kurdish nature and essence’ of Nevruz feast and strengthen bonds between Kurds inhabited in Turkey and in Iraq. As it will be examined later, the Nevruz of 2005 became a turning point in displaying transformation of state’s perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds.



## 5.5 Second Congress of HADEP (Peoples Democracy Party) – 1996

Events that occurred during the party congress of HADEP that held in 1996, was not perceived different than previous experiences with Kurdish parties, which were presented as evidences of their connection with PKK, namely of their 'betrayal'. The significance of this event is the enormity of country wide reactions to the event and their representation in the press. These reactions are significant in displaying the transformation of the perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds that began to be based on Turkish nationalism. In the second party Congress of HADEP (successor of HEP and DEP parties) on June 23, 1996, the Turkish flag that was hanged in the Atatürk Gymnasium, where the congress took place, was taken down and replaced with Abdullah Öcalan's poster and PKK flag. Also banners and posters of Abdullah Öcalan were carried and slogans were chanted during the Congress.

*Hürriyet* newspaper reported the event as "a shocking scene" and defined the Congress as "a PKK show" ("Şok Eden Sahne", *Hürriyet*, June 24, 1996). *Hürriyet* underlined that, "HADEP administration did not intervene, and hold aloof to the hanging up of Abdullah Öcalan's posters and PKK banners" ("Bayrağı indirdiler", *Hürriyet*, June 24, 1996). The emphasis on that 'they' put down the flag and HEP administration's 'overlooking' to event is presenting all people in the Congress as 'terrorist' who are against 'us', which would give rise to polarization in van Dijk's terms. Hikmet Çetinkaya's column confirms this perception. Çetinkaya claims that "HADEP is governed and controlled by PKK" considering "the taciturnity of its Congress Council" (Çetinkaya, "Türk Bayrağı...", *Cumhuriyet*, June 25, 1996). *Cumhuriyet* newspaper reported the event as "disrespect to the flag", and its outcome as the "incitement of fratricidal strife" ("Kardeş Kavgası Körükleniyor", *Cumhuriyet*, June 25, 1996). With this report *Cumhuriyet* newspaper implied that people attended the Congress as 'disrespectful to the

national values and symbols of the country' and proposing that this event might be a 'just' reason of civil war.

According to reports of newspapers; this event "aroused indignation among the whole country" and "reacted with rage" ("İşte Bu Hain İndirdi", *Hürriyet*, June 25, 1996, "Bayrağın İndirilmesine Öfke", *Cumhuriyet*, June 25, 1996). Country wide demonstrations after the event were reported by newspapers with great enthusiasm and without neutrality. According to *Hürriyet*, demonstrations were "flag insurrection" that indicate "the rage, which does not pass off" ("Bayrak Ayaklanması", *Hürriyet*, June 26, 1996, "Öfke Dinmiyor" ", *Hürriyet*, June 28, 1996). *Hürriyet* reported that "the best reply to the incident came from the public; thousands chanted '[this] flag shall always float', the whole country was decked with flags" ("Halk Bayrak Çekti", *Hürriyet*, June 26, 1996). *Hürriyet*'s reporting of people's reaction against the event as an 'insurrection' is significant in examining the perception of the Kurdish issue. The perception implied here is that people were rise in insurrection against not only to the hauling down of the Turkish flag but against people, namely Kurds, who 'do not claim and embrace country's national values'. *Cumhuriyet* reported country wide demonstrations as "flood and wind of love to the flag" and put the emphasis on the condemnation of the assault on flag ("Bayrağa Sevgi Seli", "Bayrağa Saldırı Lanetlendi", "Bayrağa Sevgi Rüzgarı", *Cumhuriyet*, June 26, 1996). With these headings and topics of news reports, in van Dijk's terms, both newspapers justified the rage against the event and the Kurdish party that 'invites' events occurred during its Congress.

These reactions to the incident were also reactions against HADEP. The passive stance, regardless of being deliberate or not, of the HADEP administrators while the Turkish flag was taken down, automatically implied the proposition that every single principle supported by HADEP, like equality and human rights, was wrong or had a connotation with betrayal. Deniz Baykal's interpretation, for instance, is likely to support this viewpoint. Baykal stated that "HADEP general assembly rejected its own maturing within a democratic environment, while everybody was proposing

the lowering of the electoral threshold so as to make HADEP's representation feasible" ("Baykal: HADEP Sınavı Geçemedi", *Hürriyet*, June 26, 1996). According to Baykal, "HADEP could not pass the examination, HADEP administrators failed this test"; implying that with this incident HADEP lost its right to be in the Parliament as a legal political party ("HADEP Sınavı Veremedi", *Cumhuriyet*, June 26, 1996).

According to Çölaşan, HADEP –as DEP– indirectly stands by PKK, treats Turkey as an enemy, and does discrimination among Turks and Kurds ("Bayrağa Saygısızlık", *Hürriyet*, June 25, 1996). Çölaşan gives advice to HADEP not to "stretch the patience of Turkish nation to its limits...injures our 60 million people..." (Çölaşan, "HADEP Üzerine", *Hürriyet*, June 26, 1996). In this text, Çölaşan implies that 'Turkish nation' was patient to 'them' in the past but the 'nation's' attitudes is changing; hereafter 'the nation' will not tolerate 'disrespect to Turkish nation's values'. Kışlalı reports that Uluç Gürkan has asked a Workers' Party Member of Parliament of England, who was known for his repeated critiques of Turkey regarding the Kurdish issue, about the HADEP incident. Kışlalı claimed that, "this Member of the Parliament commented that even the IRA could not dare such an act. Moreover, "in such a case the congress would be paused for urgent arrest of the activists...Democracy is not the regime of weakness!" (Kışlalı, "HADEP İngiltere'de Olsaydı!", *Cumhuriyet*, July 5, 1996).<sup>404</sup> In his column, Kışlalı identifies PKK with HADEP. He also indirectly justifies Turkey's reaction to this event by referring to a British deputy, who usually criticized Turkey on its policies on the Kurdish issue.

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<sup>404</sup> Actually, presenting HEP, DEP, and HADEP as illegal organizations, was formerly existed too. Frankly, every congress of these parties, and speeches, activities, organizations of their members and deputies always were accepted and represented as indicators of their 'proximity' to illegality and 'betrayal'. For example, in his column in *Hürriyet* on June 10, 1991, Oktay Ekşi discusses Fehmi Işıklar's –chairman of the party and Bursa deputy- opening speech in HEP's congress that held couple of days before. In his column, Ekşi asserts that Işıklar "betrays other part of the nation while pretending to protect rights of the one part." Ekşi rests his opinion on Işıklar's speech: "Kurdish problem is the major obstacle in front of democracy...it is obvious that Kurdish problem can not be solved with rejection and denial...In Turkey the Kurdish people are in existence...stating its own destiny is the unarguable and indispensable right of Kurdish public as much as every public..." And Ekşi asks; does betraying a freedom? (Ekşi, "İhanet Nerede Başlar", *Hürriyet*, June 10, 1991).

As it was mentioned before, the taking down of Turkish flag by some attendees to the HADEP Congress was not represented in the press different than previous events occurred during the oath taking ceremony in the Parliament in 1991, and most of meetings and congress that organized by HEP and its successor DEP, which based on ‘their betrayal’. The reactions of society and size of these reactions are significant in examining this event. For the first time with this event well attended demonstrations among the country was experienced. It is arguable that society hit the streets with grudge to PKK terror; and to everything it represents. By this event, society’s and state’s perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds became equipped with reflexes of Turkish nationalism.

### **5.6 Capture of Şemdin Sakık (1998) and Abdullah Öcalan (1999)**

The capture of the two leaders of the PKK, Sakık and Öcalan, marked the beginning of the disintegration phase for the terrorist organization. Activities of PKK were already been de-escalating since 1997, but capture of terrorist leaders was a turning point for the Kurdish issue in Turkey. This situation would be seen as a development invalidating the discourse of “first terror, then reform” that rose in early 1990s. However, following developments in the country delayed reforms considering the Kurdish issue and they failed to become priorities of the state. The *Marmara* earthquake in August 1999 and the economic crisis in 2001 brought instability to the country and to the coalition government of DSP-MHP-ANAP. These crises that had long-term effects of instability failed the fulfillment of requirements of ‘Copenhagen Criteria’ –long list of requirements including reforms in economics, human rights, and protection of minorities- in order to be a candidate for European Union membership.<sup>405</sup> These three years of instability and uncertainty did not come to an end with

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<sup>405</sup> On August 3, 2002, the Parliament ratified the ‘democracy package’ that covers new laws with the aim of meeting European Union requirements. However, it was almost taken three years to take this step in reform process and it was right after the decision on early general elections was made. In other words, this step was an investment for elections.

the general elections of November 2002 that resulted with the overwhelming electoral victory of ‘moderate Islamist’ Justice and Development Party (AKP). On the other hand, despite the big steps taken by the AKP government towards fulfillment of Copenhagen Criteria, the change of discourse on the Kurdish issue, as shall be elaborated later in the text, corresponds to the recent past.

The capture of Şemdin Sakık induced a witch-hunt that will bring forth the assassination attempt to Akın Birdal, chairman of Human Rights Association of Turkey. Sakık’s confessions on PKK after his capture were treated as facts that unveil the ‘truth’ and ‘collaborators’. The capture of Öcalan was actually presented as the indicator of ‘greatness’ of Turkey and started the recirculation of discourse of denial and practices of assimilation on the Kurdish issue. In April 1998, *Hürriyet* newspaper reported Sakık’s avowal as “direful”, and proposed Sakık’s statements as ‘accurate’ (“Sakık’tan Dehşet İtirafı”, April 25, 1998).<sup>406</sup> According to *Hürriyet*, Sakık gave information on 19 main subjects; PKK relations with HADEP and some countries, supporters of PKK –journalists, writers, politicians, associations, foundations, businessmen–, etc. (“19 Ana Konuda Bilgi Verdi”, April 25, 1998).<sup>407</sup> As van Dijk identifies, the lexical style, namely the choice of words, is significant in analyzing the ideology and language in texts. *Hürriyet*’s report presenting Sakık’s statements as ‘information’ not as ‘assertion’ displays the stance of the newspaper considering the issue. The newspaper supposes and accepts the validity of Sakık’s statements. Significantly, the next day, *Hürriyet* newspaper published the list of the names –politicians, corporations, businessmen, newspapers and journalists– in Sakık’s statement. (“İfadedeki İsimler”, *Hürriyet*, April 26, 1998).<sup>408</sup>

Ekşi commented on the announcement of the above mentioned list as follows: “we are bound to know who were *stabbing us from the back* with

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<sup>406</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1998/04/25/39922.asp> (accessed October 3, 2007)

<sup>407</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1998/04/25/39955.asp> (accessed October 3, 2007)

<sup>408</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1998/04/26/hurriyet.asp> (accessed September 25, 2007)

the mood of 'honest journalist' and 'responsible intellectual'....some used 'law' to cover their malignancy...some said 'human rights'...some said 'democracy'...of course they were right at some points however their concern was not law, human rights or democracy but being PKK's and Kurds' supporter..." (Ekşi, "Alçakları Tanıyalım", *Hürriyet*, April 25, 1998).<sup>409</sup> First of all, according to the text, Ekşi supposes Sakık's statement as absolutely accurate. Secondly, he accuses supporters of human rights and democracy of being 'traitors'. Lastly, he implies that people who support human rights, democracy and rule of law considering the Kurdish issue were terrorists and supporters of PKK. Indeed, after the assassination attempt against Akın Birdal, Ekşi evaluated the event as follows: "this attack is villainous and cloddish for giving the chance to the people who are waiting for an opportunity to talk and write against Turkey..." (Ekşi, "Hem Alçakça, Hem de Aptalca", *Hürriyet*, May 13, 1998).<sup>410</sup> He understated the brutality of the event by defining the attack as 'cloddish'; in a way proposing that there might be other 'wise' ways to 'silence and punish them'. He also evaluated the matter considering 'Turkey's image' not protection of freedom of speech, democracy, or human rights. Altaylı also took a similar attitude to Ekşi. He claimed that "...now all the attention in the west and the east will be on the state...not because Akın Birdal is an important person...just because what was done is wrong...just like Zana...a terror supporter will acquire a monument status..." (Altaylı, "Al Başına Belayı!", *Hürriyet*, May 13, 1998).<sup>411</sup> Altaylı also supposed Birdal as a 'terrorist' guilty of 'betrayal' that deserves to be 'punished'. According to Altaylı, what is wrong and 'cloddish' in this event is not that it is a human rights violation but giving the 'enemy' the chance to 'catch Turkey in the act'.

The presentation of Öcalan's capture as the indicator of greatness of Turkey can be traced in news and news articles published in both

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<sup>409</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1998/04/25/39929.asp> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>410</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1998/05/13/43354.asp> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>411</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1998/05/13/43473.asp> (accessed 25 September 2007)

newspapers. On February 17, *Hürriyet* newspaper reported the capture of Öcalan from the front-page with the title “Here is the Great Victory”. According to *Hürriyet*, Turkey proved to the whole world that it is a great state by capturing the *baby killer* (“İşte büyük Zafer”, *Hürriyet*, February 17, 1999).<sup>412</sup> The lexical style in this news report that does not present Öcalan as a terrorist or a terrorist leader but as a ‘baby killer’ is significant in identifying the value judgment of the newspaper. This choice of word is used as a negativization that displayed newspaper’s underlying opinions about Öcalan. According to Hikmet Çetinkaya, “strength of state of Turkey reappeared once again with the capture of Öcalan...Turkey showed its strength to the world...” (Çetinkaya, “Apo Türkiye’de...”, *Cumhuriyet*, February 17, 1999).<sup>413</sup> Oktay Akbal also believed that by capturing Öcalan “Turkish state showed its allies and enemies how powerful it is and no obstacle can stand in her way when it is necessary to show its power...” (Akbal, “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene”, *Cumhuriyet*, February, 18, 1999).<sup>414</sup> These news reports and opinion articles in newspapers display the fomentation of Turkish nationalism in this period of time.

Following the capture of Öcalan and his trial there was still no trace of reforms on the Kurdish issue. Besides, there was a return to the denial of the existence of ‘a Kurdish issue’ like before the 1990s and the rise of terrorism. As an example of ‘denial’, one of General Kıvrıkoğlu’s -Chief of General Staff- statements is significant. Kıvrıkoğlu mentioned that “if there were a Kurdish problem, we would not succeed in our struggle with terror. There has never been a Kurdish problem in Turkey but a terror problem created by the ones who want to separate Turkey” (“Kürt Sorunu Olsaydı Terörle Mücadelede Başarılı Olamazdık”, *Hürriyet*, April 15, 1999).<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1999/02/17/hurriyet.asp> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>413</sup> <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/cgi-bin/sayfa.cgi? w+30+/Cumhuriyet/ 9902/17/ t/c05.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>414</sup> <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/ cgi-bin/ sayfa.cgi? w+30+/ Cumhuriyet/ 9902/18/t/c02.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>415</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1999/04/15/109309.asp> (accessed 25 September 2007)

Ecevit also denied the existence of a Kurdish problem in his letter to Germany Prime Minister Schröder sent before the European Union summit. In his letter, according to *Hürriyet*'s report, Ecevit stressed that "there is not a Kurdish problem or a Kurdish minority problem in Turkey but there is a struggle against terror" ("Kürt Sorunu Yok", *Hürriyet*, June 9, 1999).<sup>416</sup> Moreover, *Hürriyet* newspaper mentioned Kurdish issue as 'so-called', just like 'so-called Armenian genocide' ("Harold H. Koh 'Haddini Bilsin' Uyarısı", *Hürriyet*, August 4, 1999).<sup>417</sup> With this lexical style, the choice of words in van Dijk's terms, *Hürriyet* proposes that 'Kurdish issue' is an 'unsubstantial assertion'.

As it was mentioned before, with the beginning of 1990s, the Kurdish question began to be perceived identical with PKK terror. The capture of Şemdin Sakık and Abdullah Öcalan realized as the end of terror and accordingly the end of Kurdish issue. Also reactions to their capture displayed nationalist features as it was the case after events in the HADEP congress in 1996. As witnessed in news report and opinion articles, capture of Sakık and Öcalan were presented in a way to 'glorify' Turkey and to label advocates of human rights and democracy as 'traitors', which strengthen Turkish nationalism. After capture of these two leaders of PKK, the state returned to the discourse of 'nonexistence of a Kurdish issue'. However, with the Gulf War II the possibility of establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq increased. Namely, the 'nonexistent Kurdish issue' that ended together with terror found a new basis to 'resurrect' for the Turkish state.

### **5.7 The Gulf War II – 2003**

The possibility of US to declare war against Iraq strengthened especially after the end of 1990s. In this climate, that second war which aimed ending the Saddam Hüseyin government did not last very long on

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<sup>416</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1999/06/09/122531.asp> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>417</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1999/08/04/134597.asp> (accessed 25 September 2007)



paper.<sup>418</sup> After the Turkish Grand National Assembly voted against America's request on U.S. troops of using Turkey's bases and airspace on March 3, 2003; already strained relations between Turkey and U.S.A. come to the point of breaking off. Together with this crisis of confidence among allies, Turkey abandoned its right to intervene in decision making process on the future of Northern Iraq and left outside of developments in the region.<sup>419</sup>

*Hürriyet* newspaper reported that after the end of 'strategic partnership' continued for years, 'USA began to play its Kurdish cards more openly', implying that USA ignores Turkey's 'sensitivities'; namely establishment of an autonomous or independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq ("ABD ve Türkiye'nin Yumuşak Karnı: Kuzey Irak", *Hürriyet*, March 26, 2003).<sup>420</sup> Mümtaz Soysal affirmed that "Washington is obviously step by step putting its plan into effect on establishing an independent Kurdish state starting from Northern Iraq" (Soysal, "Niyet, Plan ve Çare", *Cumhuriyet*, April 7, 2003).<sup>421</sup> Moreover, America was accused on embroiling Turkey's relationship with Iraqi Kurds. According to Cüneyt Arcayürek, USA is triggering the crises in the region (Arcayürek, "Krizin Tetikçisi: ABD!", *Cumhuriyet*, April 12, 2003).<sup>422</sup> As Mustafa Balbay claimed, Barzani and Talabani were making statements to provoke Turkey, because USA wants

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<sup>418</sup>Saddam Hussein caught in Tikrit, Iraq on December 14, 2003 and executed in Iraq on December 30, 2006. Still in 2007, there is not any specific timetable for retreat of USA troops from Iraq. And even as excuse to suspend the retreat; President Bush argues that "hasty "retreat" from Iraq would lead to the kinds of bloodbaths that followed U.S. withdrawals from Vietnam and Cambodia in the 1970s" [http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2007-08-21-iraq-vietnam\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2007-08-21-iraq-vietnam_N.htm) (accessed 1 October 2007)

<sup>419</sup> Especially, after the house arrest of eleven Turkish soldiers by U.S. soldiers –'sack incident' - in Iraq on July 4, 2003, relations between two countries injured to its worst and the anti-American position began to won more adherents in Turkish public opinion.

<sup>420</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/03/26/266775.asp> (accessed September 21, 2007)

<sup>421</sup><http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2003/0304/07/t/c02.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>422</sup><http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2003/0304/12/t/c01.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

them to. (Balbay, “Barzany ve Talabany”, *Cumhuriyet*, April 17, 2003).<sup>423</sup> For Hikmet Bila, there were always intentions to establish a Kurdish state that was started to be realized with the Gulf War I and now America established the Kurdish state and will do anything to protect and ensure its international recognition (Bila, “3 Seyirci”, *Cumhuriyet*, February 4, 2005).<sup>424</sup> *Cumhuriyet* reported that USA will train Kurdish pilots, and found it debatable that air force academy was based in Duhok not Baghdad; implying USA interests in establishing a strong, self-sufficient Kurdish state in Northern Iraq and its disinterest in a unified Iraq (“ABD Kürt Pilot Yetiştirecek”, *Cumhuriyet*, June 5, 2006).<sup>425</sup> Additionally, Turkey reacted Barzani’s treatment as a ‘state President’ during his Washington visit, and Bush calling him as President (“‘Başkan’ Ankara’yı Rahatsız Etti”, *Hürriyet*, October 29, 2005).<sup>426</sup> According to above mentioned newspaper reports and columns; the USA planned and supported the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish state in northern Iraq. In other words, the conventional perception of Kurdish issue that accepts foreign meddling as one of its basic reasons is still effective as a discourse in newspapers.

On the other hand, different than the Gulf War I, in the Gulf War II Turkey took the Turcoman existence in northern Iraq as the basis of its policies on northern Iraq. In *Hürriyet*’s news report, Turkey’s apprehensions on northern Iraq in the post-war period were cited as; Kurds’ demand of federation, status of Turcoman, recall of guns that will be dealt out (“Ankara’da Kuzey Irak Endişesi”, *Hürriyet*, February 24, 2003).<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>423</sup><http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2003/0304/17/t/c01.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>424</sup><http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0502/04/t/c03.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>425</sup><http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2006/0606/05/t/c10.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>426</sup> <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3442134&tarih=2005-10-29> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>427</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/02/24/252935.asp> (accessed October 1, 2007)

Statement of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the then, Yaşar Yakış, on Turkey's 'sensitivities' on northern Iraq issue briefs Turkey's policies. According to Yakış, Turkey does not want Kurds grow stronger with strengthening the autonomy in the region in a way that would damage territorial integrity of Iraq, and does not want Turcoman cultural identities to be damaged and want them to enjoy their constitutional rights fully ("Üç Hassas Mesaj", *Hürriyet*, January 6, 2003).<sup>428</sup> As Sedat Ergin expressed, the Turcoman situation in northern Iraq became Turkey's primary issue in foreign politics ("Yeni Gündem: Türkmen Meselesi", *Hürriyet*, April 15, 2003).<sup>429</sup> In Abdullah Gül's, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the then, statement Turkey's policies on this issue were plainly expressed. Gül's statement follows as: "Kirkuk is a place where Turcoman are majority....that (Turcoman) identity of Kirkuk could not be destroyed. If our relatives can not live in peace in these regions and injustice done to them, governments in a democratic country could not hold aloof...Turkey is a regional country; it is historically responsible to the region" ("Kerkük'te Çatışma Olursa Türkiye Seyirci Kalamaz", *Hürriyet*, January 31, 2005).<sup>430</sup>

Turkey uses Turcoman existence in northern Iraq as an excuse and means to intervene establishment of a Kurdish state. Turkey's policies on Turcoman population that are based on 'race union' represented Turkey's perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds. With emphasizing 'kinship' between Turcoman and Turks; Turkish state excluded Kurdish citizens both by overrating importance of race commonality rather than citizenship and by presenting Iraqi Kurds, akin of Turkey's Kurds, as enemies of Turkey. In other words, Turkish nationalism, which had been rising since the end of 1990s, was the essence of Turkey's policies on Turcoman issue in northern Iraq.

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<sup>428</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/01/06/230859.asp> (accessed October 1, 2007)

<sup>429</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/04/15/275394.asp> (accessed October 1, 2007)

<sup>430</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/01/31/592311.asp> (accessed October 1, 2007)

There are several examples of identification of Turcoman with Turkey. For example, in 2003 *Hürriyet* newspaper reported the beginning of Turcoman radio's broadcast in Kirkuk ("Kerkük'te Türkmen Radyosu Yayında", *Hürriyet*, April 26, 2003).<sup>431</sup> According to this news, "Kirkuk, where Turcoman densely inhabit, finally got Turkish radio broadcast...Turkish artists' songs were played on the radio...". On the other hand, in 2003, Turkey invited twenty seven Turcoman -with 'leadership qualities'- to Ankara, for training on politics (Yalçın Doğan, "Türkmenlere Ankara'da Eğitim", *Hürriyet*, July 9, 2003).<sup>432</sup> This means that Turkey is educating its 'relatives', who would not betray 'them', in accordance with its interests in the region. According to state's approach, the Turcoman people did not break Turkey's faith and adopt Turkey's 'sensitivities' in principle. For example, the Turcoman Television broadcasted PKK office in Kirkuk, with flags of the organization and democratic confederation (PKK, Kerkük'te Büro Açıp, Flama Astı", *Hürriyet*, July 31, 2005).<sup>433</sup> The broadcast emphasized that USA and other allies' forces do not interfere to the building. However, it is more significant that the broadcast was made by the Turcoman Television. With this irrelevant information, the newspaper represented Turcoman people as Turkey's 'loyal' relatives and allies. Ahmet Muratlı's, agent of Iraq Turcoman Front in Turkey, letter to President Sezer on the adoption of Constitution of Iraq is also significant in displaying relationship between Turkey and Turcoman population in Iraq. In his letter, Muratlı call attention to article 22 of the Constitution claiming it recognizes PKK right to house in northern Iraq ("PKK'lılar Irak'ta Mülteci Oluyor", *Hürriyet*, November 6, 2005).<sup>434</sup> This news report is another example of 'adopting Turkey's sensitivities' by Turcoman people.

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<sup>431</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/04/26/280375.asp> (accessed October 1, 2007)

<sup>432</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/07/09/314572.asp> (accessed October 1, 2007)

<sup>433</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/07/31/680011.asp> (accessed October 1, 2007)

<sup>434</sup> <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haberler.aspx?id=1&tarih=2005-11-06> (main page accessed 6 October 2006)

The Gulf War II that was initiated by the USA in accordance with its national interests was differently evaluated by Turkey compared to the Gulf War I. First of all, there was not any multinational initiative taken in this war; America was standing-alone. In other words, possibility of an independent or an autonomous Iraqi Kurdish state became associated mainly with the USA. The 'hidden objectives of the West' were replaced with 'America's hidden objectives'. Within the thirteen years of time after the Gulf War I, the possibility of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq raised. Iraqi Kurds, which had been protected by USA from Saddam Hussein threat for years, grew stronger since the Gulf War II. Namely, the discourse of Iraqi Kurd's dependency on Turkey to survive, which was effective after the Gulf War I, definitely became invalid by the Gulf War II. Therefore Turkey adopted another policy on northern Iraq; namely being 'guardian' of Turcoman in northern Iraq.

Turkish state's policies of defending Turcoman rights in northern Iraq and putting these policies in the agenda of the country was both reason and consequence of fomenting rise of Turkish nationalism. Turkey's policy on claiming to be defender of Turcoman rights exposes Turkey's changing priorities after the Gulf War II. According to these priorities, citizen Kurds that are not of the same race were excluded because of their 'kinship' with 'enemies', namely northern Iraqi Kurds, while Turcoman that are of same race with Turks, who are not citizens, were treated as 'allies'. During this period perception of the Kurds was shaped by Turkish nationalism and notion of 'race' rather than through citizens that can be assimilated. This transformation on the perception of citizenship will be the basis of the next case; 2005 Nevruz.

### **5.8 Nevruz - 2005**

In the country-wide demonstrations of Nevruz in 2005, the flags promoted by the PKK as part of its "stateless confederalism" program were

used in an extensive manner.<sup>435</sup> In many of these demonstrations posters of Abdullah Öcalan were also used. Strikingly, during the celebrations in Urfa, a ‘*Kurdistan*’ map covering Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria was opened.<sup>436</sup> During the demonstrations of Nevruz celebration in Mersin a few kids tread down the Turkish flag. This incident in Mersin raised a country wide reaction similar to following reactions to putting down of the Turkish flag in HADEP party Congress in 1996.<sup>437</sup> Prime Minister Erdoğan assessed the incident as ‘malignity’, leader of the main opposition party Baykal as ‘maraud’ (“Tepkiler”, *Hürriyet*, March 23, 2005).<sup>438</sup> Deputy Prime Minister Gül defined the event as ‘traitorous’ and the ones that assaulted the flag as ‘malevolent’ (“Gül: Türk Bayrağına Saldıranlar Bedhahtır”, *Hürriyet*, March 22, 2005).<sup>439</sup>

However the reaction of the military was the most crucial point considering the significance of this incident. The General Staff issued a statement of ‘warning’ reads as follows:

To the Great Turkish Nation...Innocent celebrations of beginning of the spring, the common value of humanity, were gone too far as ...attacking the glorious Turkish flag, the symbol of Turkish nation, by a group who did not took their share of any value...Turkish nation gone through good and bad times in its wide history, experienced betrayals alongside victories. However, never been faced with this kind of malignancy done in its own country by its own so-called citizens...nation’s flag being subject to a treatment like this by its so-

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<sup>435</sup> Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türk’ten Sözde Vatandaşa - Cumhuriyet Ve Kürtler*, p. 78

<sup>436</sup> [www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=147163](http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=147163) (accessed 25 August 2007)

<sup>437</sup> According to *Hürriyet* newspaper, as the best response to traitor; “millions claimed the Turkish flag that some betrayers attempt to tread down. Ten thousands of our citizens take to the streets [organized protest marches by carrying Turkish flags] and work places and houses wore red-white.” “Haine En Güzel Yantı”, *Hürriyet*, March 24, 2005 <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/03/24/618200.asp> “Flag demonstrations organized as a reaction in the whole country turned into flag meetings...respect for the flag marches were made...” “Pazar Bayrakları”, *Hürriyet*, March 28, 2005 <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/03/28/620026.asp> (accessed 25 August 2007)

<sup>438</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/03/23/617803.asp> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>439</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/03/22/617112.asp> (accessed 25 September 2007)

called own citizens on its own soil is both inexplicable and unacceptable. This is a treasonous action. Both being citizen of a country, breath its air, drinking its water, feeding on, and attempting to attack its most sacred asset, its flag, can not be explained by nothing but negligence, depravity, and treason. Everyone, allies and enemies, should know very well that, neither the inseparable integrity of this nation nor the glorious Turkish flag that is the symbol of this solidarity and integrity is defenseless...we suggest the ones who misinterpret its [Turkish Armed Forces] dignity, solemnity, and patience, ones who run after miscalculations, and attempt to test its love of motherland and its flag, to look at the pages of history.<sup>440</sup>

As Yeğen mentions, “this statement was unique in charging citizens of the country who broke the laws as ‘so-called citizens’”.<sup>441</sup> Needless to say; emphasis on ‘betrayal’ reflects nothing but the old, considering patterns of previous experiences. According to Yeğen, “what concerned the high officials this much to call upon this ‘unusual’ expression of ‘so-called citizens’, was not only two kids treaded down the Turkish flag but primarily Nevruz demonstrations of 2005 indicating important number of Kurdish citizens’ weakening bond with the national political unity.”<sup>442</sup>

To some columnists, what displayed the above mentioned weakening bond was the use of flags of “democratic confederacy”. Orhan Birgit draws attention to the posters of “Democratic Confederacy is the Salvation of Middle east” that was carried during Nevruz celebrations in Diyarbakır. According to Birgit, “these posters of ‘confederacy’ present the new aim of Kurdish movement in Turkey” (Birgit, “Demokratik Konfederalizm!”, *Cumhuriyet*, March 22, 2005).<sup>443</sup> He implies that aims and nature of the Kurdish movement in Turkey transformed after the Gulf War II that increased the possibility of the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Birgit supposed the aim of Kurdish nationalism as

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<sup>440</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/03/23/617801.asp> (accessed 25 August 2007)

<sup>441</sup> Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türkten Sözde Vatandaşa Cumhuriyet Ve Kürtler*, p. 79

<sup>442</sup> Ibid, p. 81

<sup>443</sup> <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0503/22/t/c07.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

weakening Turkey's Kurds' 'bonds' with the state in order to strengthen their 'will' to join the Kurdish state that will be established in northern Iraq. Hikmet Çetinkaya also embraced similar perspective with Orhan Birgit. According to Çetinkaya, "some Kurdish groups and PKK spokesmen begin to speak of 'democratic confederacy' after Iraq's occupation -by USA-...aim was to move conjointly with Kurds of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and of Iran...foreign powers, that want to disintegrate the Turkish nation, are pleased with these happenings..." (Çetinkaya, "Tarihi Yok Saymak...", *Cumhuriyet*, March 24, 2005).<sup>444</sup> Çetinkaya supposes, in van Dijk's terms, that plans of 'democratic confederacy', supported by foreign powers besides Kurds settled in countries of the region, will disintegrate Turkey. Hadi Uluengin determines both Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish nationalists as "primitive" and "immature" considering their support to policy of 'democratic confederacy' (Uluengin, "Kürt Eli...", *Hürriyet*, March 22, 2005).<sup>445</sup> He also claimed that "celebrating Nevruz with daring to carrying the flag of Iraqi Kurdistan additional to Abdullah Öcalan posters" as "negligence" and "dreaming Iraqi Kurdistan to be charming for millions of our Kurdish citizens ranged all corners of the country" as another part of "delirium". However, more importantly, Uluengin claims that Kurdish nationalism will fail because "overwhelming majority of our Kurdish citizens are wise, foresighted and 'from Turkey'".

Celebrations of Nevruz in 2005 proved that the policies of the state toward acquiring and officializing Nevruz remained ineffective. As mentioned earlier, the discourse that Nevruz to be a Turkish fest was promoted since the prime ministry of Tansu Çiller. Especially after the incidents of 1992, celebrations of Nevruz feast did not turned into a 'mutiny' against the state once the policies of 'officializing Nevruz' were erected. However, Nevruz celebrations of 2005 organized in several cities received

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<sup>444</sup><http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0503/24/t/c05.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>445</sup> <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/03/22/617445.asp> (accessed 25 August 2007)



popular participation<sup>446</sup> and the demonstrations were striking in its symbolic dimensions.<sup>447</sup> All in all, the Kurdish nationalism became that much ‘visible’ for the first time after a path of many years. The next case, Şemdinli incident, is the second time that Kurdish nationalism and popular ‘discontent’ of Kurds became visible. Events following the Şemdinli incident were perceived as other indicators of ‘Kurds’ weakening bond with the national unity’ and displayed state’s weakening belief in Kurds’ assimilation.

### **5.9 Şemdinli Incident (2005) and Debates on ‘Identity’**

On November 9, 2005, a bookstore in Şemdinli –county of Hakkari- was bombed; two people were killed and fourteen people were injured. Local people witnessed the incident that ended with arrest of three men involved with the bombing. It was contended that two of these perpetrators were gendarmerie intelligence officers (JITEM) and one was a PKK informant. In suspects’ automobile assault rifles, Şemdinli area maps, a name list of the political opposition leaders, and a document of information about certain individuals in Şemdinli were discovered. After the detention of these three men (Tanju Çavuş, Veysel Ateş –PKK informant-, Ali Kaya, Özcan İldeniz) on November 12, 2005, two of them -Ali Kaya and Özcan İldeniz released pending trial by the Court.<sup>448</sup>

*Cumhuriyet* newspaper reported that “violence broke out in Şemdinli with bombing incident”, which is defined as a “bloody provocation” (“Şemdinli’de Kanlı Tahrık”, *Cumhuriyet*, November 10, 2005).<sup>449</sup> *Hürriyet* newspaper reported that “thousands of people attended protest

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<sup>446</sup> [www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=147163](http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=147163) (accessed 25 August 2007)

<sup>447</sup> Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türk’ten Sözde Vatandaşa - Cumhuriyet Ve Kürtler*, p. 78

<sup>448</sup> The judicial process is still continuing; as per September 2007, Supreme Court of Appeals reversed the judgment on procedural grounds. The law suit will be held in the military court.

<sup>449</sup> <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0511/10/t/c06.html> (accessed 2 October 2007)

demonstrations following the event” and defined the incident as “tension in Şemdinli” (“Şemdinli Gergin”, *Hürriyet*, November 10, 2005).<sup>450</sup> While *Cumhuriyet* newspaper reported suspects of being soldiers as “network of dark relationships”, *Hürriyet* newspaper reported their presence in the venue as “gathering information” (“Karanlık İlişkiler Ağı”, *Cumhuriyet*, November 11, 2005, “Askerler Bilgi Topluyordu”, *Hürriyet*, November 11, 2005).<sup>451</sup> According to the news report of *Hürriyet*, “it is announced that three soldiers, who the public attempt to lynch, were in the region with the mission of gathering information”. The lexical style –the choice of words-, in van Dijk’s terms, is significant. According to the report the information is not an assertion but an announcement. By this word choice, *Hürriyet* presupposes the validity of this information, which reported without quotation as newspaper’s perception; implying suspects did not partake in the bombing.

Following the bombing event in Şemdinli, Commander of Land Forces General Büyükanıt expressed that he knows Petty Officer Ali Kaya and mentioned that “That Petty Officer speaks Kurdish fluently. He officiated in Northern Iraq. He was always with me while I was in Diyarbakır. He is a good soldier. Of course we respect to continuing inquiry. We are waiting for the result.” General Büyükanıt also emphasized that “the region is chaotic for a while and many martyr funerals are coming” (“Susurluk’la İlgisi Yok”, *Cumhuriyet*, November 12, 2005).<sup>452</sup> Büyükanıt’s statement that portrays a suspect as a ‘good soldier’ and irrelevant emphasis on martyr funerals displays the stance of the military considering this issue. In other words, maintaining peace of Kurdish ‘citizens’ in southeast and their reliance to the state put aside; human rights violations and possible

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<sup>450</sup><http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/Haberler.aspx?id=1&tarih=2005-11-10> (accessed 2 October 2007)

<sup>451</sup> <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0511/11/t/c04.html> (accessed October 2, 2007) <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3508370&tarih=2005-11-11> (accessed 2 October 2007)

<sup>452</sup><http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0511/12/t/c01.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

illegal activities of the state and the military in the region considered and presented as insignificant.<sup>453</sup>

One week after the Şemdinli bombing, three people died by police fire during demonstrations in Yüksekova –county of Hakkari- to protest Şemdinli incidents.<sup>454</sup> On November 16, 2005, thousands of people attend these three people’s funeral ceremony in Yüksekova. The military flying F-16s over the Yüksekova funerals was significant in displaying the transformation of the perception of the Kurdish issue on the official level. *Cumhuriyet* newspaper did not report this event. However, *Hürriyet* newspaper reported that “people reacted” to the event. According to the news, “people mentioned that an event like this was not experienced for years in the region” (“Hakkari’de Tansiyon Düşüyor”, *Hürriyet*, November 17, 2005).<sup>455</sup> Yeğen regards this event as a ‘reaction’ of armed forces. However, Yeğen argues that this ‘reaction’ of the armed forces is an indicator, as their statement of ‘so-called citizens’ following 2005 Nevruz

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<sup>453</sup> The prosecutor of Şemdinli case, Ferhat Sarıkaya, issued an indictment on March 3, 2006. In the indictment the prosecutor proposed that further investigations should be carried out in order to determine whether senior military officers had ordered the attack on the bookshop. The indictment referred to General Büyükanıt by name because of his description of Kaya as ‘a good officer’. On March 20, 2006, the Office of the Chief of General Staff made a complaint against the prosecutor and issued a statement that the indictment was “political ... aiming to undermine the Turkish Armed Forces and the fight against terror.” By April 21, 2006, the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors had taken Prosecutor Sarıkaya off the case, removed him from his job, and stripped him of his status as a lawyer for “abuse of his duty and exceeding his authority.” *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers reported this indictment as part of a frame-up against the armed forces and General Büyükanıt.

<sup>454</sup> These demonstrations and events reported by newspapers as “provocation” that spread out to Yüksekova after Şemdinli. “Tahrir Savaşı Yüksekova’da”, *Hürriyet*, November 16, 2005, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/Haberler.aspx?id=1&tarih=2005-11-16> (main page accessed 3 October 2005), “Tehlikeli Oyunlar”, *Cumhuriyet*, November 16, 2005 <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0511/16/t/index.html> (accessed October 2, 2007) *Cumhuriyet* reported protest demonstrations in Yüksekova as increasing of tension. “Tansiyon Yükseliyor”, *Cumhuriyet*, November 17, 2005 <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0511/17/t/c01.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>455</sup> <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/Haberler.aspx?id=1&tarih=2005-11-17> (main page accessed 3 October 2007)

events, that both in popular and official levels the belief on Kurds as ‘future Turks’ weakened with regard to past.<sup>456</sup>

Some newspaper columnists perceived the Şemdinli incident and well-attended protest demonstrations mostly as ‘rehearsals of separation’ of the region from the country. For example; considering the incidents in the region Çölaşan claimed that “southeast is going out of our hands...events occurred and almost transform into rebellion...the crowd is being directed and manipulated by mayors of the district...things reached a serious and terrifying level...everyone should come to their senses”. (Çölaşan, “Elden Çıkan Güneydoğu”, *Hürriyet*, November 22, 2005).<sup>457</sup> Additionally, Mehmet Yılmaz asserted that “there is a mood of rebellion in the region”, and “a public riot is being prompted” (Yılmaz, “Türkiye En Kritik Dönemekte”, *Hürriyet*, November 23, 2005).<sup>458</sup> Both columnists evaluated incidents in the region following Şemdinli events as either ‘uprising’ or ‘rehearsal of uprising’. However, they did not question the motives behind the Şemdinli bombing, and the attendance of Kurds to demonstrations protesting the bombing.

Besides this perspective mentioned above, developments in the northern Iraq also considered interrelated to events in the southeast Anatolia. According to Cüneyt Ülsever, “Turkey could have intercepted current ‘issues’ outside its borders if the Parliament had approved the resolution of March 3” (Ülsever, “Şemdinli’de Olanlar Irak’ta olanlarla İlgilidir!”, *Hürriyet*, November 23, 2005).<sup>459</sup> Ülsever implies that these events are organized by Kurds in northern Iraq. According to Ülsever, “The latest developments in Şemdinli-Hakkari-Yüksekova and in (Northern) Iraq are

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<sup>456</sup> Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türk’ten Sözde Vatandaşa - Cumhuriyet Ve Kürtler*, p. 82

<sup>457</sup> <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3549616&tarih=2005-11-22> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>458</sup> <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3554493&tarih=2005-11-23> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>459</sup> <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3553937&tarih=2005-11-23> (accessed 25 September 2007)

interrelated developments...The Kurdish issue is a pus in Turkey's own body; but in general, especially in the recent past, is scratched from abroad!..." (Ülsever, "Irak Üstünden Şemdinli", *Hürriyet*, November 29, 2005).<sup>460</sup> Mustafa Balbay asserts that "it is impossible to evaluate incidents in Şemdinli, Yüksekova, and Hakkari separately from developments in our environment...northern Iraq is behind the scene in these incidents... On the same days as the tension between security forces and the public rose, it is reported that there experienced similar cases in Kurdish territories of Iran and Syria..." (Balbay, "Güneydoğu'daki Kanlı Bulmacanın Parçaları", *Cumhuriyet*, November 28, 2005).<sup>461</sup> Considering the examples of news reports examined above, it can be argued that the discourse of 'foreign meddling' was still effective in referencing the Kurdish movement.

During his visits to Şemdinli and Yüksekova on November 20, 2005, following the Şemdinli event, Prime Minister Erdoğan initiated the debates on supra-identity and sub-identity. Erdoğan stated that "...in Turkey there will be no ethnic nationalism, we will end this...we [Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Laz] will be one and united under the supra-identity of citizenship of Republic of Turkey...we will respect sub-identities...Turk will say 'I'm a Turk', Kurd will say 'I'm a Kurd', and Laz will say 'I'm a Laz'...everyone is obliged to respect that...however, we all have a supra-identity: we are citizens of Republic of Turkey..." ("Erdoğan: Puslu Havaya Aldanmayın", *Hürriyet*, November 21, 2005).<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3576233&tarih=2005-11-29> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>461</sup> <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0511/28/t/c01.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>462</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/3546774.asp?gid=69> (accessed 25 September 2007) Baykal, the leader of the main opposition party CHP, responded Erdoğan by stating that "...citizenship of Republic of Turkey is not a supra-identity...it can not be replaced with Turkish nation...you will embrace the notion of Turkish nation, you will not be ashamed of saying Turkish nation..." "Alt Kimlik Polemiği", *Hürriyet*, November 22, 2005. <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/Haberler.aspx?id=1&tarih=2005-11-22> (accessed 25 September 2007) *Cumhuriyet* newspaper reported Baykal's statement that "Citizenship of Republic of Turkey is not a supra-identity but a juridical identity...you can not replace Turkish nation with citizenship of Republic of Turkey..." "Üst-Kimlik Tartışması",

The issue of identity that is raised by the Prime Minister following Şemdinli incidents motivated arguments country-wide. For example, Özdemir İnce claimed that “notions of constitutional citizenship, sub-identity, and supra-identity that brought up by Prime Minister are...opening Pandora’s box...” (İnce, “Alt-üst Kimlik Tezgahı”, *Hürriyet*, December 3, 2005).<sup>463</sup> According to İnce, “destroying the national consciousness and the nation state would be the aim of global capital and imperialism...citizens of nation state should claim their nations and nation states...contrary to this is: betrayal!..” (İnce, “Kirlili Oyun”, *Hürriyet*, December 4, 2005).<sup>464</sup> Emre Kongar asserts that “bringing cultural specialties foreground, without doubt, damages both social unity and unified structure of Republic of Turkey...” (Kongar, “Alt-Kimlik Üst-Kimlik”, *Cumhuriyet*, December 12, 2005).<sup>465</sup> Despite the emphasis that Turkish citizenship forms the supra-identity, İnce and Kongar agree that identity debates may harm the unity of country. In this way, two authors support state’s policies of assimilation.

On the other hand, according İlhan Selçuk, “the incitement of ‘identity’ debates and rising of minority issue again is not a coincidence...they want to shake the well established foundations of secular Republic...” (Selçuk, “Azınlıklar?...”, *Cumhuriyet*, December 28, 2005).<sup>466</sup> Selçuk adopts a discourse that emphasizes two major threats to the Turkish state; the ‘reactionary movements’ and ‘separatism’. The columnist implies that the ‘Turkishness’ and ‘secularism’ are foundations of the Turkish state. Additionally, President Sezer’s New Years Message was full of meanings. In

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*Cumhuriyet*, November 23, 2005. [http:// arama.yore.com.tr: 8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/ Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0511/23/t/index.html](http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0511/23/t/index.html) (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>463</sup> <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3594488&tarih=2005-12-03> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>464</sup> <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3597521&tarih=2005-12-04> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>465</sup> <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0512/12/t/c03.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>466</sup> <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2005/0512/28/t/c02.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

this message, Sezer states that in the Republic of Turkey “there exists single state, single country, and single nation as founding elements; these elements, single language and single flag ideals are indispensable...” (“Sezer’den Kimlik Vurgusu”, *Hürriyet*, December 31, 2005, “Tek Devlet, Tek Ülke, Tek Ulus” “, *Hürriyet*, January 1, 2006).<sup>467</sup> The headline of news report of *Hürriyet*, underlines the significant points of the President’s statement. The statement, which was reported as being a response to debates on identity by the news, manifested that state’s policies on citizenship is based on ‘race’. The news report emphasizes the importance and validity of state’s policies of assimilation based on ‘Turkishness’.

Şemdinli bombing and events occurred after the incident revealed the transformation of the perception on the Kurdish issue and the Kurds. Flying low of two F-16 jets of Turkish air forces over the funeral procession of people who killed during protest demonstrations of Şemdinli incident and the Yüksekova County, which was a message of ‘disappointment’ from the military was of the same nature with statement of ‘so-called citizens’ issued after 2005 Nevruz events. In Yeğen’s terms, state realized that Kurds are not willing to be assimilated. It was realized with Nevruz of 2005, events occurred after Şemdinli events and re-escalating terror that (either a consequence of establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq or foreign meddling) efforts to assimilate Kurds, which continuing for decades, will not be eventuated. The state realized increasing discontent in the region and weakening of Kurdish citizens’ bond with the state rather than strengthening. As a matter of fact, debates on sub-identity and supra-identity that initiated by Prime Minister Erdoğan was a step towards strengthening Kurdish citizens’ bonds with the state.

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<sup>467</sup><http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/Haberler.aspx?id=1&tarih=2005-12-31> (main page accessed 3 October 2007)<http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/Haberler.aspx?id=1&tarih=2006-01-01> (main page accessed 3 October 2007)

## 5.10 Civil Conflicts

Until this point, transformation of the perception on the Kurdish issue was examined through representations in the press parallel to domestic and international political developments. On the other hand, tension and conflicts among the society displays the direction of the change in the perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds during significant periods. Conflicts between Turks and Kurds, mostly between 1991 and 1993, were isolated events in general. However, discourse that occurred during these events is significant in displaying the nature of perception on Kurds. For example, an incident occurred in July 1991 displays the intolerance to 'Kurdish existence'. On July 4, 1991, a police chief in Istanbul killed two people in a restaurant because they were talking and singing in Kurdish ("Kürtçe Kavgası Kanlı Bitti", *Cumhuriyet*, July 5, 1991). Besides this example of 'intolerance' to 'Kurdish existence' there are several examples of discrimination against Kurdish citizens based on their identification with PKK. For example, events following the martyr funeral of a soldier in Fethiye, who was murdered by the PKK militants in Bitlis, continued for days in the county. According to *Cumhuriyet's* news, during the events; the outdoor sign of HEP county organization was taken down and groups of teenagers exercised identification control by night ("Türk-Kürt Kavgası Şimdilik Bitti", *Cumhuriyet*, October 5, 1992). Hikmet Çetinkaya regarded events and tension in Fethiye as a result of provocation and conflicting interests of the mafia ("Fethiye ve Turgutlu'da Neler Oluyor?", *Cumhuriyet*, October 5, 1992). These news reports and columns presented events as a matter of public order with disregarding their 'discriminative' nature. However, less than a month later tension re-increased in the region, again after a martyr funeral in Alanya. According to *Cumhuriyet's* news, during the events, two people were tried to be lynched, offices and houses of 'eastern originated citizens' were shot and damaged. The newspaper reported that "oppression against 'eastern originated citizens' to vacate their offices and houses begin and Kurds are afraid to leave their houses"



(“Kürtler Korkudan Sokağa Çıkamıyor”, *Cumhuriyet*, November 1, 1992, “Kiracı Kürtlere ‘Evden Çık’ Baskısı”, *Cumhuriyet*, November 3, 1992). These news reports emphasize discrimination and restraint against the Kurds; but consequences of the social psychology created by ‘low-intensity war’ continuing for years, in this case lynch of Kurds, were disregarded and not discussed.

The most eminent example of society’s discriminative practices against Kurds was occurred in Tavas county of Denizli in November 1993. According to *Hürriyet*’s news report, “seven families of Kurdish origin - escaped from Muş because of terror- that wanted to migrate to Tavas were stopped by 300 people mentioning they ‘do not want Kurds’ in the county” (“Muş’tan Kaçan Kürtler Tavas’a Sokulmadı”, *Hürriyet*, November 2, 1993). As it was mentioned in the report, the crowd chanted slogans against PKK and Kurds and families left the county. On the other hand, *Hürriyet*’s way of reporting the news is also significant. Reporting that “seven families that want to migrate to the county increased tension”, the newspaper presented Kurdish families as responsible for increasing the tension in the county and defended ‘the crowd’. Also the newspaper justified actions of people of Tavas, with irrelevant information, by emphasizing the murder of two teachers in Diyarbakır, who were from Tavas, five days before these incidents occurred. The newspaper claimed that, the people of Tavas were intense because of murder of these teachers by PKK. Disputes and reactions against Kurds were mostly based on their identification with PKK by the public. In other words, opposition of people to PKK terror and hatred against terror returns as discrimination, violence, and cancellation of rights of Kurds.

The most significant event that can not be treated as an isolated incident was the systematic exercise of discrimination and oppression against Kurdish agricultural workers by governorship of Ordu for years. In 1998, governor of Ordu, Kemal Yazıcıoğlu, issued a circular order that prohibits eastern workers laboring in harvest of hazelnut by reason of

'sheltering PKK spies'.<sup>468</sup> After the governor warned governors of districts and village headmen; the police deported eastern workers that arrived Ordu. As *Cumhuriyet* newspaper reported, exercise of repression against eastern workers continued in 1999; four workers that claimed to be supporters of PKK taken into custody. These workers were deported after they were released.<sup>469</sup> As *Cumhuriyet* newspaper reported in 2000, "the 'prohibition' did not end" in Ordu and secretly continued.<sup>470</sup> According to the newspaper, gendarmerie impounded identity certificates of all eastern workers that arrived Ordu.<sup>471</sup> Following *Cumhuriyet*'s news report, governorship of Ordu restrained the prohibition and announced that fresh water and bread will be given to workers and a doctor will be assigned for their medical control.<sup>472</sup> However, in 2002 prohibition on eastern workers laboring in Ordu that ended by the governorship re-imposed by Chamber of Agriculture of Ordu.<sup>473</sup> According to *Cumhuriyet*, Chamber of Agriculture imposed embargo to many southeastern cities by disallowing working of agricultural workers from whole southeastern cities except Batman, Adıyaman, and Mersin. Applications like impounding identity certificates of workers and building police station in workers' settling area continued in 2006.

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<sup>468</sup> "Kürt Tarım İşçisine İş Yasağı", *Cumhuriyet*, August 6, 1998, <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet1998/9808/06/t/c03.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>469</sup> "Ordu'da Ambargolu Yaşam", *Cumhuriyet*, August 12, 1999 <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet1999/9908/12/t/c07.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>470</sup> "Güneydoğulu İşçiler Kente Sokulmuyor", *Cumhuriyet*, August 1, 2000 <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2000/0008/01/t/c04.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>471</sup> "Güneydoğulu İşçilerin Ordu'daki Çilesi", *Cumhuriyet*, August 5, 2000 <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2000/0008/05/t/c07.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>472</sup> "Valilik Güneydoğulu İşçilere Kucak Açtı", *Cumhuriyet*, August 6, 2000 <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2000/0008/06/t/c04.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

<sup>473</sup> "Güneydoğulu Fındık İşçisine Ambargo", *Cumhuriyet*, July 6, 2002 <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2002/0207/06/t/c03.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

According to *Cumhuriyet*'s news report, workers reacted to these applications that continued for years by claiming that they are citizens not terrorists.<sup>474</sup>

These applications of discrimination that continued in Ordu reflect state's perception of Kurdish issue and Kurds rather than reflecting perception of the society. The state seems to have embraced these discriminative policies as it did not intervene to prevent them. It can be argued that Kurds were identified with PKK and perceived as 'potential' terrorist by the beginning of 1990 as PKK terror accelerated and by the end of 1990s as Turkish nationalism rise. In other words, it can be argued that, both at the social and official levels, the Kurdish issue and Kurds were identified with PKK terror. The prevention of migration of Kurds to eastern cities by local people, demands on vacating their houses, and imposition of embargo to their work were based and related to PKK terror in every occasion.

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<sup>474</sup> ““Terörist Değil Yurttaşız””, *Cumhuriyet*, August 8, 2006, <http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/Cumhuriyet/Cumhuriyet2002/0608/08/t/c07.html> (accessed 25 September 2007)

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify if there occurred any transformation in perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds both on official and popular levels during the last two decades. This purpose of the thesis necessitated identification and analysis of the conventional perception that examined in relation to ‘transformation’. According to state’s ‘conventional perception’, (established by the 1924 Constitution) Kurds were accepted as ‘Turks-to-be’; who can become Turks by practices of assimilation, contrary to the non-Muslim population regarded as Turks ‘in terms of citizenship’.<sup>475</sup>

By 1990s state’s policies of the Kurdish issue began to change. Primarily, the Turkish state accepted the ‘existence’ of Kurds and the Kurdish issue. In this study, eight cases of significant international and domestic events were examined regarding their effects on state’s discourse, the way the Kurdish issue and Kurds had been perceived. Three international developments, which constitute the background context of these eight cases, necessitated the Turkish state to revise its perception and policies on the Kurdish issue: dissolution of the Soviet Union, globalization, and establishment of a Kurdish political formation in northern Iraq.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> See Yeğen, M., *Müstakbel Türkten Sözde Vatandaş*

<sup>476</sup> Ibid, p. 39 According to Yeğen, as a consequence of dissolution of the Soviet Union the balances of power in the region shifted. A USA intervention to Iraq became possible and the historical reconciliation between Turkey, Iraq, and Iran on controlling their Kurdish population became invalid. Secondly, it is argued that the Kurdish issue is attached to opportunities (like the European Union and discourse of human rights and democracy) and disadvantages (like unequal development and poverty) of globalization. Lastly, the *de facto* Kurdish state in northern Iraq became a reference for Kurds’ political imagination. Ibid, pp. 37-40

As it was argued before newspapers regenerate and represent the state perception, which -in this case- based on nationalist reflexes. Methodologically, in this study, the transformation of the official ideology and discourse on the Kurdish issue was followed from two mainstream newspapers; *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*. It is significant to note that, these two newspapers differ on their discourse considering the human rights issues that recalled by Kurdish question. *Cumhuriyet* usually reported events on the Kurdish issue neutrally. Until mid-1990s, the newspaper focused on and underlined human rights violations in the region and grievances of the Kurdish population inhabited the southeast region. After mid-1990s, as state's struggle with PKK terror increased, *Cumhuriyet* stopped reporting on these issues. Following the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government after 2003, *Cumhuriyet* began to report the Kurdish issue as a part of Islamic revivalism. The newspaper reports and columns presented the AKP government's efforts of democratization considering the Kurdish issue as a threat to basic foundations of the republic: unity and secularism. On the other hand, *Hürriyet* generally used 'nationalist discourse', which was far from neutrality, in reporting about the Kurdish issue. Additionally, following the Gulf War in 2003, both newspapers adopted an anti-American stance regarding the Kurdish question.

In order to examine the 'representations' of official ideology in these two newspapers the Critical Discourse Analysis techniques of van Dijk and Fairclough were used. According to Fairclough, the purpose of discourse analysis is to show the links between *social practice* and *discursive practice*, namely the context and the text. Its aim is to explore the links between language use and the *social practice*; the focus is the role of *discursive practices* in the maintenance of the 'social order' and 'social change'. According to Fairclough, discourse conventions, which embody naturalized *ideologies*, are the most effective mechanisms for sustaining *hegemonies*. Hence, in order to identify *hegemonies* that are sustained by discourse conventions, naturalized *ideologies* -embedded in *discursive practices*- that achieve the status of common sense is analyzed. With focusing on

*hegemonies*, the *social practice* is analyzed in terms of *power relations*; whether they reproduce, restructure or challenge existing *hegemonies*. Because according to Fairclough, the nature of the *social practice* determines the internalized member resources, macro-processes of *discursive practice*, which are people's values, beliefs, assumptions that drew upon representations of the social world they inhabit and make use of when they engage in their *social practice*.

Yeğen asserts that recently the belief in Kurds to be 'future Turks' was weakened and this 'erosion' took place both in popular and official grounds.<sup>477</sup> According to Yeğen, association of Kurdishness with *non-Muslimhood* in the popular ground indicates weakening of belief in Kurds' capacities to become Turks. Yeğen pointed out two indicators of weakening of this belief in the official ground as the statement issued by the military that implied Kurds as 'so-called citizens' after Nevruz of 2005 and flying of two jets over funeral ceremony of a demonstrator killed in protests of Şemdinli bombing in 2005. In other words, developments in the *social practice*, weakening of the belief in Kurds potential to become Turks, shaped the *discursive practice*; the discursive representations of this weakening. At this point it is significant to raise questions: how was the perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds prior to this weakening of belief, were there any transformation in perception? How and why did the state begin to perceive its Kurdish citizens as 'so-called'? In order to answer these questions micro-analysis of newspaper texts is necessary to conduct macro-analysis, which means identifying the *social practice* and the *discursive practice* conditioned by it.

As it was mentioned before, by 1990s, Turkey entered a short period of reform movement. Even though these reforms were carried out parallel to repressive measures like anti-terror law, as the consequence of reform movement the Kurdish question and Kurdish 'existence' were recognized by

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<sup>477</sup> Ibid, pp. 47-88

the state.<sup>478</sup> However, as a result of two events that occurred in the beginning of 1990s the traditional discourse of ‘foreign meddling’ strengthened. Following the Gulf War I in 1991 and the trial of former HEP deputies in 1994 the discourse of ‘foreign meddling’ was the dominant discourse in newspaper reports. Significantly, discourse of ‘foreign meddling’ was the main discourse of Turkish state during the early-republican period while struggling with Kurdish rebellions in the southeast region. The state’s discourse of ‘foreign meddling’ and presentation of Turkey as a country ‘surrounded with enemies’ was rebuilt in newspaper reports, which focused on west’s support to the *de facto* Kurdish state in northern Iraq and to former HEP deputies. According to this discourse, Turkey’s enemies were intending to partition the country and directly or indirectly supporting the PKK by guarding interest of northern Iraqi Kurdish state and rights of former HEP deputies.

In general, newspaper reports presented west’s policies and stances on the establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq as a ‘game’ against Turkey. Considering the language of the news reports, the northern Iraqi leaders and their collaborators (‘so-called’ western allies) were enemies of Turkey. This discourse continued to circulate after the Gulf War II. More importantly, the Turkish state, which began to question its Kurdish citizens’ ‘attachment’ and ‘loyalty’ to the state, concerned with the Kurdish state in northern Iraq, the possibility of being its ‘alternative’.

Events occurred during the oath taking ceremony in the Parliament in 1991 and Nevruz events in 1992 become the occasion to identify Kurdish issue with PKK terror and broke the faith in Kurds’ will of ‘becoming Turks’. Following the Parliamentary oath taking ceremony in 1991, the state’s perception of the Kurdish issue was changed and the discourse of ‘betrayal’ of Kurdish politicians, who claim to represent Kurdish population, was strengthened. On the micro level, namely the language of the news,

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<sup>478</sup> Newspaper reports on the reform movement, which presented them as ‘courageous steps’ of the government are significant in displaying the role of the Press in maintaining state’s conventional perception and policies relating to the Kurdish issue.

Kurdish politicians and indirectly the Kurds were represented as ‘them’ against ‘us’. The Kurdish political parties and the Kurdish politicians, which were expected to adopt state’s discourse on the Kurdish issue, were excluded and presented as enemies of the country.

With the Nevruz events in 1992, for the first time, the state realized the extent of popular support given to PKK in southeastern regions. Even though the state perceived these events as provocation and claimed to heed differentiation between terrorist and public; in general, events were evaluated as rebellion and rehearsals of a rebellion. From 1992 forward, the state’s discourse of struggle with terror became the basis of perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds. More importantly, after 1992, as an outcome of policies of struggle with terror, interest and concerns on Kurds’ troubles, and human rights violations in the region inhabited by Kurdish population were abandoned. *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers published several news series on problems of the region and interviews with the Kurdish people and the Kurdish politicians in the region. However, following 1992, two newspapers ended these kinds of news reports. In other words, newspapers reproduced state’s discourse of ‘first terror then reform’ by disregarding human rights violations in the region as topics of news reports.

As state’s struggle with terror continued the nationalist ideology and the discourse of Turkish nationalism became ‘necessary’ and ‘mundane’. After this point reflexes of Turkish nationalism became the basis of perception of Kurdish issue and Kurds both on the official and societal levels.<sup>479</sup> The first indication of the rise of Turkish nationalism as the essence and the basis of mechanisms of ‘perception’, was the public reaction to the events occurred during the party congress of HADEP in 1996. Though similar events were experienced in previous years; for the first time public reacted to this extent with well attended meetings and demonstrations.

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<sup>479</sup> Tanıl Bora argues that, during the ‘low intensity war’ (between PKK and Turkish state) the official nationalism continued the principle of assimilation together with secretly allowing the racist discourse. Bora, T., “Kitle İmhaları Yok Etmek Lazım – Gelişen Anti-Kürt Hınç” in *Medeniyet Kaybı – Milliyetçilik ve Faşizm Üzerine Yazılar*, İstanbul, Birikim Yayınları, 2006, p. 232



Significantly, reports of these demonstrations in the newspapers were maintaining Turkish nationalist reflexes as the basis of perception of the Kurdish issue. Newspaper reports supported these mass demonstrations against Kurdish political parties with the assurance of justness of these reactions.

Actually, by mid-1990s the rise of Turkish nationalism is observable in every issue related to Kurds and the Kurdish issue. The state policies on presenting Nevruz as a Turkish feast by 1994 were also other indicators of rising Turkish nationalism and continuing policies of assimilation. The ‘witch hunt’ initiated after Sakık’s statements, which based on discourse of ‘betrayal’, was another example of perceiving Kurdish issue and Kurds through strengthened reflexes of Turkish nationalism. Considering the language of newspaper reports, labeling of advocates of human rights, democracy, and rule of law as traitors and PKK supporters was evidence of the level of the influence of Turkish nationalist reflexes of the perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds.

As 1992 Nevruz being a turning point for perception of the Kurdish issue and Kurds, 2005 Nevruz was also another turning point. With statements following Nevruz celebrations in 2005, state’s ‘disappointment’ of Kurdish citizens became apparent. As a consequence of state’s ‘disappointment’ emanating from Kurds’ resistance to Turkification and will of showing loyalty to another state (northern Iraqi Kurdish state) rather than Turkish state in spite of 90 years of exercise of assimilation policies and 20 years of struggle with terror; motivated the arise of state’s discourse of ‘discrimination’. For the first time, the state explicitly presented Kurds as ‘other’ and ‘second class citizens’ through the discourse of ‘betrayal’ by addressing them as ‘so called citizens’. Newspaper reports did not question state’s stance and policies but supported with their language emphasizing its justness and appropriateness.

In the final stage, the relationship between the *discursive practice* and the *social practice* must be identified. Considering the language of the news reports and representations on the Kurdish issue; the *discursive*

*practice* contributed to the maintenance of the status quo, in other words the ‘social order’. As an ideological consequence of the *discursive practice*, the state’s perception of the Kurdish issue that identifies the problem with PKK terror may possibly become the dominant ideology. As a political consequence, parallel with the rising Turkish nationalism the Kurdish politicians and Kurdish parties might be excluded as mediators to end the Kurdish issue. As a social consequence of the *discursive practice*, society would be polarized between two groups; ‘them’ –the Kurds- and ‘us’ – the Turks-.

To sum up, it can be argued that the discourse presenting Kurds as ‘enemies’ of Turkey and ‘other’ in Turkish society is effective since 1990s. On the other hand, since the Kurdish rebellions of the early-Republican period, Kurds’ willingness and potential of becoming ‘Turks’ was being questioned by the state. However, after the Gulf War II in 2003, the state began to express its ‘hesitation’ rather than implying it. As a possible consequence of this ‘transformation’ both in the official perception and the discourse of the Kurdish issue, together with traditional practices of assimilation Kurds might be subjected to discriminatory citizenship practices like non-Muslim population experienced.

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