

MULTICULTURALISM IN TURKEY: IMAGINARIES OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY  
AND THE CONUNDRUM OF RECOGNITION

by

Dila Keleş

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Graduate School of Social Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Comparative Studies in History and Society

Koç University

October 2014

Koç University

Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities

This is to certify that I have examined this copy of a master's thesis by

Dila Keleş

and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects,

and that any and all revisions required by the final

examining committee have been made.

Committee Members:

---

Asst. Prof. Murat Yüksel

---

Asst. Prof. Deniz Yüksek

---

Asst. Prof. Bülent Küçük

Date:

---

## **STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for any award or any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. It is affirmed by the candidate that, to the best of her knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

**Signed**

**Dila Keleş**

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how ordinary Turkish citizens perceive and respond to changes throughout the last decade in the cultural politics of the Turkish state regarding the Kurdish question. Based on in-depth interviews with fourteen Turkish Sunni-Muslim individuals, I aim to understand how collective belonging and otherness is imagined by subjects of the dominant identity and what do these narratives tell about identity-based structural inequalities in Turkey. Setting neoliberal multiculturalism as the analytical framework of the study, I take recognition to be a governmental project to reconstruct the political community within the rhetoric of unity-in-diversity. Three pivotal mechanisms of government are discerned to be in operation: Culturalization of politics; demarcation of the public and private spheres as respectively realms of universality and particularity; and differentiation between desirable and undesirable subjectivities via the neoliberal trope of responsible-moral citizen. The resulting explanatory scheme is the conundrum of recognition, intended to delineate that recognition of the Kurdish identity goes hand in hand with its denial according to the extent to which difference is politicized by the Other. Second, this conundrum is daily experienced by Turkish subjects in such ways that Turkishness is affectively reproduced in everyday encounters with the manifestations of Kurdishness, whereby the latter is fantasized as disrupting the otherwise possible wholeness of the nation. It is the main argument of the study that within the institutional, discursive and affective ground at hand, nationalism is functioning in more effective ways to undermine the right-claims of Kurds when coevally reproducing the normativity of Turkishness in the face of politicized group difference.

**Keywords:** Neoliberal multiculturalism, collective belonging and otherness, Turkish subjectivities, Kurdish Question, Turkey.

## ÖZET

Bu tezde sıradan Türk vatandaşlarının son on yıl içinde Türk devletinin Kürt sorununa ilişkin izlediği kültür politikalarındaki değişimi anlamlandırma biçimleri incelenmektedir. Kendini Türk Sünni-Müslüman kimliğiyle tanımlayan on dört kişiyle yapılan derinlemesine görüşmelerden yola çıkılarak, kolektif aidiyet ve ötekiliğin egemen kimliğe mensup özneler tarafından nasıl tahayyül edildiği ve bu anlatıların Türkiye'deki kimlik temelli yapısal eşitsizliklere dair neler söylediği sorgulanmıştır. Neoliberal çokkültürcülüğün analitik çerçevesini çizdiği çalışma, tanımayı, siyasal cemaati çeşitlilik-içinde-birlik söylemi içerisinde yeniden kurma maksatlı bir idari proje olarak ele alıyor. Bu minvalde üç belirgin idari mekanizma saptanmıştır: Siyasetin kültürelleştirilmesi; kamusal ve özel alanın sırasıyla evrensel ve tikel olana tekabül edecek biçimde birbirinden ayrılması; arzu edilen ile arzu edilmeyen öznelliklerin kendi kendinden sorumlu olmanın ahlaki yasasını tariflediği neoliberal vatandaş modeli üzerinden ayrımının yapılması. Bir açmaz olarak tanıma, araştırma verilerini neoliberal çokkültürcülüğün toplumsal alandaki tezahürü olarak görülen Kürt kimliğini tanıma ve inkarın birbiriyle ilişkiselliğini ortaya koyması açısından değerlendirmektedir. Bu anlamda, tanıma ve inkarın, ötekinin farklılığını ne ölçüde siyasallaştırdığıyla bağlantılı olduğu görülmektedir. İkincil olarak, çalışma, bu açmazın egemen özneler tarafından gündelik hayatta nasıl deneyimlendiğine odaklanıyor ve Kürtlüğün gündelik tezahürleriyle karşılaşma anlarında ulusun bütünlüğünü bozan Kürt fantazisinin Türklüğün duygulanımsal yeniden üretimiyle ilişkisini tartışıyor. Araştırmanın öne sürdüğü temel argüman, incelenen kurumsal, söylemsel ve duygulanımsal düzlemde daha etkin bir milliyetçiliğin, Kürtlerin hak taleplerini temelsizleştirmek isterken aynı zamanda siyasallaşmış kolektif farklılık karşısında Türklüğün kaideselliğini yeniden üretmek biçiminde işlevsellik kazandığıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Neoliberal çokkültürcülük, kolektif aidiyet ve ötekilik, Türk öznellikleri, Kürt Sorunu, Türkiye.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Each and every question in the thesis has proven in time all the more difficult to pose and examine in the context they burn and burned by. It is only thanks to the ones who tidy the intellectual and personal mess I feel plunged that I finally see my flow of opinions, puzzles and arguments meaningfully, so I hope, come together to produce this text.

The first among these is my thesis advisor, Murat Yüksel, who has tamed the once irreconcilable commitment of mine to create an *interested* account of questioning towards the one that would synergize this anxiety with the academic canons of writing. He has been generous in his criticisms that somewhat wake me up about the volume my research questions is intended to cover within such a vast area of collective belonging and otherness. I thank to him for the patience, always productive to me, he displayed in the writing period I exceeded the time limits.

I owe thanks to Deniz Yüksek, the second reader of my thesis, for the contributions she has made into way I was trying to write a readerly text. I have learned a lot, throughout my graduate years, from her omissions and crossing over my phrases that any single expression I make has become my own, with the necessary analytical depth and responsibility she has taught me to keep in sight.

Professor Bülent Küçük has given me critical lessons for how to put and develop questions in sociologically competent and ethically alert ways. I have frequently resorted to his intellectual repertoire in the thesis so that I am grateful for the help and tolerance he showed towards my staggering in analysis. I should let him know here that he has contributed to the making up of mine more than he would predict.

In the Kurdish language sessions, to which my attendance was mostly mixed of excitement and manipulation towards what happened and was happening in the country, Şerif Derince, my professor of Kurdish, stand wise and devoted. I thank to him for the conversations we made that helped me to consider over and over again my own subject position when I was writing.

Very deep thanks I express to my respondents for joining the interviews of the sort we realized, that which were not without intrusions they welcomed into their inarticulate thoughts and lived experiences about/with the Other.

The unchangeable address of the deepest gratitude I feel is my family and all those lovely women of my life. To Elif, Ayla, Elis, Bade, Cansu, Seray and Yaprak, and to my mother I am indebted for making life worth living. I cannot imagine how it would be possible to orient myself within the readings and notes day and night without their smiling faces and encouragements they provided me with the drinks I like the most. There are no enough words to explain how much they mean to me.

I would also like to thank to TÜBİTAK and Koç University. These two institutions supported me financially throughout my graduate studies, without which conducting this research would be impossible.

# MULTICULTURALISM IN TURKEY: IMAGINARIES OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND THE CONUNDRUM OF RECOGNITION

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION.....   | 1  |
| “Multiculturalism in Turkey” and Contents of the Chapters.....  | 1  |
| Methodology.....  | 10 |
| <br>  |    |
| CHAPTER I: Towards Multiculturalism: Historicizing the Turkish National Identity and Turkey’s Kurdish Question                        |    |
| Introduction.....   | 17 |
| Eighty Years of the Republic and Re-Construction of the National Identity.....  | 17 |
| The Rise in Power of the AKP and Conflictual Developments for Turkey’s Kurds.....   | 24 |
| Alternative Approaches to the Changing Trajectory of the Kurdish Question in 2000s.....   | 28 |
| Struggles for Recognition and Neoliberal Governmentality of Diversity.....  | 32 |
| Conclusion.....   | 38 |
| <br>  |    |
| CHAPTER II: Governing <i>Cultural Diversity</i> , or <i>Governing</i> Cultural Diversity: Multiculturalism and Turkish Subjectivities |    |
| Introduction.....   | 39 |
| Representations as Governmental Practice.....   | 39 |
| The State and Struggles for Power.....  | 42 |
| Religious Conservative Subjectivities in the face of Multiculturalism.....  | 44 |
| Secularist Subjectivities in the face of Multiculturalism.....  | 49 |
| Conclusion.....   | 55 |
| <br>  |    |
| CHAPTER III: In Between Recognition and Denial: Multiculturalism and Reproducing Turkishness of the Political Community               |    |
| Introduction.....   | 56 |
| National Identity and Kurdishness as In-appropriable Difference.....  | 57 |



|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Imaginarities of State and Turkishness of Citizenship.....  | 62  |
| Public versus Private: Difference without Assertion, Diversity without Rights.....                | 68  |
| Conclusion.....   | 74  |
|   |     |
| CHAPTER IV: Fantasies of Belonging: The Kurdish Question and Psychic Reproductions of Turkishness |     |
| Introduction.....   | 75  |
| Workings of Fantasy and Desire in Re-Identifying with the Nation.....                             | 77  |
| Limits of Peace: Bad Feelings and Counter-Images in <i>Newroz</i> .....                           | 85  |
| Interplay of Belonging and Enmity.....  | 90  |
| Conclusion.....   | 93  |
|   |     |
| CONCLUSION.....   | 94  |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY.....   | 98  |
| APPENDIX.....   | 108 |
|   |     |
| The Profile of the Informant Body   |     |

## INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempted product of the sociological concern with how ordinary Turkish citizens perceive and respond to changes in 2000s towards recognition of the Kurdish identity in Turkey's political sphere. I seek to grasp how subject positions my respondents inhabit affect their imaginaries of cultural diversity; what do their narratives tell us about the structural inequalities between the Turkish and Kurdish identities as they manifest in the imaginaries of belonging and otherness; and what sorts of tensions and ambivalences arise from the encounters of my respondents with the daily expressions of the Kurdish identity.

### **“Multiculturalism in Turkey” and Contents of the Chapters**

In 2005, the Prime Minister Erdoğan recognized in a public speech in Diyarbakır the Kurdish Question of Turkey and declared what is known as the “Kurdish Initiative” for the legal recognition of the distinct Kurdish identity and culture. This at that time was a remarkable moment in Turkish state's approach to the Kurdish question which had hitherto based on unconditional denial and oppression of difference.

On the one hand, a discourse of enhancement of human rights and democracy –in terms of free speech, conscientious objection to military service, fair trial processes for political detainees, recognition of the Kurdish identity and grant of cultural rights, diminishing power of the Turkish army in political processes, authorization of headscarf in public institutions- developed as somewhat an opening into the previous military-bureaucratic regime's strictly adopted principles of secularism and homogenous nation. Turkey's European Union accession process and the necessary harmonization packages with the EU standards of democracy seem to be contributed to these initial attempts as a result of which Kurdish broadcast and language institutions had been authorized.

In 2009, what we later come to know as the National Unity and Fraternity Project was publicized by Beşir Atalay, the minister of internal affairs of the time, as a plan to improve the standards of democracy in Turkey. The proposed changes included opening an official Kurdish television, giving back the village names that had previously been turkified, and putting elective Kurdish language courses in private schools. The democratic initiatives, so has been popularized by the AKP (The Justice and Development Party) the cultural politics of the state regarding the Kurdish question, continued with the Peace Process in 2013. A reciprocal ceasefire between the PKK (The Workers Party of Kurdistan) and the Turkish army was declared to open up a phase of negotiation by democratic means by the parties involved.

On the other hand, though, there have been contradictory -contradictory to the presented will to peacefully resolve the Kurdish question- developments throughout. Examples might be given to the KCK operations, Roboski, and the ongoing discursive marginalization of the Kurdish cause as that which threatens the territorial integrity and national security of the country. Also further constructions are still being made in the Turkish Kurdistan to increase the war capacity of the army and killings by the Turkish security forces of Kurdish civilians in political demonstrations against these constructions is far from being occasional.

How, then, can we make sense of the steps back-and-forward that the AKP, the predominant legislative and executive force in the Turkish state, which indeed abolished in 2010 the constitutive interfering role of the Turkish army in times of so-called political turbulence in the country, take towards the official recognition of the Kurdish identity? Do we witness to the cracking of the founding state ideology of homogenization and centralism in Turkey, or to the calibration of the cultural politics of the Turkish state with the *Zeitgeist* whose main protagonist since 1990s appear to be the identity-based oppositional movements challenging the status quo in nation-states?

Fusing conceptual tools from the literatures on multiculturalism and neoliberal governmentality is useful to address these questions. The literature on both venues is dense and there are several points of entry to this conceptual terrain. As I discuss in Chapter I, some studies focus on the political movements in nation-states for group-differentiated cultural rights, some others analyze the responses these movements generate from the concerning states, and still others strive for developing normative accounts on how to simultaneously ensure group difference and substantive equality under citizenship regimes. The adjectives put before multiculturalism, i.e. state, corporate, managerial, difference, and critical give clues about one's analytical posture.

To clarify my own position, I make use of the analyses that conceive multiculturalism as a neoliberal project of government of the heterogeneity of collective identifications in nation-states. Neoliberal multiculturalism refers to an ensemble of political rationalities and modes of action to effectively govern identity-based political activism within a revised understanding of the political community. Rather than the nation-building principles of homogeneity and denial of difference, neoliberal multiculturalism functions to discursively reconstruct the nation according to the principle of unity-in-diversity. It creates a distinct legal and discursive framework that represents identity-based differences as innate cultural traits to be enjoyed within the confines of the private sphere. It attempts to reduce the political claim in difference by making it a matter of cultural diversity. In cases assimilation has proven to be futile, subjects of the dominated identity is called to reproduce their distinct culture via initiatives of the private enterprise and civil society organizations.

If the degree of politicization of difference transgresses these limits, I mean if the discursive moves around mutual respect and tolerance, and accommodative politics through privatization of cultural rights remain insufficient to harness the opposition, then forms of authoritarian government are put into effect to discipline undesirable subjectivities. The neoliberal

endorsement of individual liberties and retrenchment of the state's fields of intervention - through privatization and support for civil society organizations- do not diminish how frequently and severely means of sovereignty are used against citizens with undesirable political subjectivities.<sup>1</sup> For example, the normalization of racialized violence by police in Britain is read as “the deeply unresolved character of British multiculturalism,”<sup>2</sup> or the exclusion of veiled Muslim women from the institutions of public education in France as “the state-led multiculturalization of the public sphere.”<sup>3</sup> Here the trope of responsible-moral citizen operates to distinguish the desirable from undesirable political subjectivities, by which authoritarian intervention into the conduct of the poor, the dissident, or the ethnic minority can be rationalized. These forms might include discursive marginalization, criminalization, police violence and denial of the systematic character of violence targeting the dominated group.

In the context of Turkey's Kurdish question, such an outlook has considerable purchase. There are invaluable studies that comment on the side-by-sideness of the initiatives for recognition and preservation by the Turkish state of the “classical” means to approach the Kurdish issue. I scan in the first chapter the alternative approaches to the changing trajectory of the Kurdish question in Turkey since 2002 the AKP has come to power and resume the arguments to the majority of which my own understanding converges. However, rather than dealing with “high politics,” in the sense of the competing interests of the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement, or on the regional motivations and implications of the domestic

---

<sup>1</sup> Dean, M., *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, Sage Publications: London, 1999, pp.131-145; Wacquant, L., “Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism,” *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, Vol:20, 2012, pp.66-79

<sup>2</sup> Hall, S., “The Multicultural Question.” Paper presented at the The Political Economy Reserach Center Annual Lecture, Firth Hall Sheffield, May 4, 2000, pp.1-16

<sup>3</sup> Akan, M., “Laïcité and Multiculturalism: The Stasi Report in Context,” *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol:60, May 2009, pp.237-256

politics, I focus on how things have found repercussions on the ways Turkish subjectivities are being reproduced and, let me put this way, puzzled.

To put differently, rather than taking a picture of the last decade of the Kurdish struggle and the responses it has been generating from the state, or commenting on the pros and cons of the state's cultural politics in terms of democratization –from the likewise studies I have benefited to base my questions- I examine the processual and socially structuring features of the recognition project. I do not consider recognition as a *fait accompli* but, rather, take recognition to be a governmental project to re-define and reconstruct the political community that, as what we expect from the wording “governmental,” endeavor to fashion subjectivities –both Turkish and Kurdish- accordingly.

Seen in this way, I argue that recognition entails problematization, symbolically and in practice, of the actual relations of power between subjects of dominant and dominated identities which, in turn, opens up questions around ethnic belonging, national identity and citizenship. Instead of referring to two different political rationalities, I take recognition and denial of the Kurdish identity to be coterminous as a function of neoliberal multiculturalism in Turkey.

This latter, neoliberal multiculturalism is not only a discursive field that invites the dominant Turkish identity to conceive of the Kurdish question as one of cultural diversity, also it refers to a set of governmental mechanisms to accommodate right-claims of the Kurdish movement within a revised understanding of the political community. While the nation-building project bent on the principles of homogeneity and secularism that rendered Kurdishness a taboo, the recent political framework presents itself as one of enlarging the domain of freedoms to the extent that the Kurdish difference does not give ground to demands for equal public representation and sharing of sovereignty. Shift in the identity politics of the state can be

observed from getting horrified by any expression of Kurdishness towards the one that would reconcile with diversity unless the claim goes as far as to negotiate for substantive equality.

Chapter II examines the repercussions of this new rhetoric of unity-in-diversity within the narratives of my respondents with different experiences of relating to the Turkish state, identity, and history. While those in secularist positions oppose the process of negotiation between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement, religious conservatives seem being excited about “the end of terrorism.” I understand this cleavage to be following, not from an essential incompatibility between the imaginaries of multicultural living by secularists and religious conservatives, but from the changing center of gravity in terms of state power. Much fed secularist subjectivities throughout the Republic are resentful at losing their structural privilege to the religious conservative imaginary of the state and society that the AKP has been gradually building. Thus, the Kurdish question appears to be another front of struggle between these two social bodies that stand in juxtaposition to each other without necessarily having different precepts for institutional changes to remedy systematic injustices against Kurds.

In Chapter III, I examine the questions of how and why sense of belonging to Turkishness outweighs other axes of differentiation among my respondent body to produce congruent subjectivities towards the question of recognition. In relation to the reception of some “critical events”<sup>4</sup> by my respondents, I analyze how two other pivotal mechanisms of neoliberal multiculturalism guide the subjectivities of my respondents towards the question of recognition.

---

<sup>4</sup> Referring to Veena Das’s formulation of critical events, Aretxaga provides the following definition: “These are events capable of producing a change in the way people think about things, events that contain in their complexity the intertwined, often contradictory threads of social experience and are thus particularly rich and illuminating fields of enquiry.” Das, V., *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*, Oxford University Press, 1997, cited in *Begoña Aretxaga, Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland*, Princeton University Press, 1997, p.12. The definition is a helpful one for those events that relate to the Kurdish issue I asked in the interviews.

One is the separation of public and private spheres as respectively realms of universality and particularity. This mechanism is functioning to render the “recognized” Kurdish identity enjoyable as an innate cultural trait via initiatives of the private enterprise. As I discuss in relation to the legalization of Kurdish language institutions, the state responds to the demand for the formal education in Kurdish by reducing the right to receive education in mother’s tongue into an extracurricular activity to be organized by private enterprise and civil society organizations. This is one of the cardinal operations of what we should discern as “neo” about neoliberalism’s cultural projects: A political demand is discursively culturalized, a collective right is privatized and, as such, the state can keep abstaining from making necessary institutional changes for equal public representation of the Kurdish identity.

The other mechanism is the differentiation between the desirable and undesirable political subjectivities through employing the neoliberal trope of responsible-moral citizen. As the analysis of the reception of Roboski by my respondents endeavors to figure out, Kurds are conceived to be a collective subject running counter to the normativity of the national identity and citizenship, the parameters of which are conditioned by Turkishness. Merging with statism, forms of authoritarian government to be directed against Kurds are rationalized by delineating the Kurdish difference as inappropriate to recognize. While the other non-Turkish ethnic groups to which my respondents frequently refer for “good examples” of cultural diversity, Kurds are understood to be in need of discipline. Within such enactments of difference, Turkishness is endowed with a universality that propel the narratives of my respondents towards such directions that ethnicity is always attributed to some other non-Turkish group. The Turkish identity remains unmarked, natural and always-already there to prime the difference as peaceful or disruptive according to the extent to which difference is politicized.



Hence the conundrum of recognition that designates the ways in which recognition and denial of the Kurdish identity appear to be coterminous. A *more effective nationalism*<sup>5</sup> is functioning as such to undermine the right-claims of Kurds when, at the same time, reproducing the dominance and normativity of the Turkish identity in the face of politicized group difference.

Such a discernment of the shifting discursive and institutional framework of cultural diversity has given rise to another set of questions that the literature on governmentality does not give tools to handle. First, conceiving population as the new and particular object of liberal government from the nineteenth century on,<sup>6</sup> governmentality does not concern itself with the question of how population of the state stands for the nation. The population is not a uniform, impermeable object that technologies of government are indiscriminately put into operation but, instead, it shelters a multiplicity of collectivities that government targets to varying degrees with varying means. This is to call notice to the significance of ethnic belongings as perpetual objects of government within nation-states, the *raison d'être* of which is to squeeze heterogeneity of individual and collective identifications among the nation-body. And the question becomes how government of the population goes hand in hand with ascribing it an identity, a sense of common belonging with desired ways of understanding and experience of this common –national- identity.

Second, and in relation to the preceding remark, if politics of representation, together with the technologies of intervention into the conduct of the governed, is what is understood by governmentality,<sup>7</sup> we are left with the question of how and with which consequences the

---

<sup>5</sup> Ang, I., “Between Nationalism and Transnationalism: Multiculturalism in a Globalising World,” *ICS Occasional Paper Series*, Vol:1, No:1, Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney, November 2010, p.3

<sup>6</sup> Dean, M., *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994, pp.181-185

<sup>7</sup> Lemke, T., “‘The Birth of Bio-politics’: Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège de France on Neo-liberal Governmentality,” *Economy and Society*, Vol:30, No:2, May 2001, p.191

subject subjects herself to the field of knowledge and meanings that rationalize the ways identity-based relations of power are organized. In other words, a closer focus into the daily experience and reproduction of national identity is necessary and necessarily calls for a theoretical twist.

Chapter IV attempts to delve into the affective dimension of subjectivity to explore national identification as an ongoing process within which my respondents' sense of belonging to Turkishness is both activated and reproduced via antagonistic encounters with the Kurdish identity. I question why normative concepts such as peace and equality lose their symbolic significance in daily confrontations of Turkish subjects with Kurdishness. The notion of fantasy has inspired and informed this move.

In *Faces of the State*, Navaro-Yashin proposes to study the reproduction of the state power in public life through daily practices of ordinary citizens.<sup>8</sup> She uses the psychoanalytic concept of fantasy to explain how not only the glorification of the state in nationalistic rituals, but also everyday public criticisms of the state work to regenerate the state's appeal for the subjects. Situating the political beyond the garb of institutions, she makes a delicate analysis of how political culture produces psychic effects such that the bodily presence, habits, and mundane practices of subjects become the locus of state power. Her analysis is guiding the fourth chapter that examines how the emotional charge within the sense of belonging to Turkishness mobilizes to surface social antagonisms towards Kurds, to which my respondents claim discursive distance.

I argue that the conundrum of recognition is daily experienced by Turkish subjects. The tension between recognition and denial, between the positions of conceiving Kurdishness as any other ethnic accessory making up Turkey's cultural diversity and of marking it with

---

<sup>8</sup> Navaro-Yashin, Y., *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*, Princeton University Press, 2002

excessive political desires, harmful to the integrity of the state and the nation, manifest in daily contexts. The Kurdish difference is at one and same time marked by an irrational excess and greed for what belongs to Turkey, and contradictorily perceived as signaling cultural inferiority that hampers “us” to become a Western-like democracy, or a world power as in the Ottoman times. Depending on the fantasy of the originary state of fullness, the founding of the Republic with the *telos* of “reaching up to the level of contemporary Western civilizations” or the Ottoman Empire with all the grandeur the Turkish nation experienced and displayed, determines where to drain the lack in the present. Kurdishness is burdened in both social fantasies as that which steals the otherwise possible wholeness of the nation. And daily encounters of my respondents with the manifestations of the Kurdish identity bear the imprint of these fantasies. Not only attachments to Turkishness get to be affectively reproduced by unexpected intrusions of Kurdishness into the spatio-scope regime that Turkish subjects have coded as uniform and inviolable by the Other, also the structured sense of dominance activate in the face of the Kurd’s resistance to submission.

## **Methodology**

Data of this study consists of the narratives of fourteen individuals who position themselves within the hegemonic Turkish sunni-muslim identity in Turkey. By conducting in-depth, extended interviews with those that express belonging to the majority group, I have questioned how each narrative is telling about the ways in which subjectivities of ordinary Turkish citizens vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue are produced and in-the-making. Insofar as subjectivity is at the core of my research questions, narrative analysis is the best suited method to examine the mediation between personal narratives and social relationships and structures in which these narratives are embedded.

Narrative analysis is related to discourse analysis in its purpose to generate sociological accounts of how the production and the flow of collective representations are intrinsic parts and vehicles of power struggles in a socio-historical context. Narrative analysis, however, can be said to be more feasible in relation to qualitative research with individual respondents.

Consider the following definition: “Discourse analysis encompasses the respective spectrum of what can be said in its qualitative range and its accumulation and/or all utterances which in a certain society at a certain time are said or can be said.”<sup>9</sup> Even if the ambitious claim in making discourse analysis might be sustained by focusing on specific temporalities or fields of production of discourse, such as media discourse on nationalism analyzed on a randomly-chosen particular day<sup>10</sup>, it is apparently impossible to scan all what is said and can be said by social subjects at a certain time. Representative samples might be formed to conduct surveys with over thousands of people; however, the gathered data will necessarily be short of covering the possible qualitative range. This method is, furthermore, more vulnerable to end up with cursory and non-reliable data when research participants, unintentionally or on purpose, distort their answers on politically charged and ethically sensitive questions.

For example, all of my respondents expressed desire for equality under Turkish citizenship regardless of group identities. However, much appreciated “inclusive character of Turkish citizenship” and “civic features of Turkish nationalism” are discussed from a distance with the accounts on daily confrontations with Kurds and evaluations of the recent happenings around the Kurdish issue. Demeaning representations of Kurds and antagonistic attitudes rise from everyday encounters with the expressions of the Kurdish identity. These internal

---

<sup>9</sup> Jäger, S, “*Discourse and Knowledge: Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of a Critical Discourse and Dispositive Analysis*,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, eds. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, Sage Publications, 2001, p.35

<sup>10</sup> Yumul, A., and Özkirimli, U., “Reproducing the Nation: Banal Nationalism in the Turkish Press,” *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol:22, No:6, 2000, pp.787-804

incoherencies, shifty features of personal narratives, as well as the overlaps and contradictions among different accounts, should be addressed. Narrative method is helpful for such an endeavor to generate rich and in-depth data, indispensable to follow research questions on social imaginaries and subjectivity.

I conducted interviews with whom I know to be self-identifying as sunni-muslim Turkish. Prior non-systemic observations of mine, combined with this study's questions, drove me to use the method of sampling for range.<sup>11</sup> I chose the respondents in such a way that I would span the possible range of the parameters that combine to define a subject position.<sup>12</sup> Gender, political orientation, socio-economic status, and age/generation have been those parameters I tried to include in my respondent list.<sup>13</sup> Sense of belonging to Turkish sunni-muslim identity and inhabitancy in Istanbul I take as constants. I composed the list this way to make sense of how different combinations might dispose the individual to engage with the different representations of Kurds and the Kurdish question. In other words, although each narrative might be taken as unique, I was expecting systematized differences and commonalities among the narratives according to, let's say, the respondent seemed to have a secularist or religious conservative lifestyle.

My sample is a purposive one. For this reason, I admit that the study cannot allow producing country-wide generalizations. Instead, I make conceptual inferences from a relatively smaller

---

<sup>11</sup> Weiss, R. S., *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*, The Free Press, 1995, pp.22-24

<sup>12</sup> The way I use the term, subject position, owes to Laclau and Mouffe's theorization: "A 'subject position' refers to the beliefs through which an individual interprets and responds to her structural positions within a social formation." See Smith, A. M., *Laclau and Mouffe. The Radical Democratic Imaginary*, Routledge, 1998, p.58. In this view, an individual is structurally positioned in a social formation that is not of her own choosing. Class, race, ethnicity, and gender are among those orders which situate the individual within the networks of power relations prior to her will. The subject position, on the other hand, refers to the ways in which the individual lives her structural position, interprets it, and responds to it. Accordingly, in my analysis of the personal narratives, I rely on the respondents' own understandings and presentations of their social identity.

<sup>13</sup> See the appendix for the profile of my informant body.

number of personal accounts by drawing on the sociological claim in making narrative analysis “that a given personal narrative illuminates a particular social position or social-structural location in society.”<sup>14</sup> The feminist dictum, “personal is political,” has kept guiding me.

In the research process, I was expecting the political orientation and gender to be the most significant cleavages. Yet, my initial expectations remain unfulfilled after a couple of interviews. Popular distinctions between right- and left-wing oriented, or conservative and liberal people proved to be more complicated than I presupposed. Two women, one self-identified rightist and the other social democrat, used almost the same language when we were talking about the Kurdish issue, the Turkish state, and the problems of law, bureaucracy, social justice and democracy in Turkey. A young AKP-voter lawyer, who had very little in common with other AKP-voters I discussed, spoke with almost identical terms to the Prime Minister Erdoğan with regard to the neoliberalization of the Turkish economy. This situation, on the one hand, encouraged me for having sense of being in the right track in making research into ordinary people’s life histories, their embodied experience and daily relations with their imagined others. On the other hand, I face with the strength of attachments to either the secularist or Islamic principles of institutionalization and ways of living, regardless of the political party people vote. These attachments have considerable bearings upon people’s daily experience and ways of expressing and reproducing their subjectivities. What is more, although women and men I talked to have had different experiences of self in public and private spheres, sense of national belonging and its structuring effect on the subjectivity towards others seemed to be surpassing over the gender difference.

---

<sup>14</sup> Maynes, M. J., Pierce, J. L., and Laslett, B., *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2008, p.129

In six weeks, from the last week of February, 2013 to the first week of May, I met with my respondents living in different neighborhoods of Istanbul. Istanbul comprises people of almost all different ethnic, religious and sectarian identities in Turkey that enable long-term or sporadic relations between various collectivities. This spatial proximity helped me get answers to how the embodied presence of different identities produces ideas about one's own group and the other, that open up spaces of ambivalence at daily confrontations. Instead of looking for the terms by which self-identified Turks stigmatize or exclude Kurds, I wanted to understand how their perceptions and representations of Kurds are (re)produced in relation to the subject positions my respondents inhabit. In other words, my curiosity at the beginning of the research was not about revealing and classifying the terms of exclusion, mistrust or hostility against Kurds that Turkish citizens might employ. Rather, I was wondering how Turks' motivations, desires, fears and ambivalences about multicultural living would change in parallel to their personal histories and social positions from which they speak.

We made semi-structured interviews that I organized in two parts, although the transition from one to other was not neat in the majority of them. Length of the interviews changed from one hour to two and a half hours, depending on my informants' willingness to speak. In the first part, I asked my informants to narrate their life history. This enabled me to better establish the ground on which they articulated their thoughts about belonging to a dominant community and others they distinguished from themselves. I examined how they comprehend and describe their position within different material contexts. Along with the encouragement to speak my attention to their personal histories sustained –except in one case- I became able to make sense of how their imaginaries of belonging and otherness were reproduced or contested within the flow of everyday life. We discussed their relations –if any- with their Kurdish friends and neighbors, daily confrontations in a street market or hospital, the images

they got from television news and series, the rumors they exchanged with family members and non-Kurdish friends, and so many other occasions they encountered with Kurdishness.

In the second part, I asked topic-oriented questions through some critical events that I expected my respondents to have heard, watched or read in the press. This method worked well for letting them elaborate upon what they understand to be the Kurdish issue and the Turkish state's changing attitudes to resolve and/or combat it. Among these events are "the Kurdish Initiative" in 2005 and 2009, Van earthquake and the Roboski massacre in 2011, the Newroz festival of 2013, and the current "Peace Process" that Abdullah Öcalan (the imprisoned Kurdish guerilla leader) and the Turkish government have initiated in April, 2013. I also investigated what they knew about the history of the Kurdish issue in republican Turkey and how they, themselves, historicize it. We discussed, for example, village evictions and the forced migrations, disappearances under custody in the 1990s, Saturday Mothers, and the war between the Turkish army and the PKK.

Finally, for analysis, I employed the method of thematic analysis which "focus on the 'told,' rather than aspects of 'the telling.'"<sup>15</sup> I analyze the content of the interviews, all mot-à-mot transcribed, in light of the themes I develop out of the theoretical framework. National belonging and identification, fantasy, cultural diversity, ethnic identities, nationalism, citizenship, private and public spheres, neoliberal governmentality and multiculturalism are the first-order concepts I use to interpret the narratives. However these so-called abstractions might seem pretentious, "[they] are enacted as individuals talk."<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Mishler, E. G., "Models of Narrative Analysis: A Typology," *Journal of Narrative and Life History/Narrative Inquiry*, Vol:1, 1995, cited in Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*, Sage Publications, 2008, p.54

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.63



In addition to the limitation of the study due to limited number of narratives I collected and made the source of analysis, I acknowledge the possible interferences of my own subjectivity into the interpretive process of reflection and writing of the chapters. Both in the research and writing phases of the study, I become obliged to revise the initial suppositions of mine with regard to the question of recognition. Attending antagonisms Turks, in a sense, *should* have experienced and narrated to me have sometimes been too complicated to be grasped within us/them dichotomies, or overt reflexes of belonging to Turkishness. The national pride to be imaginarily derived from identification with Turkishness, as well as assignment of Kurds to the place of constitutive Others, have been implicated, and not directly put to allow immediate conclusions about recognition. The last chapter of the study has been a product of my own encounter with this complication, although I was from the beginning willing to go beyond the ways normative concepts like equality, citizenship and peace are uttered by Turkish subjects in distance from Kurds. There and every line I am actively engaging with the interpretive exercise, of which I take the full responsibility and venture to defend its contribution into the existing literature on what might be called the social-relational dimension of the Kurdish issue from the perspective of those with belonging to the hegemonic Turkish identity.

Concerning the structure of the thesis, I organize the chapters in such a way that the subsequent one deepens the analyses of the preceding. The reader will find elaborate discussion in chapter start-ups aiming to expand both what has been previously said and the analytical purchase of the further wielding of the theoretical framework. This I make to prevent rupture between the narratives and the necessarily abstraction-loaded scheme of the study. Thus, each chapter takes issue of one part of the overall “narrative,” while connecting to the others by virtue of an attempted integrity around the research questions.

## Chapter I

### **Towards Multiculturalism: Historicizing the Turkish National Identity and Turkey's Kurdish Question**

*...struggles for recognition are also expressions of refusal to be recognized under such-and-such descriptions.<sup>17</sup>*

#### **Introduction**

To analytically appreciate why the forthcoming chapters focus on the multiple ways national belonging strongly guide the subjectivities of my respondents in the face of recognition of the Kurdish identity, a revisit to the Turkish state's founding identity politics that has forged the Turkish subject as such, antagonistic to difference, is indispensable. An overview of the zealous engagement of the state in creating the exclusive dominance of Turkishness is necessary to assess the continuities and ruptures of the AKP's initiatives of recognition in relation to the previous establishment's politics of unconditional denial of difference. Alternative approaches are helpful to address the conflictual facets of the Turkish state's changing cultural politics towards the Kurdish issue, and, at the same time, reveal the need for perspectives from below. The framework of neoliberal multiculturalism opens up fresh venues for analyzing the processual and socially structuring features of the government of cultural diversity.

#### **Eighty Years of the Republic and Re-Construction of the National Identity**

The early Republican era, covering the period from the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923 until the passage to the multi-party system in 1946, was marked by the intensive homogenization policies in relation to the nation-building efforts of the Kemalist élite. The

---

<sup>17</sup> Maclure, J., "The Politics of Recognition at an Impasse? Identity Politics and Democratic Citizenship," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol:36, No:1, March 2003, p.14

initial programme for the projection of the Turkish national identity was multi-faceted. On the one hand, the ethnic and religious diversity inherited from the Ottoman Empire was to be eliminated through different techniques. Whereas non-Muslim populations were literally expelled in exchange with the incoming Muslims from the Caucasus and the Balkans, non-Turkish Muslim groups were targeted for assimilation into the new, to-be-fabricated common imaginary of nationhood. Thus, on the other hand, the major task was to define, build, and if necessary, enforce this imaginary of belonging to Turkish national identity and citizenship.

Towards this end, state-sponsored institutions for research into the Turkish history and language that would prove the authenticity, uniqueness and worth of the Turkish identity established throughout the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>18</sup> With regard to Kurds, the shift in the ethnic policy of the state in comparison to the pre-1924 period was striking. It is not only that the first, 1921 Constitution was granting sovereignty to the people of Turkey without reference to Turkish ethnicity, various public speeches of Kemal Atatürk, the leader of the founding cadre, were addressing the necessary collaboration and brotherhood of Turks and Kurds in the struggle against the victorious World War I powers.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the 1921 Constitution contained provisions for provincial autonomy in the Kurdish regions, due to which it has remained a critical text that the pro-Kurdish political actors refer to defend the legitimacy of the right-claims of the Kurdish movement.

In a word, the contract that the Kemalist élite had once made with Kurds was abolished following the end of war. Within one year, from 1923 to 1924 when the second constitution was promulgated, terms like Kurd, Kurdish, Kurdistan were all omitted from the state discourse. Instead, Kurds were defined as “mountain Turks” who, so it had been supposed

---

<sup>18</sup> Aytürk, I., “Turkish Linguists against the West: The Origins of Linguistic Nationalism in Atatürk’s Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol:40, No:6, November 2004, pp.1-25

<sup>19</sup> Mango, A., “Ataturk and the Kurds,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol:35, No:4, Seventy-Five Years of the Turkish Republic, October 1999, pp.1-25

and become a state policy, belonged to the same origins with the Turkish tribes that settled down in Anatolia centuries ago after migrating from the Central Asia.<sup>20</sup> Kurds were only to be reminded their Turkish origins and modernized according to the West-oriented principles of modernism, secularism and national unity.<sup>21</sup>

In accordance with the long discredited differentiation between civic and ethnic nationalisms, the Turkish nation-building project displayed the features of both models. Kadıoğlu conceives early Turkish nationalism as a *mélange* of the French and German nationalisms; the former referring to the assimilationist and state-centered conception of the national identity, and the latter to the ethno-cultural and exclusionary one. She argues that this dual character of Turkish nationalism was reflected in the way membership to the political community was conditioned by Turkishness.<sup>22</sup> Whereas Turkish national identity remained open to different groups' voluntary assimilation, such that support of the Jewish community to the exclusive institutionalization of the Turkish language exemplify,<sup>23</sup> Kurds' resistance to assimilation and centralized state apparatuses were responded with resettlement policies and the application of brute force. The major Kurdish uprisings, such as the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925 and the Ararat Revolt in 1927-31 were suppressed by the Turkish army. The military operation into Dersim in 1938, or "the Dersim Massacre" as it is incised in the collective memory of Kurds,

---

<sup>20</sup> Smith, T. W., "Civic Nationalism and Ethnocultural Justice in Turkey," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol:27, No:2, May 2005, p.441

<sup>21</sup> The modernization has been an ideal to Turkish political élite since the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, whose dissolution handed over this *mission civilisatrice* to the republican élite, in the name of which the Turkish nation is projected at the cost of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. For the self-definition of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth century as the agent of modernization and progress vis-à-vis its subjects whom it began to saw as its own Orient to be disciplined and reformed, See, Makdisi, U., *The Culture of Secterianism*, University of California Press, 2000, pp. 768-796; Deringil, S., " 'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol:45, No:2, 2003, pp.311-42.

<sup>22</sup> Kadıoğlu, A., "Türkiye'de Vatandaşlığın Anatomisi," in *Vatandaşlığın Dönüşümü. Üyelikten Haklara*, ed. Ayşe Kadıoğlu, Metis Yayınları, 2008, pp.173-175

<sup>23</sup> Cagaptay, S., "Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol:40, No:3, May 2004, p.97

ended up with thousands of people of the region having been killed, and thousands forcibly migrated to western parts of Turkey.<sup>24</sup> Thus, throughout the 1920s and 1930s, all expressions of the Kurdish identity and culture were denied and suppressed with whatever means considered effective.<sup>25</sup>

The Kemalist definition of the Turkish nation, according to Cagaptay, was simultaneously territorial in the outset, religious in the midway, and ethnic in the core.<sup>26</sup> The incompatibility between the commitment of the founding élite to secularism and the institutionalization of Sunni Islam under the Directorate of Religious Affairs, as part of the state, was ingenuously maintained by virtue of the strict state supervision of religious activities at the communal level. In other words, Islam was not a component of the desired Turkish citizen. Whereas rationality, progress and laïcité were projected as constitutive of the modern Turkish nation, ethnic and religious identities and communal loyalties are driven to the private sphere.<sup>27</sup> Much to the chagrin of the founders of the Republic, though, the Islamic and Kurdish identities were only to be invigorated as oppositional movements in the public sphere throughout the 1980s and 1990s that I turn in a moment.

The 1961 Constitution was regarded as being more inclusive and liberal since it put a new emphasis onto the state's responsibilities in terms of the protection of individual rights and

---

<sup>24</sup> Murat Yüksel, "Forced Migration and the Politics of Internal Displacement in the Making of Modern Turkey: The Case of Dersim, 1937-1947." (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Soyarik-Şentürk, N., "Türk Vatandaşlığının Yasal ve Anayasal Esasları: Değişimler ve Devamlılıklar," in *Küreselleşme, Avrupalılaştırma ve Türkiye'de Vatandaşlık*, eds. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İçduygu, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009, p.137. She analyzes The Act of Citizenship in 1928 and The Act of Settlement in 1934 which well reflected the co-existence of the principles of jus soli and jus sanguinis in the early republican definition of citizenship. Both acts showed an inconsistency between the equality discourse in the legal sphere and its application to minorities –non-Muslim communities according to the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923-immigrants and Kurds. Notably the Settlement Act of 1934 coincides with the Turkification process when the discourse of linguistic, cultural and ideal unity was coupled with the policies of re-settlement of Kurdish tribes.

<sup>26</sup> Cagaptay, S., "Passage to Turkishness: Immigration and Religion in Modern Turkey" in *Citizenship and Ethnic Conflict*, ed. Haldun Gülalp, Routledge, 2006, pp.61-82

<sup>27</sup> Baban, F., "Türkiye'de Cemaat, Vatandaşlık ve Kimlik" in *Küreselleşme, Avrupalılaştırma ve Türkiye'de Vatandaşlık*, pp.64-66

liberties, and the supremacy of law. It remodeled citizenship in more liberal, individualistic, and participatory terms, yet, without any provision for group-differentiated cultural rights.<sup>28</sup> Little might have been expected already at a time when the Turkish President, Cemal Gürsel, addressed Kurds in Diyarbakir in 1961 with the humiliating phrase, “spit in the face of him who calls you a Kurd,” thus making the very term “Kurd” an insult.<sup>29</sup>

However, the pro-Kurdish political activism was progressively strengthened throughout the 1960s and 1970s, both decades having been ended up with the military interventions into the political vibrancy of the Turkish and Kurdish left. With the consolidation of the Turkish left in the Workers Party of Turkey (TIP) in the 1960s, the view that the Kurdish problem was not only a matter of regional underdevelopment but also had aspects of ethnic inequality and cultural oppression began to be discussed among the leftist circles.<sup>30</sup> The formation of the Revolutionary Cultural Centers of the East (DDKO) in 1969 marked the beginning of the self-differentiation of the Kurdish nationalist left from its Turkish Marxist counterpart.<sup>31</sup> Both organizations, among other leftist groupings, were outlawed following the March 1971 army coup, and their members imprisoned in part for advocating pro-Kurdish separatism.

Once again, repression generated resistance. The 1970s became a decade of heightened politicization by Kurdish intellectuals, though they were split around different political organizations, associations and cultural clubs.<sup>32</sup> A gradually self-conscious and organized Kurdish struggle reemerged under the leadership of Öcalan in 1974. The PKK was formed

---

<sup>28</sup> Soyarık-Şentürk, N., *Türk Vatandaşlığının Yasal ve Anayasal Esasları*, p.146

<sup>29</sup> Beşikçi, İ., *Kurdistan and Turkish Colonialism: Selected Writings*, Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, 1991, p.34

<sup>30</sup> Bruinessen, M., “The Kurds in Turkey,” *MERIP Reports*, No:121, State Terror in Turkey, February 1984, p.8

<sup>31</sup> Kutschera, C., “Mad Dreams of Independence: The Kurds of Turkey and the PKK,” *Middle East Report*, No:189, The Kurdish Experience, 1994, p.11

<sup>32</sup> For the various Kurdish organizations active in the 1970s see, Gunter, M. M., “The Kurdish Problem in Turkey,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol:42, No:3, Summer 1988, pp.389-406

with the aim of establishing an independent, pan-Kurdish state and declared armed struggle in 1979 against feudalism and colonialism.<sup>33</sup> Then after the PKK has become the most radical movement of opposition in Turkey up to this day in 2014. Due to its engagement with armed struggle, the Kurdish question has never again been put out the agenda of the Turkish state.

The initial years of the PKK coincided with the martial law in Kurdistan following the 1980 coup. “The repression of the 1980s, both in numbers of persons seized and imprisoned and in the extent of systematic torture, was far worse than before.”<sup>34</sup> The coup-product 1982 Constitution reconstructed the unquestionable authority of the state and curtailed individual rights. The written and spoken use of the Kurdish language were banned with provisions that widened the scope of running counter to the indivisibility of Turkey to all expression in Kurdish.<sup>35</sup>

The leadership of Turgut Özal from the 1983 until his death in 1993 can said to be the first period of shift in the state’s cultural politics with regard to Kurds. Both the pressure of the PKK and the regional developments in the Middle East (for example, the Gulf War in 1991 internationalized the Kurdish question) necessitated a revision of the Kemalist ethnic policy of unconditional denial.<sup>36</sup> Özal not only embarked on a civilianization process by subordinating the military to civil authority, he recognized identity-based differences in Turkey and declared his half-Kurdish identity in 1989. Reconciliation with political Islam and the Ottoman past,<sup>37</sup> both of which were strictly disclaimed by Kemalism, went hand in hand

---

<sup>33</sup> Bruinessen, M., *The Kurds in Turkey*, p.11

<sup>34</sup> Kutschera, C., *Mad Dreams of Independence*, p.13

<sup>35</sup> Gunter, M. M., “The Kurdish Question in Perspective,” *World Affairs*, Vol:166, No: 4, Spring 2004, p.200

<sup>36</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

<sup>37</sup> Ayata, S., “Patronage, Party, and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol:50, No:1, Winter 1996, pp.44-46

with the process of creating civil society. The compulsory jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights was recognized in 1990, the hard-lines of the Anti-Terror Act softened, and the expressions of languages other than Turkish legalized in 1991.

End of the leadership of Özal in 1993 reversed all these changes to a dramatic extent, especially in relation to the Kurdish question. The 1990s, though still in need of abundant research, should be understood nightmarish for Kurds in Turkey. Politics of denial revived and the Kurdish question re-entered into the public-political discourse as a matter of national security. Military regained its extraordinary power and the war with the PKK intensified with the results of tens of thousands of death and millions of forcibly migrated Kurds towards the cities in the West and the Mediterranean coast. Moreover, “not only were the Kurdish villages often destroyed by fire to deny their use as bases by guerrillas and to prevent the return of residents, but the evacuations were also brutally executed with beatings, rapes, and selective instances of extrajudicial killing.”<sup>38</sup> “[The anti-Kurdish backlash among the Turkish population] was fully exploited by Ciller [the Prime Minister between 1993-1996] who tirelessly campaigned on her success in crushing Kurdish insurgency and protecting secularism against the ‘imagines enemies’ of the state- Kurds and Islamists.”<sup>39</sup> The pro-Kurdish political parties –HED, DEP, HADEP, DEHAP- were outlawed one after another and their cadres were imprisoned.

Öcalan’s capture in the embassy of Greece in Nairobi, Kenya in 1999 by the Turkish special operation task force became an issue of Turkish national pride and elicited wide support for

---

<sup>38</sup> Göçek, F. M., “Through a Glass Darkly: Consequences of a Politicized Past in Contemporary Turkey,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol:617, The Politics of History in Comparative Perspective, May 2008, p.94

<sup>39</sup> Yavuz, H., M., “Turkey’s ‘Imagined’ Enemies: Kurds and Islamists,” *The World Today*, Vol:52, No:4, April 1996, p.101



the extreme right Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in the national elections same year.<sup>40</sup> Whereas the Kurdish movement can said to be entered into a new phase of struggle in the following fifteen years Öcalan has been imprisoned in Turkey, the Turkish state's approach to the Kurdish question equally evolved with the AKP's gradually unfettered rise in power since 2002.

### **The Rise in Power of the AKP and Conflictual Developments for Turkey's Kurds**

There are a number of issues that have prepared the Turkish state's politics of denial of the Kurdish identity throughout the Republican era to change at the turn of the millennium. The 2001 economic crisis had weakened the intense engagement of the Turkish state and media with the perils of political Islam and the Kurdish question, which were then put into a place of secondary importance. The mobilization against political Islam had already reached its limits in 1997 with what is known as the February 28 Process or the post-modern coup, when the National Security Council (MGK) forced the government, led by the Islamist Welfare Party, to resign. The suppression of political Islam by the military and its gradual marginalization by the state élite continued until the reformist AKP has appeared on the political stage. The nationalist mobilization of the 1990s against the Kurdish movement, on the other hand, had been mitigated prior to economic crisis due to the arrest of the PKK leader in 1999 which was followed by a unilateral ceasefire by the PKK that was going to endure until 2004. The 2001 crisis blew up in this conjuncture, contributing further the "nationalist demobilization"<sup>41</sup> against the two historical enemies of the Kemalist regime.

---

<sup>40</sup> Gunter, M., M., "The Continuing Kurdish Problem in Turkey after Öcalan's Capture," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol:21, No:5, October 2000, p.851

<sup>41</sup> Bulut, E., "The Social Grammar of Populist Nationalism," in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-National Identities*, ed. Hans-Lucas Kieser, I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2006, p.130

AKP's victory in 2002 national elections can be explained partly in relation to the popular disappointment with the establishment parties, whose coalition governments had been under charges of corruption and incapability of managing the domestic and regional politico-economic instability, and partly to the social fatigue resulting from the economic crisis in 2001.<sup>42</sup> With regard to the Kurdish question, in addition to the domestic conjuncture, founding of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq when the US occupation has ended in 2003 put Turkey's Kurdish question to a historically different trajectory. It was in these circumstances that the AKP and its incontestably authoritarian leader, Erdoğan, took initiative into the official recognition of the Kurdish identity. In continuation with Turkey's long journey of membership to the European Union, whose candidacy was approved in the Helsinki Summit of 1999, eight "harmonization packages" with the EU standards of democratization were enacted between 2002 and 2004.

Within the framework of the EU membership, Kurdish broadcast and Kurdish language institutions were authorized.<sup>43</sup> In 2005, as I mention in the chapter of introduction of this study, Erdoğan delivered a public speech in Diyarbakir signaling empathy with the historically excluded and oppressed Kurdish people of Turkey –empathy for being subjected to similar mechanisms of denial and oppression towards Islam as a communal identity Erdoğan is attached to. He admitted that the Turkish state had made mistakes in the past towards Kurds and verbally recognized the Kurdish Question of Turkey. These initial attempts were largely welcomed by the pro-Kurdish parties and activists with an expectation for their enhancement towards a genuinely functioning reconciliation and peace process.

However the course of history was to witness complication.

---

<sup>42</sup> More in Chapter II on how the AKP initially managed the tension between laicism and Islam, and succeeded in building alliances with different social groups so as to carry itself to power in 2002.

<sup>43</sup> Şahin, B., "Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği Uyum Süreci Bağlamında Kürt Sorunu: Açılımlar ve Sınırlar," in *Türkiye'de Çoğunluk ve Azınlık Politikaları: AB Sürecinde Yurttaşlık Tartışmaları*, eds. Ayhan Kaya and Turgut Tarhanlı, Tesev Yayınları, 2005.

The 2007 national elections gave the fruits of the AKP's seemingly accommodative policy of the Kurdish resentment. The party was provided with significant electoral support in the Kurdish regions in such a way as to make analysts believe in the success of the AKP's self-created image of being an anti-establishment party seeking to bridge with Kurds on common Islamic ties and improvement of the much neglected infrastructural facilities in Kurdistan.<sup>44</sup> To whatever extent the election results in 2007 fostered the self-esteem of the AKP and Erdoğan, the municipal elections in March 2009 was kind of a retrieved credit of Kurds to the AKP. The pro-Kurdish DTP (The Party of Democratic Society) had had the upper hand in Kurdistan to an irreversible extent that the subsequent local and national elections until March 2014 repeatedly ended up with the victory of the BDP, successor of the DTP when it was closed down same year due to having ties with and propagating for the PKK.

Defeated in the Kurdish regions, in July 2009, Erdoğan announced what was then going to be named "The National Unity and Fraternity Project," a comprehensive plan to improve the standards of democracy in Turkey. The proposed changes included opening of an official Kurdish TV, giving back the village names that had previously changed into Turkish, and putting elective Kurdish language courses in private schools. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 the PKK declared ceasefire and extended until July 15, 2009. Moreover, Turkey's public was informed by Erdoğan about the meetings in Oslo, Norway between actors from MIT (The National Intelligence Agency) and the PKK, yet, in such a cursory way that the frequency and content of the negotiations remained unknown to public.

Nevertheless, the project found correspondence from Öcalan, upon whose call 34 militants of the PKK came to Habour, the border gate of Turkey with Iraq, to surrender. The crowd that made of civilians and members of various political parties and civil society organizations was

---

<sup>44</sup> Toprak, M., Uslu, N., and King, J.D., "Transformation of Turkish Politics: Socio-Political, Economic and Ethnic Peculiarities," *Bilig*, No:50, Summer 2009, p.217

present with enthusiasm to welcome the guerillas. The nationalist newspapers and the channels of broadcast mediatized the event as “The Harbour Scandal,” after the leader of the ultra-nationalist MHP, Bahçeli, had commented with rage. The trial process, possibly due to nationalist reactions, proceeded in an immune manner from the so-called peace project.<sup>45</sup> Some of the surrendered guerillas were sentenced to jail for having committed crimes of terror and some others turned back to the PKK camps in Northern Iraq.

Mass arrests of the pro-Kurdish political actors on charges of being affiliated with the KCK (Union of Communities in Kurdistan; the chief Kurdish organization striving for democratic confederalism in the Middle East to which the PKK is a part) came as disappointing and frustrating to those hopeful about the peace-to-come. Hence we can reasonably argue that “rather than taking democratic steps to address the Kurdish issue, it [the AKP] relapsed into conventional ‘national security’ policies, evidenced in the ‘KCK operations’ since April 2009.”<sup>46</sup> The number of those that were taken into custody in October 2011 reached up to 4000. This number was to be doubled by 2012 when the scope of the arrests were extended to lawyers, journalists, academicians, students, and human rights activists, whosoever voiced opposition to the AKP’s authoritarian means of dealing with the Kurdish issue.

The bombardment by the Turkish Armed Forces of 34 Kurdish villagers turning from extra-legal frontier trade in Iraqi territories on December 28, 2011 became another instance of how the Turkish state was still unperturbed in killing Kurdish civilians despite its presented will to peacefully resolve the Kurdish issue. The military then explained the bombardment as an operational mistake, due to wrong security intelligence that misidentified the villagers as the

---

<sup>45</sup> Evren Balta Paker, “AKP’nin Kürt Sorunu Politikası: Bir Adım İleri, Bir Adım Geri [The AKP’s Politics of the Kurdish Question: A Step Further, A Step Back],” Heinrich Böll Stiftung. <http://www.tr.boell.org/web/103-1531.html> (accessed June 24, 2014).

<sup>46</sup> Çiçek, C., “The Pro-Islamic Challenge for the Kurdish Movement,” *Dialect Anthropol*, Vol:37, 2013, p.161

PKK militants. No civilian or military authority is held responsible and put in front of the judiciary up to this day.

The war between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces continued in parallel to these contradictory developments until March 2013. The democratization projects of the state were coupled with oppressive measures like the KCK operations; Erdoğan was, and still is, presenting himself candidate to peacefully resolve the Kurdish issue, yet rejecting to recognize members of the BDP as legitimate actors to collaborate with in the process of resolution; a reciprocal ceasefire between the PKK and the Turkish army was declared in March 2013 to re-initiate the Peace Process and advisory committees to the parliament similar to the “Truth and Reconciliation Commissions” were composed, on the one hand; whereas, on the other hand, further investment is being made in Kurdistan to increase the war capacity of the Turkish army and the Kurdish civilians are going on to be killed by police in protests against the constructions.

### **Alternative Approaches to the Changing Trajectory of the Kurdish Question in 2000s**

The existing literature on Turkey’s Kurdish question has almost uniformly tended to focus on “high politics,” i.e. how, by which means, and with what results thus far the Turkish state has related to Kurds and the Kurdish movement, while the repercussions of the state discourse and policies on subjectivities of ordinary Turkish citizens received less attention. The tendency is also dominant in analyses on the last decade of changing cultural politics towards the Kurdish issue, which is led by the AKP.

For example, Tezcür analyzes the reasons for the radicalization of the PKK in and after 2004 when there were considerable attempts at democratization and recognition of the Kurdish identity by the Turkish state. Data in his article show that although the EU-induced reform

process of democratization slowed down after 2005, human rights violations in Turkey substantially decreased between 1999 and 2008, in comparison to the dreadful reports of the 1990s. He argues that because the PKK faced with intense competition from the AKP that outperformed the pro-Kurdish DTP in 2004 local and 2007 national elections, the PKK radicalized to sustain its claim to be the true representative of Kurds in Turkey.<sup>47</sup>

By contrast to what Tezcür calls a process of democratization, Watts characterizes the years between 1999 and 2008 as a new phase of coercion in Turkey. She asserts that juridical coercion was given more emphasis in this period to promote compliance, rather than overt physical suppression via extra-judicial measures of the 1990s. The rhetorical marginalization of the Kurdish cause and preservation of the high number of court cases against pro-Kurdish party administrators were systematic responses to the increasing institutionalization of the pro-Kurdish political activism. One of the ways coercion worked in this phase, according to Watts, is “through ‘internal’ disciplinary mechanisms, which relied on continual harassment, surveillance, the persistent threat of punishment (without necessarily delivering it) and the promise of the advancement of selected movement goals (namely, some cultural freedom of expression).”<sup>48</sup>

Yıldız and Muller argue that even for the implementation of the new law in 2005 permitting private Kurdish TV and radio stations, the Supreme Board of Television (RTUK) applied many legal and extra-legal obstacles, such as restricting the content and duration of the programmes, or delaying the applications for establishing such channels for long times. Thus, “the reforms enacted in Turkey are effectively bypassed by provisions representing the ‘security of the state first’ principle of Turkish authorities, limiting the fragile body of human

---

<sup>47</sup> Tezcür, M. G., “When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol:47, No:6, November 2010, pp.235-253

<sup>48</sup> Watts, N., *Activists in Office: Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey*, University of Washington Press, 2010, p.113

rights law in Turkey.’’<sup>49</sup> In a similar fashion, Yeğen explains that the AKP reforms opened a new route for recognition of the Kurdish identity after decades’ long policies of assimilation and suppression had failed, yet in very limited sense that could not confer equal citizenship rights to Kurds. The identification of Kurds by the Turkish state shifted from that of the to-be-assimilated, “prospective-Turks” to “pseudo-citizens” who resist to identify with and remain loyal to national ideals.<sup>50</sup>

Yavuz and Özcan attribute the “incapacity of the AKP” to develop a democratic resolution of the Kurdish question to the party’s limited understanding of the problem as one that can be managed by institutionalizing “Islam as cement.”<sup>51</sup> Çiçek also argues for the AKP’s “lack of deep democratic values in the political tradition of neoliberal pro-Islamic politics and its weak administrative capacity about the Kurdish issue.”<sup>52</sup> As a result, the argument goes; the AKP has failed to move beyond the traditional national security policy.

Invaluable these analyses are as I find them to assess the recent changes in the cultural politics of the Turkish state; we are far from a completed process of recognition, which necessitates a farther look than that of the results taken so far or of the AKP’s original ideological standing towards differences in Turkey. It is moreover acknowledged that “private-individual beliefs and interests regarding the Kurdish issue, as opposed to the security perceptions and interests of states and militant groups, should receive more attention.”<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Yıldız, K., and Muller, M., *European Union and Turkish Accession: Human Rights and Kurds*, Pluto Press, 2008, p.86

<sup>50</sup> Yeğen, M., “ ‘Prospective-Turks’ or ‘Pseudo-Citizens:’ Kurds in Turkey,” *The Middle East Journal*, Vol:63, No:4, Autumn 2009, pp.597-615

<sup>51</sup> Yavuz, M. H., and Özcan, N. A., “The Kurdish Question and Turkey’s Justice and Development Party,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol:8, No:1, Spring 2006, p.103

<sup>52</sup> Çiçek, C., “Elimination or Integration of Pro-Kurdish Politics: Limits of the AKP’s Democratic Initiative,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol:12, No:1, 2011, p.15

<sup>53</sup> Somer, M., “Turkey’s Kurdish Conflict: Changing Context, and Domestic and Regional Implications,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol:58, No:2, Spring 2004, p.238

In this proposed line of research, Saraçoğlu attempts to explain anti-Kurdish sentiments among the urban middle-class Turkish citizens in relation to the macro-level changes Turkey has gone through since the 1980s. He discusses that while the intensification of the armed conflict between the Turkish army and the PKK led to Kurdish immigration into western cities, the neoliberal transformation of the Turkish economy has had devastating effects on the life chances of migrant Kurds in urban social life.<sup>54</sup> The better-off middle-class people of Izmir create pejorative labels to address migrant Kurds who live in shanty neighborhoods and work in the informal sector. This dimension of socio-economic inequality should be taken into account in investigating the antagonistic relations between groups, yet, I argue, not at the expense of the political and historical dimension. In other words, daily encounters and face-to-face relations between local Turks and Kurdish migrants should be considered as “mediated” -and not as having started at a zero point- by the circulating representations of Kurds and political discourses on the Kurdish issue.

This study targets to fill this niche in the forthcoming chapters by analyzing the narratives of belonging and otherness by Turkish citizens at the intersection of everyday life and neoliberal government of cultural diversity. Below I intend to familiarize the reader with the theoretical terrain of multiculturalism to both set the background for understanding in a different light the recent changes of the Turkish state’s cultural politics regarding the Kurdish issue, and discuss which venues the framework of multiculturalism opens up for reflecting upon citizenship, cultural diversity, and daily encounters of Turkish subjects with the different manifestations of the Kurdish identity.

---

<sup>54</sup> Saraçoğlu, C., *Kurds of Modern Turkey: Migration, Neoliberalism, and Exclusion in Turkish Society*, I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2011, pp.20-21; 79-104



## **Struggles for Recognition and Neoliberal Governmentality of Diversity**

Identity politics and the collective struggles for recognition has been one of the most prolific areas of research in social theory, especially since the 1960s with the flourishing of the “new social movements,” as they are popularly called. The ever-increasing flows of international migration due to the uneven spread of economic liberalism and globalization in the 1980s have revived interest in questions of cultural diversity, ethnic minorities and politics of difference in Europe.<sup>55</sup> Multiculturalist paradigm entered into the agenda of social policies in those societies that claim to be liberal democratic, such as the United States, Canada, Australia and the Western Europe. The demands of minorities for group-differentiated cultural rights have been voiced by organized political movements not only in these countries but also in various parts of the Latin America, and Turkey. Multiculturalism has appeared in this context of strong political activism of minorities across the globe, yet largely discredited by anti-racist groups, for example, in Britain. As Gunew put, “the reason for continuing to focus on multiculturalism...is precisely because it is so intimately bound up in many parts of the world with those practices and discourses which manage (often in the sense of police and control) ‘diversity’.”<sup>56</sup>

Analyzing Guatemalan multiculturalism, Charles Hale argues that neoliberalism creates such a distinct legal and discursive framework that responds to cultural rights demands of indigenous communities in ways that pose a greater menace to the Mayan collective empowerment than the previous assimilationist era. Rather than a straightforward rejection of indigenous rights demands, institutions of neoliberal governance attempts to curtail the political energy of cultural rights activism by configuring a space of contestation that clearly

---

<sup>55</sup> Foweraker, J., “Social Movement Theory and the Political Context of Collective Action” in *The Political Context of Political Action. Power, Argumentation and Democracy*, ed. Ricca Edmonson, Routledge, 1997, p.74

<sup>56</sup> Gunew, S., “Postcolonialism and Multiculturalism: Between Race and Ethnicity,” *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol:27, The Politics of Postcolonial Criticism, 1997, p.22

draws the line between acceptable and unacceptable demands. “The concessions and prohibitions of neoliberal multiculturalism structure the spaces that cultural rights activists occupy: defining the language of contention; starting which rights are legitimate, and what forms of political action are appropriate for achieving them.”<sup>57</sup> Rhetoric of multicultural, pluri-lingual society is adopted by powerful economic and political actors whose recognition of the Maya culture is at the same time an urge against those demands that risk transgressing the limits set by the neoliberal cultural project.

Hale’s formulation of neoliberal multiculturalism is highly inspiring to reflect upon the Turkish case. The discursive fraternity with Kurds that the AKP and recently the establishment parties use to address the Kurdish issue shift into one of national security when the pro-Kurdish political actors voice the demands for transformative remedies to the Kurdish question. Among these are the abolition of the ten percent election quota that has been the major impediment before full representation, education in Kurdish in primary and secondary level schools in the Kurdish regions, betterment of Öcalan’s conditions of detention and recognizing him as a dialogue partner in the process of a democratic resolution. Although with the initiation of the Peace Process in 2013 the indispensable agency of Öcalan has been acknowledged by the Turkish state, the rest of the demands are found unacceptable to sustain in a political framework that leans on the descriptive slogan “One flag, one nation, one fatherland, one state.”<sup>58</sup>

As said before, despite the fact that the AKP has deployed a language of “common victims” of the Kemalist regime that suppressed both the Islamic and Kurdish identity, and seek in this way an alliance with Kurds, there is an irreconcilable gap between this formulation and that of

---

<sup>57</sup> Hale, C., “Does Multiculturalism Menace? Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol:34, No:3, August 2002, p.490

<sup>58</sup> Erdoğan repeatedly uses this slogan whenever he seems to feel in a position of defense against charges that he deceives the Turkish nation by negotiating with the pro-Kurdish political actors.

the pro-Kurdish political parties and actors.<sup>59</sup> The limited package of cultural rights, granted to Kurds within subsequent projects of democratization, should be understood as having put the principal mechanisms of neoliberal multiculturalism into operation. Though the reader will find more on this in the following chapters, I note that reforms seem to be designed to make the Kurdish identity enjoyable in the private sphere and upon individual choice, as putting elective Kurdish courses in private schools has been a telling example. Narratives of my respondents manifest the governmental purchase of the neoliberal cultural project that manage the demarcation of public and private spheres and reproduce the trope of responsible-moral citizen with which Kurds are deemed to be unfit.

Furthermore, while the reforms are being implemented, the state has not abstained from taking oppressive measures, such as the KCK operations, discursive marginalization of the Kurdish cause by referring it within the terms of terrorism, further construction of security apparatuses in Kurdistan and suppressing the protests with means of physical violence. As I elaborate in Chapter III, the use of authoritarian forms is immanent to neoliberal governmentality by which undesirable collective subjectivities are always-already vulnerable to sovereign interventions by the state. For this reason the analysis should be alert to the non-liberal features of neoliberalism with respect to the identity-based political mobilizations. Coequality of democratization and coercion, as scholars analyzing the AKP's initiative of recognition explain either in terms of the AKP's by nature lack of deep democratic values or the persistence of Turkish nationalism in the political field, can better be grasped in relation to the forms of government that neoliberal multiculturalism deploy.

Those theoretical accounts and their normative assumptions about what should be the basis of equality –individual rights or group rights; difference-blindness or recognition of difference;

---

<sup>59</sup> Yavuz and Özcan, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Justice and Development Party*, p.103

neutrality of the state toward all cultural groups or measures the state is supposed to take to remedy cultural domination of the majority- are important sources to evaluate the Kurdish question within the scope of multiculturalism. In this vein, the debate between liberals and communitarians focus on the conception of the political community and the corresponding form of citizenship for a genuinely democratic and egalitarian society.

According to the liberal view, citizenship is a capacity of each individual to rationally pursue her/his own definition of the good to the extent that it does not infringe upon the rights of others.<sup>60</sup> Liberalism rests upon the presumption that all individuals are born free and equal. They are endowed with natural rights and properties to form, revise and follow their self-interest freely in exchange relationships with equal others. Therefore citizenship is understood as a legal status the individual resides in vis-à-vis the state, whose basic principle is to maintain equal distance to each individual regardless of her/his identity –gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic belonging and so on.

The liberal formulation of citizenship as the insertion to the political community on the individual basis has been exposed to harsh criticisms both in the social theory literature and group-differentiated rights activism. Joan Scott charges the liberal notion of equality as incompatible with the real conditions of social life. She asserts that in liberal democratic understanding, the individual is abstract and disembodied from her/his social relations and group identities, which underpin the inequality and discrimination in the first place.<sup>61</sup> Işın and Wood point to the tension between the universalistic claims of citizenship status and particularistic claims of identity-based movements. Rather than taking citizenship and identity as inherently antinomic principles, they emphasize the need to re-conceptualize their relation

---

<sup>60</sup> Mouffe, C., *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, Verso, 1992, p.226

<sup>61</sup> Scott, J., *The Conundrum of Equality*, Unpublished Paper. Occasional Papers of the School of Social Science Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University, 1999, p.4

in such a way that modern citizenship would become “an articulating principle for the recognition of group rights.”<sup>62</sup>

The theoretical involvement with how to ensure the principals of equality and recognition of difference in a synergized fashion is one of my primary reasons to frame the Kurdish issue in terms of multiculturalism. Because, as “the conundrum of recognition” intend to describe, recognition of the Kurdish difference neither immediately produce institutional arrangements that would guarantee equal public representation of the Kurdish identity, nor automatically dismantle the sense of dominance Turkish subjects activate in their encounters with the manifestations of the Kurdish identity –the latter that Chapter IV aims to look through the notion of fantasy.

The alternative to the liberal conception of citizenship, so the communitarians theorize, is the civic republican principle that privileges the public good over the individual desires or interests. Charles Taylor, who coined the term “politics of recognition,” pinpoints the importance of culture, group identities and collective goals in understanding the individual. An activist for the recognition of distinct Quebecois identity in the Canadian state, he argues that “the supposedly fair and difference-blind society is itself highly discriminatory” because it always leans upon one hegemonic culture.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, for Bhikhu Parekh, cultural practices have a primary constitutive role in personhood and moral agency so that the individual cannot be considered outside its social and historical context. Against the liberal individualism and its assumption of a transcendental moral subject, Parekh suggests that culture and moral subjectivity are interconnected and necessarily plural.<sup>64</sup> Therefore he stresses the need for a

---

<sup>62</sup> Işın E. F., and Wood P. K., *Citizenship and Identity*, Sage, 1999, p.4

<sup>63</sup> Taylor, C., “The Politics of Recognition,” in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutman, Princeton University Press, 1994, p.43

<sup>64</sup> Kelly, P., “Identity, Equality and Power: Tensions in Parekh’s Political Theory of Multiculturalism,” in *Multiculturalism, Identity, and Rights*, eds. Bruce Haddock and Peter Sutch, Routledge, 2003, p.100

dialogue, in pluri-cultural societies like Britain, between the minority claims for recognition and operative public values of the majority. However the communitarians are also criticized for positing essentialized cultures, which are not bounded and internally homogenous, but, rather, are open to continual change in their interactive relation with others.<sup>65</sup>

Terence Turner, a prominent critic in anthropological theory, concurs with anti-essentialists that culture and identity do not refer to a fixed set of attributes or meanings. Defining multiculturalism as a movement for change,<sup>66</sup> he distinguishes between *critical multiculturalism* and *difference multiculturalism*, where the former seeks to dissociate the political community and the organization of social institutions from one hegemonic cultural tradition, the latter tends to reduce culture to ethnic identity. He endorses Coronil's view that culture should be understood as the processes of production of the self and the other, which can in no way be immune from the asymmetrical power relations. Rather, cultural forms are constructed within the social existence of their bearers, who are situated in relations of domination and exploitation. Hence, for critical multiculturalism, the self is unstable and historically situated product of multiple identifications; and the culture, as the mediator of the social relations, provides the basis for self-identification and the battleground for a decentred understanding of the political community.

Taking multiculturalism as a neoliberal project of government of diversity is to problematize the givenness of antagonism between the dominant Turkish and dominated Kurdish identities. It does so by conceiving the politics of recognition as a challenge to the unequal organization of social institutions, and not as the enforcement of identitarian claims drained from the history of asymmetrical power relations. By virtue of an anti-essentialist theorization of

---

<sup>65</sup> Vincent, A., "What is so Different about Difference?", in *Multiculturalism, Identity, and Rights*, p.53

<sup>66</sup> Turner, T., "Anthropology and Multiculturalism: What is Anthropology That Multiculturalists Should be Mindful of It?," *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol:8, No:4, 1993, p.412

identity as the ensemble of multiple subject positions within the structure of cultural and material forces, as the Chapter II discuss in detail, this position requires examining the historical projection of the national identity which put the Turkish and Kurdish identities in relationships of dominance.

## **Conclusion**

Brief review of the historical re-construction of the Turkish national identity and citizenship show that these two are conflated in such a homogenizing manner that ethnic and religious differences were either literally eliminated by methods of demographic engineering, or removed from the public sphere. The desired member of the Turkish Republic was defined as a passive citizen-subject, bearer of the republican ideals of indivisibility, secularism, modernity and progress. Legal, extra-legal and military means the Turkish state employed to suppress the Kurdish and Islamist identities remained futile in the face of the determined politicization of these identities throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The rise in power of the AKP by 2002 has come to and further changed the domestic and regional conjuncture that power cards on the Kurdish question have been reshuffling. The democratic initiatives of the AKP have been coupled with the oppressive measures taken to harness the pro-Kurdish political activism. I make use of the framework of neoliberal multiculturalism to scrutinize which discourses and practices are mobilized in the name of recognition of the Kurdish identity, that have so far become a matter of conundrum. I read the narratives of my respondents as telling accounts of how neoliberal cultural project aims at producing subjectivities that necessarily oscillate between recognition and non-recognition of the other.

## Chapter II

### **Governing Cultural Diversity, or Governing Cultural Diversity: Multiculturalism and Turkish Subjectivities**

*It must be demonstrated how social agents subject themselves and are subjected to modes of expression, how the expressions become the agents' own; whom they choose to direct them at and why.<sup>67</sup>*

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I begin exploring how recent cultural politics of the Turkish state targeting the Kurdish issue is perceived and responded to by Turkish citizens with different ways of relating to the Turkish state, history, and identity. The previous chapter is presenting the primary contours of the recent cultural politics, and attempting to locate it within the framework of neoliberal multiculturalism. This chapter is intended to deepen our understanding of neoliberal governance of cultural diversity and its impact on subjectivities of those with belonging to hegemonic Turkish identity. I argue that the main fissure that divides the Turkish subject is belonging to either secularist or religious conservative positions. By using the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, I aim to comprehend the interplay between different representations of the Kurdish issue and struggle for power between subjects of religious conservative and secularist identities.

#### **Representations as Governmental Practice**

According to Thomas Lemke's reading, governmentality is a useful analytical tool to study the intimate link between technologies of power and the political rationality at their base. As being implicated in linking the words, governing ('gouverner') and modes of thought

---

<sup>67</sup> Goldberg, D., "Raking the Field of the Discourse of Racism," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol:18, No:1, September 1987, p.69



(‘mentalité’), Lemke argues that the concept of governmentality addresses the two dimensions of government. On the one hand, government, so Foucault defines, consists of structuring the space of behavior and delineating the frontiers of acceptable conduct so that the subject governs itself. Conduct-of-conduct, the shortcut for government, points to the ways in which political technologies operate as intervention into the conduct of the self and others. On the other hand, “government defines a discursive field in which exercising power is ‘rationalized’. This occurs, among other things, by the delineation of concepts, the specification of objects and borders, the provision of arguments and justifications, etc.”<sup>68</sup> Hence government is revealed to be not only about political technologies that are put into effect to create desirable subjectivities, it also involves the representation of those means and procedures as rational.

Understanding governmentality in terms of the two mutually constituting dimensions of governmental practice –intervention and representation; exercise of power and the political rationality underpinning power techniques- gives handy insight for an analysis of subjectivity. So long as we formulate the subject as both being configured by the structures of power and responsive to its sociocultural circumstances, the mediation between the structural and subjective becomes the focus of analytical undertaking. Yet, to examine how the cultural politics of the Turkish state in the last decade are perceived by Turkish subjects, and, in this

---

<sup>68</sup> Lemke, T., *The Birth of Bio-politics*, p.191

way, discuss the social imaginaries of cultural diversity by those in dominant identity positions, I necessarily privilege the dimension of representation in governmental practice.<sup>69</sup>

Previously I put my criticism to Saraçoğlu. His work is remarkably informing about the neoliberal transformation of the Turkish economy and its constitutive effects on the antagonistic relations between resident middle-class urbanite Turks and newly migrated Kurds in Izmir, a metropolis in western Turkey.<sup>70</sup> My contention was such that the pattern “exclusive recognition” that he created to describe the Turkish citizens’ exclusionary attitudes towards Kurds in the city cannot be sustained without examining Turks’ varying ways of relating to the cultural politics of the Turkish state which creates different representations of the Kurdish issue, as well as of Kurds. Following this criticism, I deal with neoliberalism as a political rationality and project only as it pertains to cultural politics of the Turkish state that refashion Turkishness as hegemonic position in both social and institutional terms.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Understanding the ways in which political technologies actively constitute a field of actions is no less important than, yet connected to, the question of how the forms of conduct are rendered acceptable, reasonable, or irrational and illegitimate. Moreover, I take seriously when Mitchell Dean reminds the risk of overemphasizing processes of meaning at the expense of governmental and disciplinary practices in analyzing the relations between forms of subjectivity and power. See, Dean, M., *Critical and Effective Histories*, p.151. The reason I make use of governmentality and its proposed analysis of subjectivity is exactly not to neglect the dimension of intervention in governmental practice. By examining cultural politics of the Turkish state and subject positions of my informants, I aim to overcome this risk of reducing everything to their symbolic dimension. However, my focus is on how cultural politics and representations of the Turkish state are perceived by my respondents with varying positions, which have definitive effects on the ways they are relating, both symbolically and in daily life, to Kurds and the Kurdish issue.

<sup>70</sup> Saraçoğlu, C., *Kurds of Modern Turkey*.

<sup>71</sup> There are similar studies on the effects of neoliberal restructuring of the Turkish economy to the social exclusion of Kurds in cities. To them, I present the same contribution of understanding the political and identity-based dimension of the relations between Turks and Kurds. Among them are: Adaman, F., and Keyder, Ç., “Türkiye’nin Büyük Kentlerinin Gecekondu ve Çöküntü Mahallelerinde Yaşayan Yoksulluk ve Sosyal Dışlanma,” *Dosya*, eds. Gökhan Atılğan and Burcu Yakut Çakar, Haziran 2007, pp.83-89; Yüksek, D., “Neoliberal Restructuring and Social Exclusion in Turkey” in *Turkish Economy in the Post-Crisis Era: The New Phase of Neo-Liberal Restructuring and Integration in the Global Economy*, eds. Ziya Öniş and Fikret Şenses, Routledge, London, 2009, pp.262-280; Keyder, Ç., “Globalization and Social Exclusion in Istanbul,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol:29, No:1, 2005, pp.124-134.

In the preceding chapter I looked at the relevance of neoliberalism to governance of identity-based social movements. I used Hale's concept of neoliberal multiculturalism to evaluate the recent cultural politics of the Turkish state. To remind Hale's argument, neoliberalism structures the political space of opposition in such ways that differentiates between acceptable forms of political action, actors, and language from unacceptable ones according to their degree of compatibility with the existing relations of power. It is in this framework that I discuss how the state endeavors to build a delicate balance between the right-claims of the Kurdish movement and the preservation of the dominant Turkish identity. In Hale's words, "Neoliberalism's cultural project entails pro-active recognition of a minimal package of cultural rights, and an equally vigorous rejection for the rest. The result is a dichotomy between recognized and recalcitrant indigenous subjects, which confronts the indigenous rights movement as a 'menace' even greater than the assimilationist policies of the previous era."<sup>72</sup> I now turn to scrutinize how subjectivities of Turkish citizens are differentially animated by neoliberal government of cultural diversity depending on the subjects' ways of relating to Turkishness.

### **The State and Struggles for Power**

The different ways my interviewees describe what they understand to be the Kurdish issue should be explained with reference to the subjects positions they inhabit. There are recurrent themes, questions, and examples in the narratives of those informants with similar experiences of relating to the Turkish state, history and identity. The major cleavage that marks the differences among the narratives seems to be following from adherence to either secular or Islamic principles of institutionalization and ways of living. The power struggle between the secular and religious conservative state élite, and the contested issue of political

---

<sup>72</sup> Hale, C., *Does Multiculturalism Menace?*, p.487

Islam that the AKP is institutionalizing, are reflected in the narratives. Defining one's self as secularist/republican or religious/religious conservative has meant putting oneself as antithetical to the other position. This, in turn, has a remarkable influence over subject's manner of perceiving the political projects and rationalities of the Turkish state on the official process of the recognition of Kurds.

It should be noted that by "the Turkish state" I do not mean a unitary machine of sovereignty, or the big Leviathan, as criticized in Foucauldian analyses of modern state. Rather, the state refers to an ensemble of institutions whereby power relations, dissipated throughout society, are reflected, elaborated, and centralized. The relevance of this conception of the state should be discerned in the way I present the political parties, AKP and the CHP. In this study, I do not describe them in neat ideological terms, such as the party of political Islam or that of secularism, respectively. Neither the AKP derives support exclusively from the religious conservative segments of the society, nor does the CHP only from secularists.<sup>73</sup>

An AKP voter might well be someone who thinks that religion should be irrelevant to the organization of state institutions. Similarly, a CHP voter might choose to describe herself alternately as social democrat, liberal, republican, nationalist, patriot or rightist. However, as

---

<sup>73</sup> There are a number studies who attempt to explain the AKP's approach to the Republic-old tension between laicism and Islam, and the contributions of its genuine approach to the consolidation of the party's power in politico-legal institutions of Turkey. Turam describes the AKP's success as following from the negotiations the party enabled between Islamic social forces and the secular actors on such common goals as making Turkey a member of the EU, democratization, and liberalization of the Turkish economy. Somer argues that the current battle should be grasped as one that is going on between the secular and the religious-conservative middle-classes, as well as between the political élite. In the eyes of the secular middle class, so he argues "a moderate Islam that is peaceful and respectful of individualism, secular laws, a market-oriented economic system and democratic competition is surely preferable to 'radical Islam' which is keen to...institute religious law." Turunc explains the AKP's success as a reaction of the marginalized segments of the population who are excluded from the benefits of globalization. See, respectively, Turam, B., *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement*, Stanford University Press, 2007, p.138; Somer, M., "Moderate Islam and Secularist Opposition in Turkey: Implications for the World, Muslims and Secular Democracy," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol:28, No:7, 2007, p.1276; and, Turunc, H., "Islamicist or Democratic? The AKP's Search for Identity in Turkish Politics," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol:15, No:1, 2007, p.84. In my research, I discovered that the consensus between secularists and religious conservatives dramatically eroded as the AKP changed his agenda of membership to the EU and democratization of Turkey's institutions. Yet, the ongoing neoliberalization of the Turkish economy and the Kurdish issue are the two major fronts both religious and secular bodies continue agreeing on *in principle*, albeit not in the means the party has been using to handle.

told before, thinking of one's self as secularist or religious conservative means having no sympathy for the other position, *even if there are similar political projects*, such as the management of cultural diversity (more on this in the present and the next chapter). Foucault's conception of state is of great help to explain how the struggle between secularists and religious conservatives finds expression in the way it is played out in the state realm. He writes, "It is certain that in contemporary societies the state is not simply one of the forms or specific situations of the exercise of power—even if it is the most important—but that in a certain way all other forms of power relations must refer to it."<sup>74</sup>

Hence the question of how recent cultural politics of the Turkish state is perceived by Turks with different subject positions should be thought in conjunction with the ongoing clashes within the state itself. This enables us to understand the constitutive power of the AKP over the religious conservative subjectivities and that of the CHP over secularist ones when we speak of the cultural politics of the Turkish state. In the next section, I elaborate on how each position yields systematized narratives of cultural diversity that correspond with the competing representations of the Kurdish issue by the AKP and the previous establishment, whose main executive body is currently the CHP.

### **Religious Conservative Subjectivities in the face of Multiculturalism**

I begin with two women with firm affiliations with Islam and organize their living according to Islamic rules. They are university graduates and their life trajectory resemble to each other in many respects, such as the decision to become veiled, to have university education, to get married and have children, and to work. Funda grew up in Germany as a veiled Turkish woman, and Sevgi in Turkey, that made them refer to their own experiences of being

---

<sup>74</sup> Foucault, M., "Afterword: The Subject and Power" in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, The University of Chicago Press, 1982, p.224

discriminated and oppressed in both countries.<sup>75</sup> They vote for the AKP, and they recognize that the Turkish state “must have made something wrong *in the past*” so that Kurds have revolted. Both emphasized the need to avoid from nationalism which they see as irrelevant for the common living of Turks and Kurds as two Muslim communities. Nevertheless, their language contained nationalistic undertones such as the love and gratitude for the country, and the image of a more prestigious and powerful Turkey with the AKP government. They support the current process of negotiation with the Kurdish movement “for Turkey to be saved from terrorism.” Nowhere in the interviews, these women expressed any pejorative phrase for Kurds, nor talked about an instance in which they had an antagonistic encounter with Kurds. However, they engage with the official discourse of togetherness and fraternity in such a way that the questions of Kurds’ collective rights and prospective remedies to systematic injustices –past and present- remained secondary.

From the narratives of these two religious conservative, university-graduate, AKP voter women, we can discern an instance of the productive dimension of the exercise of power. The way Funda and Sevgi engage with the representations of the AKP can be read as a manifestation of the desirable subjectivities that the AKP’s project of multiculturalism endeavors to produce. First, the Kurdish problem is seen as the result of some wrongdoings of the previous military-bureaucratic regime whose main executive power is presented as the CHP, now the main opposition party in the parliament. The past is full of these women’s own experiences of being suppressed and excluded in daily life, which is thought to having been gradually changed by the AKP’s efforts to free the public expression of diverse subjectivities. In the below passage Sevgi mentions a daily encounter with an unveiled woman in Nişantaşı, one of the symbolic spatial centers of secularist Turks with high socio-economic status.

---

<sup>75</sup> All names are pseudonyms.

“I *still* read in the newspapers from time to time. A doctor doesn’t want to examine a veiled patient, humiliates or contemns her. I find such things unpleasant. We should value persons because of their humanity, not because of their outfit. *These are now largely overcome but there are still those who couldn’t internalize or accept this.* For example, I experienced in a market in Nişantaşı when I was picking out vegetables to buy. A woman came and told me not to pick that way. I responded, “why are you telling this in such a rigid way? Okay, you can warn, but why so rigidly?” She answered, “I tell this rigidly so that it might be useful to enlarge your horizon,” she told something like this. I mean, this is really not a nice thing. Vegetable is a pretext here. What does it mean that it might enlarge my horizon? Don’t I have my own ideas, opinions? This is an absurd thing.”

She recounts this encounter as an example of how veiled women are offended by secularists who resist to progressive changes in the public expression of religious conservative subjectivities. Erdogan’s rhetoric of the “common victims” of the Kemalist regime, referring to the Islamic and Kurdish identities, seems to have worked well in this case whereby the AKP presents itself as enlarging the domain of freedoms. This rhetoric has proved too thin to gain the alliance of Kurds for the AKP’s will to become the overwhelming force within the state.<sup>76</sup> Yet, it has become successful in inviting certain religious subjectivities to this project which the AKP has rationalized by addressing the Kemalist regime as the oppressor.

Second, The AKP, and Erdoğan in person, is perceived to be capable of dealing with the Kurdish issue. As the wish to be saved from terrorism indicates, the ideological separation of Kurds from the PKK has great purchase for my respondents. The PKK is thought as the cause of the problems, pain and death for both Turks and Kurds, which is indeed going hand in hand with the recognition that the PKK is a result of oppression in the past. Not only AKP-voters who reproduce the AKP’s and president Erdoğan’s discourse that differentiate between “Kurdish brothers and terrorists,” those that are overtly oppositional to his government contend that “we cannot regard every Kurd as terrorist.” Kurds are believed to suffer from

---

<sup>76</sup> According to Yavuz and Özcan, the AKP “has used the Kurdish issue as a weapon against secularism in Turkey, identifying secularism as a cause of division between Turks and Kurds. The JDP has offered its own solution -Islam as cement- to end the societal polarization of Turkey.” However, so they discuss, the AKP failed to develop any coherent policy on the Kurdish question. Despite the fact that the AKP has deployed a language of “common victims” of the Kemalist regime that suppressed both the Islamic and Kurdish identities, and seek in this way an alliance with Kurds, there is an irreconcilable gap between this formulation and that of the pro-Kurdish political parties and actors. Yavuz, M. H., and Özcan, N. A., “The Kurdish Question and Turkey’s Justice and Development Party,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol:8, No:1, Spring 2006, pp.102-119

socio-cultural and economic underdevelopment of the east of Turkey which has left them an uneducated mass, vulnerable to manipulation by the PKK. For example, to account for why the BDP have such a vast support in Kurdish regions or why there was such a huge participation as around one million people in the Newroz gathering, my respondents use the rhetoric that Kurds are being coerced by the PKK. The implication of this is the discursive denial of agency to Kurds in both claiming collective rights and performing the Kurdish identity in public.

Different from secularists, though, religious conservatives support the cultural politics that the AKP has variously named “The Kurdish Opening” in 2005, “National Unity and Fraternity Project” in 2009, and “Peace Process” in 2012 for the country to recover its strength. Erdoğan, as the national will personified, is the only legitimate actor that is supposed to put an end to this problem and increase the power and prestige of the country. Rights and liberties are omitted from discussion.

Consider the following passage from our conversation with Funda, where she describes the Kurdish issue and proposes solutions:

“I was abroad; the PKK has always been a problem. Always there was, there is a Kurdish problem. But there are Kurds that I know, and my husband knows. *Not all Kurds are the same.* And there was the Kurdish question, unfortunately. As much as we read from books, as we heard stories, something was made wrong. But something needs to be corrected. Kurds should be able to speak Kurdish. Even if it will not become official, there should be elective courses in schools, there should be Kurdish publications. I see these things normal. There are many cultures in Turkey living like this. They existed in the Ottoman Empire and lived in peace. We should achieve this one way or another. We should be respectful to every culture...I evaluate the Peace Process very positively. I think it is going towards a good end. If this is democracy, democracy should be like this. *On the condition that it will not be an official language, of course Turkish should be the only official language, Kurds can speak their language in courts.* There can be a translator, and the translator would deal with it. Is it not enough? Why this has become such a problem, I don’t understand. I shall put this way: Once this *tolerance* is assured, once there is *respect* between communities, be it Alevi, Kurdish, or Christian, everybody can live together. *But nothing about state has to change.*”

The very beginning of the passage employs the popular distinction between “good Kurds and bad Kurds,” according to whether the Kurdish identity is politicized or not. Kurds she and her



husband know are not the same as “others,” so are the “bad Kurds” represented, who hold on or at least sympathize with guns against the Turkish army. In spite of the causal connections she is making between the PKK’s armed struggle and mistakes of the state in the past, she finds relief in distinguishing Kurds as those with and without the PKK affiliation. So long as the problem is the PKK *per se*, and not the collective rights that Kurds are demanding, to let Kurds speak Kurdish or to be tolerant should be enough to stop the PKK violence. Her reference to the multicultural make-up of the Ottoman Empire repeats this rhetoric of tolerance, which is the backbone of multiculturalist discourses in many settings.<sup>77</sup> After having narrated how she had felt offended by the rigid tone of warning by an unveiled woman in the market, Sevgi arrived at a similar conclusion by making references to Islam and its congenial relationship to democracy:

“We should be a little more tolerant. Our dignified Prophet says too, ‘the diversity of opinions among my *ummah* [the worldwide community of Islam] is auspicious.’ Isn’t this a requirement of democracy as well? No doubt there shall be difference but what matters is to be able to live together. I think likewise in every issue. Same in the Turkish-Kurdish issue or in the Alevi issue. There shall be different beliefs, different viewpoints, different ethnic groups. We should be able to respect each other.”

To pose MacCannell’s question: “In their interactions with others, how can groups in power...foster the impression that their own traits and qualities are correct, while the corresponding qualities of others are ‘ethnic?’”<sup>78</sup> By suggesting that everybody should be respectful to every culture, and that Kurdish *of course* should not become an official language, she seems to be immersed in what Žižek called *culturalization of politics as the liberal multiculturalist’s basic ideological operation*: “Political differences, differences conditioned by political inequality...are naturalized and neutralized into cultural differences,

---

<sup>77</sup> Ang, I., “The Curse of the Smile: Ambivalence and the ‘Asian’ Woman in Australian Multiculturalism,” *Feminist Review*, The World Upside Down: Feminism in the Antipodes, No:52, Spring 1996, pp.36-49

<sup>78</sup> Cited in McLaren, P., “White Terror and Oppositional Agency: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism,” in *Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference*, eds. Christine E. Sleeter and Peter L. McLaren, State University of New York Press, 1995, p.50

different ways of life, which are something given, something that cannot be overcome, but must be merely tolerated.”<sup>79</sup>

In other words, the Kurdish issue is being reduced to its cultural dimension in such a way as to exemplify that “multiculturalism's implied focus on culture can occlude or minimize specific political activisms and their histories.”<sup>80</sup> This move around the rhetoric of tolerance and mutual respect should indeed be connected to the prevalent conception of state by Turkish subjects, both religious conservative and secularist, as an abstraction that is separate from and superior to the realm of the society. (See the next chapter for a detailed discussion of Turks' imaginaries of the state and the political community). This liberal conception allows Turks to imagine diversity as being the natural order of things in social life that should be kept separate from the political questions of representation and sovereignty. Kurds exist, so do Alevis, non-Muslims and all different ethnic groups in a way that makes Turkey a “mosaic” or “the cradle of civilizations.” All what is necessary is conceived as not posing the question of diversity in terms of group rights and power-sharing mechanisms in governance and representation.

### **Secularist Subjectivities in the face of Multiculturalism**

How does the AKP's way of dealing with the Kurdish issue find resonance among secularists, especially among those who think that the pro-Islamic rhetoric and policies of the AKP threaten the inviolable laicism of the Turkish state? Let me note again: I argue that neoliberal multiculturalism is a political project of governing the right-claims of oppositional movements, exactly by turning questions of collective rights and liberties into matters of cultural diversity. This means that this project does not depart from the institutional

---

<sup>79</sup> Žižek, S., “Tolerance as an Ideological Category,” *Critical Inquiry*, No:34, Summer 2008, p.660

<sup>80</sup> Gunew, S., *Postcolonialism and Multiculturalism*, p.25

organization of a desirably homogenous national identity of a previous era, but attempts to harness the opposition by representational strategies and gestural changes in cultural politics.

Within this framework, it is not surprising that secularists do not have a dramatically different policy suggestions for the Kurdish issue than that the AKP is implementing. What is remarkable, however, is the way the Kurdish question becomes but another front of struggle between the secularist and religious conservative subjects for power. Secularists blame the AKP for collaborating with the actors of the PKK and seeking Kurds' alliance for its pro-Islamic transformation of the state and society. Hence, although the political rationality of the AKP's cultural politics does not offer new power-sharing mechanisms and substantive equality of rights for different identities, secularists and CHP remain opposed. The difference of secularists can be observed in the way they define and historicize the Kurdish issue, and rationalize the preservation of the constitution as it was formulated by the founding élite.<sup>81</sup>

Two secularist women, Leyla and Nermin, were exceptionally eager to talk with me and each one said, at the end of our conversations, that she needed a wise person to make her voice heard. Although I repeated the aim of my research, which is, after all, research that holds no promise or claim to legitimate any viewpoint of the respondents, they said:

“Anyway, we [Turks] are now being suppressed. I feel myself suppressed because I am saying that I am Turkish.”

Nermin, identifying herself a non-practicing Muslim and Atatürkist, is a 55 years old university graduate woman voting for the CHP. After expressing her anxiety about the Peace Process and the sense of being increasingly oppressed due to her Turkish identity, she begins

---

<sup>81</sup> CHP persists to preserve the definition and institutionalization of the Turkish identity and citizenship as they are defined in the constitution. Although the party cadre and its president, Kılıçdaroğlu, express their wish for a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish issue, there is no new and coherent policy suggestion that the party has declared up to this day. The CHP's party program defines ethnic identities as the national richness of the country and suggests that “the problems of the citizens with Kurdish origin” should be dealt with on the basis of respect and tolerance for individual cultural rights. See, [http://www.chp.org.tr/?page\\_id=70](http://www.chp.org.tr/?page_id=70), pp.46-49

to narrate a daily encounter with two Kurdish women in a public bus. This encounter has remarkable similarities with the one Sevgi experienced, yet, this time; I am talking with a woman like the one whom Sevgi described as having been offensive towards her veil. And Nermin's narrative is a telling example of the secularist subjectivities that are resentful at losing their superior positions vis-à-vis Kurds and religious conservatives, both of which secularists imagine to be in need of enlightenment.

“I think Turks begin to be under oppression after these things. Because, last week I took a bus which I suppose was driving towards a region where Kurds populously live. Two women, maybe they were sisters-in-law, had made their little children sit on single seats. I asked the child if she could pass to her mother's arms so that I could sit because I was really too much tired that day and I was carrying packages. The woman said to her daughter 'no girl, keep sitting.' In response, I asked if she had spent separate entry pass for the child. Then I looked at her face, from her appearance and manner of talk I understood that they were Kurds. People around us also wanted to intervene into their behavior, but they couldn't... I said to that woman 'what a disrespectful person you are! Don't you feel ashamed? If you behave in this manner, how would these children do in the future taking you example?' She answered, 'You cannot instruct me.' I said, 'I can. You should learn to be instructed. Whatever you learn would better cultivate you.' ”

“No” of the Kurdish woman and her rejection to be guided about her behavior by Nermin annoyed the latter who imagines Kurds as not knowing the manners of conduct, like leaving the child's seat to a middle-aged woman with packages. She got angry by the other's refusal because, as a matter of fact, she should have had the power to demand submission. The silent support she assumed to having been provided by the people around them is taken as a sign of oppression of the Turkish identity, which has become incapable of intervening into the uncultivated manners of Kurds. Following the narration of this experience, Nermin called my attention to her necklace shaped of crescent-and-star, the symbol of the Turkish flag, and said that she began carrying it on purpose, “after that which is called the Peace Process started.” Likewise, Leyla told me that she put “T.C.”, initials of the Turkish Republic in Turkish, before her name on her Facebook account, like many other people started doing as a reaction to the lifting in April, 2012 of the initials from the plates of the ministries.

These reactionary gestures tell a lot on the structured contradiction between the rhetoric of cultural diversity and the Turkish identity. On the one hand, these two women, recognizing the fact that various ethnic/religious/sectarian groups live in Turkey, advocate a multicultural living whereby no group is excluded, discriminated, or oppressed. As opposed to religious conservatives, they do not recall Islam as a moral principle or institution to ensure a peaceful coexistence between Turks and Kurds, but refer to Atatürk and republican ideals of laicism and democracy. On the other hand, though, they feel the need to reassert their Turkishness when they think its public expression becomes comparable to Kurdish identity. Thinking of Turkishness as “an umbrella” encompassing all other identities culminates into the recognition of each one as distinct, but in such a hierarchical way that each collective identity becomes subordinate to being Turkish. It is a metaphor that expresses an embodied position of having the upper hand both in representation and reproduction of the Turkish identity. The sense of being threatened or suppressed follows from the imagined probability of losing this privilege.

Neither the similar ways of understanding, nor the argumentation against the recent cultural politics of the Turkish state that we find in Leyla and Nermin are accidental. Their resembling life trajectories –family life, migration to Istanbul, schools, marriage with Turkish men, having children, work in state institutions- put them in a describable position of middle-aged secularist Turkish women voting for the CHP. This is what explains the similarity in their accounts of cultural diversity, as much as the opposition they show to both the AKP and the Kurdish movement. In contrast to AKP supporters who read the last decade as a period of Turkey gaining strength in international politics, re-becoming a world power and leading economic force, secularists lament for the erosion of laicism and the concomitant rise of political Islam, lost of the track towards being a Western-like democracy, and collapse of the urban middle-class. How secularists perceive the Kurdish issue and the bundle of events that

recently took place within its domain should be understood in relation to the ongoing struggle between secularists and pro-Islamists to hold the state power. As Graham Burchell aptly put, “...our relation to political power has been shaped by what Foucault calls the ‘governmentalization’ of the state. That is to say, it is in the name of forms of existence which have been shaped by political technologies of *government* that we, as individuals and groups, make claims on or against the state.”<sup>82</sup>

In the passage below, I read a double-tension between the positions of being Turkish and Kurdish, and secularist and religious conservative –a tension that bear significant consequences for the informant’s relation to the state and perception of the Kurdish issue.

Upon my question what Leyla understands to be the Kurdish issue, she answers:

“I am talking about the PKK. The state is not able to protect there. Think what happened in the east. *In the east, the state couldn’t become a state; it couldn’t bring the Republic to the east.* Why? Because of the feudal system. The state could not achieve to make the land reform. It was the state’s mistake. The landlord makes whatever he wants; he is the head of everything. Then, after 1980, there had been [paramilitary] organizations that were formed by the state. They killed Kurdish notables; that’s true. There had been losses, right. These happened, nobody denies that. But there had been painful things in this country. Whom did the 1980 coup demolish? It demolished Leftists and Idealists. They [Idealists] were also gone. Well, confrontation? Right, we shall confront. Confront everything. All right this country made something, the state made something [wrong]. But what is happening today! Today you are saying ‘leave your gun and go’ to the PKK. Isn’t this a terrorist organization? PKK [is] terrorist organization. You are letting them to give up their guns and leave the country. But you condemn those men, who are not members of terrorist organizations, to death in prison! What an egregious contradiction is this! *To be brothers with those people in the east, to get their votes, you are killing people in this side.*”

This full-length quotation from a middle-aged, university graduate, Atatürkist, CHP-voter woman consists of some typical elements of the secularist position I put in contradistinction to the religious conservative one. As I am arguing, the Kurdish issue is another battlefield on which the struggle to hold the state power is played out between secularists and pro-Islamists. Leyla’s mention of the Ergenekon lawsuit to oppose the Peace Process is a clear example of

---

<sup>82</sup> Burchell, G., “Peculiar Interests: Civil Society and Governing ‘The System of Natural Liberty’” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p.145

her attachment to the structural dominance of the Turkish identity, on the one hand, and the secularist resentment against the shifting locus of state power towards pro-Islamic clique within the state, on the other. Her recognition that Kurds became subjected to state violence and that the state, as much as people, should confront this past is not followed by a concrete prospect of actions to be taken. To the very contrast, she goes on to rationalize violence for it was used not only against Kurds but also against patriot Turkish youth (her description of Idealists), as if suffering made the *sides* equal.

Like other secularists I talked to, Leyla sees the Kurdish problem not a result of the exclusionary definition of citizenship by the founding élite, but as a result of the incomplete project of Turkish modernization. The proactive role the state was supposed to take to regulate the local relations of land, production and class would have ended with a more harmonious nation-body. This can also be read as a failed project of assimilation since “to be state,” “to bring the Republic to east” has meant to create a homogenous national community from the initial years of the Republic.<sup>83</sup> Secularists’ reactions to the process of negotiation with the Kurdish movement merge with their exasperation against the AKP’s consolidation of power within the state. As such, theirs is a *wounded* subjectivity, to invoke Wendy Brown’s metaphor.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Yeğen, M., “The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol:34, No: 4, October 1999, pp.555-568

<sup>84</sup> Brown, W., “Wounded Attachments,” *Political Theory*, Vol:21, No:3, August 1993, pp.390-410

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has been an attempt to unravel the fragmented character of Turkish subjectivities in relation to neoliberal government of cultural diversity. I use the concept of governmentality to monitor how struggles for power are carried on through dichotomized identities of secularist-religious conservative, no less than Turkish-Kurdish. To inhabit secularist or religious conservative subject positions is indicative of the ways my respondents differentially relate to state and its recent cultural politics concerning the Kurdish issue. Secularists protest what religious conservatives celebrate –an opposition that follows, not from an essential incompatibility between the ways they imagine cultural diversity and multicultural living, but from the changing center of gravity in terms of state power. Next chapter investigates how and why sense of belonging to Turkishness outweighs other axes of differentiation to produce similar political subjectivities towards the question of recognition.



## Chapter III

### **In Between Recognition and Denial: Multiculturalism and Reproducing Turkishness of the Political Community**

*Once they become an object of government, a significant part of our identity and citizenship is produced through our relation to the state which is by no means a purely juridical relation.*<sup>85</sup>

#### **Introduction**

How does recognition of difference function to undermine right-claims of the Other no less than its denial? What does recognition mean after all if, in the process, we witness the empowerment of, not the Other, but the subject of the hegemonic identity?

At issue in this conundrum is the reproduction of the dominance and normativity of Turkishness through key mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality and multiculturalism. Culturalization of politics or de-politicization of cultural-rights claims through discursive moves around cultural diversity, mutual respect and tolerance constitute the analytical focus of the preceding chapter. In the present one, I analyze two other pivotal mechanisms of neoliberal government of diversity: differentiation between desirable and undesirable political subjectivities through the trope of responsible-moral citizen; and the demarcation of public and private spheres as respectively realms of universality and particularity. In Turkey's own specific socio-political context, saturated with a statist culture, these modes of government function to reproduce the immanence of Turkishness within my respondents' imaginaries of the political community of rights. As such, Turks are re-empowered to oscillate between recognition and non-recognition, as much as between inclusion and exclusion of the Kurdish identity.

---

<sup>85</sup> Procacci, G., "Governmentality and Citizenship," in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, eds. Kate Nash and Alan Scott, Blackwell Publishing, 2004, p.349

## National Identity and Kurdishness as In-appropriable Difference

I examine in the previous chapter how secularism and religious conservatism position Turkish subjects towards different representations of the Kurdish issue, and towards each other. Using governmentality approach has been fruitful to explore that subjects of secularist and religious conservative identities project their power struggles onto the realm of the state, which drive them to *employ different terms to display similar political subjectivities* in the face of the Kurdish issue.

This chapter investigates how and why sense of belonging to Turkishness surpasses other axes of differentiation –i.e. secularism versus religious conservatism, gender, age, and socio-economic status- to produce congruent subjectivities towards the question of recognition. My informants with various ideological commitments and ways of life seem to be immersed within a discursive field that mobilizes particular rationalities to account for the different dimensions of the Kurdish issue; such as the history of state violence against non-Turkish communities, difference and cultural rights, and the boundaries separating the private and public spheres. These narratives show that thinking of recognition in terms of the acknowledgment that “Kurds exist in Turkey” is limited. Delanty points out that “multiculturalism is a textual, performative field of power in which the subaltern is discursively constituted in relations of recognition that are necessarily ones of *misrecognition*.”<sup>86</sup> In a similar vein, I examine in this chapter that recognition involves problematization of the actual relations of power between subjects of different identities, which, in turn, bring forth issues of ethnic belonging, national identity and citizenship.

---

<sup>86</sup> Delanty, G., “Review of *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* by Elizabeth A. Povinelli,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol:109, No:1, July 2003, p.247, (emphasis original)

Ien Ang analyzes the intriguing relationship of multiculturalism to nationalism within the framework of governmentality. She describes multiculturalism as particularly a modern technology of government put into effect as a response to the increasing pressure of identity-based opposition to the effacement of difference by the nation-state.<sup>87</sup> Ang's comparison of the Australian and Malaysian multiculturalisms focuses on governmental projects of 'One Nation' in these two contexts, different in history and organization of the relationships among ethnic identities, that is common to both where the state policies target harmony and unity by granting *limited recognition to minorities*. As she pertinently puts, "Rather than working against nationalism, multiculturalism here is a governmental attempt to construct a *more effective nationalism*, one that can accommodate the increasingly complex heterogeneous reality of late 20<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>88</sup>

A redefinition of nationalism on the basis of a limited recognition of plurality, rather than a restrictive projection of homogeneity, would be useful to understand the last decade of multiculturalism in Turkey. Erdoğan's repeated slogan, "One flag, one nation, one fatherland, one state," is reminiscent of the new codes through which nationalism persists in state realm. This discursive strategy can be read as part of a broader project of state multiculturalism with which the AKP has been candidate to solve the Kurdish issue "without dislocating the nationalist logic [of the political field]."<sup>89</sup> This oxymoron-like strategy repeats itself, as I mentioned before, in Erdoğan's representation of the Kurdish issue as an inevitable result of the former Kemalist establishment's suppression of alternative subjectivities in public sphere, and of its resolution as the eventual strengthening of the nation with more solid unity (whereas Kurds demand legal recognition of the Kurdish identity and empowering

---

<sup>87</sup> Ang, I., *Between Nationalism and Transnationalism*, p.3

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7, (emphasis original)

<sup>89</sup> Akdeniz, E., Göker, E., "The Historical 'Stickiness' of Nationalism in Turkey's Political Field," *Turkish Studies*, Vol:12, No:3, September 2011, p.329

institutional arrangements to realize the substantive equality of Turks and Kurds in representation, participation to public sphere, and self-administration).

When I follow the repercussions of this rhetoric of unity-in-diversity in my respondents' narratives, I realize that the weight of Turkishness intervene to create swaying attitudes of recognition and denial, embracing and fearing from difference, desired equality and reluctance to forgo the privilege of belonging to the hegemonic Turkish identity. What is commonly involved in these narratives is neither an *a priori* denial of Kurds as an earlier era of Turkish nationalism endeavored to project. Nor it is recognition that is followed by support to the organization of substantive equality between ethnic identities, as demanded by the Kurdish movement. On the fragile ground between these two positions, my respondents reproduce Turkishness as the entry card to the political community of rights and citizenship.

These non-straightforward manifestations of *more effective nationalism* should analytically be related to functioning of differentiation mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality: those having the necessary attributes of responsible-moral citizen and those who have not; individual and collective subjects with desirable and undesirable political subjectivities; appropriate and inappropriate forms of difference; public sphere as the realm of universality and the private sphere of particularity. Indeed, the statist culture provides the fertile ground to nurture Turkish subjectivities that engage with these differentiations to rationalize forms of authoritarian government and non-recognition of the Kurdish identity.

Mitchell Dean's term, authoritarian governmentality, questions how explicitly non-liberal rationalities and practices go hand in hand with liberal forms of government. Dean criticizes the way liberalism presents itself as limited government that ensures the security of the rights of the political and juridical subject on a universal basis. Instead, government of the modern state, whether committed to liberal or authoritarian rationalities, calls for sovereign

interventions into those segments of the population deemed to be not displaying the necessary attributes of responsible freedom.<sup>90</sup> The emphasis of the liberal art of government “on governing through freedom means that it always contains a division between those who are capable of bearing the responsibilities and freedoms of mature citizenship and those who are not.”<sup>91</sup> Giroux’s notice is similar to that on the misrepresentation of liberal government as safeguarding the equality of all citizens. She asserts that “modern state power is defined by both its monopoly on force and its capacity to categorize, *through which it acquires the necessary justification*. The state determines who will be protected under the mantle of citizenship and who will remain alien,”<sup>92</sup> the latter being vulnerable to be excluded from state protection.

These analyses are valuable not only for a political anthropology of state in Turkey where the historical record of authoritarian government is voluminous, but also to grasp how Turkish subjectivities are configured to simultaneously support a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish issue and justify instances of state violence against Kurds. (The perception of the Roboski massacre by my respondents is exemplary, as I discuss later in this chapter.) I analyze the relationship of authoritarian governmentality to multiculturalism through the ways my respondents differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate forms of difference and corresponding political subjectivities. This is to suggest that recognition of difference may invoke rationalities of authoritarian government no less than its denial once difference signify a collective subject running counter to the normativity of national identity and citizenship.

---

<sup>90</sup> Dean, M., *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, pp.131-145

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.146

<sup>92</sup> Giroux, S., Goldberg, D., “On the State of Race Theory: A Conversation with David Theo Goldberg,” *JAC*, Vol:26, No:1/2, 2006, p.21, (emphasis mine)

Giovanna Procacci maintains that citizenship cannot be distinguished “from the practices of government organizing it, and from the forms of subjectivity corresponding to them.”<sup>93</sup> Although she makes this point to criticize the conceptual coupling of citizenship with national identity, and proposes to view citizenship as practice of belonging to political community, narratives of my informants show that belonging to national identity is imagined to precondition citizenship practices. The more ethnic groups conform to Turkishness in public sphere, the more their difference is found appropriate to be included into the political community of citizens. Mentioning other ethnic communities in Turkey is popular to define this limit of recognition and inclusion. Lazs, Circassians, Georgians, Arabs, Albanians and Bosnians (note that non-Muslim communities of Turkey are not included either) are cited as a proof of the cultural richness of the country and of the equality of all ethnic groups under Turkish citizenship. Difference of these communities is silent, hence peaceful, in the sense of the absence of identity-based political struggles by these communities that Turkish subjects appreciate. On the other hand, “some forms of difference becomes legible as willfulness and obstinacy.”<sup>94</sup> What makes difference of the Kurdish identity inappropriate is exactly its in-appropriable character into Turkishness the assigned universality of which is regulating the limits of the political community and rights that membership to that community confers on individual and collective subjects.

---

<sup>93</sup> *Governmentality and Citizenship*, p.343

<sup>94</sup> Ahmed, S., *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012, p.158

Hence recognition is bounded to be partial,<sup>95</sup> or partially non-recognition, as long as distinctions are “made between proper and improper forms of difference. As Mathew Hyland notes, this becomes the route by which an ‘open-ended obligation to the state and its proxies’ is demanded.”<sup>96</sup> Especially in Turkey where “the state remains a crucial presence, a screen for political desires and identifications as well as fears,”<sup>97</sup> assertion of or simply belonging to identities of inappropriate difference is imagined to be in need of discipline by forms of authoritarian government. Next sections inquire these issues within the narratives of my respondents.

### **Imaginarities of State and Turkishness of Citizenship**

“Public veneration for the state reerects mechanisms of state power, even when they show the potential to disintegrate.”<sup>98</sup> Navaro-Yashin’s influential study explores that an idea of the Turkish state is daily reproduced by ordinary people through which the state, as material reality, retains its power, in addition to the institutional mechanisms of ideological enforcement. In this section and the next chapter, I take her analysis to continue reflecting on how state figures in the imaginaries of my interviewees to amplify their sense of belonging to Turkishness so that forms of authoritarian government towards Kurds, imagined to be a collective body of pseudo- or non-citizens, are normalized. This is, furthermore, to continue

---

<sup>95</sup> The present discussion is alluding to Bülent Küçük’s term “partial recognition,” that he has formulated to analyze the intricate ways in which the governmental project of multiculturalism in the last decade both departs from and updates the assimilationist politics of the previous military-bureaucratic regime that was hitherto based on denial of difference. I understand partial recognition to designate the AKP’s double-edged cultural politics through which the official recognition of the Kurdish identity is going hand in hand with disciplining the pro-Kurdish politics such that the right-claims of the Kurdish movement to equal public representation and sovereignty-sharing mechanisms are attempted to be tamed. I re-pose the question of recognition in the way it becomes operative within the imaginaries of belonging and otherness of ordinary Turkish citizens.

<sup>96</sup> Angela Mitropoulos, “The Materialization of Race in Multiculture,” *darkmatter*, February 23, 2008, <http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2008/02/23/the-materialisation-of-race-in-multiculture/>

<sup>97</sup> Aretxaga, B., “Maddening States,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol:32, 2003, p.393

<sup>98</sup> Navaro-Yashin, Y., *Faces of the State*, p.135

scrutinizing the characterization of the state as an ensemble of institutions reflecting and regulating social relations, as I began in the previous chapter. If subjects of religious conservative and secularist identities differentially relate to Turkish state as a reflection of their power struggles, we should comprehend how their “peculiar existential need for the idea of a strong and unified Turkish state”<sup>99</sup> generates congruent subjectivities towards the Kurdish issue.

When the state is thought in abstract terms, majority of my informants<sup>100</sup> mention it with respect, gratitude, devotion and love. Without any referent, such as institutions, policies, and political actors, the state is commonly understood almost with a sense of divinity that is the source and guarantee of life. When we talked about oppressive measures that the Turkish state undertook against non-Muslim minorities and Kurds, interviewees held positions that do not reject the facticity of these events.<sup>101</sup> However, the state is discursively redeemed from its oppressive, and at times bloody, past with recourse to an imaginary that elevates the state to a trans-historical reality, as can be witnessed in most nationalist narratives. Assimilationist or violent policies and operations that the Turkish state implemented against dominated groups in recent past are attributed to executive bodies that allegedly cannot capture the overall character of the Turkish state.

Hence the imaginary of the state is contradictory, fragmented, and changing according to the subjects’ ways of relating. Remember that whereas secularists blame the AKP government for

---

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p.135

<sup>100</sup> With the exception of two self-identified leftists for whom the state refers to the bureaucratic machine of class- and identity-based oppression. One of them, Yılmaz, is voting for the CHP, whereas the other, Fikret, refuses engagement with politics in any of its legal or mainstream form.

<sup>101</sup> Although examples given varied with different informants, one or several of the following had been mentioned: Mass deportation of Armenians in 1915 (as referred to by my informants who replicate the official discourse of denial that that was genocide); Dersim massacre in 1937 and 1938; deathly tortures in Diyarbakir Prison following the 1980 coup; the pogrom that targeted Alevis in Sivas on 2 July 1993; the forced migration of Kurds through village evictions and extra-legal killings through disappearances under custody in the 1990s.



corroding laicism and separation-of-powers principle of the Turkish state, religious conservatives complain about the previous governments for suppressing religious subjectivities in a “Muslim country”. For both, the longings of the other group tend to distort what the Turkish state *really* is. What is crucial to neoliberal multiculturalism is the uniting character of its rhetoric and representation of diversity for the imaginaries of the state and Turkishness. Faced with the Kurdish identity and political struggle for equality, my respondents resign to abstraction. Their own narrativized experiences of being oppressed in different personal-historical moments –for example, due to inhabiting positions of being poor or uneducated, woman or veiled woman, newcomer to the city or resident of a lower-middle class neighborhood- are omitted from the discussion of the state as if these experiences are irrelevant to their structural relationships with the state. Narratives of tolerance, difference-blindness, and neutrality of the state to all ethnic and religious groups proliferate.

These narratives closely overlap with the institutional organization of the Turkish identity that is blind to its own historicity. The weight of recognizing the facticity of state violence against minorities is overcome by de-historicizing: The state is to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights of each and every citizen regardless of identity. Counter examples in history to this imagined ideality of the state are thought to be exceptional, *the exigency of the times*, or anomalous due to a number of ill-intended state élite. The imagined gap between what the state is and what the state does, its ideality and facticity, its abstract form and pro-active presence in history is kind of a “rescue operation” for the dominant identity to reconstitute itself. As much as national identity is lived and imagined as a relationship with the state and collective history, this gap becomes constitutive of the imagined legitimacy and normativity of Turkishness vis-à-vis dominated identities.

The reception of the Roboski massacre<sup>102</sup> by my respondents demonstrates the productively self-contradictory image of the state for the dominant identity. The event was so recent at the time of the interviews –around a year and a half had passed since then- that my informants could not resort to the language of *past should remain in the past*, as they often do when having been disturbed to confront the Other’s suffering. Furthermore, they were incapable, this time, of immediately rationalizing violence against Kurds within the rhetoric of national security because the bombardment killed 34 villagers –majority children- turning back from extra-legal frontier trade. The image of death bodies wrapped to blankets and put side-by-side with the mourning mass around was horrifying to audience of the mainstream media. The state élite explained the event as an operational mistake, and, in this way, confirmed the state being the perpetrator. The abstract and trans-historical imaginary of the state is temporarily suspended.

When I asked the informants what they thought and felt after having watched the news about Roboski, I heard almost the same things with different sequences. Below are a couple of examples from different interviews. First is taken from the interview with Leyla, one of the secularist women parts of whose narrative were taken in the previous chapter:

“It is great pain. I don’t think that the government did it on purpose. They received the wrong security intelligence from either the PKK or the U.S. Civilian people... They were smuggling diesel fuel. For God’s sake, is this something that can happen in any of the European countries? Can a state ever turn a blind eye to smuggling? They were smuggling. Why!”

Next answer is taken from the interview with Fatma, a religious conservative AKP-voter woman of 50 years old, with primary education. This is at the same time the most difficult interview of mine because of Fatma’s self description as being a woman with insufficient cultivation to talk about politics. Roboski was among the very rare subjects she felt eager to talk. Yet, her answer was not dramatically different from secularists or university graduates:

---

<sup>102</sup> See the first chapter for a brief description of the occurrence.

“But they were smuggling, right. How would the army know [that they were civilians] so that they wouldn’t shoot? Maybe [the army thought that] the others were coming to shoot. I can’t really put this... But, why did this happen? I ask the same thing. Maybe they [civilians] were mis-defined as the PKK. *But if the state knew, it wouldn’t have killed them, Dila. Would it?*”

Leyla and Fatma expressed their feelings and doubts in the present tense as though having been witness to Roboski leded them to step out of the formal frameworks of state and citizenship. The state is grasped with the destruction it caused -destruction in real time and space, with death bodies it left behind, with a non-negotiable facticity observed and acknowledged. The distance from the imaginary grotesqueness of the state, then, needed to be covered by expanding the imaginary itself: thinking of explanations based on conspiracy theories, assumptions, searching for *real* culpable actors from the PKK to the U.S. in the *admitted* absence of even a small indicator about their relevance to the operation. It is in this way that, “the notion of the state has somehow (always) survived scandals about its terror.”<sup>103</sup>

I put below an excerpt from the interview with Nilüfer, a 47 years-old woman with university education who defines herself as patriot. She was born in the ex-communist Bulgaria and had forcibly migrated to Turkey in 1989, as a result of the assimilationist policies of the Bulgarian government against Turks and other citizens of ethnically non-Bulgarian origin. Although the major part of her life history consists of the experiences of inhabiting the positions of the Other, being Muslim-Turkish in Bulgaria and not-really-native Turkish in Turkey, her imaginary of the state is strongly constitutive of her Turkish identity.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> *Faces of the State*, p.177

<sup>104</sup> One may reason about her attachment to the state as following from the experience of being oppressed in her birth land outside of Turkey. However, I realize in the course of our conversation that the state does not signify the Turkish state for her, but, to the very contrary, the Bulgarian state and its politics towards minorities are informing her conceptualization of the Turkish state and its imagined inadequacy in preserving Turks in the face of the Kurdish opposition. Despite her trials to empathize with Kurds, as subjects of the dominated identity, she opts for statism that is instrumental to rationalize oppression and violence against those who remain external to the national identity, Turkish in Bulgaria and Kurdish in Turkey.

“There, at that border, the state is inactive as I was saying. Smuggling shouldn’t be permitted there. Whereas in a place, people make their living with smuggled commodities without paying tax to the state, or use electricity illegally, *our normal citizen in Anatolia is trying to survive by farming or animal breeding*. And s/he cannot do anything else like smuggling. This is also inequality, *inequality against the Turkish people*. On the other hand, you send soldiers there and cannot protect those soldiers. This Turkish soldier doesn’t go there out of his will, but *that smuggler willingly goes...* Right, those people [murdered villagers], they shouldn’t be killed. The state should take correct security intelligence and shouldn’t kill. The penalty for smuggling is not death; it [the state] should investigate. Is it that easy to bomb? I don’t find this right either. *But if you pay compensation like 120.000 Turkish Lira for those who died there, you shouldn’t desolate the families of the martyrs here.*”

As in the previous passages, those who lost their lives under bombardment were charged as going against legality and breaking the border rules. Even if it is conceded that those villagers could not have been punished to death because of smuggling, they are assumed to know the dangers of the frontier region where the army is fighting against the PKK. It thus becomes a matter of choice to run the risk of being killed by the armed forces of the state. Those who died are held responsible of their own death.

I analyze this way of reasoning as being productively employed by the subject of *authoritarian governmentality*. It is not only a reference to the responsible-moral individual of neoliberal rationality, but also to the naturalized pervasiveness of non-liberal and authoritarian forms of government within neoliberal polities. The former is a reference to one key feature of neoliberal government which “aspires to construct prudent subjects whose moral quality is based on the fact that they rationally assess the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to other alternative acts.”<sup>105</sup> The latter reference concerns the interventions of the sovereign power to collective subjects who are deemed not possessing the necessary attributes of responsible freedom. Both connect on the question of “how a state performs its state-ness”<sup>106</sup> towards populations that it divides into those displaying desirable (conforming) and undesirable (dissident) subjectivities. The way Nilüfer refers to Turkish people in Anatolia as

---

<sup>105</sup> Lemke, T., *The Birth of Bio-politics*, p.201

<sup>106</sup> Hansen, T. B., Stepputat, F., “Introduction,” in *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the Postcolonial World*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, Princeton University Press, 2005, p.1

“our normal citizens,” those facing up to the difficult economic conditions without challenging the state, is a telling example of this. And this culminates into reminding the state its responsibility to care the families of deceased soldiers, killed by the PKK, when the state is looking for reconciliation with Roboski families through material compensation.

Within Turkish subjects’ common perception of making extra-legal frontier trade as a more serious violation of legality than the state having killed its citizens, the abstract imaginary of the state finds shelter for its ongoing demand of conformity to the structured model of responsible-moral citizen. Thought together with the prevalent perception of Kurds as being amenable to violence, finding victims of Roboski being responsible of their own death, or having chosen to die, is only analyzable in terms of the identity-selective forms of authoritarian government. My respondents’ reception of the Roboski event attests to the imaginary coupling of Kurds with the undesirable subjectivities that being Turkish citizen normatively convicts. In the face of naked violence to death by the state, indeed in such a circumstance that could not fit with the national security rhetoric, Turkish subjectivities cling to the historically constituted representation of Kurds as pseudo-citizens that interfere with, and overcome, the deconstructive rift within the imaginary of the state.

### **Public versus Private: Difference without Assertion, Diversity without Rights**

When the structural mechanisms of inequality, oppression and violence against the Other are perceived as conjunctural deviation from the otherwise egalitarian and difference-blind character of the state, power differentials the state has historically organized among different identities can be explained away with recourse to an unproblematic rhetoric of diversity. The nationalist vein of neoliberal multiculturalism should be located in this de-historicized history. Mohanty contends that the rhetoric of diversity “bypasses power as well as history to suggest

a harmonious empty pluralism.’’<sup>107</sup> An ending sentence from my interview with Fatma captures the point:

‘‘We were already living in peace until Kurds disrupted things.’’

To whom does this ‘‘we’’ correspond? What kinds of social relations are implied in this term ‘‘peace’’? Posing these questions is important to expose the limits that the subjects of neoliberal governmentality set to recognition of difference. Difference is recognized to the extent that the Other does not transgress the limits of what political question can be brought to public sphere. Another way of putting this is that difference is imagined to be safe and peaceful until the Other negotiates the limits of the public sphere with claims to change its definition and parameters. In the context of Turkey, nation is a catchword, and particularly a charged one, for a political question to arouse interest in public, to become an object of common concern. If we make sense of the Kurdish movement as a struggle for positive interventions into the definition of the political community, my respondents’ oscillation between recognition and denial of difference become understandable on the basis of their imaginaries of the public sphere as a site of re-inscription of the normativity of Turkishness.<sup>108</sup> Hence what is denied to recognize is not the Kurdish identity, but its demand to change the make-up of the political community that would confer equal status to different ethnic identities; what exclusion is about is not a pre-political imaginary of Kurdishness by Turks, but the possibility of a re-organized public sphere as a site of struggle for equality between Kurdish and Turkish identities.

---

<sup>107</sup> Cited in Ahmed, S., *On Being Included*, p.13

<sup>108</sup> To remind, I have made use of the differentiation between state multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism according to which the latter ‘‘implies...the elevation of ‘culture’ as a new category of collective human rights, and defines it, as such, as a legitimate goal of political struggle for equal representation in the public domain.’’ Turner, T., ‘‘Anthropology and Multiculturalism: What is Anthropology that Multiculturalists Should be Mindful of It?,’’ in *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol:8, No:4, November 1993, p.425

I have discussed in the previous chapter that my respondents believe in a clear-cut distinction between the domain of the state and of the society through which the Kurdish question can be conceived as one of cultural diversity, and not of representation and sovereignty. The distinction between private and public spheres implies the same logic of government. The concept of governmentality allows analyzing the differentiation between private and public spheres as “the instrument and effect of neoliberal governmental practice.”<sup>109</sup> From this point of view, we can discern that neoliberal multiculturalism conceive the private sphere as the realm of difference and particularity, as opposed –or, put in opposition- to the public sphere as the realm of universality. Within the imaginaries of my informants, the criterion of universality is Turkishness to which difference is measured acceptable/reasonable or not.

The frequent response of Turkish subjects to Kurds’ demand to receive primary education in Kurdish is illustrative of this mode of government by marking a dividing line between private and the public. All interviewees concur in supporting Kurdish education in private schools. Right to receive education in native tongue is recognized as an inviolable right, insofar as it is exercised via private schools and language institutes, or becomes an elective language course in primary education the language of which is and should remain Turkish. The logic is twofold. On the one hand, this is one of the basic operations of neoliberalism: Privatizing various kinds of state activity “to minimize inducements for citizens to engage in politically oriented action.”<sup>110</sup> Once left to the initiative of private enterprise, right to native language

---

<sup>109</sup> Lemke, T., *The Birth of Bio-politics*, p.193

<sup>110</sup> Hindess, B., “Power, Government, Politics,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, eds. Kate Nash and Alan Scott, Blackwell Publishing, 2004, p.46

ceases to be a right that the state is responsible to provide with institutional mechanisms, and, instead, take the form of a commodity to be bought, upon choice, in the market.<sup>111</sup>

On the other hand, the primary education is indispensable to the formation of the national identity, of “the desirable citizen,” filled up with ethno-cultural features and connotations of Turkishness.<sup>112</sup> It is undoubtedly these monocultural and statist aspects of primary education to which Kurds are opposing, and which attempt to forge Turkish subjects being hyper-sensitive to difference. Native language is imagined to be permissible as an extra-curricular activity that Kurds can engage in elective courses or by paying for private institutes, if they choose so and have sufficient financial means. Turkish language is endowed with universality that others are expected to submit. Confining Kurdish to private sphere and, in this way, making it irrelevant to the discussion of rights follows from activating the mental codes of language, identity, and nation that are structured around Turkishness.

Baran is a 28 years old, AKP-voter lawyer coming from a southeastern city of Turkey. Considering himself Turkish, he is proud of being member of a tribe whose relations with the Turkish state has always been in the form of collaboration: Upholding their vast lands and having been provided with infrastructural facilities by the state in exchange for “controlling” Kurdish villagers who labor on the family’s lands for basic subsistence. To him, Kurds are content with the traditional way they are living. Both his father (the owner of the village) and the state are benevolent to care about villagers’ basic needs such as literacy in Turkish or medical treatment. He does not regard any more inequality than that can be found, in his words, between a factory owner and his workers which supposedly normalize their

---

<sup>111</sup> Bülent Küçük, “What is a Democratization Package Good For?,” *Jadaliyya*, October 21, 2013, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/14685/what-is-a-democratization-package-good-for>; Nazan Ustundag, “The AKP and the Peace Process,” *Jadaliyya*, December 1, 2013, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15412/the-akp-and-the-peace-process>

<sup>112</sup> Üstel, F., *Makbul Vatandaşın Peşinde: İkinci Meşrutiyet’ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005



relationship. He thinks that there is no violation of villagers' citizenship rights of any kind, civil, political and social (obviously because they do not exist in practice). To my question of what he thinks about the right to receive education in Kurdish, he answers:

“Education in native tongue should not be obligatory, it should be elective. Now they put it as elective course. This is normal. I find it correct to be elective rather than not being at all. But if you want to be a nation, a state, you have to have certain concepts. You should have one native tongue, one flag, one capital city, something. These should exist. Now you come and say ‘I don’t want Turkish to be the native tongue, in education, in state offices, in state institutions I don’t want Turkish.’ You cannot say this. You cannot say ‘I want to use the language I want.’ Such a thing is not possible.”

Kurdish being an elective course is preferable to him because making it a matter of individual choice is expected to inhibit the political claim within the right to education in native language. He draws the boundary of performing difference to the edge of nation-ness that is defined through symbols of uniformity, homogeneity, and centralism. Beyond this edge, one *cannot*. He says in continuation:

“They always give the example of Belgium. ‘There are two races, Flemish and Walloons that make up the society, the subject of the state. These two languages are native languages in the county’s state offices and institutions. Vernaculars of both, plus the flags representing both people are waving. Why ours cannot be?’ But they are established in this way, you did not. 80 years, 90 years later you cannot come up with this thesis. The two are very different things.”

There is recognition in this part that there are counter-examples to that of Turkey where the representation of ethnic identities are equally institutionalized. However he attempts to rationalize the present inequality between Turkish and Kurdish identities by a retrograde move to the inception phase of nation-building upon the principles of homogeneity and centralized government. This reference Baran makes to the founding years of the Republic is vitally necessary to preserve his position of structural advantage. His sense of belonging to

Turkishness is crosscut by the socioeconomic “privilege”<sup>113</sup> his family enjoy as a result of the trouble-free relations with the state. “The way things are and have always been,” as an imaginary of history, obscure the asymmetrical material effects the national identity has engendered for subjects with and without the attributes of desirable citizen.

In the analysis above of Roboski, I argue that citizenship does not guarantee state protection of the most basic right to live for those who do not fall under the category of responsible-moral citizen with desirable forms of conduct and political subjectivities. Attempted privatization of the right to receive education in Kurdish is yet another instance of the ways cultural rights are unevenly distributed among dominant and dominated identities. Turkish subjects do not display immediate refusal to education in Kurdish. What is rejected, though, is a legal arrangement that would put Turkish and Kurdish languages to an equal alignment. This mode of subjectivity is prevalent among my respondents who resist prospective changes in the definition of the political community with rights that membership to that community confers to individual and collective subjects. This is what structures their normative accounts on the public sphere which is limited to representation and performance of the Turkish identity.

---

<sup>113</sup> Frankenberg scrutinizes how whiteness in the U.S. is lived as a structural position of race privilege. Her study on the interplay between the discourses on race and the material relations of racism discloses that whiteness is a historically constructed category with real material effects on the way white people have relationships of inequality with people of color. Her analysis is useful to deconstruct Turkishness as a position of political dominance, in addition to those contexts where it might also bring socioeconomic privilege, like the one Baran is situated in. Frankenberg, R., *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*, University of Minnesota Press, 1988

## Conclusion

That which lies at the heart of neoliberal multiculturalism -recognition of cultural difference by Turks unless difference is politicized to enforce right-claims- functions to reproduce the relationship of inequality between subjects of the dominant and dominated identities. Cultural difference is imagined to be a matter of innate personal trait that can be enjoyed within the confines of the private sphere. It is frequently envisioned by my interviewees that once individual becomes the citizen, the side of a contract with the sovereign power, the subject of rights and responsibilities, she is no longer recognizable with cultural difference but only with conformity to the universal identity. These are substantial clues to argue that, in the context of Turkey, Turkishness is endowed with a normativity that determines the limits of acceptable and legitimate relationship between identity, citizenship, and the state. And these terms operate to animate Turkish subjectivities in such ways that recognition of the Kurdish identity becomes *necessarily* one of misrecognition or non-recognition. Next chapter's attempt is to analyze the affective dimension and daily reproduction of belonging to Turkish national identity.

## Chapter IV

### Fantasies of Belonging: The Kurdish Question and Psychic Reproductions of Turkishness

*Any close look at otherness reflects back hidden images of ourselves.*<sup>114</sup>

*Only with a non-essentialist conception of the subject which incorporates the psychoanalytic insight that all identities are forms of identification can we pose the question of political identity in a fruitful way.*<sup>115</sup>

#### Introduction

The preceding chapters take recognition to name a governmental project to reconstruct the political community in such ways that the power differentials between Turkish and Kurdish identities remain, as much as possible, intact. In this chapter, I deal with the question of government as it pertains to everyday life of my respondents that I consider as the site of embodied experiences of national identity, informed by and responsive to the discursive field of neoliberal multiculturalism. If government is about to engender desirable subjectivities, it should also create particular forms of sociality, “particular ways of experiencing and relating to the Other, as well as particular codes for how to represent him/her in everyday speech acts.”<sup>116</sup> This is to stretch the discussion on governmentality of cultural diversity towards the dimension of government that animates the feelings of social subjects in such ways that nation

---

<sup>114</sup> Aretxaga, B., *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland*, Princeton University Press, 1997, p.22

<sup>115</sup> Mouffe, C., *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, p.237

<sup>116</sup> Haldrup, M., Koefoed, L., and Simonsen, K., “Practical Orientalism: Bodies, Everyday Life and the Construction of Otherness,” *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, Vol:88, No:2, Geography and Power, the Power of Geography, 2006, p.183

becomes “the basic unit of shared experience”<sup>117</sup> in daily life. Hence the following questions orient the present chapter:

How do daily encounters of my respondents with Kurds and the various manifestations of the Kurdish identity become affective moments of re-identification with Turkishness? Which theoretical tools are available for us to analyze the surfacing of social antagonisms in daily confrontations between subjects of the dominant and dominated identities whereas they tend to be disguised within Turks’ normative accounts on peace and equality? How emotional investments are made into the sense of belonging to Turkish national identity so that Kurds become the bearers of frustrating affects?

I attempt to deal with these questions by making use of the psychoanalytic concept of fantasy. My curiosity follows from the uneasy relation between my respondents’ expressed desires for a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish issue and their attachments to the hegemonic Turkish identity that drives them in the opposite direction. Taking fantasy as an analytical lens towards daily confrontations, I aim to understand the emotional charge within the sense of belonging to Turkishness such that peace and equality lose their symbolic significance within daily contexts. I argue that Kurdishness is negated in social fantasies that my respondents partake and animate as that which steals the otherwise possible wholeness of the nation. And, so my analysis goes, the negation of the Kurdish identity in historically specific ways by my respondents daily recovers the fantasmatic dominance of Turkishness by activating the historically structured emotions around its collective self and others.

---

<sup>117</sup> Gilbert, J., “Signifying Nothing: ‘Culture,’ ‘Discourse,’ and the Sociality of Affect,” *Culture Machine*, Vol:6, 2004, available at <http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/article/viewarticle/8/7>

## **Workings of Fantasy and Desire in Re-Identifying with the Nation**

Incorporating the affective dimension of national identity into this study's questions is not an extra, but a complementary move to make sense of the antagonistic interplay between the dominant Turkish and dominated Kurdish identities. The empirical motive behind this is because the narratives of my respondents revealed inner contradictions and slippery ways of relating to formal concepts such as peace and equality, and emotional excess towards the Kurdish question that does not fit with normative accounts. Something previously sidelined as undemocratic, unjust, puritan, racist or nationalist turns back into the narrative and is appropriated in disguises. I understand this "something" as fantasy, and hereby analyze its social structural operating. To do this, I use conceptual tools from the secondary literature on the Lacanian psychoanalysis which requires a turn towards the conceptualization of subjectivity in relation to the subject of lack.

From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, the subject is formed by the loss of a pre-symbolic enjoyment, lost through socialization. To become social subjects, to enter into the order of language and representation, we sacrifice the enjoyment that we imagine to have had in the primary state of full identification.<sup>118</sup> Our socio-symbolic reality (the big Other) is also lacking in the sense that we never find a state of perfection where everything is completely satisfying. The constitutive inability of the symbolic order to signify the Real and to provide us with complete meaning and satisfaction sustains our desire for identification.<sup>119</sup> "In order for the social world to retain any consistency and appeal, this lack of the real, the negative

---

<sup>118</sup> "According to Lacanian theory, every human being who learns to speak is thereby alienated from her or himself –for it is language that, while allowing desire to come into being, ties knots therein, and makes us such that we can both want and not want one and the same thing, never be satisfied when we get what we thought we wanted." Fink, B., *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, Princeton University Press, 1995, p.7

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.24-31

mark of symbolic castration, needs to be positivized (imaginarized).”<sup>120</sup> And it is to fantasy to fill in the gaps in our social reality, to endow our experience with a sense of coherence. Fantasy fills out the void by turning this constitutive lack into something that is of a temporal or circumstantial nature.<sup>121</sup>

How does fantasy achieve this, to make us believe that our object of desire stands somewhere in the future waiting us to reach it? This question connects best to my concern to discover the force that drives the reproduction of national identity. The keen balance between desire and fantasy is the key answer which makes us understand why we continue our practices in social life even if we remain unsatisfied, at least partially. To foster our hopes, to remain as desiring subjects, we turn to fantasy and opt for an imaginary future satisfaction, instead of an ongoing dissatisfaction.

This move between desire and fantasy, which turns around *objet petit a* (object-cause of desire) and a barrier that is fantasized as standing on the way to capture it, involves a dangerous dimension that we might find operative in certain modalities of racism or, say, antagonistic relations of the dominant group with the Other. “If my identifications prove incapable of recapturing my lost/impossible enjoyment, the only way these can be sustained is by attributing this lack to the ‘theft of my enjoyment’ by an external actor.”<sup>122</sup> Some social group –the Jew, the immigrant, the Kurd- is found responsible for the limitation of “our” enjoyment. Therefore from the Lacanian perspective, the underlying principle beneath national attachments and their endurance is the affective bond the subject builds in structured fantasies, and in the negation of the Other.

---

<sup>120</sup> Stavrakakis, Y., *The Lacanian Left: Psychoanalysis, Theory, and Politics*, Edinburg University Press, 2007, p.75

<sup>121</sup> McGowan, T., *The Real Gaze: Film Theory after Lacan*, State University of New York Press, 2007, p.24

<sup>122</sup> *The Lacanian Left*, p.198

Kurds frequently become the target of negation in my respondents' narratives. The demonization of the Other, or the production of scapegoats in Connolly's terms,<sup>123</sup> can be observed to be repetitive in the way Turkish subjects fantasize the Kurdish identity. Despite the knowledge they have on the history state violence against Kurds, Kurdish political activism continues to signify an irrational, or, cannot-be-rationalized, act of hostility against Turkey. The Kurdish issue epitomizes either the failure of the Turkish modernization, or the inability of the Turkish state to re-become a world power as it was in the Ottoman period. The Turkish subject opts for one of these explanations for the castration s/he continually experiences, depending on the way s/he relates to history. That is to say, the imaginary state of origin –founding of the Republic or the preceding Ottoman existence- determines where to drain one's sense of incompleteness in the present, which is caused by the treacherous activity of a definable group.

Research presents data on anti-Kurdish beliefs among Turks, which follow from Turks' perception of Kurds as antagonistic to the republican ideals of secularism, modernity and progress.<sup>124</sup> Similar terms of exclusion or enmity towards Kurds, either in overt or latent forms, come to the fore also in my interviews with those that identify themselves devoted to the path Atatürk addressed in founding the Republic. When being Turkish means being committed to the values of Western democracies –such as, secularism, gender equality, rule of law, and financial development- the Kurdish identity becomes the antonym of one's self and of these terms which one identifies with. The question propels itself, why? I argue that the answer lies in the workings of fantasy.

---

<sup>123</sup> Connolly, W. E., *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, Cornell University Press, 1991, p.67

<sup>124</sup> Ergin, M., and Dixon C. J., "Explaining Anti-Kurdish Beliefs in Turkey: Group Competition, Identity, and Globalization," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol:91, No:5, December 2010, p.1343



The ideal of Atatürk and the founding élite in creating a totally new country by breaking its historical ties with the Ottoman state and society in all spheres –political regime, demography, education, family, political status of woman, architecture and so on- has remained an ideal.<sup>125</sup>

The course of history has shown that a complete top-to-bottom transformation of the realms of culture and bureaucracy is impossible. Its partial success –partial in proportion to the various segments of Turkey’s society and in proportion to the change it aimed at- keeps informing the desire of secularist Turkish subjects in search of its completion. Its impossibility, however, is concealed by fantasizing Kurds as the main disturbance before a fully Westernized Turkey. As Healy notes, ‘‘Fantasy provides an explanation for why the subject remains unhappy by locating an external ‘if only’ factor.’’<sup>126</sup>

‘‘If only Kurds learned to give birth to fewer children; if only Kurds abolished the feudal system they are living under; if only Kurds knew the canons of conduct; if only Kurds understood the value of education...’’

These are common reflexes that my secularist respondents displayed with recourse to their everyday encounter with Kurds, concluding that the problem of Kurds derives from what is inherent to being Kurdish. Consider the following two passages from our conversation with Nilüfer, self-identified patriot who migrated to Turkey from her birthplace in Bulgaria in 1989. First one is about a daily encounter that she had with a Kurdish woman in the public hospital she is working, with which she makes shifts for making sense of Kurds’ rights-demanding collective mobilization:

---

<sup>125</sup> Among the dense literature on the initial phase of the Turkish modernization, I cite some exemplary studies that focus on the particular spheres targeted by the founding élite and critically examine the claim for a total rupture from the Ottoman system. Abadan-Unat, N., *Women in Turkish Society*, ed. Nermin Abadan-Unat, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1981; Bozdoğan, S., Kasaba, R., *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, University of Washington Press, 1997; İçduygu, A., Toktaş, S., ‘‘The Politics of Population in a Nation-building Process: Emigration of Non-Muslims from Turkey,’’ *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol:31, No:2, February 2008; Neyzi, L., ‘‘Remembering to Forget: Sabbateanism, National Identity, and Subjectivity in Turkey,’’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol:44, No:1, January 2002.

<sup>126</sup> Healy, S., ‘‘Traversing Fantasies, Activating Desires: Economic Geography, Activist Research, and Psychoanalytic Methodology,’’ *The Professional Geographer*, Vol:62, No:4, 2010, p.501

“There had been unfair things done in the past to Kurds, I accept this. But I don’t find correct the current happenings [negotiations between the Turkish state and actors of the Kurdish movement over the peaceful resolution of the Kurdish issue]. I say to myself maybe they were so oppressed in the past that they have now become *excessively rights-demanding. But this is excessive. All they think is rights, rights!* For example, one came to the hospital, *I find this very frustrating.* I didn’t know that she was Kurdish and were trying to explain things. But *she was obstinate and refusing to understand. That was a Kurdish and a veiled woman.* I was trying to explain the procedure after she asked for something. Let’s say, she asked, ‘where is the doctor?’ I said I didn’t know that doctor. She answered, ‘how couldn’t you know, aren’t you a nurse here?’ God, I am not the shepherd of doctors! Then she said something like ‘you act in this way towards me because I am Kurdish, you deliberately refuse responding.’ *How possibly can I be knowledgeable about your ideological commitments and treat you with prejudice?* This might be the result of oppression in the past, I don’t know.”

Let me put the second one to discuss their juncture at which Nilüfer’s attachment to Turkishness gets to be reproduced through the frustration the Kurdish irrational excess provokes in her:

“Now everything has reached to a dimension like ‘oh, we shall be prudent [to not to cause any harm to the Peace Process].’ For example, recently they burned a public bus and nothing [legal punishment] has been charged to them. I can’t imagine what would happen if the same thing occurred in the United Kingdom, the United States, or in Bulgaria. Because their law is properly functioning... Here they [Kurds] don’t care about things that would injure the Turkish state and the Turkish people.”

In the first quotation, the switch between her recognition that Kurds were oppressed in the past and her narrativized experience of a daily confrontation with a Kurdish woman testifies to the fantasmatic aspect of her collective self and who remains external to it. She conceives the Kurdish woman as irrationally over-demanding and herself as the other’s superior correspondence trying to persuade her over the formal procedure. This psychic shift of hers, so I argue, is informed by Nilüfer’s attachment to Turkish national identity which endures the irrational excess in the other (*All they think is rights, rights!*) with inviting gestures towards rationality, formality, how things are naturally supposed to be. Second quotation substantiates this -her fantasy about the excessive political desires of Kurds (burning down a public bus) in the face of which the Turkish state and people stand patient to preserve the cease-fire. And the regulation of Kurds’ excess through patience and prudence comes with a cost that our legal system is impeded from proper functioning as it is in Western countries.

Back to the first, she forgot what that Kurdish woman had asked to her and how this led to a controversy between the two. What she is sure about that woman is that she was Kurdish and veiled. Despite the symbolic refusal of having engaged with a prejudiced act, the prominence of Kurdishness and the veil in her memory is a sign of frustrating affects that had already been charged to these objects and got to be activated both at the moment of their encounter and of its narration to me. The Kurdish identity is reduced to being an ideological commitment and the reaction of the Kurdish woman to a matter of insufficient self-esteem (*This might be the result of oppression in the past, I don't know*). And Nilüfer's mentioning of the Kurdish woman's veil is a clue to her fantasy of Kurds' discrepancy with the so-called progressivity of the Turkish national identity.

A likewise example can be recalled from the chapter II where I analyze a daily encounter in a public bus between Nermin, a CHP-voter secularist woman, and two other women that she had identified Kurdish. She recounted how she had got frustrated by the refusal of the Kurdish woman to leave her child's seat to Nermin, concluding that Turks were gradually losing their legitimate power to intervene into the uncivilized conduct of Kurds. Conceiving the Kurdish woman lacking and in need of cultivation can be re-read as a moment of manifestation of Nermin's fantasy of Turkishness as wholeness. Impossibility of the Turkish identity to become the universal and exclusive object of collective identification, as Nermin and Nilüfer confronted in those Kurdish women's resistance, renewed the desire to self-identify with Turkishness that is marked in their psyche by cultural superiority. Oppression becomes a minor detail as if it is irrelevant to the ways Turkish and Kurdish identities are presently being experienced.

The other emblematic way the Kurdish difference is fantasized by my respondents as excess and obstinacy is referring to the Ottoman Empire in which all groups putatively coexisted in a state of total harmony, thanks to tolerance that the Ottoman state bestowed upon the ethnic

and religious diversity in its territories. An ambivalent “we” becomes the subject of an imaginary past in which “we were all living together in peace.”<sup>127</sup> Analyzing the narratives of my informants in their specific social and historical context is revealing for how the mental makeup of this “we” shifts to include and exclude different groups at different historical conjunctures. And Kurds turn up to be the most mobile group in this ambivalent boundary construction. Whereas “we” signify the collaboration and fraternity of Turks and Kurds during the Independence War (1919-1922) against Western imperial powers and their domestic extensions (so are fantasized Greeks, Armenians, and Jews of the Ottoman Empire), this imaginary contract has been abolished by Kurds with the emergence of the PKK’s armed struggle in 1984.

The Kurdish movement is seen as an anomaly, a stain in the smooth unfolding of history of diversity in Turkey, a fantasy space of “the cradle of civilizations” where distinct cultures harmoniously live since Ottoman times by relying on the values of tolerance and respect for each other. Although there is a bunch of historical counter-evidence to this national myth, and in spite of being knowledgeable about at least some of those events,<sup>128</sup> the fantasy of a “happy multicultural living” preserves its appeal for Turkish subjects. The underlying force beneath this persistence is the supposition of a Golden Age that was disturbed when a group decided to turn from being “our brothers” into “traitors of the nation.” A passage from our conversation with Baran, the young lawyer voting for the AKP that I presented in Chapter III,

---

<sup>127</sup> In using the term ambivalent, I am pointing to Ien Ang’s analysis of how multiculturalism discourse produces ambivalent subject positions for majority and minority subjects such that their straining daily relations are sidelined at the structural level. See, Ang, I., “The Curse of the Smile: Ambivalence and the ‘Asian’ Woman in Australian Multiculturalism,” *Feminist Review*, *The World Upside Down: Feminisms in the Antipodes*, No:52, Spring 1996, pp.36-49

<sup>128</sup> I do not develop this part of the history of inter-community conflict, religious/secterian riots, and privileged status of Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. Deportation and mass killing of Armenians by the Ottoman state in 1915 are thought by my informants as the most immediate counter-example but, at the same time, rationalized as an exception that had happened due to exigencies of the time.

is a cogent example of this. To my question on how to constitute a democratic culture of common living in Turkey, he responded:

“Once it was already there. We have turned something already existing into an impossibility, and now are discussing how to make it a possibility again. In my childhood, we didn’t know who was Turkish or who was Kurdish, Arab, Circassian, or Armenian. Armenian, for example, there were lots of Armenian families but people didn’t know that they were Armenians. Still the majority isn’t knowledgeable about this. I mean, we don’t need to get accustomed to such a thing [common living]. As a society, we’re already used to it, used to it for centuries. Our origin, our culture is like this; our ancestors, grandfathers, and our way of upbringing are like this... The rise of the PKK has disturbed this togetherness. If the PKK ceases to exist, we will absolutely adapt again. These problems are having currency and this debate keep being done as long as the PKK is there. We should end up these discussions.”

He conceives the absence of public expression of distinct identities as a function of peaceful common living, and not of the founding politics of homogenization that denied public visibility to these identities. Ottoman nostalgia incites Baran’s imaginary of multicultural living as the originary state of fullness in which every community was glad to live under the Ottoman rule. The benevolence and fairness of the Ottoman past testifies to the grandeur of the Turkish nation, which was lost at some point in history only to be recaptured again. The major obstacle that stands on the way to recover the strength of the state and the compact togetherness of the nation to achieve this ideal is the “PKK terrorism.” His choosing of the word “adaptation” anchors that once-already-there harmony. The Kurdish difference and its politicization are negated as that which steals the otherwise possible fullness of the nation.

Although all identification involves creating boundaries and binary oppositions, national identification derives a surplus enjoyment from doing so. My informants’ recognition that the state committed mistakes in the past towards non-hegemonic groups is not followed by dissolution of their psychic attachment to the state, nor to the Turkish identity is it historically forged and institutionally sustained. For the national subject needs an explanation to “why did we fail?” that s/he ultimately finds in the activity of some fantasmatic other. The politicized difference of the Kurdish identity is charged with frustrating affects that mobilize in daily confrontations of my respondents with Kurds. It is such that the desire to overcome

this barrier prompts them to re-identify with Turkishness that remains lacking and imperfect to be a universal object of identification. Next section brings a closer focus on the relationship between daily manifestations of the Kurdish identity and their provocation of the structured emotions within my respondents' attachments to Turkish national identity.

### **Limits of Peace: Bad Feelings and Counter-Images in *Newroz***

On March 21, 2013, Turkey was locked onto watching the Newroz festivity in Diyarbakır. Although Newroz literally means the festivity of welcoming the spring, and is celebrated in various parts of the Asia Minor, Caucasia, and the Balkans, it has always signified more to Kurds in Turkey and been organized as a collective expression of Kurdishness. This political dimension explains why its performance had been banned by the Turkish political authorities in previous years (in unison with all other legal and extralegal impediments to the expressions of the Kurdish identity). This time, in 2013, not only the ban over the public celebration of the Newroz was lifted, but it also has become the moment at which a new phase of the hitherto ongoing struggle between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement was proclaimed opening.

The Peace Process, so was baptized this new phase of negotiation-by-democratic-means or struggle-without-arms, was announced to Turkey's society in, and in spite of, the aura of suspicion and anxiety it engendered. Immanent to the term peace is the existence of at least two parties in conflict with each other, which disrupts the imaginary of Turkey as a homogenous nation state. After decades long denial of recognition to the Kurdish identity, history of repression and violence, and the propagation of "Turkish Turkey," Newroz stood out as an intrusion to the dominant Turkish imaginary with all the symbolization it staged and frustrating affects it put into circulation.

Sara Ahmed analyzes the sociality of affect in the context of debates around diversity and integration of immigrants to the national culture.<sup>129</sup> She explores that happiness functions as promise, to be fulfilled by proximity to certain objects and attachment to the objects of national desire. Integration is what is at stake in defining the national desire and her analysis of how immigrants become the origin of good and bad feelings. She argues that good and bad feelings are attributed in the social field to particular bodies, depending on whether or not they are willing to engage with the national fantasies. “Diversity becomes happy when it involves loyalty to what has already been given as a national ideal.”<sup>130</sup>

Ahmed’s analysis is inspiring to understand how the Newroz event converted the joy, which the term peace has generated, into anger and anxiety within the narratives of my respondents. After tiredness of the 30 years war between the Turkish army and the PKK, and of the television news on how many people died from which side (I do not add those whose lives are ruined by the loss of their loved ones), peace, one might expect, should have vigorously been welcomed in Turkey’s society. Yet, it was not quite so. In the way Aretxaga analyzes the effects of the cease-fire the IRA declared in 1994 on the political subjectivities of republican women in Belfast,<sup>131</sup> peace has become in Turkey a highly charged political term to guide the subjectivities of ordinary Turks. I present Burak’s narrative to figure out this.

He is a 26 years old CHP-voter university graduate who wanted to talk in detail about himself as being a genuine adversary of religion and all forms of nationalism. However it might seem odd, and it is no doubt this facial oddness that I am scrutinizing, he defines himself anti-nationalist at some times, and Ataturkist at others. He narrated the first day of his bachelor’s

---

<sup>129</sup> Ahmed, S., “Multiculturalism and the Promise of Happiness,” *New Formations*, Vol:63, No:1, 2007, pp.121-138

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p.123

<sup>131</sup> *Shattering Silence*, p.5

degree in Boğaziçi University, known with its politically engaged student community and liberal campus culture, as a tension-laden confrontation of him with the Kurdish identity:

“When I first came to the campus, I saw people dancing in Kurdish folk songs. I was seventeen. To me, at those times, Kurdish was something negative, speaking Kurdish was like speaking the language of terrorists. I mean, not really the language of terrorists but it was still weird to dancing in Kurdish. I was thinking that ‘in Turkey, in the top university of Turkey, s/he is dancing in Kurdish. If you are meant to dance, do it in Turkish.’ When I saw this at that very first day of mine in the university, I started to question things.”

His encounter with a daily manifestation of the Kurdish identity through Kurdish folk dance triggered the structured antagonism towards Kurds in Burak’s attachment to Turkish national identity. The university campus, and the one that the top university of Turkey hosts, is perceived all the more unsuitable for the expression of Kurdishness that he fantasized exterior to high culture that Boğaziçi symbolizes for him. What he found weird is this unfettered performance of the Kurdish identity running counter to his codification of it with terrorism. This confrontation has been a turning point to “start questioning things,” as he said to me, yet one that is trapped by the emotional investments he has made into the sense of belonging to Turkishness, as the rest of his narrative on being witness to the performance of Kurdish folk dance in the celebration of Newroz attests to.

Before we move onto the official process of recognition of the Kurdish identity, Burak spent much time to explain how he evolved throughout his undergraduate years towards losing his religious faith and nationalist convictions. To him, both religion and nationalism lack any substantial content than being politically constructed to divide people. A part from the narrative of his personal history in his words:

“I was getting emotional when I saw a bust of Atatürk. *Now I know* that I shouldn’t, that this nationalist feeling is inculcated in me in the form of ‘*My existence shall be dedicated to the Turkish existence*,’<sup>132</sup> from my childhood, from the age of six or seven when I was in the primary school, that it is an ideology and a constructed thing. *I have been aware* of it in the Boğaziçi University. I might not have changed,

---

<sup>132</sup> A concluding line from the Student Oath that had been a daily ritual in primary schools as part of the Kemalist education system from 1933 to its abolishment in 2013 as part of the Peace Process.



or might still have been thinking that it is a legitimate thing to believe. But today I think this is an unnecessary thing...I have first broken this [constructed beliefs] by losing my religious faith. And, at university, I broke up with nationalism.”

Reading this and the previous passage together with the one on his reception of the Newroz is exemplary of how the accounts of my respondents grew antagonistic towards the Kurdish identity when we stepped out from the discussion with abstract terms to concrete happenings. To my question “how did you feel when you saw the televisual images of the Newroz gathering in Diyarbakır,” Burak answered:

“The feeling it evoked in me is that: In Turkey, the Turkish Republic couldn’t defeat terrorism. It has militarily lost which means that it couldn’t wipe off terrorism. And now it ends up with handshaking. I see this handshaking as a victory of a section of people that we have been used for years to know to be our enemies. This is a minor and premature victory for them.”

After years of questioning his attachment to Turkish national identity that got into his self through nationalistic symbols and rituals, he has ended up with symbolic dissolution with Turkishness. He claims awareness and knowledge of the constructed character of national identification as a result of which he “broke up” with nationalism. However, as his return to the language of “we” and “they” in a state of war exposes, the acts of identification do not merely unfold in the symbolic realm, the realm of language and representation. As Žižek explains the workings of fantasy in regenerating the psychic attachments to those objects that are criticized within the domain of consciousness,<sup>133</sup> Burak’s exposure to the counter-images of the Newroz has been a moment of re-identification with Turkishness that he denies any attachment after repetitive encounters with the Kurdish identity at Boğaziçi. What he has deconstructed as the effects of the nation-building project on his sense of collective belonging is affectively reconstructed by the excessive manifestation of Kurdishness in the Newroz. From questioning his own over-reaction to Kurdish folk dance at the campus he arrives at a

---

<sup>133</sup> Žižek, S., *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London and New York: Verso, 1989, pp.28-30

point where the expression of Kurdishness in the Newroz area re-become the exposition of enmity Kurds perform against Turks and the Turkish Republic.

In Turkey where “the culture of news”<sup>134</sup> is extremely strong in producing psychic effects, the media coverage of the festivity became central in fragmenting the desires of Turkish subjects for peace. The channels of broadcast and print media supporting the president Erdoğan’s AKP government represented the peace process as yet another great success of the AKP among the many since the party came into power in 2002. The symbols of the Kurdish movement were attentively denied visibility in these representations. Large scale posters of Öcalan, the KCK flags, slogans in Kurdish expressing the rights demands of the Kurdish movement, and the crowd of the hundreds of thousands of people gathered in the festivity area were among the main shots in the Kurdish media. The peace process was regarded a consequence of the resistance, which was only to be channeled to the sphere of democratic politics as was the call of Öcalan to the PKK fighters to leave the territories of Turkey. Those in support of the nationalist MHP were blaming the government to collaborate with terrorists in the way towards abolishing the unity of the country.<sup>135</sup>

The manner in which Newroz was organized was unfit with the “scopic regime”<sup>136</sup> that the Turkish state has much strived to establish by suppressing the Kurdish media. The visual representations of the Kurdish movement by its own political actors superseded the declaration of peace in animating the sentiments of my respondents. The recognition of Öcalan as a legitimate and inevitable partner in negotiations and the usage of symbols of the Kurdish identity exceeded the limits that Turkish subjects set for bringing peace. Good

---

<sup>134</sup> *Faces of the State*, pp.6; 183

<sup>135</sup> I have taken this general overview of the media coverage of Newroz from <http://www.sendika.org/2013/03/basinda-diyarbakir-newrozu-ve-ocalanin-mektubu/>

<sup>136</sup> Feldman, A., “Violence and Vision: The Prosthetics and Aesthetics of Terror,” *Public Culture*, Vol:10, No:1, Duke University Press, 1997, pp.24-60

feelings for peace converted to bad feelings in the bodies of Kurdish men and women, dancing hand in hand with Kurdish folk songs under the KCK flags. “Our relationship to this unfathomable traumatic element that ‘bothers us’ in the Other is structured in fantasies.”<sup>137</sup> In the psyche of the Turkish subject, the festivity turned into a “show of force,” as Zümürüt said, sustaining the fantasy of the political omnipotence that Kurds have and are using for their malign ends. In the next section, I introduce the narrative of Zümürüt to situate my analysis into her experience of gender and national identity, and the psychic attachments she activates in the face of the daily manifestations of the Kurdish identity.

### **Interplay of Belonging and Enmity**

Zümürüt began narrating her life history with recourse to her childhood in a central Anatolian village that she temporarily had left for college education in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. Describing herself as disinterested in her college years, because of the tiresome routine of the girls’ dormitory and disciplinary college staff, she abandoned her studies and went back to the village to resume her simple life with parents and village work. Her marriage, move with her husband to Istanbul to establish their family, and raising her three children since then completes her full history. She spends most of her time and bodily energy to domestic work. The only outdoor activity she does is her regular attendance to the meetings, with other women in the neighborhood, of lecture and interpretation of Quran. She regards these meetings as the most meaningful thing she is doing, with all the cultivation they add to her personality and help in properly fulfilling her duties for God.

Her religious convictions and way of life, and the Turkish identity she is proud of having put Zümürüt in a remarkably ambivalent position vis-à-vis Kurds. In those instances she speaks of

---

<sup>137</sup> Žižek, S., “ ‘I Hear You with My Eyes’; or, The Invisible Master” in *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, eds. Renata Salecl and Slavoj Žižek, Duke University Press, 1996, p.105

the virtues of Islam, she refers to the Quran and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed on the necessity of being fair, moderate, benevolent, and gentle towards outsiders. She explains how ethnicity is irrelevant to Islam which has rendered all Muslims equal in the eyes of God. When we distance from the realm of religious philosophy to daily occurrences, though, her language slips toward one of exclusion, accusation, and, at times, hatred of Kurds, an overwhelming number of which being Sunni-Muslim as she says.

From the rare occasions she had contact with Kurds, for example with Kurdish seasonal workers coming to the cereal fields her father owns, she inferred how hoggish and disrespectful Kurds, especially Kurdish women, are. Her image of the Kurdish women is such that they are unsuited with the Islamic prescriptions, according to which, she goes on, woman's place is the private sphere where she is supposed to submit to the will of the father or the husband. Since there is no room for resistance within her narrative and experiences of involvement in public sphere, Kurdish women embody excessive political subjectivities for her. She substantiates this image with the women deputies of the pro-Kurdish BDP who are "so ill-mannered that they cry from the chairs of the parliament, they even go as far as to scold the president of this country." In a political culture where insult and aggression have been habitual, marking Kurdish women by being quarrelsome is an example to the structuration of senses in relation to gender and ethnic identities.

Zümrüt thinks of the Kurdish issue as a pretext that Kurds are using to divide the country. In other words, even if the state used violent means to suppress the Kurdish identity, Kurds are instrumentalizing this past to reach their ultimate aim of building a separate country out of "our territories." Once again, at stake is the fantasy of Turkey the integrity and peaceful diversity of which is attacked with no rationale but greed for what belongs to Turkey. Newroz festivity was a proof of this as she responded when I asked what she had felt in watching the television news:

“I said to myself how crowded they are, how populous they are, how much rage they have garnered. Then I said ‘right, they do have a problem,’ and I saw an image as if only and exclusively they are living there, as if there is no Turkey. Waving flags with strange colors, they made me feel threatened as if they are saying ‘we will ask you when the day comes.’ I said to my husband that the flag is nowhere, and the following day this flag issue emerged. I was very upset about this. I understood that they don’t want Turkey, and that they are after cutting off something from Turkey to found Kurdistan. Then I said ‘Tayyip [Erdoğan], you did wrong.’”

In her analysis of the contributions of mass media to the processes of identity formation, Mankekar asserts that “we are fashioned by our interactions with what we read, watch, and listen to.”<sup>138</sup> Zümriit’s encounter with the media images of Newroz was “traumatic” because they disrupted a discursive and scopic field that the Turkish identity heretofore had the exclusive access to visibility and representation. The colors of the KCK flags were strange because different, different than those of *the (Turkish) flag* she is used to see waving. She confronted with a different representation of reality. The KCK flag primes the possibility of an alternative object of identification (the Kurdish identity) and an alternative organization of sovereignty, attachment to which by such a vast number of people in Turkey made her feel threatened and upset. The collective expression of Kurdishness is watched with its intrinsic distance from the national ideal for homogeneity. This, in turn, reinforced her fantasy of Kurds as disturbing the otherwise harmonious unity of the nation. Peace has lost its symbolic significance alongside the enmity against Kurds the negotiation process has provoked.

---

<sup>138</sup> Mankekar, P., “National Texts and Gendered Lives: An Ethnography of Television Viewers in a North Indian City,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol:20, No:3, August 1993, p.543

## **Conclusion**

I put my efforts in this chapter to scrutinize my respondents' daily reproductions of belonging to Turkishness at moments of their tension-laden encounters with the Kurdish identity. I follow the argument that although language is the primary medium through which social subjects express their wishes and hesitations about getting along with cultural diversity, their affective attachments to objects of national desire overrules expression. The ways Turkish subjects fantasize the Kurdish identity and react to its daily manifestations expose the conflicts Turks have in desiring peace and resisting to its gradual realization. Behind the façade of endorsing the equality of all citizens in the country, no matter to which identity they are attached to, social antagonisms are waiting to surface. And they do surface when the formal concepts, such as equality and respect, are transferred to experiential grounds of the body and the psyche.

## CONCLUSION

“There may be not much difference between the Anti-Semite and the democrat. The former wishes to destroy him as a man and leave nothing in him but the Jew, the pariah, the untouchable; the latter wishes to destroy him as a Jew and leave nothing in him but the man, the abstract and universal subject of the rights of man and rights of citizen. [The democrat] is hostile to the Jew to the extent that the latter thinks of himself as Jew.”<sup>139</sup>

Striking it is to realize the relevance of Sartre’s reflections on antisemitism in France in the aftermath of the World War II for my questions around recognition of the Kurdish identity in Turkey in 2000s. It is so, not because there I find easy analytical ways of switch between the two historical contexts, but because his description of the two patterned hegemonic subjectivities towards the Other hits in unison at the heart of the problem I define in this study as “the conundrum of recognition.” This latter wording of mine has intended to understand the uneasy coequality of denial and recognition within the imaginaries of Turkish subjects in relation to Kurds and the Kurdish question. Or, back to Sartre’s delineation, the Kurd figures in the imaginaries of my respondents as a collective subject with excessive political desires and, at the same time, one alongside other ethnic groups that make up Turkey a cultural mosaic. Which of these mental images would activate to make the Turkish subject speak and act in specific ways depends on the perceived degree of politicization of Kurdishness.

The passages I put in the thesis from the interviews show that the Kurdish identity is contrasted to non-Turkish Muslim communities who are perceived as peacefully different and loyal to national ideals. No expression came as an unmediated, essentialized hatred of Kurds; but, “the democrat,” to go on with the allusion to Sartre’s types, has turned to be Anti-Kurd whenever the Kurdish struggle is conceived in the entirety of its claim to equality in all the

---

<sup>139</sup> Sartre, J. P., *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*, Schocken Books, New York, 1995, p.41

spheres Turkishness has a monopoly of existence and reproduction. In other words, the Kurdish identity is not immediately denied –impossibly not, if only because of the 30 years of war with the Turkish army- but is charged as causing to unnecessary pain to nation when there is no reason to do so in a country all identities are equal in front of law. Acknowledged history of oppression and state violence against Kurds do not weaken the fantasy that Kurds disrupt the otherwise possible harmonious unity of the nation.

Whereas the rhetoric of unity-in-diversity operates through making references to “good examples,” in this way the politically silent difference of Lazs, Circassians, Bosnians and Arabs are appreciated, the Turkish identity does not necessitates mention. Rather, Turkishness is already there to decide which differences are appropriate to be included in the political community and which are destined to remain excluded. To put differently, as the preceding pages attempt to elaborate, Turkishness is endowed with a universality to which difference is measured acceptable/reasonable or not. It regulates the limits of the political community such that the Turkish subject is empowered to naturalize the uneven distribution of the rights of citizenship according to whether difference conforms to its universality.

In connection to this, let me put a final reference to the very first interview of mine for this study I did not –on purpose- previously do. Fikret, an Ottoman historian who defines himself leftist and ex-revolutionary make an invaluable instructive comment:

“There is not so much thing to study about the Kurdish question, Dila; the reasons for which Kurds have resorted to armed struggle, as well as the scope and aim of the struggle is clear. The question is the Turkish Question which is rooted in the nineteenth century. Look, you say ‘the Armenian Genocide,’ but this was necessary in terms of the reason of state. I mean their elimination was necessary for the founding of the nation-state. You say this is a crime against humanity. What you call state is already a crime against humanity in itself. Now, even if there are democratic initiatives for the official recognition of Kurds we are discussing every day, we shouldn’t be fooled about how far this might go. Even if you write to the constitution that ‘you are an equal citizen in this country,’ it is impossible to realize this in practice; because, first, there is reason of state and memory of state. Second, the majority would never accept this.”



I am not that pessimistic as Fikret put because the reason of state cannot and do not remain solid and unresponsive to the challenge by the contentious collective subject as determined and organized as Kurds. From the other side, going on with the interviews, in mind what Fikret described as the Turkish question, I encountered the extent to which Turkishness was informing, and at times forcing, my respondents' imaginaries of belonging and otherness. No doubt it was my own fault to consider nationalism as easy discernible in speech acts with overtones about the collective self and others, on which there are already canonical studies that have fashioned my own political subjectivity. I was rather looking for something else that would meaningfully connect the recent political framework of the official recognition of the Kurdish identity to subjectivities of my respondents towards Kurds and the Kurdish question. And it can be said that I found it in relation what has initially triggered my curiosity, the side-by-sideness of recognition and denial corresponding, *partially*, to the legal and discursive framework of neoliberal multiculturalism that displays both a change and continuity with the previous era of unconditional denial of difference.

This partiality I admit has taught me a crucial thing; that recognition is about the reconstruction of the political community. It does not stand for a final response to the demands of the Kurdish movement, but lays an institutional as well as an affective ground whereby the imaginaries of belonging by the dominant and dominated identities confront and contest. Thus it has an historical load, marked by the collective memory of dominance and resistance. If Turkish subjects oscillate between recognition and denial of the Kurdish identity, this I understand with regard to the now visible clash, both following from and being energized by these different collective memories, between the historically established dominance of Turkishness and the possibility –struggled for by Kurdish and encountered by Turkish subjects- of an alternative, substantially equal form of coexistence. Whether and

within which forms of sociality nationalism would persist to guide the subjectivities of Turkish citizens, I suppose, will depend on the directions this clash will evolve through.

Lastly, I admit that this study might have better articulated its discussion of how subjectivities of ordinary Turkish citizens are shaped by and responsive to the recent changes in the state's cultural politics towards the Kurdish issue if its method was a multi-sited ethnography. Istanbul has a sui generis character in terms of the ways the urban space is experienced by groups with various collective identities and political commitments. The way I use the adjective ordinary throughout the thesis is very much –and to my unrest- effected by the values and ideals of the middle-class in terms of having jobs with social security, marriage and having children over the age of around twenty five, regarding local and national elections as the only political activity to engage, and normalizing patriarchy and the social distribution of gender roles. All my respondents fall under this category whether they have attained the middle-class status or are still struggling to do. However this group of “ordinary Turkish citizens” can said to be the demographic majority, which indeed what is at stake in relation to my research questions, I am well aware that the sense of belonging to Turkishness would have shown different modalities of thinking and daily praxis if it was researched among so-called non-ordinary Turkish citizens, such as leftists, conscientious objectors to military service, LBGT individuals and so on. Moreover, research in the cities in Anatolia that have met Turks with the Kurdish migrants since 1990s' waves of forced migration would have still bear different accounts of Turkish citizens' imaginaries of belonging and otherness. Fortunately, I know a couple them proceeding.

I believe that the study will generate fresh questions about the ordinary Turkish citizen whose multi-dimensional canonization should be problematized. Preceding chapters should be understood as an introduction to this proposed epistemological shift in the field of sociology that would concern itself with the “Turkish Question” in Turkey.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books and Articles

Abadan-Unat, N., *Women in Turkish Society*, ed. Nermin Abadan-Unat, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1981.

Adaman, F., and Keyder, Ç., “Türkiye’nin Büyük Kentlerinin Gecekondu ve Çöküntü Mahallelerinde Yaşayan Yoksulluk ve Sosyal Dışlanma” in *Dosya*, eds. Gökhan Atılğan and Burcu Yakut Çakar, Haziran 2007, pp.83-89

Ahmed, S., *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012.

Ahmed, S., “Multiculturalism and the Promise of Happiness,” *New Formations*, Vol:63, No:1, 2007, pp.121-138

Akan, M., “Laïcité and Multiculturalism: The Stasi Report in Context,” *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol:60, May 2009, pp.237-256

Akdeniz, E., and Göker, E., “The Historical ‘Stickiness’ of Nationalism in Turkey’s Political Field,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol:12, No:3, September 2011, pp.309-340

Ang, I., “Between Nationalism and Transnationalism: Multiculturalism in a Globalising World,” *ICS Occasional Paper Series*, Vol:1, No:1, Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney, November 2010, pp.1-14

Ang, I., “The Curse of the Smile: Ambivalence and the ‘Asian’ Woman in Australian Multiculturalism,” *Feminist Review*, *The World Upside Down: Feminism in the Antipodes*, No:52, Spring 1996, pp.36-49

Aretxaga, B., “Maddening States,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol:32, 2003, pp.393-410

Aretxaga, B., *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland*, Princeton University Press, 1997.

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

Ayata, S., “Patronage, Party, and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol:50, No:1, Winter 1996, pp.40-56

Aytürk, İ., “Turkish Linguists against the West: The Origins of Linguistic Nationalism in Atatürk’s Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol: 40, No:6, November 2004, pp.1-25

Baban, F., “Türkiye’de Cemaat, Vatandaşlık ve Kimlik,” in *Küreselleşme, Avrupalılaştırma ve Türkiye’de Vatandaşlık*, eds. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İçduygu, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009.

Beşikçi, İ., *Kurdistan and Turkish Colonialism: Selected Writings*, Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, 1991.

Bozdoğan, S., and Kasaba, R., *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, University of Washington Press, 1997.

Bulut, E., “The Social Grammar of Populist Nationalism,” in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-National Identities*, ed. Hans-Lucas Kieser, I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2006, pp.125-135

Brown, W., “Wounded Attachments,” *Political Theory*, Vol:21, No:3, August 1993, pp.390-410

Bruinessen, M., “The Kurds in Turkey,” *MERIP Reports*, No:121, State Terror in Turkey, February 1984, pp.6-14

Burchell, G., “Peculiar Interests: Civil Society and Governing ‘The System of Natural Liberty’” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Cagaptay, S., “Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol:40, No:3, May 2004, pp.86-101

Cagaptay, S., “Passage to Turkishness: Immigration and Religion in Modern Turkey” in *Citizenship and Ethnic Conflict*, ed. Haldun Gülalp, Routledge, 2006, pp.61-82

Connolly, W. E., *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, Cornell University Press, 1991.

Çiçek, C., “Elimination or Integration of Pro-Kurdish Politics: Limits of the AKP’s Democratic Initiative,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol:12, No:1, 2011, pp.15-26

Çiçek, C., “The Pro-Islamic Challenge for the Kurdish Movement,” *Dialect Anthropol*, Vol:37, 2013, pp.159-163

Dean, M., *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, London: Sage Publications, 1999.

Dean, M., *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault’s Methods and Historical Sociology*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994.

Delanty, G., “Review of *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* by Elizabeth A. Povinelli,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol:109, No:1, July 2003, pp.246-247

Deringil, S., “ ‘They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery’: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol:45, No:2, 2003, pp.311-42

Ergin, M., and Dixon C. J., “Explaining Anti-Kurdish Beliefs in Turkey: Group Competition, Identity, and Globalization,” *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol:91, No:5, December 2010, pp.1329-1348

Feldman, A., “Violence and Vision: The Prosthetics and Aesthetics of Terror,” *Public Culture*, Vol:10, No:1, Duke University Press, 1997, pp.24-60

Fink, B., *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, Princeton University Press, 1995.

Foweraker, J., "Social Movement Theory and the Political Context of Collective Action," in *The Political Context of Political Action: Power, Argumentation and Democracy*, ed. Ricca Edmonson, Routledge, 1997, pp.64-80

Foucault, M., "Afterword: The Subject and Power" in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Frankenberg, R., *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*, University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

Giroux, S., Goldberg, D., "On the State of Race Theory: A Conversation with David Theo Goldberg," *JAC*, Vol:26, No:1/2, 2006, pp.11-66

Goldberg, D., "Raking the Field of the Discourse of Racism," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol:18, No:1, September 1987, pp.58-71

Göçek, F. M., "Through a Glass Darkly: Consequences of a Politicized Past in Contemporary Turkey," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol:617, The Politics of History in Comparative Perspective, May 2008, pp.88-106

Gunew, S., "Postcolonialism and Multiculturalism: Between Race and Ethnicity," *The Year Book of English Studies*, Vol:27, The Politics of Postcolonial Criticism, 1997, pp.22-39

Gunter, M. M., "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey," *Middle East Journal*, Vol:42, No:3, Summer 1988, pp.389-406

Gunter, M., M., "The Continuing Kurdish Problem in Turkey after Öcalan's Capture," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol:21, No:5, October 2000, pp.849-869

Gunter, M. M., "The Kurdish Question in Perspective," *World Affairs*, Vol:166, No: 4, Spring 2004, pp.197-205

Haldrup, M., Koefoed, L., and Simonsen, K., “Practical Orientalism: Bodies, Everyday Life and the Construction of Otherness,” *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, Vol:88, No:2, Geography and Power, the Power of Geography, 2006, pp.173-184

Hall, S., “The Multicultural Question.” Paper presented at the The Political Economy Reserach Center Annual Lecture, Firth Hall Sheffield, May 4, 2000, pp.1-16

Hale, C., “Does Multiculturalism Menace? Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp.485-524

Hansen, T. B., Stepputat, F., *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the Postcolonial World*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, Princeton University Press, 2005.

Healy, S., “Traversing Fantasies, Activating Desires: Economic Geography, Activist Research, and Psychoanalytic Methodology,” *The Professional Geographer*, Vol:62, No:4, 2010, pp.496-506

Hindess, B., “Power, Government, Politics,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, eds. Kate Nash and Alan Scott, Blackwell Publishing, 2004, pp.40-48

İçduygu, A., Toktaş, S., “The Politics of Population in a Nation-building Process: Emigration of Non-Muslims from Turkey,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol:31, No:2, February 2008.

Işın E. F., and Wood P. K., *Citizenship and Identity*, Sage, 1999.

Jäger, S., “Discourse and Knowledge: Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of a Critical Discourse and Dispositive Analysis,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, eds. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, Sage Publications, 2001, pp.32-62

Kadıoğlu, A., “Türkiye’de Vatandaşlığın Anatomisi,” in *Vatandaşlığın Dönüşümü: Üyelikten Haklara*, ed. Ayşe Kadıoğlu, Metis Yayınları, 2008, pp.168-184

Kelly, P., "Identity, Equality and Power: Tensions in Parekh's Political Theory of Multiculturalism," in *Multiculturalism, Identity, and Rights*, eds. Bruce Haddock and Peter Sutch, Routledge, 2003, pp.94-110

Keyder, Ç., "Globalization and Social Exclusion in Istanbul," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol:29, No:1, 2005, pp.124-134

Kutschera, C., "Mad Dreams of Independence: The Kurds of Turkey and the PKK," *Middle East Report*, No:189, The Kurdish Experience, 1994, pp.12-15

Lemke, T., " 'The Birth of Bio-politics': Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège de France on Neo-liberal Governmentality," *Economy and Society*, Vol:30, No:2, May 2001, pp.190-207

Maclure, J., "The Politics of Recognition at an Impasse? Identity Politics and Democratic Citizenship," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol:36, No:1, March 2003, pp.3-21

Makdisi, U., *The Culture of Secterianism*, University of California Press, 2000.

Mango, A., "Ataturk and the Kurds," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol:35, No:4, Seventy-Five Years of the Turkish Republic, October 1999, pp.1-25

Mankekar, P., "National Texts and Gendered Lives: An Ethnography of Television Viewers in a North Indian City," *American Ethnologist*, Vol:20, No:3, August 1993, pp.543-563

Maynes, M. J., Pierce, J. L., and Laslett, B., *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2008.

McGowan, T., *The Real Gaze: Film Theory after Lacan*, State University of New York Press, 2007.

McLaren, P., "White Terror and Oppositional Agency: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism," in *Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference*, eds. Christine E. Sleeter and Peter L. McLaren, State University of New York Press, 1995, pp.33-70



- Mouffe, C., *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, Verso, New York, 1992, pp.225-239
- Navaro-Yashin, Y., *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*, Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Neyzi, L., “Remembering to Forget: Sabbateanism, National Identity, and Subjectivity in Turkey,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol:44, No:1, January 2002.
- Ortner, S., *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*, Duke University Press, 2006.
- Procacci, G., “Governmentality and Citizenship,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, eds. Kate Nash and Alan Scott, Blackwell Publishing, 2004, pp.342-351
- Riesmann, C. K., *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*, Sage Publications, 2008.
- Saraçoğlu, C., *Kurds of Modern Turkey: Migration, Neoliberalism and Exclusion in Turkish Society*, I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2011.
- Sartre, J. P., *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*, Schocken Books, New York, 1995.
- Scott, J., *The Conundrum of Equality*, Unpublished Paper. Occasional Papers of the School of Social Science Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University, 1999, pp.1-12
- Smith, A. M., *Laclau and Mouffe. The Radical Democratic Imaginary*, Routledge, 1998.
- Smith, T. W., “Civic Nationalism and Ethnocultural Justice in Turkey,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol:27, No:2, May 2005, pp.436-470
- Somer, M., “Turkey’s Kurdish Conflict: Changing Context, and Domestic and Regional Implications,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol:58, No:2, Spring 2004, pp.235-253

Somer, M., ‘‘Moderate Islam and Secularist Opposition in Turkey: Implications for the World, Muslims and Secular Democracy,’’ *Third World Quarterly*, Vol:28, No:7, 2007, pp.1271-1289

Soyarık-Şentürk, N., ‘‘Türk Vatandaşlığının Yasal ve Anayasal Esasları: Değişimler ve Devamlılıklar,’’ in *Küreselleşme, Avrupalılaşıma ve Türkiye’de Vatandaşlık*, eds. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İçduygu, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009, pp.134-161

Stavrakakis, Y., *The Lacanian Left: Psychoanalysis, Theory, and Politics*, Edinburg University Press, 2007.

Şahin, B., ‘‘Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliği Uyum Süreci Bağlamında Kürt Sorunu: Açılımlar ve Sınırlar,’’ in *Türkiye’de Çoğunluk ve Azınlık Politikaları: AB Sürecinde Yurttaşlık Tartışmaları*, eds. Ayhan Kaya and Turgut Tarhanlı, Tesev Yayınları, 2005.

Taylor, C., ‘‘The Politics of Recognition,’’ in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutman, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp.25-74

Tezcür, M. G., ‘‘When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,’’ *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol:47, No:6, November 2010, pp.235-253

Toprak, M., Uslu, N., and King, J.D., ‘‘Transformation of Turkish Politics: Socio-Political, Economic and Ethnic Peculiarities,’’ *Bilig*, No:50, Summer 2009, pp.199-232

Turam, B., *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement*, Stanford University Press, 2007.

Turner, T., ‘‘Anthropology and Multiculturalism: What is Anthropology that Multiculturalists Should be Mindful of It?,’’ *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol:8, No:4, November 1993, pp.411-429

Turunc, H., ‘‘Islamicist or Democratic? The AKP’s Search for Identity in Turkish Politics,’’ *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol:15, No:1, 2007, pp-79-91

Üstel, F., *Makbul Vatandaşın Peşinde: İkinci Meşrutiyet’ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005.

Vincent, A., “What is so Different about Difference?”, in *Multiculturalism, Identity, and Rights*, eds. Bruce Haddock and Peter Sutch, Routledge, 2003, pp.42-60

Wacquant, L., “Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism,” *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, Vol:20, 2012, pp.66-79

Watts, N., *Activists in Office: Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey*, University of Washington Press, 2010.

Weiss, R. S., *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*, The Free Press, 1995.

Yavuz, H. M., “Turkey’s ‘Imagined’ Enemies: Kurds and Islamists,” *The World Today*, Vol:52, No:4, April 1996, pp.99-101

Yavuz, H. M., and Özcan, N. A., “The Kurdish Question and Turkey’s Justice and Development Party,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol:8, No:1, Spring 2006, pp.102-119

Yeğen, M., “The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol:34, No: 4, October 1999, pp.555-568

Yeğen, M., “ ‘Prospective-Turks’ or ‘Pseudo-Citizens:’ Kurds in Turkey,” *The Middle East Journal*, Vol:63, No:4, Autumn 2009, pp.597-615

Yıldız, K., and Muller, M., *European Union and Turkish Accession: Human Rights and Kurds*, Pluto Press, 2008.

Yumul, A., and Özkirimli, U., “Reproducing the Nation: Banal Nationalism in the Turkish Press,” *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol:22, No:6, 2000, pp.787-804

Yükseker, D., “Neoliberal Restructuring and Social Exclusion in Turkey” in *Turkish Economy in the Post-Crisis Era: The New Phase of Neo-Liberal Restructuring and Integration in the Global Economy*, eds. Ziya Öniş and Fikret Şenses, Routledge, London, 2009, pp.262-280

Yüksel, M., ‘Forced Migration and the Politics of Internal Displacement in the Making of Modern Turkey: The Case of Dersim, 1937-1947.’ PhD diss., Columbia University, 2008.

Žižek, S., ‘Tolerance as an Ideological Category,’ *Critical Inquiry*, No:34, Summer 2008, pp.660-682

Žižek, S., ‘‘ ‘I Hear You with My Eyes’; or, The Invisible Master’’ in *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, eds. Renata Salecl and Slavoj Žižek, Duke University Press, 1996.

Žižek, S., *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Verso, London and New York, 1989.

### **Online Resources**

Angela Mitropoulos, ‘‘The Materialization of Race in Multiculture,’’ *darkmatter*, February 23, 2008, <http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2008/02/23/the-materialisation-of-race-in-multiculture/>

Bülent Küçük, ‘‘What is a Democratization Package Good For?,’’ *Jadaliyya*, October 21, 2013, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/14685/what-is-a-democratization-package-good-for>

Evren Balta Paker, ‘‘AKP’nin Kürt Sorunu Politikası: Bir Adım İleri, Bir Adım Geri [The AKP’s Politics of the Kurdish Question: A Step Further, A Step Back],’’ Heinrich Böll Stiftung. <http://www.tr.boell.org/web/103-1531.html>

Jeremy Gilbert, ‘‘Signifying Nothing: ‘Culture,’ ‘Discourse,’ and the Sociality of Affect,’’ *Culture Machine*, Vol:6, 2004, <http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/article/viewarticle/8/7>

Nazan Üstündağ, ‘‘The AKP and the Peace Process,’’ *Jadaliyya*, December 1, 2013, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15412/the-akp-and-the-peace-process>

<http://www.sendika.org/2013/03/basinda-diyarbakir-newrozu-ve-ocalanin-mektubu/>

[http://www.chp.org.tr/?page\\_id=70](http://www.chp.org.tr/?page_id=70)

## APPENDIX

### The Profile of the Informant Body

| Interviewees | Voting Preference | Political orientation   | Sex | Occupation               | Age | Education      | Family status        |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|----------------|----------------------|
| Fikret       | N/A*              | Leftist                 | M   | Historian                | 64  | Ph.D.          | Married, no children |
| Yılmaz       | CHP               | Secularist              | M   | Construction engineer    | 52  | University     | Married, 2 children  |
| Burak        | CHP               | Secularist              | M   | Graduate student         | 25  | M.A.           | Single               |
| Nermin       | CHP               | Secularist              | W   | Accountant               | 55  | High school    | Married, 2 children  |
| Mustafa      | AKP               | Religious conservative  | M   | Accountant               | 44  | High school    | Married, 3 children  |
| Leyla        | CHP               | Secularist              | W   | Chemistry teacher        | 50  | University     | Married, 2 children  |
| Burcu        | N/A               | No political commitment | W   | Psychology graduate      | 24  | University     | Single               |
| Hüseyin      | AKP               | Religious conservative  | M   | Small-scale retailer     | 53  | Primary school | Married, 6 children  |
| Nilüfer      | CHP               | Secularist              | W   | Nurse                    | 47  | University     | Married, 2 children  |
| Zümrüt       | AKP               | Religious conservative  | W   | Housekeeper              | 49  | High school    | Married, 3 children  |
| Fatma        | AKP               | Religious conservative  | W   | Housekeeper              | 58  | Primary school | Married, 4 children  |
| Sevgi        | AKP               | Religious conservative  | W   | Primary school teacher** | 40  | University     | Married, 2 children  |
| Funda        | AKP               | Religious conservative  | W   | Pedagogue                | 42  | University     | Married, 2 children  |
| Baran        | AKP               | Liberal                 | M   | Lawyer                   | 28  | University     | Single               |

\* Fikret identifies himself leftist and ex-revolutionary who had been active in the 1970s in one of the revolutionary leftist organizations in Turkey and been imprisoned for eight years due to his political activities. I put this “Not Applicable” sign for the voting preference of him because he refuses engagement with politics in any of its legal or mainstream form. N/A is put second time for Burcu who repeatedly expressed apathy towards politics as a result of which she never participated to local and national elections.

\*\* Being a primary school teacher, Sevgi is teaching the class that is called the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge. This class is an highly contested issue in Turkey for two reasons that is being put by the opponents: First, it is regarded as a violation of the principle of secularism in primary education and, second, the content of the textbooks focus on the Sunni sect of Islam in such ways that Alevi children are systematically excluded and, at times, humiliated. Sevgi identifies herself Sunni-Muslim Turkish, but a teacher of religion who tries to be just in the class towards Alevism that she considers as an Islamic creed.