

STRATEGIC CONSTRUCTIONS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY
BY POLITICAL LEADERS IN TURKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

JULY 2012

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

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July 2012, 124 pages

The present study examines how political party leaders in Turkey strategically construct boundaries of the Turkish nation, which norms they attribute to it, and the prototypicality claims of these party leaders regarding the nation. Leaders' national identity constructions are expected to be in line with their parties' collective projects and serve to increase their claims of representativeness in the eyes of the electorate. A second aim of the study is to inquire leaders' attempts in rhetorically including the Kurdish population to the Turkish nation construction. The particular context was 2011 General Elections and the data was composed of campaign speeches of AK Parti, MHP and CHP. The campaign speeches given at Eastern and Southeastern regions of Turkey prior to the elections constituted the data. The analysis revealed that three leaders consensualized on the national flag, the official language, the unity of the land and the state as the claimed commonalities of the Turkish nation. Differences emerge when elaborating on the nature of the binding relationship

between nationals. Erdoğan (AK Parti) puts more emphasis on religion, Bahçeli (MHP) underlines shared history and culture and Kılıçdaroğlu (CHP) depicts a nation based on citizenship. Nation constructions also involve attribution of national norms that also differ among parties and coincide with the topics over which leaders claim prototypicality. Apart from invoking national categories, party leaders argued over universal and other social categories (in this study; politician category) when constructing their rhetoric. Taking social categories for granted impairs the possibility of social change. Therefore, examining strategic purposes these categories serve, as in this study, is intended to empower those who struggle through their effects.

Keywords: National Identity, Nation Constructions, Social Identity Approach

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE’DEKİ POLİTİK LİDERLERİN STRATEJİK ULUSAL KİMLİK KURULUMLARI

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Yüksek Lisans, Psikoloji Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yar. Doç. Banu Cingöz-Ulu

Temmuz 2012, 124 sayfa

Bu çalışma Türk ulusunun sınırlarının, ona atfedilen normların ve siyasi temsil iddialarının Türkiye’deki siyasi parti liderleri tarafından nasıl inşa edildiğini araştırmıştır. Liderlerin ulusal kimlik inşalarının partilerin kolektif planlarıyla örtüşmesi ve seçmen gözünde temsiliyet iddialarını kuvvetlendirme amaçlı olması beklenmiştir. Çalışmanın bir diğer amacı liderlerin Kürt nüfusunu Türk ulusu tanımına nasıl dahil ettiğinin söylemsel analizidir. Bu nedenle kullanılacak verinin AK Parti, MHP ve CHP’nin Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu illerindeki 2011 Genel Seçimleri öncesi miting konuşmaları olması kararlaştırılmıştır. Analiz bulgularına göre üç lider ulusal bayrağı, resmi dili, toprak bütünlüğünü ve üniter devleti Türk ulusunun ortaklaştığı konular olarak inşa etmişlerdir. Farklılaştıkları konular ise yurttaşları birbirine bağlayan ilişkinin doğası üzerinden olmuştur. Erdoğan (AK Parti) dindaşlık vurgusu yaparken; Bahçeli (MHP) ortak tarih ve kültürün, Kılıçdaroğlu (CHP) ise vatandaşlık bağının altını çizmiştir. Ulus kurulumları ulusa

atfedilen normları da içermiş ve bu normlar parti liderlerinin temsiliyet göttükleri konularla örtüşmüştür. Parti liderleri retoriklerini kurarken ulusal kategorilerden yararlandıkları gibi evrensel ve diğer sosyal kategorileri de (bu çalışmada siyasetçi kategorisi) kullandığı görülmüştür. Sosyal kategorileri verili kabul etmek sosyal değişim önündeki bir engeldir. Bu nedenle hizmet ettikleri amaçları araştırmak, bu çalışmada olduğu gibi, sosyal kategorizasyonun etkileriyle mücadele edenleri güçlendirmek niyetini taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ulusal Kimlik, Ulus Kurulumları, Sosyal Kimlik Yaklaşımı

For Esmé – with Love and Squalor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am so grateful and blissful to have the chance to work with my dearest supervisor Banu Cingöz-Ulu who has always been a true believer of this work. Her insistence in making a sense of my tangled thoughts, and her sincerity which created joyful moments out of an arduous research process have left me indebted to her support and patience. I also would like to thank Bengi Öner-Özkan and Sevda Numanbayraktaroğlu for willingly taking part in my examining committee and their insightful comments in turning this thesis into a better one.

I have so many people to be thankful for their encouragement, hard work or mere presence throughout this process. I thank Bahar for making me believe that I could “pull it off” and her insightful comments as my second coder; Meltem for being my third coder and a constant discussion partner whenever I needed an opinion; Berrak, Seçil, Aylin, Özge and Onursal for translating such difficult texts; Beril for her feedbacks; and lastly but certainly not leastly Bahar Tanyaş for her unhesitant and timely feedback regarding the analysis. I owe a great deal to my sisters because they kept me going with their unconditional love and faith. Finally, I am grateful to everyone who has put up with my anxiety attacks and constant grumblings, especially Emre for his patience and precious company during this period.

I also thank TUBITAK for their financial support which created a peaceful study environment for my graduate education.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 General Introduction

Most people perceive the world as a closed system that they have no control over. Social hierarchies, power relations, national borders and the relations between people are regarded as givens almost like physical facts. However, when looking from an historical perspective one can judge the changing nature of social entities like the status of African Americans in the United States or the women's place in societies. Observing the change is also possible by comparing contemporaneous social formations, because they reflect the fact the same thing can be constructed differently by different individuals, groups and societies.

However, in a world of nations many people do not imagine that an alternative is possible to the existent social organization, largely because the national categories permeate into how people perceive the world as it is. Quoting from Michael Billig's famous terminology, nationalism in people's everyday experience is so "banal" (1995) that it is hard to notice its presence when not looking closely. He rightfully observes that even when complaining about the weather, we always refer to the weather in our country. Whether they are social, cultural or political; categories are taken for granted.

People are prone to think in terms of categories; hence it becomes a topic of interest to study the outcomes of these categorization processes. Yet, it becomes even more important to inquire the content of these categories since they also determine how people act in the social realm. For example, defining the self as a Turkish national, a woman or a Muslim may have divergent outcomes in accordance with the meanings attached to these social identities. On the other hand, social psychologists disagree on the stability of social categories; that is, it is vague whether people understand the same thing when talking about a category, such as a national category (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty, & Reynolds, 1998; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). This theoretical debate may not mean much to an ordinary individual unless the practice deriving from this disagreement is understood as crucial in terms of its real life implications. If the members of a certain group possess different understandings related to the social category that they belong to, it means that category can be altered in ways to serve certain aims. In other words, categories may change by the will of its members and not merely by themselves.

A theoretically elusive argument such as this one need not always be so difficult to observe in practice. Leaders, activists, opinion leaders have always known that re-structuring the way people see the world through their lenses of nation, ethnicity, gender, class etc. is pivotal in realizing their collective projects. In other words, categories are not fixed givens; rather, they are constantly structured by others who are aware of their fluid nature (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

Nation is a sophisticatedly structured belongingness to which people attach certain characteristics. The aim of the current thesis is to examine the category of the Turkish nation. In doing so, a specific point in history is chosen, the context of the 2011 General Elections. I paid specific attention to the construction of this category

by the political leaders in Turkey. In particular, I intended to investigate how boundaries of the nation are set, which norms are attributed to this national category and why these different construals are pursued as such. Moreover, the ways Kurdish identity is rhetorically integrated into the nation definition will be inquired due to its relatively contested status (Yeğen, 2009).

Before the actual analysis, the theoretical framework is provided in order to lay out the ideational basis of this analysis. Following the literature, a brief depiction of the “Kurdish issue” together with the portrayal of the context prior to the elections are given in order to familiarize the readers with the issue of interest. After the analysis, the discussion limitations and possible research directions are addressed.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the social-psychological mechanisms of the categorization process will be outlined through reviewing the main theories of the discipline (i.e. Social Identity Theory; “SIT” and Self-Categorization Theory; “SCT”). Moreover, the ways in which social identities come into being and the role they play in rendering the social change will be described by paying particular attention to national identities.

1.2.1 Social Identity Theory

During the 70’s, social psychologists of European descent, unlike their American counterparts who study groups from a reductionist and individualistic perspective, created a new path in the discipline that aimed to investigate the human relation through its contextual determinants (Turner, 1996). Henri Tajfel was one of those social psychologists who wanted to understand what is genuinely social about the human action. He was particularly interested in how people come to perceive

themselves as belonging to a social group and the related outcomes of this perception. As a starting point, he attempted to discover the minimal conditions for intergroup differentiation to occur.

Tajfel and his colleagues designed a study in which participants were made to believe that they were allocated to two experimental groups based on their painter preferences (the allocation was, in fact, random) (Tajfel, Flament, Billig, & Bundy, 1971). Participants were aware only of their own group membership and they did not have any personal contact with the other in- or out-group members. When asked to distribute a given sum of money to either group, they ended up maximizing the difference between groups even though it signified sacrificing the maximum reward for their in-group (the so-called strategy of “maximum differentiation”). The researchers reached the conclusion that because people believed they were categorized into two groups they desired to increase the difference between the in-group and the out-group. In other words, a categorization made on a trivial basis was enough to instill a sense of “we” within the participants and accordingly they wanted to differentiate themselves from the out-group. This perception of belonging to a group along with its related feelings and values came to be known as one’s social identity (Tajfel, 1978, p.273).

This starting point led to numerous research regarding social identity and its influence on people’s thoughts and judgments. According to Social Identity Theory (referred as SIT), adoption of a social identity is regarded as the basis of intergroup relations. Through personal identity people differentiate themselves from others as individuals; through social identities a similar differentiation process occurs between one’s group and the other groups. By differentiating oneself as belonging to a distinct social identity, one may engage in processes like ingroup favoritism, and perceptions

like ingroup homogeneity, outgroup heterogeneity etc. Therefore, social identities are defined in comparative terms, that is group members always compare their groups with out-group members on various dimensions. The theory proposes that because members long to perceive their groups in positive terms they have a tendency to favor their own group on evaluated dimensions (labeled as “in-group bias”) to achieve positive self-esteem on a collective level (Tajfel, 1982). However, ingroup favoritism does not necessarily lead up to out-group hostility in each case. In fact, they are theoretically distinct outcomes of the social identity process (Struch & Schwartz, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) implying the possibility that ingroup favoritism and outgroup hostility is driven by a different set of factors (Levin & Sidanius, 1999).

The notion that the mere division of people into groups triggers a need for differentiation is widely accepted by researchers to be a universal process. As a result of this differentiation, individuals favor their own group more often than they discriminate the out-group (Brewer, 1979). However, many subsequent researchers did not retain the emphasis on the contextual nature of the categorization process. Therefore the categorization / differentiation process started to be regarded as a precursor for intergroup discrimination and conflict. As one of those researchers who insisted on the contextuality of social identity, Reicher (2004) highlights the variety in the outcomes of this differentiation process. He reminds the fact that the laboratory context of the minimal group study allowed participants to belong only to one ingroup, compare themselves with only one out-group and value only one dimension (i.e. money reward) to differentiate their groups from others. Therefore, what can be perceived as a trivial criterion became all too significant for the participants who had no access to other alternative means to differentiate themselves from the other group.

In real life, however, people have various social categories that they can make use of in order to interpret a situation. For instance, if a student is asked about the increases in tuition fees she may answer as a student who will experience budget deficits or she may evaluate the issue as a socialist person who will interpret the situation in an economy-political frame. Accordingly, she would be guided by a different set of norms, values and beliefs attached to these different identities; in short, she could react differently each time she categorizes herself as a member of a particular group (Turner, 1982; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). In line with this, Reicher (2004) asserts that how people react to a situation is bounded with the category by which they define themselves and others. In brief, Reicher notes the danger of reducing the results of minimal group experiment to the understanding that social categories are fixed entities and the resultant manifestations are resilient to context. Therefore, Reicher remarks, researchers should perceive mechanisms behind the minimal group paradigm as the very basic conditions of group differentiation, and not as fixed manifestations of a cognitive process.

The discussion up to this point over the founding research of SIT stresses the contextuality of the categorization/differentiation process and the outcomes associated with it. In order to see how this differentiation process manifests itself differently in various circumstances, Tajfel's research on the relation between subordinate and superordinate groups is informative.

Due to the way the world is organized as it is, some people find themselves to be categorized as subordinate and some are seen as superordinate on relevant dimensions. For instance in a national context, one ethnic identity might be perceived as inferior to another just as skin color or religious identity may determine one's

prestige, status or power in a society The very basic concern of SIT is to examine how subordinate group members will react to their relatively inferior position in societies having differing structural characteristics. Literature on the outcomes of intergroup comparison processes mostly focuses on conflict and discrimination though it is equally possible to observe alternative manifestations of the in-group bias in the disadvantaged groups like remedying the negatively evaluated characteristics of the in-group or seeking ways to alter the structure of relations.

According to SIT, people pursue positive social identities. Therefore it is expected that members of low status groups should not be satisfied with their social positioning. There are a number of contextual factors that determine how these group members will react to this stratification leading to their relatively disadvantaged position (Turner & Brown, 1978). One contextual factor that influences how members of subordinated groups will react relates to the perceived permeability of the group boundaries. If boundaries are conceived as permeable, that is, if members can attain a more advantaged social status by distancing themselves from their previous belonging, they will act individually. In other words, they will individually move up the ladder and change their group identifications; a strategy called “individual mobility”. However, if category boundaries are perceived to be impermeable people will pursue collectivistic strategies. Another determinant of how people will react to their disadvantaged status is the presence of cognitive alternatives, namely perceiving the advantaged group’s position as illegitimate and the belief that the inequality is not stable. In other words, if people question the legitimacy of their inferior position and believe that the situation can be altered, they are more likely to challenge the status quo. However, challenging the status quo is not the only reaction people give to an unequal social organization. There are several

strategies people utilize to escape the negative self-esteem effect of their social positioning which are called “social creativity behaviors”. One of them is to distance themselves from those characteristics of the in-group that were previously named inferior. Another strategy is to reinterpret those dimensions of the in-group that were formerly known to be negative in a positive light. The last strategy is to create new dimensions by which subordinated group members may be perceived positively (Reicher, 2004; Tajfel; 1986, Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

These last three strategies depend on contextual factors since their accomplishment is bound up with structural barriers between groups (regarding the distancing strategy) and the willingness of the dominant group members to acknowledge the claimed changes in the category dimensions (regarding the last two strategies). In short, how subordinate group members choose to differentiate themselves from the superordinate group is determined by various contextual factors, which may not always result in discrimination.

Considering these widely endorsed premises of SIT, first, it can be concluded that the theory has a particular focus on determining the mechanisms through which subordinate groups do or do not challenge the status quo, namely how social change may come into being. The second point that is implicitly addressed by SIT researchers is the contextually determined nature of social relations. As it is observed in diverse strategies subordinate group members utilize, people will differ in their intergroup behavior depending on how social categories are organized within a community.

For instance, in a study conducted with the East Germans, researchers inquired the influence of the perceptions of Germany’s organizational structure on people’s way of coping with the dissatisfying status position. Being more identified

as an Eastern German and perceiving more illegitimacy in the situation were predictors of a higher likelihood of engaging in social competition (i.e. collective strategy). Perceptions of impermeability and instability also increased the likelihood. On the contrary, individual mobility was more likely when people were less identified with their group; and when they perceived the structural organization of the country as less stable, impermeable, and illegitimate (Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, & Blanz, 1999). It is, therefore, crucial to reveal how the social context affects the way people act out their social identities.

1.2.2 Self-Categorization Theory

SIT was rather implicit in its emphasis on the contextual determinants of social action. Self-Categorization Theory (hereon referred as the SCT), on the other hand, is more explicit and systematic in examining how social context determines the nature of intergroup relations. The theory specifies the mechanisms by which categorization process constitutes the cognitive underpinnings of intergroup behavior (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987).

SCT rests on the notion that social identities are formed out of the relation between the perceiver's readiness and category fit (Oakes, 1987; Turner et al., 1994). Perceiver readiness reflects the relative accessibility of the category. Relative accessibility is in turn determined by the perceiver's former experiences, and contemporary expectations, values, needs and motives. Category fit is a product of the match between the relevant social category and the comparative and normative aspects of the reality. That is, it reflects how the given social category fits with the reality. Category fit may manifest itself in two forms. Accordingly in comparative fit, categorization is salient to the extent that it increases perceived similarities between people belonging to the same group and differences between people belonging to

different groups (i.e. meta-contrast principle). For instance, a Barcelona fan may perceive Real Madrid fans to be invariably arrogant while he depicts Barcelona supporters as humble football fans, again, without any exception. Normative fit, on the other hand, relates to the success of the category in matching the expectation of the perceiver with structured social reality (Turner, 1985). To illustrate, a British should not only differ from a French person more than he does from a Brit regarding his attitudes, actions, thoughts etc. (comparative fit), he should also do this comparison in the expected direction. For instance, he could criticize the deportation of gypsies from France, or the hegemonic culture policies pursued by governments against immigrant populations.

The reason for the inevitable operation of the categorization process is regarded to depend on people's need to give meaning to certain similarities and differences between human groups existent in the social reality. It also serves to highlight relevant dimensions of the category, which one should act on (Reicher, 2004).

As soon as people are included into a group, they simultaneously think how much they are in line with the group's prototypical members and its norms. This shift in people's cognitive categorization of themselves from the unique individual to the group member marks the "depersonalization" claim of social identity tradition (including SIT and SCT) (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). In other words, depersonalization refers to the way people perceive and act in line with their in-group prototypes not as unique individuals. Depersonalization does not entail a loss of identity; on the contrary, it implies a shift from personal to social identity. Hence it becomes the basis of intergroup behavior. In order to concretize social groups in their minds, people utilize prototypes. These are subjective constructions of the group's

attributes depicted from the social information present in the context (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

The nature of the given prototypes, however, is an issue of debate between categorization researchers. While some researchers claim that these prototypes are shared by members of the same group to a large extent because they receive similar information from the context (Hogg et al., 1995), other researchers do not agree that group members will unexceptionally share the same stereotype regarding the group and therefore act similarly (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty, & Reynolds, 1998). Haslam and his colleagues conducted successive studies in examining the consensualization process by which group members come to share similar stereotypes of the relevant groups and thus manifest similar intergroup attitudes and behaviors (Haslam, 1997; Haslam et al., 1996; Haslam et al. 1998, Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, & Turner, 1999). According to these researchers, people reach stereotype consensus when they (a) share a common social identity and (b) engage in an active discussion regarding the content of the stereotype. These studies depict the potential cases in which people may not possess the same perception regarding a social category prototype; therefore, different views on a category definition may coexist even for the members of the same group. For instance, members of the same social group, like Americans, may have different views regarding a social category, say immigrants, because they are constantly exposed to differing views on what immigration means and how they should respond to it as fellow group members. Group members receive information not only from politicians, activists and newspapers on how they should treat immigrants; they also discuss it with people around them. Therefore, group definitions and intergroup behaviors will be the result

of an active discussion between the members of the same social category (Haslam, 1997).

It was mentioned earlier that group prototypes are instrumental in decreasing the intra-category differences and increasing the inter-category difference in order to retain the maximum level of contrast between groups. Therefore, prototypes are amenable to change according to the salient out-group (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Turner, 1985). Some of these prototypes alter gradually while others readily react to the changes in the immediate environment (Hogg et al., 1995). For instance, while capitalists readily contrast their identity definitions with those of the socialists', it would take some time to situate their category opposite to that of social democrats. On the other hand, the change in the prototype would be rather instant when a female manager speaking in a board meeting gets off and participates in a feminist protest. This strong effect of the context in shaping the prototype's content is pivotal to both SIT and SCT. According to social identity tradition, behavior will be determined by the social context surrounding it.

If social categories are so amenable to context, how self and other categories are constructed becomes a critical question. It is a relatively understudied research area since researchers are generally more interested in the consequences of the categorization than the process of category formation. The very basic question of why the world is perceived in categories is answered with the limited cognitive capacities of human beings by many researchers. It is claimed that through categorization people minimize their workload by simplifying the world (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). In other words, they engage in a perceptual distortion which meets people's practical needs. Social identity tradition, on the other hand, strongly disagrees with this reasoning and claims social categorization to be the cognitive

reflection of how the society is organized (i.e. the fit between perceiver's readiness and the present category). In other words, categories are perceptions of how the social reality is constructed rather than mere distortions of the human mind.

SCT addresses the flexible nature of social categories that changes according to the context; namely, out of various categories only one social category becomes salient in a given situation defining who we are and what we should do. Comparison process also entails such flexibility since given a particular social category people will vary in their behaviors according to which group theirs is being compared to. Moreover, deriving from Haslam's work on consensualization process, it seems that content of the social categories (i.e. stereotypes) are open to debate; thus have a tendency to change across time.

Because there is an immense variability in the *content*, *salience* and *comparison target* of social categories, researchers should not take social categories and their influence on behaviors as fixed manifestations of the social context. On the contrary, these three dimensions of social categorization are all open to argumentation (thus to the intervention of the human agency) and they are bound up with the context. For example, consider the change in the perception of African Americans in the United States, Palestinians in Israel, Israeli in the Arab world, or Kurds in Turkey. Over the past fifty years, these social categories have experienced major transformations in how they are being depicted and treated by others due to the changes in the social and political sphere. However, even if the content of social categories change greatly over time, they remain to be perceived as fixed by their holders and their contemporaries at a particular period in time.

1.2.3 Social Identity Constructions

Deriving from the tenets of social identity tradition, Reicher and his colleagues raise a different perspective regarding the relation between social reality and social categories (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Reicher, 2004). They claim that the link between the context and categorization process is not a unidirectional one. On the contrary, they assert that social categories are about making the future as much as they are about reflecting the present. If, they argue, the consensualization process depends on a feeling of shared identity and the active discussion of group members regarding group stereotypes (i.e. norms, values and action attached to the social category) (Haslam et al. 1998), there might be disagreements between group members resulting in schisms in certain contexts (Sani, 2005; Sani & Reicher, 2000). Taking advantage of this debated nature of social categories, some people will attempt to construct alternative group stereotypes in order to accomplish certain goals that happen to overlap with those stereotypical characteristics. In other words, social identities may be used as means of creating a social change (Tajfel & Turner, 1979); hence people who desire to mobilize others in pursuit of a cause should construct the definitions of social identities in accordance with their respective goals. In other words, they become “entrepreneurs of identity” (Reicher 1996; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

Social identities serve to “define the individual but are not simply defined by individuals” (Reicher, 2004, p. 937); they are derived from the culture they inhabit. It is this constructed nature of the identity that makes it a tool for identity entrepreneurs. They attempt to direct collective mobilization by attributing norms and values to the relevant social group which happens to overlap with their group’s policies.

In their rhetorical analysis of politicians' speeches on the British miners' strike in 1984-85, Reicher and Hopkins (1996) address how different political party leaders, namely Conservative and Labour parties, construct the strike and categories involved in it as overlapping with their party's political objectives. Both leaders claim to represent the whole nation and claim their political perspectives regarding the strike mirror the nation's norms and values. According to the authors, what these leaders aim to achieve is to mobilize the population in accordance with their parties' political aims. This study, therefore, requires further attention because it illustrates the category constructions and norms in a detailed manner.

In line with the Conservative Party's objectives, Margaret Thatcher desired to mobilize the population against the miner's strike since her party was pursuing neo-conservative ideals that require the impoverishing of the work force. The Labour leader Neil Kinnock, on the other hand, was trying to mobilize the nation against the Thatcher government in line with his party's liberal ideals. The miners' strike was a great challenge ahead since manipulating the public consonant with their parties' political aims carried major importance for the leaders because a strong public support for the strike would have impaired the then-in-power Thatcher government deeply. Researchers expected that both party leaders will define the involved social categories differently and these differences will coincide with how they aim to mobilize the public. According to the authors, what these leaders are expected to share is their claim in being members of the in-group which includes the whole nation and excludes their proponents; and opposing to other party's claims on grounds of the nation's assumed norms (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996).

In accordance with the authors' expectations, Thatcher equates the executives of National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) with terrorist groups and situates both of

them against the democratic norms which the nation is assumed to be holding. She continues by equating democracy with elections, rules out other forms of participation and therefore denounces the NUM executive as undemocratic. Accordingly, the miners' strike is framed as an attack against the values of the British nation not as a protest against the government. Thatcher depicts a picture in which the NUM executive is devoid of the very characteristics of the British nation (i.e. respect for the rule and democracy) therefore is excluded from the nation category. It is worthwhile to note that she includes all labor movement, miners, or even striking miners to the in-group, except for the NUM executives (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996). This is a highly adhered strategy used by leaders in which they define an out-group constituted by people limited in number and who are displaying anti-normative behaviors. Using this method, they aim to mobilize people against this "small" group's demands. Leaders who will be discussed in the current analysis frequently utilize such a strategy.

Throughout her speech, Thatcher talks of a fight between "us" and "them". "Them" clearly refers to the strikers (the NUM executive in particular) yet what "we" implies remain vague creating the rhetorical advantage of equating the nation with the government as fighters of democracy (1996). This is also a frequent argumentation style used by conservative leaders in the current analysis to equate the nation with their party's characteristics.

In her depiction of a major opposition against the government, Thatcher successfully builds a rhetoric in which the miners' strike is portrayed as the negation of the British nation's devotion to democracy – a norm *she* attributed to the nation in the first place. Thatcher assigns norms to the category, compares it to an out-group the content of which was determined by herself and renames the nature of the debate.

Thus, she uses all the information SCT research has been providing over the years to her party's benefit, probably without knowing she has done so.

Kinnock, on the other hand, chooses to contrast Thatcher's personal characteristics with the interests of the nation, particularized in the benefits of coal miners. She is portrayed as oppressive and ignorant of the country, finally as irrational since Kinnock claims there is no rational base for how she reacts to the problems of the nation (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996). Both leaders use this marginalization method. Thatcher defines an out-group composed of only the NUM executives. In a similar sense, Kinnock downsizes the out-group down to the very personality of Margaret Thatcher. In other words, as the authors nicely put, people who oppose the strike are not regarded to be from the upper and middle classes, not from the conservative population; they are not even from the government and the cabinet; it is only Thatcher herself who is against the strike. Contrary to the definition of the out-group, he uses a completely opposite strategy in building the in-group by adding all the layers of the society to his categorization of the people of Britain regardless of their ethnicities, classes, faiths and genders. Therefore attacks against the miners become attacks on the people of the country.

The analysis continues with the liberal leader's speech. Unlike his rival, Kinnock's categories do not involve national categories like "the British" such that the in-group is comprised of "the people" of the country who make the national production while the out-group (materialized in the personality of Margaret Thatcher) is claimed to be exploiting it. The reason why the Conservative Party's leader is marginalized is due to the fact that Kinnock also wants to mobilize the conservative segment of society, who has voted for Thatcher in the first place, against her party's policies. By isolating the opponent leader as ignorant of the

public's needs and having irrational policies he aims to strip Thatcher off her prototypicality claims (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996).

What can be inferred from the rhetorical analyses of these two leaders is how they construct different contextual information and categories in order to depict the same event. If social categories are to be regarded automatic reflections of the social reality, then it is worthwhile to question how it is possible that these two leaders depict completely opposite construals regarding the same in-group. It is evident from the results of the analysis that differences in the content (i.e. the stereotype) and boundary of the categorization is accorded with the political aims of the politicians. Namely, Thatcher wants to mobilize the country against the strike by equating the nation's interest with her party's future aspirations, while Kinnock wants to mobilize the country against Thatcher's governance by portraying an arrogant and ignorant leader who is against the society's interests.

The analysis of British politicians' speeches is an early attempt by Reicher and Hopkins in studying social categories through rhetorical rather than perceptual means. Later research by the same authors revealed a similar picture in how party leaders construct category boundaries, category content and prototypicality claims in ways so as to earn support for their collective projects. In a group of studies Reicher and colleagues examine Scottish politicians' depictions of the Scottish identity and how these depictions are in line with their party politics (Reicher & Hopkins; Reicher, Hopkins, & Condor, 1997a; Reicher, Hopkins, & Condor, 1997b). There are two major political tendencies in Scotland, one defending social democratic ideals and the other pursuing conservative values, and they vary in their nation depictions in accordance with their economy policies. While both parties claim their wholehearted belongings to the Scottish nation, they differ in how they define what it

means to be a Scottish. Not surprisingly, though, these differences between national identity constructions overlap with the party's collective agendas. For instance, Labour party asserts that Scottish people share the norm of collectivity thus support the welfare state; whereas Conservatives depict the national characteristics as anti-authoritarian and anti-bureaucratic thus they oppose state intervention (Reicher et al., 1997b).

Another divergence is observed when Scottish politicians are discussing the issue of segregation from Great Britain. Those who wanted a sovereign parliament described Scots' as being reluctant in expressing their opinions on an issue when the English are around. On the other hand, politicians who aimed the inclusion of the Scotland within the United Kingdom depicted Scots as sovereign people speaking their minds out in any circumstance (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). These descriptions may sound contradictory to someone who thinks they are definitions of the same national identity; however, the conflict resolves itself when the definitions are seen as collective projects aimed for mobilization. These examples all show that while context is crucial in determining the categories, categories are also influential in creating a change in the social reality. Therefore, inducing people into a certain version of the group identity creates an influence, which then makes it possible to change the world in desired ways (Turner, 2005).

A case in point is the rhetoric used by Bulgarian politicians in preventing the deportation of Jews from Bulgaria during the Second World War (Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins, & Levine, 2006). In this study, declarations from various social groups (i.e. writers, lawyers, politicians, journalists, communists, and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church) against the legislation enabling the deportation of Jews are examined in order to analyze the arguments used within the documents. In line with

the previous research, most arguments were crafted so as to include Jews as part of the in-group (“Jews are Bulgarians”) rather than treating them as members of an out-group. By changing the boundaries of the Bulgarian nation, opponents were aiming to instill the notion that Jews were fellow nationals who were facing deportation if not opposed by the rest of the society. Moreover, norms of the nation were reframed as civilized, tolerant and humane so that Bulgarians would feel the need to be sensitive against the deportation if they had defined themselves to be Bulgarian in the first place. Lastly, the legislation was depicted to be threatening for the category’s interests jeopardizing its place in the civilized world.

The study was significant in displaying how social categories could be of use in times of emergency. Although there is no systematic data on whether the Bulgarian public has actually responded to these appeals, it could be assumed that the public opinion was somehow influenced by the opposition because Bulgaria was one of the very few countries who declined Nazi’s deportation request. Even if it is assumed that the public did not respond to these appeals, the widespread presence of category arguments in the documents and the corresponding changes in the way they were presented to the audience marks the significance of category constructions in attempting to change the social reality.

The mentioned study also points to the overriding utilization of national categories in the documents intended to persuade the public. The authors explain the intensity of national arguments within the documents through the relation between categorization and mobilization. That is, the audience to be mobilized and the reason for mobilization determine the *category* that will be used (Reicher et al., 2006). In other words, public leaders utilize national categories in this context because they need the entire population to oppose the deportation legislation either using national

fellowship / solidarity argument or using the compassion or morality argument as the in-group's norms.

The same logic could be applied to any context at hand. An argument is effective as long as the category in rhetoric includes all those people to be mobilized and the norms attributed to the category serves the aims of the identity entrepreneur. Thus, in some cases sub-national categories could be as effective as national categories in enacting large mobilizations. For instance, if public leaders were seeking help specifically from the middle class they could use the category of class for inclusion and attribute relevant norms to the middle class in order to gain the support of the audience. Similarly, if they do not have to get the support of the entire electorate and they may achieve their intended mobilization by triggering sectional identities, they may target to specific ethnicity, class, or gender groups.

In their vigorous endeavor, Reicher and his colleagues show how seemingly fixed social categories are indeed contingent in nature, how they are being manipulated by leaders who aim to achieve certain goals, and how this process becomes a crucial research question for social psychologists (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). They highlight the role of human agency in the process, since the content of the categories are shaped by those who attempt to define them.

When large-scale categories such as national and ethnical identities are of concern, there will be different parties claiming different versions of the category with aims to fulfill different goals. How the in-group is defined in contrast to which out-group will be an issue of interest both for social researchers interested in social categorization processes and for the layperson who is acting by these constructed identities. After all, taking categories for granted will ultimately end up in

strengthening them (Reicher, 2004) and eventually leave people with no choice but to abide with their social categories “characteristics”.

Under the light of this literature, the present study aims to reveal the strategic side of category constructions of political party leaders in Turkey prior to the General Elections in 2011 especially in the Eastern and South Eastern regions of Turkey. Three major parties that have formed a group in the parliament (i.e. AK Parti¹ “Justice and Development Party”, CHP “Republican People’s Party”, and MHP “Nationalist Movement Party”) were selected because they represent a significant portion of the society; thus their attempts in shaping the national category are influential and consequential for the public.

Firstly, the present study deals with how political leaders define the Turkish nation and which norms they attribute to the nation in line with their parties’ collective projects. Secondly, it aims to examine the prototypicality claims of party leaders since claiming representation of a social group is intertwined with how the particular group is constructed in the first place. The last aim of this study is to examine how the Kurdish population, the second largest ethnic group in Turkey, is rhetorically included into the nation definition. Since defining the Turkish nation will incorporate the positioning of Kurdish population, two aims will be examined in an intertwined fashion.

The aim of the research is to define the relationship between the national category construction and parties’ political aims, i.e. collective projects, therefore it

¹ AK Parti (in Turkish, “White Party”) is the abbreviation AK Parti founders uses for their party. The current analysis utilizes it instead of AKP in order to abide by their preference.

is necessary to mention the content of each party's proposals². Although most founding members of AK Parti come from a tradition of conservative and Islam-referenced parties like Welfare Party, they no longer define themselves in such terms. Instead, AK Parti regards itself as "Conservative Democrat" which is a term implicating universal notions like democracy while limiting their scope by traditional values. Therefore, it might be safe to claim they represent right-wing ideals while claiming to abide by modern democratic principles. According to its party program, (<http://www.akparti.org.tr/>) AK Parti claims to respect differences in religion, language, sect, region, ethnicity; a political stance which is regarded to depend on the historical practice of previous generations. The renowned holder of such an approach in governance is the Ottoman Empire which is implicitly favored by these proposals.

Party policy is regarded to depend on democratic principles and basic human rights and freedoms. The will of the nation is held above else, and no institution based on other sources of legitimacy is regarded to be beneficial for the public. It is made explicit that the influence of majority in determining the governance of the country and its potential in impairing the basic human rights of minority groups is strongly disapproved by party politicians. However, the emphasis given to the practice of referendum can be seen as highlighting the implicit preference for the dominance of a majority decision rather than the will of nation.

The policy program intends to portray the party as inheriting the modern liberal values like democracy, pluralism, and respect for minority (religious and ethnic) rights. It promises the process of a new civil constitution which will be based on the principles of democracy and the state of law.

² Party programs have been retrieved from official websites of each political party. These programs are self-representations of parties; therefore does not constitute an objective picture of practices they pursue.

AK Parti program values a governing model in which people's participation to the decision making processes of public policies is prioritized since it allows citizens to control the appropriateness and implementation of these decisions. Accordingly, it promises to include the principles of the European Charter of Local-Self Government into its political agenda which basically requires the strengthening of local governments in managing local policies and services.

The party strongly supports free market economy and it embraces the support of private capital in basic services of the state like education, health and infrastructure. In fact, it frequently uses concepts like quality, efficiency, speed, resource capacity, which are prominent notions of market economies, as crucial criteria for public services. Similarly, it values privatization since it is regarded to ease the state's overwhelming duties; and approves foreign investment as well as national ones.

Foreign policy is based on strengthening bonds with neighboring countries especially in economical spheres and aims to become a role model for the region following the path of its political ancestor, the Ottoman Empire.

Coming from a far-right nationalistic background, MHP pursues a national policy based on the unity of the state and the nation (http://www.mhp.org.tr/mhp_index.php). Its primary aims are defined as protecting the founding principles of the Turkish Republic, sustaining the social agreement between different segments of the society and facilitating national solidarity. It claims to defend national and moral values of the society and cherish the historical and cultural diversity of the country. Another aim is to raise a religious, moral and professionally adequate youth. With their love for the nation and the state, MHP politicians are portrayed as serving their country, engaging in hard work, self-

devotion and self-sacrifice. According to the party program, differences in regions and traditions within the country should be considered and respected as national treasure. It is worthwhile to note the party program does not include attributions to a specific ethnicity or sect.

A peaceful society is to be achieved with the so-called “Turkish communitarianism” which requires the equal allocation of national income, maintaining the moral values, and abandoning attitudes like selfishness and insensitiveness to be replaced by compromise and sacrifice; therefore the strengthening of national solidarity. It does not defy the role of free enterprise in national economy; and rather perceives it as necessary for Turkish brands to succeed in a competitive world arena.

Preventing unemployment and poverty is to be achieved by an economy based on production, not on consumption. The language of education is strictly limited to Turkish. Similarly, policies related to art, sports, family life, women, children, and youth all are discussed related to their importance for the nation.

Defining itself as a social democratic party, CHP claims to oppose all forms of discrimination, and value democratic principles like pluralism, political participation, and respect for human rights (<http://www.chp.org.tr/>). As the founding party of the Republic, it is grounded on the basic principles of the Turkish nation-building process which are republicanism, nationalism, statism, populism, laicism, and revolutionism. Nationalism, populism and revolutionism principles convey different meanings than their universally consensualized contents. According to the party program, nationalism principle asserts that Turkish republic is not based on a single religion, language, race, or ethnicity; it relies on a consensus regarding political consciousness and national goals. It is regarded to enable people from

different belongings unite in one superordinate national identity which is defined by citizenship. The state is portrayed to be impartial to differences in belief and ethnicity. Populism refers to the prominence of national will in determining the political legitimacy. It opposes to a system in which only certain segments of the society are privileged economically and socially. Revolutionism implicates the transitional practice from the old regime to the modern nation-state and the ensuing character of the party in following modern values while aiming to implement the corresponding changes into the state and the society.

New CHP conceptualization, initiated by Kılıçdaroğlu, includes certain differences from previous periods. For instance, policies regarding different ethnic identities are given a separate section in the party program. Ethnic identity is named as an honorable characteristic of the individual and respected accordingly. Unless they violate the unity of the nation state, expressions of cultural differences, the demand for cultural rights and the use of Kurdish language are acknowledged as a part of CHP's commitment to universal democratic values like equality and freedom. It claims to pursue a policy of integration rather than assimilation. Laicism policy involves changes in the engagement of governments in religious affairs which has been known to disadvantage all belief systems other than Sunni Islam. Problems of religious minorities like Alevi are taken into consideration in this regard.

It should be stressed that parties' nation constructions are expected to be shaped by these different political stances because they represent parties' collective projects. Still, particular attention will be given to cases where parties diverge from their own rhetoric in accordance with the change in the characteristics of the audience.

The choice of general elections as the target context may seem to limit politicians' aims to earning votes. However, another aim of the party leaders in this election will be to include the Kurdish population within the nation definition because how Kurds are positioned in Turkey has recently started to be redefined with respect to political reforms aiming to amend the "Kurdish issue". This contestation status demands identity entrepreneurs to apply corresponding changes to their nation rhetoric.

1.3 The Case of Kurds in Turkey

Nation category in Turkey suffers certain uncertainties like any other nation definition in the world (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). It seems difficult to list the attributes that makes someone a Turk, both in theory and practice. Is it religion (there are non-Muslim Turkish citizens), ethnicity (there are various ethnicities residing in Turkey), the language (apart from Turkish, the official language, there are various languages at use) or is it the shared history (there are multiple history constructions possessed by different segments of the society) which creates a nation out of a group of people who happen to live on the same land? One needs to look at the historical context in which a certain version of the nation was preferred over others and the factors favoring that particular rhetoric. The case of Kurdish identity accompanies the changes in the Turkish nation definition rendering it a fruitful ground for the current analysis to inquire the contents of the nation.

The place of Kurds within the definitions of Turkishness has gone through several transformations from the period they were under the rule of the Ottoman Empire to the current day. Defining Kurds' position in Turkishness is not an easy endeavor since Turkishness itself has remained an ambiguous term connoting ethnical, national, territorial-political and cultural characteristics depending on the

historical context (Yeğen, 2009). Just as the aims of this analysis involve both defining the boundaries of the Turkish nation and the rhetorical inclusion of Kurdish population, the below historical account will also explicate these two processes in an intertwined fashion. After all, it is hard to describe how Turkishness is configured without mentioning the position of Kurds within this definition.

Before the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, people under the rule of the Ottoman Empire were denoted their status based on their religious identities such that the term *millet* (the nation, in Turkish) referred to the Muslim community and the rest was regarded to be non-Muslim subjects. Ethnic identity was not a significant characteristic in determining one's place within other subjects of the Empire because until the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 religious identity had been the most important marker of the Ottoman administrative system. In fact, some researchers regard the role of Islam as pivotal in delaying the occurrence of an ethnic segregation within the Ottoman Empire since it constituted a superordinate category, at least for Muslim subjects of the Empire (Yeğen, 1999).

Kurds lived in a tribal order and enjoyed relatively autonomous governance until the 19th century when the Ottoman Empire began to employ centralization policies that undermined the role of tribe leaders in managing the control over their territory (Yeğen, 1999). Accordingly, tribal structures started to mobilize the Muslim Kurdish population against modernization practices in the administrative sphere. Transforming from a non-western, de-central, a-national and non-secular social organization to its complete opposite, the state discourse was challenged by ethno-religious identity-based movements against modernization, secularism, and centralization (Yavuz, 2001; Yeğen, 1999). There were also insurgences of the

ethnically diverse subjects of the Empire residing in Europe sweeping away the remainders of this multi-ethnic and multi-cultural administrative system.

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the young Republic faced the challenge of governing a country shrunk into a small land that is populated by different ethnicities and religious belongings. The country was still under the threat of foreign invasion and the best way to prevent such a threat was to unite the people of the country around an inclusive identity. According to Poulton (1997), when the republic was established, demographics revealed the dominance of a Muslim population which led Atatürk, the leader of the Independence War and founding father of the Turkish Republic, to mobilize the country based on this religious identity bypassing ethno-linguistic differences. Surrounded by European Armies, people defended the land in the name of Jihad and the Caliphate (Poulton, 1997). After the abolition of the Caliphate, religion decreased in its formal strength as a unifying factor, but the Turkish nation continued to be framed as a religio-territorial entity (Yavuz, 2001).

The Republic of Turkey adopted a secular regime, yet religion has always been a factor in determining the status of its citizens within the nation (Cagaptay, 2006; Yavuz, 2001). Although the nation is officially defined in terms of citizenship, different ethnic and religious groups other than Muslim Turks have experienced differential practices to differing degrees (Cagaptay, 2006; Kirişçi, 2000; Oran, 1996; Parla & Davison, 2004; Soner, 2005; Yeğen, 2004). In particular, non-Muslim communities have been subjected to discriminatory practices throughout the Republic period like detention from public offices, wealth taxes specifically designed for the non-Muslim population and confiscation of the estates possessed by foundations of the non-Muslim (Oran, 2004). A campaign called “Citizen, Speak

Turkish!” was initiated by government and media, including a fine for speaking minority languages (Cagaptay, 2004; Oran, 2000).

However, these practices were erased off from the official narratives with the claim that Turkishness does not underline any particular characteristics and it only concerns the name of the nation. Accordingly, many people in Turkey believe that Turkishness is based on citizenship and does not point to any other characteristics like ethnicity or religion (Cingöz-Ulu, 2008; Özkırımlı, 2006). However, there has always been a gap between “Turkishness as citizenship” and “Turkishness as such” (i.e. Turkishness in its own right) even in constitutional texts (Yeğen, 2009, p. 597). The oscillation between a civic and an ethno-cultural understanding of Turkishness is reflected in the rather vague status of non-Muslim and ethnically diverse populations of Turkey in national definitions. Although the founding constitution (i.e. the Constitution of 1924) of the Republic asserts all people living in Turkey are called Turkish regardless of religion and race, it underlies that they are only so “in terms of citizenship” (Yeğen, 2004). It is interesting to note that the addition of this expression during the sessions of the Parliament was due to politicians’ insistence that there was a difference between subjection (citizenship) and ethnicity and this distinction should be made clear by including the citizenship provision in the article. The emphasis is almost parallel to Orwell’s famous phrase from *Animal Farm* (1946): All people are Turkish, but some people are more Turkish than others.

Although the 1961 Constitution gave a more political and finer redefinition of the Turkish citizenship, the ethnical tone attached to the construct have been determining the political and social landscape of the last ninety years (Yeğen, 2004). As “prospective Turks” (Yeğen, 2009), Kurds, unlike the non-Muslim population, were expected to blend in with the official definition of the nation. Those people who

did not accept such an invitation revolted against the state. During its first two decades, there were several uprisings against the policies of the new republic and its aims in centralizing the power and homogenizing the nation. During the 1920s and 1930s Kurds have attempted two large-scale rebellions against the state. The Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925 and Dersim rebellion in 1937 were triggered by concerns comprised of ethnic and religious identifications (Hirschler, 2001). These and several other revolts were forcefully repressed and certain measures were taken in order to facilitate the process of assimilation. To mention a few, the state enforcement of compulsory settlement and displacement policies continued until the 1940's, a language ban was issued and a significant number of boarding schools were built in the region where education was expected to transform the young generation of Kurdish origins (Cagaptay, 2006; Barkey & Fuller, 1998; Kirişçi, 2000; McDowall, 2000; Yeğen, 2004).

During the 1960s, politicization of the Kurdish identity began to materialize. Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths (DDKO) and numerous political organizations like Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey (clandestine Kurdish nationalist party "TKDP") became visible in the political sphere due to the relatively democratic atmosphere of the 1960's constitutional change (Bozarslan, 1992; Marcus, 2007; Yavuz, 2001). These movements radicalized throughout the 1970s, which culminated in the monopolizing power of Kurdistan Worker's Party (Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan – PKK) following the 1980 military coup. In August 15, 1984 the Şemdinli and Erüh attacks took place making it formal that PKK had declared a war against the Turkish army (Marcus, 2007).

During the 90's, the country witnessed countless human rights violations, including the killings of journalists, politicians, activists of human rights

organizations, and ordinary citizens suspected of helping PKK without any formal interrogations or trial. Forced displacements were issued due to evacuations of many villages in the region mostly by the Turkish Armed Forces, and sometimes by PKK militants (Ayata & Yüksek, 2005; Kirişçi, 1998). According to the official records 378,335 people were displaced during the 1990s throughout the “low density conflict” between the Turkish Army and PKK (cited in Ayata & Yüksek, 2005)³.

In 1999, Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of PKK, was captured. For the last thirteen years, Öcalan has been in İmralı Island in semi-isolation being the only prisoner in the penitentiary. Although he was imprisoned for life, he managed to stay in charge of PKK and ordered his militants to withdraw from Turkey’s soil and give up the armed struggle. He changed the course of PKK’s aims from an autonomous, federative and/or independent state to negotiations with the Turkish government in pursuit of a “democratic Turkey” in which the Kurdish identity is formally acknowledged at a constitutional level (Marcus, 2007).

In 2002, the ban on Kurdish-language broadcasting was repealed and private Kurdish lessons were allowed for people over the age of 18 as part of a series of requirements European Union (EU) entailed for Turkey’s accession process. However, in 2004 Öcalan called an end to ceasefire since he claimed the steps taken were not adequate in handling the Kurdish issue.

Deriving from the brief historical depiction above it is safe to say that at least a certain segment of the Kurdish population in Turkey has long doubted its status as a proper national. Politicians, on the other hand, handled the issue either by totally ignoring or reframing it. Accordingly, Yeğen claims that the Turkish state has always

³ See “Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Boşaltılan Yerleşim Birimleri Nedeniyle Göç Eden Yurttaşlarımızın Sorunlarının Araştırılarak Alınması Gereken Tedbirlerin Tespit Edilmesi Amacıyla Kurulan Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu Raporu,” T.B.M.M. Tutanak Dergisi 53 (Dönem 20), June 2, 1998, available from <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanak/donem20/yil2/bas/b108m.htm>

denied the “Kurdishness of the Kurdish issue” and framed it as an issue of “political reaction, tribal resistance, or regional backwardness but never as an ethno-political question” (Yeğen, 1999, p. 555). He claims that the specific aim in this rhetoric has been to portray the opposition against the state as an opposition to the civilization of the country. The content of the Kurdish identity was framed as belonging to the pre-modern, possessing traditional and religious characteristics therefore Kurds needed to repress their identities in order to appear as proper and modern members of the Turkish nation (Yeğen, 1999). It is interesting to stress the relation between the category boundary and category content in this analysis. Namely, it assumes that the state has attributed norms and values to the nation; thereby setting the criteria for being included in the nation definition.

However, as outlined above, the content of Turkishness has not been clear-cut to close the debates on its inclusiveness; it has changed according to needs of the historical context and to the interventions of political actors. At least certain segments of the Kurdish population had aspirations revolving around issues of democratic and cultural rights, citizenship and the national definition throughout the Republican era. Although the debated nature of the national category led to a bitter history in terms of its humane costs, it created a fruitful ground for the study of categorization processes of identity.

1.4 The Context Prior to 2011 General Elections

Starting from 2007, the political life in Turkey has experienced important defining moments some of which influenced how the Kurdish issue is approached by the state. The current analysis is based on leaders’ campaign speeches; hence a brief outline of these milestones is given below so that the analysis is rendered meaningful

to the readers. After all, political leaders frequently refer to previous events during their speeches so as to strengthen their party propaganda.

In 2007, Justice and Development Party (AK Parti), then the ruling party in the parliament, declared their candidate for the presidency as Abdullah Gül who had been an MP from the same party. There was an extensive media coverage discussing the probability of an authoritarian regime if Gül were to become the president since executive and legislative powers would now be united at the hands of AK Parti, long known for its conservative concerns. This created a sense of threat within the secular segments of the society. They believed that the underlying principles of the Republic, such as secularism and democracy, were at stake because AK Parti was believed to hold hidden agendas, such as an Islamic Republic like Iran, in accordance with its Islamic background. In fact, there were a series of rallies to protest against AK Parti's political trajectory across the country and these received wide participation from secular and nationalist segments of the society⁴.

The Turkish Armed Forces made an announcement on April 27, 2007 framing the decision as a probable threat to the secularism in country⁵. AK Parti officials did not abide the obvious intimidation and declared that the General Staff of The Republic of Turkey could not possibly conflict with the Turkish government on a political issue since the Turkish Army was a subsidiary institution that took orders from the government⁶.

⁴ According to a report on Reuters more than 300,000 people attended the April 14th rally alone.

⁵ The announcement was perceived as a memorandum by the public; in fact it is frequently referred as the "e-memorandum" because the announcement was made in the General Staff's website. The announcement was retracted from the website in 2011.

⁶ Available from <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/406662.asp>

In the following elections, 2007 General Elections, AK Parti returned to power with the support of 47 % of the entire electorate, regarded by many commentators as the affirmation of their stance in the implicit power struggle between the party and the military. Abdullah Gül being elected as the President, AK Parti earned an important victory against the Kemalist oppositional front which consisted of members of the secularist Republican People's Party (CHP) and ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP) along with the high ranking officers of the army, the bureaucracy and the judiciary (Yeğen, 2009). The opposition "Kemalist" is named after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and is regarded to foster secularism, Turkish nationalism, state regulation in the economy and the strong role of the military as the defender of the Republic (Parla, & Davison, 2004).

Another pivotal event of the period was the Ergenekon Case which charged many retired army and security officials, political party members, journalists, academicians and activists with being members of a so-called clandestine terrorist organization responsible for illegal activities like attempts to destabilize the political sphere, control or overthrow governments and, if necessary, commit murders for achieving their goals (Milliyet, 2009, August 6). Groups sympathetic to the government's take on the issue framed the trial as a judicial struggle against clandestine groups in the state who undermine the will of nation and justify their illegitimate means for the intended outcome that is the protection the founding principles of the Turkish Republic. There were also opinions contrary to this portrayal framing the case as a tool to create a fear climate in the country. According to this view, the trial grew into an amorphous judicial process in which holding counterviews to those of the government became an adequate reason for being a suspect. CHP and MHP members mostly held the latter view.

In 2009, there were several steps implying a change in the way the Kurdish issue had been approached by the state. TRT, the state-funded broadcasting agency, started the broadcast of a 24-hour Kurdish language channel. Moreover, the Higher Education Board (YÖK) was appointed to open departments of Kurdish language and literature in universities. In July 2009, AK Parti governance announced that there would be a new period ahead, the so-called “Democratic opening” initiative, in which certain measures would be taken in order to tackle the Kurdish question (e.g. returning the Kurdish names of certain locations in the region). However, towards the end of the year the name of the initiative was changed into “National Unity and Fraternity Project” paralleling the state’s former doctrine that perceived the Kurdish issue as a threat to the unity of the nation (McDowall, 2000; Yeğen, 1999). The initiative/project neither halted nor continued in the following period.

Another important trial is known as “KCK ‘Kurdistan Communities Union’ Case”. Numerous mayors of the East and Southeast regions, Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)⁷ members, unionists and students were charged with being members of PKK’s “urban division”. Although the arrestees were not found to utilize violent means, nor possess weaponry, they were accused of being members of PKK since they were claimed to be pursuing its will.

At the end of the year 2010, Democratic Society Congress, composed of delegates from political parties (including BDP), unions, NGOs and religious organizations, declared “Democratic Autonomy”. It was a reform proposal to be employed in the administrative system suggesting stronger local governances

⁷ A pro-Kurdish political party that possesses leftist ideals in the party program. It is the last of a long list of pro-Kurdish political parties which were all shut down by the Constitutional Court due to alleged charges of becoming a "focal point of activities against the indivisible unity of the state, the country and the nation".

autonomous from the central government. It presupposed a more direct democratic participation on behalf of the inhabitants of the region, and therefore was strongly condemned by politicians and opinion leaders for inheriting separatist intentions. At about the same time, BDP announced a proposal called “Multi-language Services” planning to install the use of Kurdish in both political and administrative sphere.

With a noteworthy change at the leadership level⁸, CHP started to follow a more social-democratic tone in its rhetoric compared to the previous nationalist emphasis (Keyman, 2010); while MHP increased its nationalist, militarist and statist tone as opposed to AK Parti’s neoliberal policies and approach on the Kurdish issue (Radikal, 2009, July 26).

BDP, on the other hand, did not enter the elections as a distinct party group although it held a significant amount of supporters in the eastern regions and in big cities of the country where Kurdish migration is widespread. The reason behind this reluctance is the electoral law in Turkey, which requires at least 10 % or earned votes (a challenging amount) to form groups in the parliament, the highest threshold in European countries. An often-adhered strategy to move around this law is through nominating independent candidates. Therefore, BDP created a platform called “Labour, Democracy and Freedom Block” incorporating candidates from leftist, Islamic and liberal fronts.

Accordingly, the context prior to the 2011 General Elections was highly charged since the Kurdish issue became hard to avoid with the ensuing developments and the country grew more factional than the previous periods of AK Parti governance that started in 2002. It was just prior to a period where the public was to

⁸ The leader of CHP before Kılıçdaroğlu, Deniz Baykal, held a strong Turkish nationalist discourse that also included a strong secularist, state-interventionist, and militarist elements.

discuss who is an eligible fellow national, because of the proposed new civil constitution process ahead of Turkey in 2012.

All these political developments required parties to appeal to the Kurdish population and incorporate inclusive arguments in their rhetoric in accordance with their collective projects. Therefore, the choice of regional meetings follows the logic that the parties would intensify their inclusion arguments regarding the Kurdish population in these particular provinces.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1 Rationale

The present study investigates the Turkish national identity construction and the specific ways of inclusion of Kurds in this definition by analyzing the arguments that are used to delimit the boundaries of the nation and the norms attached to the national category in the campaign speeches of the three major political parties (i.e. AK Parti, CHP and MHP⁹) during the 2011 General Elections in the East and Southeast Regions. These arguments are also used to imply or directly assert the politicians' claims of prototypicality for the nation. This prototypicality was achieved by assigning norms for the nation and politicians.

The choice of general elections is a suitable context for several reasons. Firstly, a general election is a sufficiently fruitful context to examine national identity construals and prototypicality claims because in electoral contexts politicians frequently use macro categories (i.e. national) for mobilization (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) and they claim representativeness. Secondly, campaign speeches in various

⁹ Independents' meeting speeches in the eastern regions were not available through formal channels like news agencies and TV archives. Moreover, the ones which were available via Internet were ill-recorded such that certain parts of the speeches were absent. These partial videos were not regarded as proper data since they would have impaired the analysis by presenting only a sectional structure of Independents' rhetoric.

cities are suitable contexts in revealing the strategic side of politicians' claims because their nation rhetoric changes according to the characteristics of the audience to be mobilized. For instance, in a city mostly populated by non-Muslim inhabitants, a party leader may prefer not to stress Islam as a unifying characteristic in defining the nation while it may be a frequent theme in his other speeches. Lastly, it would be both impractical and theoretically meaningless to analyze all utterances of the political leaders regarding the nation thus the study necessitated specification of time and space.

In particular, 2011 General Elections was chosen as the study's research context because politicians as well as opinion leaders had frequently stressed its significance prior to and during the elections. Erdoğan, himself, included the making of a new constitution to his campaign pledges. The role attributed to this election was that it was going to determine the politicians who would be making the new civil constitution of Turkey. The ex-ante constitution may involve changes in the first three articles of the current constitution that describe the characteristics of the Republic of Turkey. The nation definition was to be publicly debated throughout this process. In short, the 2011 General Elections was a period where the national identity politics dominated parties' discourses.

The use of the campaign speeches from the eastern cities follows from the aim of the study, i.e. inquiring the rhetorical inclusion of the Kurdish population into the Turkish nation definition. Leaders' speeches in eastern cities, which are mostly populated by people of Kurdish origin, are expected to provide richer data and finer argumentation structure because category arguments, national in this case, are strategically tuned to appeal to their audience's expectations. Leaders giving

speeches in the eastern regions are expected to engage in national category arguments more often and more directly compared to the rest of the country.

2.2 Method of Analysis: SAGA

Structural Analysis of Group Arguments technique (SAGA, Reicher & Sani, 1998; see Sani & Reicher, 2000 for an illustration) was utilized to seek for regular patterns in the arguments about a group's identity. In particular, it depicts the structural relations between group boundaries and group content in terms of the intended outcomes (Reicher et al., 2006). The method is qualitative in essence though it also depicts the density and the variability of arguments throughout the texts. SAGA is not a static method in the sense that particular procedures are applied in a certain order. The underlying mentality to the method is the notion that social categories are debated, therefore constructed and then acted on in ways that eventually alter the world. Moreover, it presupposes certain strategic concerns in the way the category arguments are uttered and thereby aims to reveal those meanings in a systematic fashion.

The flexibility of the method is useful in analyzing arguments about group identity since it enables the researcher to customize the procedures according to the issue under examination. Therefore, it differs from other widely-used methods in psychology pursuing similar interests (i.e. quantifying a qualitative data) like content analysis (see Holsti, 1969; Weber, 1990) in detailing what is contextual therefore insightful about the material. Another aspect of SAGA is its emphasis on the structural organization of the texts, which seems to be absent in other approaches. In other words, it seeks commonalities out of a range of seemingly diverse social category arguments within rhetoric.

Any document addressed to the public can be data for SAGA technique including interviews, public meetings, booklets and newspaper articles. Selection of the material depends on the principle that the text should involve category arguments related to the issue at hand. Category arguments refer to social identities like ethnic, national, professional and universal.

The technique is appropriate for the present study since party leaders strategically construct the nation and its norms in accordance with their collective projects, i.e. there is a structure in their rhetoric. Therefore, an analysis method that ignores the structured nature of these arguments would not be able to reveal the strategic side of different national identity constructions.

2.3 Procedure of Analysis

AK Parti's documents (17 meeting speeches) were derived from the party's official web site including both the videos and their transcriptions. MHP's videos (5 meeting speeches¹⁰) were retrieved from the web site called "Alptürk TV" which is the official video database of the party. Videos of CHP (14 meeting speeches) was scattered throughout the internet, they were not directly available in the official website. Therefore, transcribed versions of the meeting speeches available in the official website were preferred. All videos were transcribed by a group of university students who volunteered to help the researcher.

In the first stage of the analysis all visual materials, which include speeches held in the eastern cities of Turkey were transcribed¹¹, then the written material was searched for category arguments related to (a) national inclusion, (b) norm attribution

¹⁰ Although MHP leader Bahçeli visited 6 cities in the eastern region of Turkey, one meeting - Malatya - was not included in the analysis since it was ill-recorded.

¹¹ There are different styles in transcription depending on the study's aims. The current study did not necessitate a detailed approach; therefore extracts in the analysis are literal translations of leaders' speeches.

and (c) prototypicality claims that were aimed at construing the “us”. In other words, extracts were derived from speeches in line with the role they play in the national category construction. Any piece of sentence or paragraph that included an argument with respect to these 3 categories was included as an excerpt.

The second stage involved the description and outlining of different category arguments (national, other and universal) which eventually constituted a coherent picture in accordance with the predictions of previous research (Reicher & Hopkins, 2004).

In the third stage of the analysis, findings were summarized as to whether depicted category arguments are present or absent in a sub-sample of the documents. This whole process requires the reader to possess an interpretative look; therefore the analysis involves extracts from the leaders’ speeches (full transcripts are available from the author).

Among all the available speeches for each political party leader, every argument that explicitly or implicitly addressed the boundaries and the content of the nation were included as data (i.e. the excerpts). The unit of argumentation was varied such that it could be a sentence or a paragraph as long as it carried a sense of unity within itself. After arriving at a category scheme out of the data, arguments were read again to determine the themes under the categories. Themes were summarized versions of different arguments aimed by the leader to refer to the same idea. The researcher subtracted extracts from the texts when they were regarded to be relevant for the themes listed under categories (i.e. national inclusion and norms). There were 181 extracts derived from speeches but only 59 are used in the analysis because they are selected as the exemplars in terms of relaying the meaning of themes.

A second coder was involved in the second stage of the analysis. She is a university student studying architecture in Turkey and is culturally familiar with the issues involved in the study. She was provided with the arguments listed in Table 1 (arrived at the end of the analysis) and fully debriefed about their contents. The appropriateness of arguments and their allocation to relevant themes in a random subsample of the data (i.e. 5 meetings for each leader) were checked (recoded by the second coder). Four instances of conflicting categorizations occurred all of which were solved through discussion. The material was read again by the researcher in order to find similar cases of disagreement.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Presentation of the arguments is composed of two parts, with respect to the level of the analysis. The first part includes all category arguments that were used in the documents by party leaders in question. They are presented so as to illustrate how category inclusion (i.e. definitions of national identity) and category norms (i.e. norms attributed to Turkish nation at large and/or Kurdish population in particular) are established. The second part of the analysis gives a summary of the arguments and reports their presence or absence in a sub-sample of the data in order to increase reliability. Two levels are presented separately for each party in order to give a more refined picture.

3.1 Presentation of the Arguments

3.1.1 AK Parti's Category Inclusion

Identity entrepreneurs' ultimate aim is to rhetorically include the maximum audience into the in-group to which they belong. Accordingly, AK Parti leader Erdoğan begins his speeches by including the whole population, i.e. "seventy seven million", into his nation definition regardless of any differences. Still, he frequently

attributes boundaries for this membership expressed either in an implicit or explicit form.

Extract 1 (Bingöl): “We love the created including all Turkish, Zaza, Kurdish, Arab, Laz, Circassian, Georgian, Abkhasian, and Romany due to the Creator. It’s that simple. I love Zaza and Kurdish people as much as I love Turkish people. Why? Because this is what my belief requires me, that’s the case. Everything is fake other than this.”

Extract 2 (Ağrı): “After the flood, we were all spread to the world from the Noah’s Ark which is on that Mount Ararat. We are all the sons of Adam and Noah. Although our languages differ, we have the same prayers. Our qibla, versicles, azan, and beliefs are the same; our country, our flag, and our land are the same. We are brothers since eternity. We will stay brothers forever if Allah allows.”

Extract 3 (Şırnak): “From 1940s to the year 2002¹², Turkey carried out a policy that denied, refused and assimilated my Kurdish fellows. Kurdish identity, culture, and language had been banned, ignored and denied.”

Extract 4 (Ağrı): “From now on, The Kurdish problem in this country has been over. There is now the problem of my Kurdish fellows but not the Kurdish problem. That’s the case.”

Extract 5 (Adıyaman): “You see what they said, and now what they say is that the religion of Kurdish people is Zoroastrianism. They are so off-track that they dare to blame my Kurdish fellows for such a suspicion. The one in İmralı [Öcalan] says something while their mentor says something else. What do they say after this? The Kurdish people are forced with swords to be Muslim.”

¹² In other words, until AK Parti started to rule the country.

These extracts are selected because they contain the main arguments of category inclusion by which the AK Parti leader constructs the Turkish nation, i.e. a de-ethnicized nation belonging to the same religion and resilient to differences of mother tongue. The use of “we” in all extracts implies people who constitute the nation even when he does not explicitly refer to a “Turkish nation”. The use such metonyms is a manifestation of how people view the world by looking through the glasses of their nationality. Billig (1995) asserts that people mostly use national frame in daily life when living out the most mundane activities of their lives like talking about the weather, listening to the news or using idioms. For instance, when they complain about the sultriness of August, it is always *the* August in their country of which they are bothered. In a similar vein, one need not use the word “Turkish nation” to refer to it; we may infer it from words like “we” or “our” in this context. In fact, the more the audience internalizes a social category as “we”, i.e. takes it for granted, the less it is needed to mention its formal name (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Therefore, while all of the extracts presume a national framework they may differ in their level of explicitness. As Erdoğan directly refers to Turkey in Extract 2, he more often prefers to use terms such as ‘fraternity’ and ‘children of Noah’ to imply the nation.

It is worthwhile to note that he actively constructs a national identity based on religious arguments while speaking about the nation. In Extract 1, the nation is defined on a supra-ethnic basis since his faith (i.e. Islam) preaches so. Erdoğan accepts these ethnically diverse people as fellow nationals because Muslims are not segregated on the grounds of ethnicity. Every individual is cherished because of his creator, regardless of his ethnicity, race, color, gender etc. Although, Erdoğan seems to specifically emphasize his party’s stance in this quote, these utterances should be

seen as his characterization of the nation because as will be clear throughout the analysis, he consistently stresses that AK Parti originates from the nation and carries all its characteristics. A fairly appropriate question may arise at this point as to the nature of the category which has been triggered in this extract: Is it a religious identity (i.e. ummah) or a national one? The question becomes even more substantial by Extract 2, because now the “we” refers to the children of Adam and Noah¹³. The category in question has a common kiblah, versicle of Quran, azan and faith – clearly a Muslim category. However, the category also possesses a common flag, common faith and a land, which are the typical attributes of a nation (Anderson, 1991). Therefore, we reach to the conclusion that Erdoğan talks about a nation category, yet what he aims to portray is a nation bonded with Islamic ties. As a matter of fact, he explicitly mentions religion as the “cement” of the national unity in one of his campaign speeches. Moreover, when he lists all ethnicities (i.e. Turk, Kurd, Zaza, Laz, Arab) that are part of the nation, he does not mention the non-Muslim, those who do not belong to any religious groups or people who have alternative religious rituals and beliefs within the Islamic faith (the sects other than Sunnis). Therefore, it can be concluded that Erdoğan’s Turkish nation construction attributes Islam a pivotal role in the making of Turkish nation.

The other significant thing about Erdoğan’s nation definition is that he does not cite language as a commonality which has been regarded as one of the core characteristics of the Turkish nation since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1920. Although the official language remains to be Turkish in his discourse, Erdoğan does not exclude ethnicities having different mother tongues from his nation

¹³ The two are fairly significant religious figures in Islam. The first is believed to give life to all humanity and the latter is believed to maintain human existence following a massive flood in religious texts.

definition. Omitting language from the common attributes manifests itself more explicitly in the following quotation:

Extract 6 (Ağrı): “Dear fellows you wanted to have private courses in your own language. Who have started these courses in this country? Dear fellows, you wanted Kurdish broadcasting in TRT. Who have launched TRT Şeş as a full-day broadcasting? Dear brothers, you wanted to propagandize in Kurdish. Who have allowed that?”

Using mother tongue (he implies Kurdish) in social and political life is not considered a standard for excluding people from the nation. On the contrary, as can be seen in Extract 3, together with Kurdish culture and Kurdish identity, banning the use of Kurdish language is regarded to be an assimilationist policy which has come to a halt with AK Parti coming into power. By this, Erdoğan explicitly differentiates himself from previous governors and portray a leader emphatic with Kurds, if not someone among them. Being against politics of denial clearly implies the acknowledgment of a language other than Turkish in social and political life. Here, it should be remembered that the construction of Turkish nation and the inclusion of Kurds into this definition is highly intertwined, since a national definition is applied in order to describe who will be a part of the in-group and who will be regarded as the out-group. In other words, although all leaders try to construct the definition of Turkish identity according to their projects, a subtle inference they try to make will always be the rhetorical inclusion of Kurdish people into the Turkish nation, especially in public speeches made in eastern regions of the country. The strategy Erdoğan seems to employ in this regard is embracing Kurdish language which is frequently inferred as the cultural back bone of Kurdish culture. Consequently, the problem of defining Turkish nation without stressing racial attributes reaches a

solution. In Extract 4, Erdoğan explicitly declares the consequence by claiming to have terminated the “Kurdish problem” in the country and he replaces the “Kurdish problem” with “the problem of my Kurdish brothers”. This term clearly implies the thorough inclusion of Kurds into the nation since it frames the problem on individual not on collective grounds (i.e. problems of Kurds as an ethnic minority).

People are included as a part of the in-group as long as they name the land, the flag, and the faith as their own (as in Extract 2). Speaking a language other than Turkish, on the other hand, does not lessen one’s national status. In fact, what seems to matter in terms of national identity is one’s religion. Like all leaders, or identity entrepreneurs, Erdoğan does not treat the religion of nationals as something to be debated. He readily applies this very basic knowledge shared by many social researchers (Billig, 1995; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) that if you treat a category definition as a given rather than suggesting its existence, you make it seem more natural to the audience. We see how this strategy is being perpetuated in Extract 5. Erdoğan ascribes some statements to Öcalan in which Öcalan declares that Kurds were forcefully converted to Islam from Zoroastrianism, supposedly Kurds’ authentic religion. He despises those who approve such a view since “it brings Kurds under suspicion”. Clearly, even the claim of possessing a different faith other than Islam is enough to put someone under the suspicion of not belonging to Kurdish identity, therefore the nation. According to him Kurds are Muslims without any exception and those who claim otherwise and those who do not embrace being a Muslim are not considered proper nationals since religion is the link that binds all ethnicities together as a nation. Without the common faith, you lose the connection to the people of this country. Moreover, if you do not share the common faith you are marginalized according to Erdoğan’s imagination of who Kurds are. These utterances

are aimed to discredit another group who also claims to represent Kurdish population: Labor, Democracy and Freedom Block¹⁴. If members of a political organization are portrayed to deny the attributed characteristics of the in-group, it means those politicians are intended to be portrayed as inappropriate representatives of the in-group. Therefore, AK Parti is expected to intensify in its argument that Kurds are Muslims and Independents, as a group denying Kurds' religious belonging, are therefore suspected of representing them altogether.

Extract 7 (Ağrı): “What if somebody recites our azan in Kurdish? What happens if they do so? It means segregation. They are segregationist. We have the same Friday prayer; however, the ones who perform a separate prayer at the back while the prayer is being performed are the ones who try to divide the country¹⁵. These people were not here until today, where were they? BDP is segregationist and separatist. It has never been against these people [who indulge in segregationist activities]”

Here we see a clear depiction of who is involved in the nation: Only those who internalize azan as their own and Friday as the prayer day, namely Sunni Muslims, are included in the category “we”. People who try to practice these religious rituals in alternative ways are regarded to have hidden political agendas regarding the country. Politicians from BDP, Erdoğan uses the party's name in order to refer to Independents, are considered to be segregationists since they seem to have initiated these acts that are out of the terrains of Sunni Islam. Needless to say,

¹⁴ They will be referred as “Independents” throughout the text.

¹⁵ ‘Civil’ Friday prayers are part of a civil disobedience campaign initiated by BDP. It aims to protest state's acclaimed manipulation of religion for purposes of controlling the society, Kurds in particular. It is portrayed as illegitimate by Erdoğan in these extracts since crowds rejected the state-appointed imam as head of the prayer.

politicians who do not share the public's assumed faith and religious practices are considered to be in no position to represent them.

Being Sunni Muslim is the main criterion for the nation in Erdoğan's speech. At first, it may perhaps seem too assertive to claim that Erdoğan tailors a Sunni Islamic faith to the nation definition; but it is possible to see the traces of Alevis, a heterodox interpretation of Islam, being regarded as "less" Muslim:

Extract 8 (Şanlıurfa): "There is also Main Opposition party of them [the opposition]. Their situation is more miserable. I am sure you have heard how unrespectfully he acted in Siirt. What did he say there? He said that the God of status quo is in Ankara. Dear Kılıçdaroğlu, above all, you should know that Allah is excluded from having a space. Be polite! In any case, my people will make you polite and have you become polite on June 12 [the Election Day]. Do not worry! There is not such an understanding even in Alevi culture."

The use of "even" in this statement implies the presence of a Sunni normativity in Erdoğan's construction of Islam, a powerful determinant of being a Turkish national. In fact, in one of his meeting speeches, he drew attention to the Alevi origins of Kılıçdaroğlu implying a decrease in his prototypicality claims within the Sunni population. In a similar vein, religious minorities (i.e. Christianity, Judaism) and diverse practices of Islam other than Sunnism (i.e. Alevi, Nusayri) are seldom mentioned in his national inclusion arguments, particularly in the eastern part of the country on which this analysis is based. Out of seventeen Eastern cities, only three (i.e. Adıyaman, Batman, Şanlıurfa) has witnessed the inclusion of Alevis into this list aiming to portray the nation, and in only one city (i.e. Mardin) Christian and Jewish minorities are mentioned as part of the nation. Although, the claim that Erdoğan excludes those belonging to other belief systems other than Sunni Islam is

too assertive, it would not be illogical to assert his national inclusion arguments are primarily based on such interpretation of Islam.

The Mardin meeting, on the other hand, is a great opportunity to observe how identity entrepreneurs can strategically shape their rhetoric to address the audience. Mardin is a city harboring people from various religious beliefs; hence Erdoğan makes a strategic shift there to include these minorities into the nation with the emphasis that they are the *citizens* of this country, i.e. a neutral form of national belonging:

Extract 9 (Mardin): “We did not mind whether they are Yezidi, Assyrian, Chaldean, Protestant, Orthodox or Catholic. We did see the problems of anyone in this country and any citizen of this country as if they were our problems.”

Another significant case is the meeting in Diyarbakır in which category inclusion was achieved on various means like religion, citizenship, and shared history. Especially the emphasis of citizenship and shared history is an uncommon practice in Erdoğan’s election speeches. Diyarbakır is a strategic city since it is mostly seen as the center of BDP electorates and Kurds in this city are predominantly Sunni Muslims, rendering it a natural laboratory for category construction. Observing how category inclusion is achieved in Diyarbakır will be particularly important since it gives a refined picture of how Kurdish identity is included in the nation definition. Erdoğan begins by describing how sacred Diyarbakır is to the world at large, not just to the Turkish nation. It is the hometown of prominent religious figures for centuries and still carries a holy atmosphere surrounded by peace, spirituality and fraternity. Then he moves on to talk about Saladin’s (a prominent historical figure in Kurdish, Arab and Muslim cultures) excellence in both governing countries and spirituality. He is cited to be a great leader regardless of his

ethnicity, language or sect and a great ancestor to whom we all connect. Needless to say, Saladin was a Sunni Muslim and he was Kurdish; therefore, he became the perfect figure to mention in a city populated by Kurds. It became a great instrument to facilitate the argument that as long as we believe in the same religion, differences in ethnicity and language does not create segregation. A perfect match is hence achieved between his definition of the nation and the portrayal of a powerful historical figure.

In addition to using the commonality in religion Erdoğan makes a maneuver and uses the citizenship affiliation, a move he utilizes when the audience in question requires more inclusion strategies than usual¹⁶:

Extract 10 (Diyarbakır): “For me, there is neither Turkish nor Kurdish nationalism. Neither this nor that! All of them are my brothers and my beloved people. I love all of them in the same manner; that is what’s different about us. What have we said? We are under the roof of Turkish Republic. We will be united, together huge and alive; this is the reason why we started in the first place.”

The stress on religion is replaced by citizenship, a superordinate identity which delegitimizes any segregationist attempt made on the grounds of ethnicity. It is interesting to note that although citizenship is a non-segregationist discourse suitable to be used in the definition of a nation, Erdoğan does not adhere to it unless it is absolutely necessary.

One last strategy to connect Kurdish identity to Turkish nation is based on the unity manifested in Kurtulus Savasi (the Independence War of Turkish nation):

Extract 11 (Diyarbakır): “My brothers look at Çanakkale! Aren’t the casualties there sleeping together under the ground? Are the Turk, the Kurt, the Laz,

¹⁶ This strategic move was quoted earlier in Mardin meeting when including the Non-Muslim population.

the Circassian, the Arab, the Romany resting side by side? We won that tremendous victory in Kut’ül Amare all together as the Turk, the Kurt and the Arab. We fought together at the War of Independence. We founded the Republic all together.”

Due to the fact that they are campaigned against a powerful other, independence wars constitute effective tools for identity entrepreneurs to emphasize national unity (Reicher & Hopkins, 2006). As will be seen in the following pages, this shared historical past will frequently be used by other leaders. Erdoğan, on the other hand, is stingy on basing his category inclusion arguments on the war of independence except for the highly challenging audience such as that of Diyarbakır, in which he has employed a variety of other inclusion strategies. The relative absence of the unifying effect of the war of independence in AK Parti’s rhetoric will be later discussed.

Although this analysis is primarily about category constructions (i.e. national boundaries and norms) and does not aim for a detailed outline of leaders’ discursive strategies, it is worthwhile to note how the line between “us” and “them” is drawn in Erdoğan’s rhetoric so as to give the readers an overall insight about his nation construction.

Extract 12 (Elazığ): “Dear Bahçeli, why do you keep your silence about the Hakkari meeting of CHP, which is a kind of collaboration and promise for autonomy? And in which Turkish flag was not allowed to be demonstrated. Dear Elazığ dwellers, this is trickery. Who is responsible for this trick? CHP, MHP and BDP. Who else? There are illegal organizations, retired politicians and conspirator businessmen in it. Who else? Certain media organizations and writers. They are not all! There are also certain international broadcasting organizations. Nevertheless, there is AK Parti and the nation against this trick. The nation will spoil this game.”

Drawing on the context of a CHP meeting in Hakkari, a city mostly populated by BDP electorates, AK Parti leader accuses the leader of the ultra-nationalist party, MHP, of not being sufficiently nationalist because he did not protest the fact that there were no Turkish flags on the meeting area or that the CHP leader had promised the electorates support on the problem of local self-governance (i.e. Democratic Autonomy Project). The use of Turkish flag and disapproval of alternative solutions to governance are obvious manifestations of the nation definition. In other words, one cannot be a part of the Turkish nation if he disagrees with these commonalities, i.e. the flag and the land. Erdoğan goes on to accuse Bahçeli for being silent on these issues and claim that this silence marks a secret consensus between certain political agents of the country. It is interesting to notice how he synthesizes illegality with legality and criticism with aspersion in this short extract to come up with an antagonism in which the nation and AK Parti together constitute a camp and other power groups constitute the other camp. In fact, AK Parti is more than just a party working for its nation, it is the nation itself. Therefore, power groups that are considered to have initiated a conflict with AK Parti are presented as actually confronting the nation. It is very obvious to see how the strategic construction of the national category as “we” becomes a political advantage for AK Parti’s collective mobilization project. This construction of “AK Parti and the nation versus its opponents” is evident in every speech of the AK Parti leader.

AK Parti and its leader Erdoğan define the Turkish nation mostly on religious grounds and they trivialize the ethnic differences. The definition centers on the prominence of acknowledging one flag, one state and one nation no matter which ethnic group one belongs to. Erdoğan makes corresponding shifts in highly charged cities so as to incorporate non-Muslim communities and alternative belief systems

(still to be within the realms of Islam) to Sunni Islam but he primarily pursues his initial definition. The specific manner that he attributes the norms to the nation at large and Kurds in particular in a way parallel his party's collective project, is analyzed in the next section.

3.1.2 AK Parti's Category Norms

Presenting national norms aligned with the party's collective objectives serves the idea that people will be more likely to act in accordance with the party's aims, because the party will be claiming to share the public's norms, hence possessing prototypicality. Therefore the sections analyzing the category norms are inevitably entwined around the leaders' claims to have the right to represent the country.

AK Parti is a party which can be regarded to be more elaborate in its representative claims because most of its arguments rest on the assumption that they originate from the nation and therefore embody all its characteristics. It can be stated no more clearly and explicitly than Erdoğan's own statement: "Because we are the nation; the nation itself".

"Peaceful and democratic means"

Erdoğan's frequently used national norm can be summarized as "this nation acts on and approve of peaceful and democratic means". Extracts below incorporate this thematic gist in seemingly different forms. This norm is first utilized to manifest that AK Parti is the only group that could represent the nation since its norms is in accordance with the nation's. Following that, rival political powers are delegitimized for not complying with these norms, about which Kurdish population is particularly sensitive. It is important to realize that Erdoğan makes a slight shift in his categories when he talks about the category norms. Namely, compared to the portions of his

speech where he defines the boundaries of nation, this time he prioritizes the portrayal of Kurdish population over the Turkish nation. As will be seen shortly, this is an important distinction between AK Parti and its political rivals, CHP and MHP. The other parties refrain from attributing norms specific to the Kurdish population, and instead, they employ more general categories like “the nation” and “people of this country” when they refer to norms. Erdoğan begins with making it absolutely clear that AK Parti represents democracy:

Extract 13 (Gaziantep): “You will advocate the democracy on the 12th June as you did on the 3rd November, the 22nd July and the 12th September¹⁷. You wholeheartedly supported our war against the gangs¹⁸.”

The people of this nation are asserted to be in favor of democracy, therefore having chosen AK Parti for the last three nation-wide polls (although not an election, referendum was perceived to be a vote of confidence for AK Parti) they show support for *the* party which defends democracy against undemocratic power groups. It should be noted that by democracy, he means coming into power by being elected. He maintains a formula in which AK Parti originates from a democratic nation; therefore it is a democratic party fighting against all other subjects/groups which will be classified as undemocratic. Below, for instance, is a classic depiction of other groups as clashing with the norms of the nation:

Extract 14 (Elazığ): “We don’t consult the gangs so as to be relieved. We don’t cry on the shoulders that belong to illegal and dark groups. We don’t beg for vote from international and global gangs as we are the nation; we are the nation

¹⁷ Regarding the dates: The first two are general elections, the third one is a referendum and the last is the upcoming general elections.

¹⁸ “Gangs” are the power groups claimed to have ruled the country for decades utilizing illegitimate means.

itself. The nation weaved our carpet; I mean you weaved it. The nation kneaded our dough; I mean you kneaded it.”

By adhering to illegal networks, these groups divert from using democratic means like elections. AK Parti does not approve of these means since it cannot defy an authority over the nation because it embodies the nation. Use of the carpet and the dough metaphors serves to reifying the image that AK Parti is an archetype of the nation. Consequently, we can reach to the conclusion that whatever Erdoğan says for his party can be attributed as norms of the nation, vice versa.

The next, rather long, extract will be needed to give a thorough picture of how the credibility of politicians can be lessened by showing that they violate a norm of the audience:

Extract 15 (Adiyaman): “My dear brothers; for God’s sake, where is this place on which this BDP rely? It is the terrorist organization which makes them powerful. Some writers [columnists] are in an agreement on saying that the prime minister is harsh on BDP. They are everyday writing about it. Some of them are even supporting them logistically and also accompanying the meetings. Should I disregard the killers of police? Should I disregard the ones who attack cars full of children and women? Should I disregard the ones who burn the faces of 13-14 year-old-children? Should I disregard the killers of Imams? Tens of Molotov cocktails were found in one of the elections office of BDP on the previous day. The person using that office talks about peace, freedom, democracy, benefit, and law under the guise of victimization. Then, what is the meaning of these Molotovs? Whom and which place will you burn? Do you think that you will bring peace in such a way? How can you equate the Molotov and the democracy? These people exploit such ways and try to

poll by threatening, frightening or vandalizing. My Kurdish citizens do not shut down the shutters on their own; they are forced to do it.”

This quote marks a number of important points, one of which relates to the direct equation of a political party to a terrorist organization. This move is strategic in the sense that once you define yourself as a democratic person, you cannot at the same time support Independents since they represent the complete opposite of what is regarded as democratic and peaceful means of conduct. Keeping in mind that the audience is largely from the Kurdish population, this equation is intended to lessen the support for the Independents for violating a norm anyone can agree on: “Do not harm the innocent”. A further aim would be to discredit Independents’ commitments in notions like democracy and peace so that they would be in no position to concord with the audience.

Another important point about this extract - though not directly relevant to the category norms - is a consistently repeated significant theme: the political choices of a “certain segment” of the Kurdish population who chooses to vote for Independents. Erdoğan depicts a perspective in which Kurdish citizens do not support Independents or BDP by their own will; on the contrary, in this picture, Kurds comply with their dictates out of the fear of being harmed. He tries to portray these people as passive agents in order to downsize the out-group. After all, a national leader cannot easily risk excluding a significant part of the nation because of their political decisions. Hence these people (who vote for the Independents or BDP) are excused for their decisions because of their fear and passivity (compliance to real or implied threat). At this point, it is necessary to emphasize that meeting speeches given in the region are not addressed particularly at Kurdish audience; all speeches are aimed also for

the whole nation. In other words, Erdoğan tries to depict BDP/Independents voters as victims rather than people acting on their rational choices.

Passivizing the audience manifests itself in other contexts, too. In equating “Hopa incident”¹⁹ with a terrorist act, Erdoğan portrays an apparent act of protest as anti-normative of the nation. In the following extract, the common strategy of leveling two events so as to make them seem in contrast with national norms is apparent once more:

Extract 16 (Diyarbakır): “However, we will manage this in a democratic way at the ballot box during the elections. The methods of these people are not our methods. You saw what they did in Hopa yesterday. They give children stones and rocks, and get them to attack with these things. These people are gangs and terrorists, this is what they do.”

The only democratic way for the public to express an opinion is voting in the elections. Protest, on the other hand, emerge as an anti-democratic act and people participating to protests are rendered passive (are stripped off of their agency) such that the use of word “children” trivializes the intentionality of the protest. At the end of the day, it is a small group of terrorists, not other fellow nationals or citizens who are behind these criticisms. Because they use undemocratic and unpeaceful means, those who are in charge of these protests do not share the basic norms of the nation; therefore do not belong to it in a rhetorical sense:

Extract 17 (Mardin): They stoned my bus and all our convoy in Hopa. The ones at the mountains walk around with their guns, are you too walking at the city with your stones and Molotovs? Don’t you have any other way other than violence?

¹⁹ The event known as the “Hopa incident” implies the protests held after Erdoğan’s Hopa meeting which resulted in the stoning of Erdoğan’s campaign bus and the death of a civilian who had been exposed to intense pepper gas implemented by the police force.

The nation, on the other hand, is to be formed by democratic people (regardless of their ethnicity). Therefore, they will eliminate these “undemocratic” power groups in the national elections, which are regarded as the only legitimate form of democratic behavior. Adopting the national norm (i.e. democratic people) to a specific audience is instrumental for creating a unity in norms among the Zaza and Kurdish populations on the one hand, and the nation on the other. Therefore, it is possible to say these arguments are used to create a dissonance between opponent parties and these populations so that the parties lose the ability to represent them:

Extract 18 (Bingol): “My dear brothers; these people are walking around as a trio of status quo like Kılıçdaroğlu and Bahçeli. As being the democrats, we will all together my Zaza, Kurdish and Turkish brothers give the best response to them at the 12th of June, in the elections.”

There are exceptions in Erdoğan’s rhetoric in which he acknowledges that those who support Independents may have rationales for doing so. Still, he insists that these political representatives are in overt contrast with the norms of their electorates since their use of violence for political objectives is not considered to be normative by the Kurdish population.

Extract 19 (Batman): “My dear brothers; for heaven's sake, we would like you to question the ones who use violence to prevent us from solving the problems, with which we deal sincerely and cordially.”

“A nation fond of its national will”

Outlined above, may be seen one of the shared norms (i.e. “this nation prefers democratic and peaceful means”) that Erdoğan employs. Another cluster of arguments that he uses may be summarized as “the respect for the will of nation”. According to Erdoğan, people of the nation would prefer to manifest their will in the

form of electing politicians to the parliament and overthrowing them when needed. Therefore, they favor politicians who take their power from the public itself, and not from illegal power groups:

Extract 20 (Ağrı): “We didn’t report to the terrorist groups or to the gangs. We were brought to account to our nation. We didn’t adhere to the elite, the capital or the illegal groups for help; we consulted the nation and had a heart- to- heart talk with them because the nation, I mean you, founded AK Parti. It does not belong to anyone else, but you.”

Equating the nation with AK Parti is made possible using the national will argument. By attributing this norm to the nation, Erdoğan creates his commonly used antagonism of the nation (embodied in AK Parti) against the other parties (cooperating with illegal forces). Opponent parties contradict the nation not just because they adhere to power provided by illegal groups, i.e., groups other than the nation, they also do not respect public opinion unless it is in favor of their policies. In fact, Erdoğan accuses the opposition composed of elites to have belittled a considerable portion of the society who did not vote for their party. Clearly, this rhetoric lessens the credibility of rival parties in claiming to represent the country and heightens AK Parti’s legitimacy in doing so:

Extract 21 (Adıyaman): “When the Democrat Party of Adnan Menderes won the elections in the evening of the 14th May, 1950, İsmet İnönü, the leader of CHP, went out to the balcony of his mansion and shouted as “ungrateful Ankara!”. That’s really interesting! Why? Because CHP lost the power. Since that day, CHP has got used to insult the ones who do not vote for their party. They call them as “drum-head” and “hillbilly”, don’t they? They call 60% of this nation as idiots? Finally, in Bursa, Mr. Kemal said “stupid” to the ones who voted for AK Parti. At the 2007

elections, 160.000 people voted for AK Parti in Adıyaman. Are these brothers of mine from Adıyaman stupid, then? 16 million people voted for AK Parti throughout Turkey... I believe that my nation ignore these people who ignored them at first.”

However, Erdoğan does not seem to accept boycott as a rational political choice. Boycotting the elections was used as a form protest against the referendum on the constitutional amendment package that was proposed by his party. The boycott was widely held in areas mostly populated by Kurdish population; hence it became the political negation of Erdoğan’s “respect for the will of nation” argument. He would have to either disregard Kurds’ political will or reframe the event as an act of terror. Obviously, he chose the latter and reframed the event as preventing the will of nation from manifesting itself. According to Erdoğan, since the Kurds, like the rest of the nation, are fond of the manifestation of national will, they would prefer to vote and most probably approve AK Parti’s proposal in the referendum. This reasoning appears to be a clear manifestation of attributing norms to the category in accordance with the party’s objectives so that they mobilize the people in favor of its policies:

Extract 22 (Diyarbakır): “You will remember that they crossed the picture of the ballot box as a part of their boycott. By this, they limited your democratic rights by threatening and intimidating you. Is this your understanding of democracy? Is this your understanding of freedom, BDP? We cannot accept that kind of understanding. We do not accept any gyve to national will and freedom. Let the citizens pursue their own will, let them vote freely. However, they cannot manage to do this. They know what will happen to them when they do this. I believe that my brothers from Diyarbakır would not even vote them.”

Another example of reframing the opposition parties in contrast with the national will uses the context of the making of a new constitution. This new constitution is presented to be the product of the nation (again, embodied in AK Parti) and oppositional groups are portrayed to refrain from this realization of the national will with a broad coalition. They are against AK Parti's policies; therefore they are against the will of nation:

Extract 23 (Batman): "They have leveled CHP, MHP, BDP, Ergenekon and the terrorist organization like what they did in the referendum on September 12th . The ones who are afraid of a new constitution which will be shaped by the national will now stand against AK Parti with a coalition."

Other parties use the national will argument as a norm that politicians should be possessing rather than a norm of the nation; the violation of which would put other parties in an undeserving position to represent it. Erdoğan, on the other hand, attributes this norm directly to the nation addressing them as the defenders of these norms. Remember that Erdoğan frequently depicts his party as the will of nation and equates his party's characteristics with the nation's. Therefore, the intended message emerges: "I am your national will, so defend me". This creates a more convincing argument than other party leaders' accusation of AK Parti politicians for not respecting the national will.

"Politicians should hold the nation's interests above all"

Inherent to Erdoğan's rhetoric is the idea that politicians should hold their nation's interests above all else. As he is Erdoğan is leader of the ruling party, it may not be interesting to include the services his party has provided over the last nine-year period in his speeches. However, what is crucial is the way he chooses to frame

these duties as “service politics²⁰” (i.e. serving the nation’s needs). Other parties are assumed to be involved in “exploitation politics” (i.e. exploiting the nation) because they make political gain out of the nation’s sufferings. AK Parti, on the other hand, cares for the nation’s needs disregarding political aims:

Extract 24 (Muş): “We do not seek votes! We are not the ones who become democrats at the time of the election when they see the ballot boxes! We are not the ones who remember this region, Muş and its dwellers at the time of election! We are not the ones who promise and then disappoint by turning their backs on the people after the election finishes. We do always care about the pain, hurt, worry and the matter of this region.”

Extract 25 (Mardin): “They do not apply service politics [like we do]. They have the municipalities, don’t they? Have you realized the low quality of their services? No clean areas! No infrastructure! It is just a scandal! Don’t you receive the money? Although you have received your money, you do not provide the necessary service for your dwellers. However, their concern is different! They do not care about giving service, but exploiting the politics!”

Politicians of AK Parti are claimed to be so keen on the nation’s interests such that they should be regarded as servants rather than governors of the nation. Politicians of AK Parti are benefiting the nation’s, not their own selfish, interests while other parties are accused of pursuing political gains:

Extract 26 (Ağrı): “We valued national issues and problems above everything. We regarded the benefits of this country and our people as having the highest importance. We apply service politics and they apply exploitation politics, ideological politics.”

²⁰ For a detailed discussion of the meaning of “service politics” in the Turkish political life with its positivist and pragmatist connotations, see Nilüfer Göle, *Mühendisler ve İdeoloji* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2008).

These statements from Erdoğan's speeches at Eastern cities of Turkey are read both as intentions to attribute norms to the Kurdish population and claims of prototypicality since the assumed norms of the audience are tuned to be in line with party's objectives. AK Parti is portrayed as the defender of democratic rule and a peaceful country against other parties and it prioritizes the national will. Moreover, politicians of AK Parti are depicted as caring for the nation's interest above all other interests. Attributing these norms such as "peacefulness, democracy" and "keenness on the national will" to the nation and to politicians and claiming to abide by them is intended to increase the strength of AK Parti's prototypicality claims.

3.1.3 MHP's Category Inclusion

Extract 27 (Diyarbakır): "We adopt and embrace everyone from east to west or from south to north without looking at their ethnic origin or sect as the relic of the Great Lord. Hence, everybody is equal. We did not give credit to differences as this is Turkey [having a united nation]. We also announced that we are united and equal to those who might be concerned. None of the children of Turkish nation is the black citizen of this country. My Diyarbakır citizens! You are us, and we are you. Haven't we defended our country together for thousand years? Haven't we waved our flag which is inspired by the blood of casualties for thousand years?"

Beginning MHP's analysis with this extract is intended to excite some interesting points in Bahçeli's definition of the nation. This extract may be one of the most explicit statements in which Bahçeli deals with how to include Kurdish population to the nation definition. At other times, he prefers more implicit ways of inclusion if not directly bypass the issue and take the status of Kurds within Turkish nation as a given, such as Kurds as honorable and equal members of the Turkish nation. According to Bahçeli, differences in place of birth, ethnicity or sect are not

considered to be divisive for the Turkish nation. Thus, he declares that no group can be regarded as the “other” or as the “Blacks” of this country. Once the issue of discrimination concerning Kurdish people is spelled out, even for the purpose of denying it, Bahçeli explicitly lists the common characteristic of the nation. By defining these characteristics he aims to refute political arguments like “Kurds are the other of this country”. This national unity, according to Bahçeli, is founded on the will to defend the national flag and the common land. Possessing a common land appears to be crucial in unifying the nation therefore it appears frequently in Bahçeli’s nation definition:

Extract 28 (Erzurum): “Our unitary structure, national state, indivisible unity and a thousand year old fraternity is under obvious threat and Turkey is being carried upon a unforeseen darkness after 12 June.”

According to Bahçeli, unitary state, unity among people and a historically shaped fraternity are the building blocks of the Turkish nation. He takes these commonalities for granted and perceives every alternative configuration as a threat to the nation. For instance, he presents AK Parti’s possible victory in elections (symbolized as the 12th of June) as a threat to the nation since AK Parti, supposedly, supports projects like “Life with two languages” (referring to the use of Kurdish in governmental and educational spheres) and “Democratic Autonomy”. He considers the very act of proposing such ideas as separatist and advantaging the terrorist groups:

Extract 29 (Gaziantep): “Justice and Development Party has tried to divide Turkey in all aspects... By time, it has carried on this segregation on ethnicity and faith basis, and by spoiling separatist terrorism based on ethnicity. AKP²¹ has led to

²¹ AK Parti’s rivals usually refer to it as AKP.

increased terrorism in Turkey by encouraging politicization of it and has brought Turkey to a point of separation with [the proposals of] bilingual life, democratic autonomy and other ways.”

Therefore we might conclude that independent from who utters suggestions like the acknowledgment of a distinct ethnicity, language, or administrative method, according to Bahçeli, the nation should perceive those people as separatists who are to be excluded from the nation. Religion, on the other, is another ascribed commonality of the nation for Bahçeli:

Extract 30 (Diyarbakır): “We altogether have faith in the rescripts of Hz. Muhammad. Our prayer is one, our appeal is one, and our side is one! Our name is one, our pain is one and our memory is one! We have grown together and become the Turkish Nation.”

Extract 31 (Elazığ): “My beloved citizens, we must find a way to embrace everyone living in this country, without thinking if they are eastern or western, southern or northern, Alevi or Sunni.”

It is fairly clear from Extract 30 that the nation is claimed to be constituted by Muslims since according to Bahçeli this nation has a common prophet and a belief system. Extract 31 maintains this notion by opposing the segregation between Alevis and Sunnis since these sects belong to the same religion, i.e. Islam. However, since what Bahçeli aims to stress is the commonality in prayer and religious rituals, there remains a gap in his rhetoric for Alevis who do not follow Sunni practices.

MHP leader depicts the Turkish nation as a homogenized category bypassing all differences like ethnicity, sect etc. This definition is strictly closed to any alternative claim regarding the formation of the Turkish nation. It trivializes diversity for the sake of unity in land, flag, language and religion and excludes those from the

nation who claim otherwise. Thereby, a perfect match between the party's collective projects and national definition manifests itself.

How the leader of the nationalist party, MHP, manages not to debate the Kurdish issue when defining the nation deserves some mention. It is interesting to notice in Extract 28 that Bahçeli refrains from naming ethnicities in Turkey; instead he refers to geographical differences. In fact, he uses the word "Kurd" only twice and only in Diyarbakır throughout his meeting speeches in the Eastern part of Turkey. Reicher and Hopkins (2001) assert that the most powerful way of establishing a category is to take it for granted, which can be frequently observed in Bahçeli's speeches such that there is *a* Turkish nation and the place of Kurdish identity within it is not an issue of debate. However according to these researchers if a category is already contested, then your argumentation lacking the public debate on this issue may lose its strength and render other's rhetoric more powerful. MHP leader seems to pursue such a path since he hardly vocalizes the word "Kurd", instead he makes use of the name of the city when referring to people of Kurdish origins like "people of Diyarbakır" and "my brothers of Elazığ". In other words, his addressee is not Kurdish people but rather as Turkish citizens of a particular place. He also strengthens the emphasis on the land, that is the idea that we are bound together (also) by where we live.

Diyarbakır constitutes a special context for Bahçeli's category construction since he could not organize a meeting there for many years because people of Diyarbakır, mostly from Kurdish origins, are strongly against MHP's collective project and its rhetoric on Kurdish identity. He begins his speech by denying the political gain for being in Diyarbakır. This argument may be regarded as the most explicit statement which points to the fact that leaders as prominent identity

entrepreneurs do not just aim for votes, they also aim for social structuring of the nation, i.e. constructing social categories:

Extract 32 (Diyarbakır): “I am not here to ask for your votes, for hoping political benefit from you. Firstly, I am here to talk with my brothers and sisters in Diyarbakır, to listen to their problems, to put an end to our longing for each other. I am here to molder the hate seeds, which Prime Minister Erdoğan is trying to plant among us. I am here to share the language of our common values. I am in front of you to support the thousand year old fraternity and make it live forever.”

This extract is a rare case in which Bahçeli attempts to configure what it is that makes a nation out of people who have various differences. According to his depiction, the nation is primarily based on a shared history which constitutes the “millennium-long fraternity”. Differences in ethnicity are therefore not relevant to the definition of nation. Throughout his Diyarbakır speech, the audience is bombarded with common cultural elements, emotions, belief systems of the Kurdish and Turkish populations. The cooperation in the War of Independence is also cited in order to give a sense of togetherness. He frequently uses metaphors like mosques, rivers, city walls and even melons of Diyarbakır to refer to the people of Diyarbakır in order to carry a sense of shared culture. It is as if he uses common history and culture to infer national togetherness rather than attributing such a will to his addressees, i.e. inhabitants of Diyarbakır. His nation definition soon appears:

Extract 33 (Diyarbakır): “This beloved homeland found its real owners a thousand years ago and prospered at these hands. During the centuries passing by, we have sealed these lands and shaped this great nation all together... Regardless of our place of birth, our place for food, our territory, our mother tongue, our belief, our identity; our name is the Turkish Nation. We see everyone living in this country as

the precious memoire of a thousand year old fusion. We see everyone breathing in our last land as the reminiscence of our ancestors.”

Bahçeli bases the nation primarily on the common history. Everybody’s included in the nation regardless of differences since they are part of a long-unified community. Simply put, he claims the nation is a unified community because its members has lived together for centuries and has come to share a cultural and historical background. Thereby, he indirectly refutes those who dispute the place of Kurdish identity as a part of the Turkish nation. In fact, he explicitly excludes those who argue such views:

Extract 34 (Diyarbakır): “Those, who are dreaming of separating from the Turkish Nation, who aspire for an independent state, must get themselves together. We do neither have a single pebble or a person to give up.”

There are interesting rhetorical differences between AK Parti and MHP that are worth noting besides category inclusion strategies. AK Parti equates the party with the nation, whereas MHP defines two of them separately and presents his party as an agent who defends the nation. Therefore when the former can reframe an opposition to his party’s policies as opposition to the will of nation, the latter will lack the power of such a strong categorization. Another difference exists in the representation claims. While Bahçeli refutes Erdoğan’s prototypicality claims, he does not explicitly stress a prototypicality of his own. Bahçeli’s frequently utilized campaign pledges (i.e. promising to provide economical aids for the poor and commitments for ending the unemployment) are manifestations of a duality in which the state and the nation are two different entities. Prototypicality claims include argumentations such as “I am one of you” and they provide significant advantages in defining the in-group.

Bahçeli defines the nation on the commonality of the land, the flag, the language and the religion. When explaining the reason why the nation represents a unity apart from these commonalities, he cites the shared history and culture. He also trivializes ethnical differences and regards debates over Kurdish identity as separatist attempts.

3.1.4 MHP's Category Norms

"The will to live together"

When attributing norms to the nation, Bahçeli favors the idea that the people of this country have a will to live together regardless of their differences. They are strongly against the possibility of a separation and people pursuing those interests:

Extract 35 (Erzurum): "Nationalist Action Party and the great Turkish Nation, want to live together with its easterners and westerners, northerners and southerners, not to separate. Because of this, we do not want to lose a single grain of sand or a single person. We wish to live with our million-year-old fraternity and believe that we should not be deceived by such play."

As mentioned above, Bahçeli positions his party and the nation as two separate entities both desiring the unity in this land. Other than specifying a norm for the nation this extract is also significant in equating the norms of the nation with the party's collective objectives, a theme that forms the heart of this analysis. The nation and the party are assumed to be agreeing on the notion that the millennium-long fraternity is to continue without making any concessions in terms of land or people. Besides, the nation should not only be eager to maintain its unity, it should be aware of the dangers of assuming other alternatives:

Extract 36 (Diyarbakır): "We do not have the option or the preference to live in another country, or under the shelter of another nation. With the permission of

God, we will continue to live in the Turkish Republic as the Turkish Nation to the end of time. This is our will. Our ambition and hope is devoted to this. Do not forget that, we will either live on this country in fraternity and in unity, or we will be expelled not only from Diyarbakır, but from Anatolia.”

Bahçeli stresses that the danger is not only for the Turkish nation at large, it is also threatening for the Kurdish population in particular. The use of threat in these extract signals a possible disagreement on the norm that Bahçeli attributes to the nation. In other words, he tries to impose the norm, yet he senses that the audience might not share his rhetoric. He remedies this doubt by casting the people of Diyarbakır as helpless against those who attempt to separate them from the nation:

Extract 37 (Diyarbakır): “I believe that my citizens from Diyarbakır are in the search for a solution to abuse, sedition, and separation. They are waiting for help against the terrorists living on blood. They are hoping to put an end to AKP’s deceptions, lies and collaborative stance [with terrorists]. Do not worry, we are here. Do not fall into despair; National Action Party is here for you.”

It is interesting to note that Bahçeli does not attribute a norm other than “the will to live together” to the nation. Defining a nation’s norms are instrumental for claiming prototypicality (or mobilizing the audience for your collective project) to the extent that they are in line with a party’s objectives; therefore, MHP loses such a discursive power. The relative absence of national norms is also significant in terms of the rhetorical inclusion of Kurds into the nation. As mentioned before, Bahçeli does not pursue such an interest since he treats the status quo whereby Kurds’ status is taken for granted as a given. He does not attribute unifying norms to the nation, which might have served his party both in strengthening claims to represent the Kurdish community and his will to defend the country’s “national integrity”.

“Politicians benefit their nation, not their self-interests”

Identity entrepreneurs do not just trigger national categories; they sometimes utilize other categories in order to reach their goals. For instance, instead of naming norms for the nation, Bahçeli relies on defining norms for politicians in order to claim prototypicality. In other words, he suggests that other politicians violate these norms therefore they are in no position to represent the nation. According to the MHP leader, politicians should not benefit their own interests, they should benefit their nation which is a norm constantly violated by politicians of AK Parti. Bahçeli states that the nation has some major problems like unemployment, poverty, corruption and lack of public order. He asserts that AK Parti, on the other hand, aims only to increase its supporters’ economical wealth instead of solving the problems of the nation (including those who have voted for him). Erdoğan’s claimed preference to favor his proponents is portrayed as his remoteness from the general public and an overt violation of political morality:

Extract 38 (Elazığ): “At one side, there is the happy AKP minority that are fed with undeserved income, gets stronger with hot money, composed of collaborators, blind supporters, canines and relatives, and the newly rich of AKP emerging from this cohort. But at the other side, there is a great mass that has been left to poverty, without food, job or any peace.”

According to Bahçeli, Erdoğan does not only favor his proponents instead of the whole nation, he also exploits public resources for his own interests. In short, he is apathetic to the nation’s actual needs:

Extract 39 (Gaziantep): “But he does not feel the need to confront the nation to discuss the realities of Turkey. Indeed, in his rallies, he runs his election propaganda from far away, refraining from going into the public, with airways,

helicopters, by using state resources to reach the public... He speaks none of the realities of our people in the election speeches and in his public talks.”

These themes constitute a large part of Bahçeli’s rhetoric in which he defines the needs of the nation and puts them in direct contrast with AK Parti’s policies. The portrayal of AK Parti as a self-indulgent group apathetic to the nation’s needs is intended to decrease its prototypicality and champion MHP as its alternative.

“Respect for the national will”

Another “politician norm” Bahçeli employs to strengthen this position is the idea of “national will”. Politicians, according to the MHP leader, should respect the will of nation no matter which party is the outcome of it:

Extract 40 (Elazığ): “So, if this nation, with its great will, carries a 1.5 year-old party to power²², then the nation should also be accepted as a power which may take the rulership away from it... You will make this decision, because this country is yours; therefore the decision of a change will be yours, too.”

Bahçeli stresses the rationality of the nation in electing its representatives throughout his speeches. According to him, politicians should be respecting the will of nation even when they themselves are not the first choice of the public. Attributing this norm to politicians, Bahçeli achieves two things: First, by glorifying the will of nation he implies that he is a leader of principle deserving to represent the nation and second, he attributes authorization to the public which creates a strong sense of “we, the nation” within the audience. It is worthwhile to note that by rationalizing the choice of the public, he differs from Erdogan’s rhetoric in which people who vote for the Independents were passivized.

²² He refers to the first triumph of AK Parti in the general elections.

In short, the norm regarding the category may be defined as the nation's will to live together. Bahçeli also changes his category when referring to norms and mentions norms of politicians in order to render Erdoğan's prototypicality and representativeness of the national will null. In this respect he uses the norm of "politicians benefit their nation" and the norm of "respect for the national will". These norms are intended to portray a unified country which needs principled politicians sensitive to the nation's needs. It is not surprising to notice they are also strong aims in MHP's political agenda.

3.1.5 CHP's Category Inclusion

CHP leader Kılıçdaroğlu bases his nation rhetoric on citizenship; thereby he includes everyone within the nation regardless of ethnicity, faith, or political view. He sometimes bases the choice of using the citizenship category in defining the nation on the assumed egalitarian founding principles of the Republic of Turkey:

Extract 41 (Dersim): "I have set off my way to serve the public without discriminating anyone, without favoring supporters, seeing everyone only as citizens, and I am in your service. This is the dream of the Republic. This is the reason for the Republic. Everyone should go to school, should work and should serve the people in democracy and freedom. No grudge, no hate, no mischief, no separation. Let's unite, share, and love each other."

Extract 42 (Malatya): "For me there is no supporter, there is only the citizen. We will work and produce for citizens. We will not marginalize anyone, like some others do. We will respect the faith, ethnic identity and political view of everyone. Our philosophy is that a person, with his thoughts, identity and faith is the most precious entity that God has created and is always welcome. Separation and discrimination does not exist in our faith."

The stress put on the word citizen is frequent throughout speeches when talking about the nation. The way that Kılıçdaroğlu includes people with different ethnicities, faiths and political views maintains the sense of citizenship. Differences in political views earn respect and are explicitly included to the nation definition in CHP's nation categorization.

Similar to the other party leaders, he uses the help of religious teachings to unite these differences; however, using religion as a unifying factor takes different forms across cases. On the one hand, AK Parti leader Erdoğan and CHP leader Kılıçdaroğlu share the same tendency of citing religion when including differences. When doing this, Erdoğan stresses the inclusion of different ethnicities under a single religious context; whereas Kılıçdaroğlu affirms national inclusion for various ethnicities, faiths, and political views. Therefore Erdoğan's reference to religion has a more superordinate and unifying tone to it, whereas for Kılıçdaroğlu, religious differences is only one of many varieties under the superordinate category of the nation. It is interesting to realize even though two leaders frequently use similar standards for national inclusion, they refer to different ideologies. In Kılıçdaroğlu's categorization, religion is used almost as a cultural bond on which everyone is assumed to be agreeing, rather than a dominant and homogenizing factor like it is in Erdoğan's rhetoric.

Additional support for Kılıçdaroğlu's reluctance in using religion as source of his political campaign manifests itself in an answer he gives to journalists after Malatya meeting. He is asked about a past utterance in which he stated "Erdoğan himself is the God of status quo". Erdoğan had reacted strongly to this statement since it was against the religious practice to use God's name in such a sentence. He

also labeled it as an act of profanity. Kılıçdaroğlu's answer is in a condemning tone negating the role of religion as a political rhetoric:

Extract 43 (Malatya): "Religion cannot be used in politics; it is disgraceful, it is a shame and a sin to do so... And it is what the Prime Minister does."

It is important to keep in mind that Erdoğan uses religion in reference to Sunni Islam and it leads to the semi-exclusion of other sects in Islam like Alevis. Bahçeli, on the other hand, was greatly uncomfortable with the rhetorical exclusion of Alevis because he perceived it as a separatist policy. However, by referring to the form of worship that Sunni Muslims practice he uses the same rhetoric, if not as explicit as Erdoğan. Kılıçdaroğlu, being an Alevi himself, opposes Erdoğan's frequent remarks about his place of birth addressing his Alevi origins (therefore aiming to impair his prototypicality) and he quite explicitly includes his identity into the national definition:

Extract 44 (Tunceli²³): "He travels all around the country, saying "beware, he is from Tunceli", as if being from Tunceli is a shame. I am proud of being from Tunceli. Both you and I know what he really means by this. We never denied our origins. Everyone is proud of his origins, his descents and his ancestors. Is being proud a disgrace? I am from here. I am from Tunceli, from Dersim and proud of it. I am not one of those fools who deny their origins... It is not something shameful. I am a servant that God has created and I set off to serve you. Is it shameful, is it disgraceful? Why all this discrimination and separation?"

By citing his prototypicality ("I am one of you") and sharing their norms Kılıçdaroğlu earns a rhetorical advantage in obtaining Alevi's votes and he aims to rhetorically include a religious/cultural minority into the nation definition. It is

²³ The city of Tunceli is sometimes named as Dersim by politicians referring to its old name.

crucial to note that Kılıçdaroğlu uses religious themes most to imply the equality of human beings in the eyes of God. In a way, he criticizes the use of faith in category constructions.

With regards to Kurds and Kurdish identity inclusion, Kılıçdaroğlu denounces the ban on Kurdish language that has prevailed for decades in Turkey. Like Erdoğan, he does not perceive the usage of mother tongue as a separatist act thus excludes it from the list of acts that impair the unity of the nation. According to Kılıçdaroğlu speaking one's mother tongue should be seen within the frame of basic human rights. However, he affirms the acknowledgement of Turkish as the official language of the country:

Extract 45 (Ağrı): “If there is a language prohibition in this country, it is not prohibited by this society. It is prohibited by certain groups and you will see that we will remove it. Everyone will be able to speak and learn their own language freely.”

Extract 46 (Dersim): “We support the idea that everyone should be able to freely speak their mother tongue. CHP is the first party to propose the law bill to remove the prohibition of mother tongue. However, our formal language is Turkish and we like our Turkish. It is our sound flag, we say.”

It seems that Erdoğan, Bahçeli and Kılıçdaroğlu agree on certain attributes regarding the nation which are the unity in the land, the flag and the official language of the country²⁴. Although Kılıçdaroğlu does not particularly stress these unities, it seems that he perceives them inherent to the national category. According to him, blaming political leaders for not standing up for national attributes like language and flag is itself a separatist act; therefore he implicitly excludes the people proposing

²⁴ It is important to acknowledge that the national unity regarding the land, the flag and the language is guarded by the constitution itself. In fact, the Article 3 of the constitution of Turkish Republic forbids any formal proposal to change these characteristics.

alternative constructions regarding the characteristics of the Turkish nation from his construction of national category.

Extract 47 (Diyarbakır): “Turkey is united, nobody wants to separate it. In this beautiful geography, we will all live in fraternity, and in peace. He says “Sir, why weren’t there any Turkish flags at your meeting?” The flag is the common ground of the 73 million citizens of this country. You cannot do politics over the flag. It belongs to all of us. It is our honor and dignity. We all show respect when it is raised up to the flag pole. It is separatism to do politics over it. And Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the greatest separatist.”

All in all, it can be said that Kılıçdaroğlu bases the nation primarily on citizenship regardless of ethnicity, faith, and political views though he takes certain attributes for granted like the unity in land, the flag and the official language. Still, he does not treat the use of Kurdish language as a separatist act like Erdoğan and frames it as a basic human right. Although he utilizes some religious themes to attribute a reason for the including of differences, he is against the rhetoric incorporating religion as the glue of this nation since it might imply excluding certain segments of the society.

3.1.6 CHP’s Category Norms

National frame is not the only category to be triggered by leaders. They utilize different categories in order to imply their prototypicality and to rhetorically incorporate Kurds into the national frame. Kılıçdaroğlu invokes national, universal and politician categories almost concomitantly and therefore, it becomes difficult to examine their distinct presence in his extracts. He uses national norms together with norms regarding how a politician should act and universal norms for “humans”.

“A nation fond of freedom, democracy, peace and justice”

The nation's assumed will for freedom, democracy, peace and justice as a norm is apparent in all speeches of Kılıçdaroğlu when referring to AK Parti's violation of the norm. In other words, the nation is assumed to possess these norms so that acting against these norms can be used to infer that AK Parti is in no position to represent the category:

Extract 48 (Ağrı): "The new CHP is the party of the public; it is the party of freedom, a party respectful to human rights. It is the party of peace and freedom, not of fights or war. It is a party that supports human rights everywhere, everyplace. The new CHP is your party. Support it, give it power. Let's bring Turkey to enlightenment."

Kılıçdaroğlu's renaming of his party as the new CHP signals a shift in many issues including the nation definition, promises of democracy and unification in terms of citizenship. It can fairly be argued that these statements are aimed to include Kurdish identity into the nation by means of the cited unifying norms since certain segments of the Kurdish population are assumed to be bothered by these contested issues.

AK Parti's report on violation of national norms is argued through its claimed advocacy of the state of emergency law, courts with special authorization (being known for their statist rather than democratic approaches) and the censorship of their opponents:

Extract 49 (Batman): "Those [AK Parti politicians] did not get rid of it; instead they brought OHAL²⁵ [back] to Turkey. Speak if you dare! When the businessman speaks; the journalist or the mayor speaks, there comes a threat. What is the end of all these threats? Democracy will come, everyone will speak freely.

²⁵ The state of emergency law employed in the eastern regions during the 1990s altered the normal functioning of executive, legislative and judicial powers. The law is regarded to have enabled the wide-spread violation human rights in the region.

Everyone will speak their thoughts freely. We will get rid of both OHAL and courts with special authority in Turkey. Everyone will be put on trial by an independent judiciary and everyone in this country will breathe a sigh of relief.”

It is important to remember that Erdoğan’s national norms also include the notion of freedom, democracy and justice but his way of claiming them is achieved through accusing opponent parties for supporting either terrorist or illegal power groups. He claims to oppose military coups, their political extensions and resultant practices. The same issue is taken up by Kılıçdaroğlu with a completely opposite perspective. The same attribute of the nation (i.e. will for democracy, freedom, and justice) is used in mutually exclusive argumentations by two leaders, revealing the power of national norms in claiming one’s prototypicality:

Extract 50 (Dersim): “These are not democrats, not liberty or libertarians. They are only a government which is ready to stick to its power, to spend every effort to stay in power and hit below the belt when necessary. “We are against 12 September [1981 military coup]”, they used to say. “We changed the constitution”, they used to say. “We will call the generals of 12 September to account”, they used to say, did they? We gave a proposal during the talks of the constitution change so that they [the generals] could be called to account; they declined our proposal, they did not call them to account.”

Remember that Erdoğan excludes various protests against his party’s policies as separatists and defines participating people as being outside to the nation. Kılıçdaroğlu reframes this argumentation and regards protests as democratic reactions of the nation. He depicts these events as the manifestation of a struggle for rights and regards them as normative to the nation. Again, same events are pictured in completely opposite frames showing the struggle over the nation’s claimed norms:

Extract 51 (Bitlis): “They sent them off to Bitlis from Ankara with pepper gas²⁶. What all those workers were asking for were their rights. Should you use pepper gas to someone who demands his rights? Should you beat someone who demands his rights? You can only show respect to someone who demands his rights in a democratic and free manner.”

Kılıçdaroğlu frames national norms as including the act of protest and depicts them as criticisms to politicians. Even though not included in this analysis, in Ankara meeting he describes people of Hopa as “beautiful, courageous, patriotic, peace-loving and libertarian people”. Sharing the norm of the nation, people of Hopa (previously framed as bandits and terrorists by Erdoğan) are reintroduced to the nation definition as fellow citizens.

“An industrious nation”

Another norm CHP leader frequently attributes to the nation is its industriousness. His mention of industriousness of the nation is quickly followed by Erdoğan’s lack of governing skills. He is accused of importing goods from other countries instead of nourishing his own countrymen and workers, abandoning them to poverty. Thus, the strategic advantage of attributing norms to the nation is once again used for decreasing the opponent party’s prototypicality:

Extract 52 (Ardahan): “Are there plateaus in Ardahan? Are there meadows? Are there hardworking people? For God's sake, we have everything... AKP says, “Our people should not work, should not produce so that they become poor and be dependent on pasta. I'll give them pasta and they will give me their votes”. This is AKP’s politics! We refuse it.”

“Politicians benefit their nation not their self-interests”

²⁶ He refers to the use of strong police force towards workers who have protested a contract labor deal.

Remember that Bahçeli uses the same politician norm (i.e. “politicians should benefit their nation”) to argue that AK Parti is creating a privileged segment and the rest of the society is growing poor. In a similar way, Kılıçdaroğlu blames politicians of AK Parti for draining the public’s resources for their own benefit. Needless to say a politician prioritizing his needs over the nation’s cannot be in a position to represent them:

Extract 53 (Malatya): “All of your [Erdoğan’s] extended family is rich now. All those from AKP have turned very rich. All the ministers have become rich, but when it comes to the farmer, they ask, “where is your resource?” When it comes to the poor, they ask “where is your resource?” We do find the resources, we do know the resources. When you stop siphoning off money, everyone in this country will live in comfort, we know that. And where do these siphoning-offs relate to? They are related to the AKP Headquarters, look at them, they have all become rich.”

Extract 54 (Ağrı): “Do not vote for those who ignore and disregard you; those who do not listen to the problems your [those from Ağrı] problems and forget their promises upon returning to Ankara.”

“Respect for the national will”

Kılıçdaroğlu remarks on the case of arrested mayors (all from the Eastern cities of the country) and the charges of being members of “KCK”, the so-called urban section of PKK. He criticizes this situation because he thinks that it is the violation of the norm “the respect for the nation’s will”, a norm attributed to politicians. According to Kılıçdaroğlu, Erdoğan as the head of the government should oppose these practices since these mayors are the “elected representatives of the nation”:

Extract 55 (Van): “See, whoever comes with the election, we will respect them all. Whether or not from our party, that doesn’t matter, whoever comes with elections and is the will of the nation, we will respect them. They put, not one, not two, three, ten, twenty... mayors in jail who were elected. This is restricting and disrespecting the will of a nation.”

Extract 56 (Diyarbakır): “AKP is not a democrat party. The 10% threshold is a legal arrangement that is the product of 12 September. Are you against the 12 September law? We told them “Let’s decrease the 10% threshold!” Did they agree? [No] It is just because they are not democrats. They do not believe in national will. Because they have their own congressman and their own MPs elected with the votes given to other parties. We are democrats, libertarians and for the people.”

It was mentioned at the outset of this section that Kılıçdaroğlu sometimes uses norms related to different categories in an intertwined fashion. Extract 56 is a perfect example including both a national (“Our people long for freedom, democracy, peace and justice”) and a politician norm (“Politicians should respect the will of nation”) in order to imply AK Parti does not possess the necessary principles to represent the nation. Kılıçdaroğlu stresses his party’s representative power by claiming to be democratic and libertarian. Moreover, using the national will argument when talking about the arrests of mayors is a rare case among these three mainstream politicians and it directly appeals to the Kurdish audience.

“Respect for different opinions due to democratic principles/humanitarian values”

Another rarely encountered usage is to apply universal norms when talking about the human rights, minority groups and the Kurdish population. According to

this norm differences of any sort should be respected due to universal ideals of humanism and democracy:

Extract 57 (Dersim): At the land where I was born, they treated people as humans. At the land where I was born, they announced people as people and that they should be respected. That is how we grew up. A human is a human and we should respect him. Then how come it is us who discriminate, who place separation at the heart of our politics?

Extract 58 (Van): They should not claim themselves as being democrats, a democrat respects human rights. Isn't it a disgrace for the humankind that a person becomes the victim of an unsolved murder, is that person not a human? Is it not necessary to show respect to that person? Even if he does not think like you and I do, he is still a human with his own thoughts and logic. He also has rights.

Extract 59 (Batman): It is the responsibility of all to respect the faith and identity of others. Being respectful to identities and beliefs is the duty of being human.

In the first extract, inclusion of differences in ethnicity, faith and political view is achieved through the spiritual teachings of Kılıçdaroğlu's place of birth, i.e. Dersim. The value endowed to human beings and the declared respect due to their very existence evokes universal norms. The second extract concerns a direct violation of the most basic human rights which is the right to live. In this extract, Erdoğan is accused of being negligent towards unresolved murders. This general term is used for murders whose murderers remain unidentified; mostly referring to systematic political murders in the Kurdish population that has dominated the early 90's in the Turkey context. Hence, his negligence is tied to reveal his undemocratic attitudes regarding human rights violations. As can be seen in the last extract,

respecting faith and religion is considered to be a duty of humanity. In short, utilizing universal norms to imply respect for human rights and differences of sort can be regarded as an attempt at heightening the moral obligations of the audience in internalizing these arguments. Building a nation definition not based on ethnical or religious homogeneity seems to have required the use of universal norms together with national ones, at least in Kılıçdaroğlu's rhetoric.

In order to lessen the ruling party's representative claims, Kılıçdaroğlu utilizes national norms which referred to people's will for a free, democratic, peaceful and fair country. He also addressed the nation's industriousness which receives no support from the government. Similarly, politicians' norms which involve care for public interest and respect for national will is aimed at decreasing AK Parti's legitimacy in representing the nation. Lastly, universal norms are used to strengthen the inclusion of differences within the country and stress the importance of respecting human rights. All three kinds of norms also aim the rhetoric inclusion of the Kurdish population into Turkish nation via democratic nation and national will arguments.

3.2 Summary of the Arguments

Results are summarized below in order to present a general overview of the categories and the themes used in the analysis. Table 1 depicts the given categories and the themes appropriated to them. Namely, there are inclusion and norm arguments that are further subdivided by the type of category used, i.e. national, other and universal. A second coder who was a fellow master student from the cognitive science department checked the accuracy of extracts' assignments to relevant themes in 5 randomly-selected cities. She depicted one other category norm which had been undetected previously (i.e. AK Parti's politician norm) and the

schema was up-dated accordingly. Following this procedure a third coder, a master student in architecture, read the same campaign speeches from 5 random cities and deducted extracts from them according to the up-dated schema. She checked the accuracy of assigned extracts (for AK Parti, 45 extracts; for MHP, 47 extracts; for CHP, 38 extracts) and found 5 extra extracts 4 of which were not regarded as relevant by the researcher. The reason why the analysis utilized only 59 of these extracts was due to the fact that the content of campaign speeches is usually repeated in various cities. Therefore, the chosen extracts were preferred according to their level of representativeness of the whole extracts.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 illustrate whether category arguments are present (or not) in the above mentioned sub-sample of the documents which were coded by the researcher and checked by the third-coder. A plus sign indicates that an argument in that theme was found in the document and a minus sign indicates that an argument in that theme was not present. The prevalence of plus signs signifies the use of relevant category arguments in the selected cities; thus constitute a check for the accuracy of the analysis.

Table 1. Summary of arguments for each party

AK PARTİ		
	Category inclusion	Category norm
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nation is primarily based on shared <i>religion</i>. • The nation has a single state, flag, and land • Differences in ethnicity and mother tongue do not separate us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nation acts on and approve of peaceful and democratic means • The nation is fond of its national will
Other Categorical	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politicians should hold the nation's interests above else
MHP		
	Category inclusion	Category norm
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nation is primarily based on shared <i>land</i> and <i>history</i> • The nation has a single state, religion, flag, and land • Differences in where we're born or sect do not separate us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nation has a will to live together
Other categorical	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politicians should benefit their nation not their self-interests • Politicians should respect the will of nation

Table 1 (continued)

CHP		
	Category inclusion	Category norm
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nation is primarily based on <i>citizenship</i>. • Differences in fate, ethnicity or worldview do not separate us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nation is hardworking and productive • The nation longs for freedom, democracy, peace and justice
Other categorical	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politicians should benefit their nation not their self-interests • Politicians should respect the will of nation
Universal	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic principles/humanitarian values require respect for different opinions

Table 2. AK Parti's summary of arguments in a subsample of the documents

	Inclusion	Norm	
	National	National	Other
Ağrı	+	+	+
Gaziantep	+	+	+
Malatya	+	+	+
Mardin	+	+	+
Muş	+	+	+

Table 3. MHP's summary of arguments in a subsample of the documents

	Inclusion	Norm	
	National	National	Other
Diyarbakır	+	+	+
Elazığ	+	+	+
Erzincan	+	-	+
Erzurum	+	+	+
Gaziantep	+	-	+

Table 4. CHP's summary of arguments in a subsample of the documents

	Inclusion	Norm		
	National	National	Other	Universal
Ağrı	+	+	+	+
Dersim	+	+	+	+
Gaziantep	+	+	+	-
Kars	+	+	+	-
Malatya	+	+	+	-

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The nation-state is a man-made construct; therefore it is hard to reach an objective set of standards as to its contents and boundaries. Bauman (1992) considers the very endeavor of searching for substantial attributes to the nation as meaningless and time-consuming since a nation definition exists to achieve certain goals; not because it includes a group of people who share certain commonalities. The ones who seek for objective attributes of a nation legitimize this “commonality” argument:

rather than exposing the fact that the 'commonality' itself (of land, of language, of tradition) is always an artefact of boundary-drawing activity: always contentious and contested, glossing over some (potentially disruptive) differentiations and representing some other (objectively minor) differences as powerful and decisive separating factors. (Bauman, 1992: p. 677)

Politicians, as effective identity entrepreneurs, try to depict themselves as the true representatives of the nation; therefore they depict its boundaries and contents overlapping with their political objectives. This analysis attempted to reveal such attempts in the Turkey context inquiring both the definitions, norms, and prototypicality claims attached to the Turkish nation and also the inclusion arguments related to the Kurdish population.

Apart from drawing boundaries of the nation, speakers were expected to describe the context in a way to include the maximum amount of the targeted audience, and minimize the out-group members. Moreover, they were expected to define the group norms in line with their party's proposals and in contrast with other parties' rhetoric (Reicher & Hopkins, 1995). Accordingly, all parties in the current analysis have utilized the rhetoric of portraying their rivals to be few in number and to practice anti-normative politics. In other words, they tried to maximize the audience they appeal by marginalizing other political arguments. Moreover, they attempted to refine the audience they address (i.e. the Turkish nation or Kurds).

Category inclusion was triggered by only national identity in the current study unlike the previous research which involved various professional categories like writers, lawyers, and journalists. Considering the notion that identity entrepreneurs try to mobilize the intended audience by maximizing the inclusiveness of category boundaries, it is not surprising for politicians to put more emphasis on the national identity. If leaders tried to mobilize a particular segment of the society in favor of their party, they would have assigned norms to that category matching the parties' collective projects.

4.1 AK Parti: Erdoğan's Rhetoric

Just like Thatcher had reduced the scope of the strikers down to the NUM executives (Reicher & Hopkins, 1995), AK Parti claimed that the opposition is a broad coalition composed of elites and terrorists; MHP depicted AK Parti as a privileged group distinct from its voters; and CHP portrayed AK Parti as a group of politicians who are indifferent to the needs of the public. They all tried to isolate their rivals from the nation so as to reduce their prototypicality (i.e. representativeness) for the public.

Erdoğan defines a nation which bypasses ethnical differences because Islam is regarded to embrace people from different ethnicities. When citing attributes of the nation he does not deviate from an orthodox understanding that includes the flag, the official language, the land, and the unity of the state as its basic determinants. However, he does deviate from the official narrative in his recognition of the Kurdish language. In other words, AK Parti's definition includes those who accept the common flag, the common religion, the given territory and the unitary state though there can be variations in the language used (specifically referring to Kurdish). The founding commonality Erdoğan ascribes to the nation that is the bond linking people together is regarded to be religion based on Sunni Islam. On the basis of shared religion, AK Parti finds Kurds to be brothers, i.e. a part of the nation. He uses the acclaimed prominence of religion to ward off prototypicality claims of CHP and Independents since they are regarded to be less "Muslim"; therefore less representative in his rhetoric.

Apart from the acknowledgment of Kurdish language and the strong role of Sunni Islam in his rhetoric, it would not be appropriate to claim that only Erdoğan treats these commonalities as given attributes of the nation. Other leaders also treat them as natural characteristics of the Turkish nation though they may differ in emphasis. In general, taking categories for granted renders them as powerful tools for rhetoric (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Therefore, arguments in leaders' rhetoric assuming the unitary state, the official language, and the common flag²⁷ as natural attributes of the nation strengthen the definition of national category on these grounds. This definition both defines the boundaries of the nation and works to exclude those who might possess alternative constructions for the nation, the state

²⁷ Commonalities attributed to the Turkish nation in Article 3 of the Turkish Constitution.

and the religion. In a political arena, it enables one party to delegitimize the other's prototypicality claims.

There are interesting shifts in Erdoğan's rhetoric. Subtle changes in the nation frame emerge when in Mardin and in Diyarbakır since the former city is known to be sensitive about religious minorities while the latter is assumed to hold ethnical concerns. In both cities citizenship bond is emphasized more explicitly than in other cities. In fact, Erdoğan does not stress the role of citizenship in binding the nation unless it is absolutely necessary. The subtle alteration in the general argumentation is intended to include those who reside in these cities having different ethnic and religious belongings into the nation definition. These examples are important in showing how identity entrepreneurs make shifts in their rhetoric so as to appeal to their audiences' expectations. In other words, categorizations of the audience must be taken into account by entrepreneurs in order not to lose their alliance. These shifts address the importance of examining changes in leaders' speeches in different contexts. Therefore, in order to examine the strategic constructions of social categories, researchers should not only focus on variations between different leaders' rhetoric but also within a given leader's own rhetoric.

There are similarities between Margaret Thatcher's miners' strike rhetoric (Reicher & Hopkins, 1995) and Erdoğan's meeting speeches. They both equate the public with their parties and use a war metaphor ("we are fighting against...") in which democracy forces are fighting against undemocratic and/or illegal groups. What "we" refers in their statements is always vague strategically implying the government and the nation together at once. An apparent facilitating factor in this regard is the fact that AK Parti was then the ruling party and it represented a significant portion of the nation to imply such an equivalence.

Leaders also utilize norms to claim prototypicality and decrease their rivals' legitimacy in representing the public. Erdoğan defines *the nation as disapproving undemocratic and unpeaceful means*²⁸ and condemns his rivals for adhering to undemocratic and illegitimate power groups. For instance, Kurds as people longing for democracy, equality and freedom are expected to discredit Independents since they are regarded by Erdoğan to pursue undemocratic and illegal ways.

Because leaders try to appeal to the maximum portion of the targeted group, Erdoğan finds a way to include those who vote for Independents by passivizing their political will. He claims that Kurds are forced to vote for Independents since illegal groups are intimidating them to do so. Consequently, Erdoğan succeeds in supporting his argument that the nation (and Kurds as part of the nation) does not approve undemocratic and unpeaceful ways and negating Independents' representativeness claims, at the same time.

Another norm Erdoğan attributes to the audience is *the fondness of the national will* to which he implicitly equates AK Parti in his rhetoric. While in oppositionist parties' arguments this norm is cited under norms attributed to other categories (i.e. "politicians should respect the will of nation"), Erdoğan frames it as a national norm since national will implies more than just an ethical principle for him; it directly consolidates his party's ten-year-old governance. Accordingly, attempts to weaken the government can be portrayed as a violation of the nation's norm, another similarity with Thatcher's strategy (Reicher & Hopkins, 1995). He equates the party with the nation against the oppositionist groups, and aligns the public's will with his party's ideals.

²⁸ Attributed norms by party leaders will be italicized henceforth in order to ease the following of arguments.

Prototypicality claims are inherent in all national norm attributions but nation is not the only category that is invoked by leaders. Erdoğan also presents his party as *pursuing the benefit of the nation rather personal interests*. His party's politicians maintain a "service politics" which prioritizes the nation's interest over their political and personal interests. Other parties are charged with practicing "exploitation politics" by prioritizing their own self-interests.

The way AK Parti attributes norms to the nation and how it equates itself with it have started to be deconstructed, recently. Ali Topuz, a columnist in a Turkish newspaper "Radikal", claims that the assigned norms which the government utilize when seeking support from the public (e.g. a democratic, freedom-loving nation) does not overlap with those norms it intends to instill in the nation (e.g. avoiding protest against government policies²⁹) (Topuz, 2012). In other words, when the very characteristics Erdoğan attributes to the nation so as to mobilize them in favor of his policies are taken up by the public (e.g. if they protest in order to demand justice or democracy), it immediately results in their exclusion from the nation. Moreover, Topuz asserts that the manner in which Erdoğan draws the boundaries between "us" (i.e. the nation) and "them" (i.e. the opposition) is based on his strategic concerns paralleling G. W. Bush's well-known depiction: "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists". Therefore, it might be fair to say, how AK Parti employs the strategy of using the nation's norms and boundaries to provide support is revealed, particularly by people from the opposition.

Another columnist in the same newspaper asserts that Erdoğan categorizes everyone criticizing his party's policies and practice as public enemies, elitists, pro-coup or conspirators delegitimizing their rhetoric as against to the nation's will

²⁹ See the analysis about the "Hopa incident".

(Öğünç, 2012). She insists that those who are rhetorically excluded from Erdoğan's nation definition are also fellow nationals, indeed, and they are not so few in numbers. Apart from its political weight, this argument is a clear illustration of uncovering the strategic use of social categories. Öğünç also performs a rhetoric that can be called as "counter-national categorization" in which those who are rhetorically excluded and minimized reclaim their place in the nation.

While AK Parti's rhetoric included small diversions from an orthodox understanding of the Turkish national identity, MHP leader strictly defended the constitutional attributes of the nation and based his arguments almost completely on the inappropriateness of Erdoğan's take on the Kurdish issue.

4.2 MHP: Bahçeli's Rhetoric

MHP leader Bahçeli makes a nation definition in which national, territorial, religious, cultural, historical and symbolic (i.e. the national flag) unity is present as if he is quoting from the founding fathers of the nation-state. According to him, differences in the places where one is born, sects or ethnical background are not decisive in defining someone's national status. By trivializing the diversity for the sake of claimed unity he excludes everyone from the nation definition who might argue otherwise. In other words, posing an alternative configuration is enough to be exempt from the nation category in Bahçeli's rhetoric. Needless to say this nation definition overlaps perfectly with the party's collective objective that depicts a unified nation regardless of its 'trivial' differences.

Leaders tend to take categories for granted to render their boundaries and contents natural to the target audience. During a period when the place of Kurdish identity within Turkish nation is being publicly debated, Bahçeli chooses to take it as a given (e.g. "you are honorable members of this nation). He uses the word "Kurd"

only twice and only in Diyarbakır making it difficult to appeal to the Kurdish population in terms of prototypicality. His configuration of the nation concentrates on attributed commonalities rather than claimed differences. Therefore, those who stress the distinctness of their ethnicity, sect or ideology may easily fall outside the terrains of his nation boundaries.

Bahçeli differs from Erdoğan's prototypicality claims since he portrays himself as an exhorter not as someone among the nation. He is also not particularly interested in attributing national norms, which are in fact extremely influential in claiming representativeness. The norm he attributes to the nation category throughout meeting speeches is the *will to live together*. Although this norm perfectly parallels his party's collective ideals thus supports the main argument of this analysis, it remains weaker in unifying the nation around norms. Bahçeli's nation construction involves people who have consensualized only in staying together. Lacking norms to strategically capture Kurdish people's demands, Bahçeli's rhetoric becomes somewhat ill structured in creating supporters of its cause in the eastern region and it renders other parties' collective projects more agreeable than that of MHP.

The category triggered by Bahçeli other than the national one is the politician category. According to Bahçeli *politicians should benefit their nations' not their own interests*. AK Parti is portrayed as an organization composed of people who exploit their power to gain wealth and are indifferent to the public's needs. The nation's interests, therefore, are positioned in contrast to AK Parti's interests. Describing the contest as such is intended to decrease AK Parti's prototypicality and render MHP as its alternative.

Contrary to Erdoğan, Bahçeli rationalize the different political choices people may possess. He asserts that politicians should *respect the will of nation* no matter

who might be the outcome. This category argument is intended to increase his representativeness as a disciplined politician.

When defining the nation, Bahçeli fails to appeal to an audience which is known to hold serious reservations for an orthodox understanding of Turkish national attributes. Moreover, his use of national norms (i.e. “will to live together”) only serves to reinforce his national boundary definition which is rigid in essence. Since Bahçeli chooses to maintain such an “official language” in defining the nation, he falls short to relay a strong sense of prototypicality, a sense of “one of us”, in the audience.

Kılıçdaroğlu’s rhetoric, on the other hand, is more advantageous in this regard since he reframes the demands of the Kurdish population as in line with the universal and humanitarian values; therefore he wards off the danger of marginalizing his audience. Moreover, Kılıçdaroğlu’s uses of strategies to rhetorically include Kurds into the nation definition are more varied than the leader of MHP.

4.3 CHP: Kılıçdaroğlu’s Rhetoric

Erdoğan bases his nation definition on the commonality of religion, and Bahçeli derives nationhood from shared history and culture. Kılıçdaroğlu attributes citizenship as the basis of nationhood. Regardless of ethnicity, religion, sect and political view, people derive their nationalities out of their citizenship.

In CHP’s rhetoric, the unifying role of religion is acknowledged in a cultural sense rather than being a dominant force in binding the nation as in Erdoğan’s rhetoric. Kılıçdaroğlu uses teachings of Islam only to infer respect for the human kind and equality among the creations of God. However, he makes no deviations from the basic commonalities of the nation also cited by other leaders. In fact, he

criticizes Erdoğan for blaming other politicians of not defending the land, the flag and the official language because Kılıçdaroğlu regards these attributes to be the given characteristics of the nation. Thus, he implicitly excludes those who might have differing understandings related to the boundaries of the nation. As for another important issue of debate, Kılıçdaroğlu acknowledges Kurdish language and condemns the prohibition of its use because he regards it as the violation of a freedom as it was in Erdoğan's arguments.

The norms Kılıçdaroğlu attributes to the nation resemble Erdoğan's rhetoric since *the nation is regarded to be fond of democracy, freedom, peace and justice*. He utilizes the same set of norms to assert a completely opposite objective than Erdoğan's. In Kılıçdaroğlu's speeches, Erdoğan and his party constitute an impediment in the way of a democratic, free, peaceful and fair country while CHP offers a collective project aiming precisely these values. The nation is portrayed to possess these norms so that Kılıçdaroğlu can utilize them to decrease Erdoğan's prototypicality because his party's policies are portrayed in direct contrast with the nation's norms.

The use of "new CHP" frame enables Kılıçdaroğlu to make shifts in issues which his predecessors were not willing to tackle like national definition, civil rights and citizenship. Considering the fact that the Kurdish issue revolves around these themes for the last ten years, it is safe to say Kılıçdaroğlu uses this new frame to appeal to the Kurdish audience and to rhetorically include them in the nation category as members of the nation longing for democracy and justice. Once again, boundaries of the nation and the attached national norms are accorded with the political projects of the party.

There are instances where Kılıçdaroğlu's national norms are strengthened with the norms he attributes to politicians. According to Kılıçdaroğlu, the Turkish nation is *an industrious nation* but AK Parti lacks the intention and the governance skills to provide people with opportunities to produce and prosper. In fact, politicians of AK Parti do not take *the nation's interests before their self-interests*, violating a norm that Kılıçdaroğlu claims politicians should possess. Therefore, exploiting the already limited sources of an "industrious nation", AK Parti is argued to be lacking representativeness for the nation.

CHP leader uses "KCK Case" in his rhetoric like Erdoğan does; however, he presents the case through a completely different perspective. According to Kılıçdaroğlu, Erdoğan does not *respect the will of nation*, a norm all politicians should abide, since he politically approves the detention of "elected representatives" of the nation. It is rare for a mainstream politician to treat the KCK case as a violation of national will, because the trial appears to aim the urban branch of PKK and portrayed to be against terrorism. Treating the detainees as the democratically elected representatives of the nation supports Kılıçdaroğlu's promise of a more democratic, free and fair country in the eyes of the Kurdish population, at least for Kurds who selected those mayors in the first place.

It is worthwhile to note once more how different leaders portray the norm of "national will" in line with their political objectives. In turn, this serves to strengthen the leaders' prototypicality claims. Erdoğan uses it as a national norm from which he claims prototypicality at the nation level, Bahçeli attributes it to politicians to declare political integrity and Kılıçdaroğlu ascribes it to politicians in order to condemn AK Parti for not respecting the will of nation it has long favored as a political argument.

Kılıçdaroğlu resembles Bahçeli in his rhetoric of attributing politicians the norm of *prioritizing the nation's interest*. They both claim that AK Parti has grown into a club of rich partisans who are indifferent to the public's needs and are merely concerned with maintaining the power by which they strengthen their socio-economic status in the society. These two opposition leaders try to decrease AK Parti's representativeness by claiming that it violates the very principle of politics, i.e. serving one's country.

Kılıçdaroğlu's attempts of including the Kurdish population both in terms of national boundaries, national and other category norms are strengthened by his use of universal norms. Unlike other two leaders, Kılıçdaroğlu uses universal humanitarian values when declaring support for human rights, minorities and the Kurdish question. Reference to universal values, especially in meeting speeches, is a rare practice for mainstream politics in Turkey. Kılıçdaroğlu might be intending to arouse a moral obligation in the audience and strengthen the citizenship superordinate category, which is ideally not defined by religion, ethnicity or a political ideology. By utilizing universal norms, Kılıçdaroğlu achieves two things. First, he appeals to the Kurdish population that actively seeks political solution regarding the issues of citizenship and collective rights. Second, he legitimizes his rhetoric with the universally accepted norms of humanity. However, it is important to note the fewness of universal norms in the sub-sample, even for CHP's meeting speeches.

The absence of universal norms in AK Parti and MHP relates both to their political stance which is conservative in nature and the relative inefficiency of universal arguments in claiming national representativeness. According to Reicher et al. (2006), most people do not perceive the world in universal terms due to the way they experience the world. In other words, articulation of societal issues with

universal concepts may not be accessible for most people not because they lack intelligence but because the world is organized around nation-states. As social identity tradition has long argued, people behave in accordance with the category salient in their surroundings. Universal categories are simply not present in people's lives; they are more accustomed to national references (Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1994). Therefore, using universal norms may not be as successful as national ones since national categories enable leaders to mobilize an audience who has socialized into a nation and who experiences the world through one. Consequently, although it may sound politically correct to claim universal norms for defending human rights, it may not provide the identity entrepreneur, Kılıçdaroğlu in this case, with the support he needs.

4.4 Implications of the Findings

It is apparent from the current analysis that drawing the boundaries of the nation and attributing norms to it and to other categories in order to infer prototypicality is at the center of election campaign speeches where the aim is to gain public support in favor of one's policies. Politicians, as effective identity entrepreneurs, try to construct a nation that happens to possess the very characteristics they desire to mobilize people with. The widespread usage of the national category in the documents and the nation's role in including/excluding certain others is not accidental; it is related with the intended audience to be mobilized. In other words, leaders frequently use the nation category because they want the support of an entire electorate.

However, it does not mean that other categories more specific than the nation like class, religion and ethnicity cannot be used as means of mobilization. In certain contexts, using more superordinate categories may suffice to earn the audience's

alliance. In fact, the strong support that the leaders in this analysis put on the unity of the nation may be deriving from this understanding. For instance, in a country where local governance is strengthened, politicians may use ethnic or religious categories to mobilize the masses around their cause. In other words, a change in the administrative system (say local self-governments) may take away all advantages of the national category arguments held by mainstream politicians and replace them with more sectional ones.

Current analysis implicitly reveals certain givens and deviations related to the Turkish nation category. For instance, none of the parties argue that Kurds are not included in the Turkish nation. Their place in the nation definition is not contested by any of the leaders; instead leaders frequently attempt to depict a nation based on certain commonalities which are claimed to be shared also by Kurds. One deviation from the official discourse of the state, which was sustained until recently, is that none of the leaders, even the ultra-nationalistic leader Bahçeli, attempts to describe Kurds as being Turks. All political party leaders accept the existence of Kurdish minority.

It is crucial to see that three leaders also do not differ in the claimed unity of the state, the flag and the official language. Rhetorically speaking, these characteristics constitute the core commonalities of Turkish nation and claiming them provides politicians a guaranteed source of legitimacy. Therefore, the consensus on these attributes does not necessarily mean that they are the very material on which the Turkishness is built; it only implies the Turkish nation is argued on these grounds for strategic purposes at this time and this context in history.

On the other hand, arguing for a unified nation provides certain advantages to politicians. For instance, Erdoğan describes a nation having a will that is

homogeneous –and in favor of his party. In other words, he defines the nation as a unified entity in order to attribute a monolith will to it and this will *obviously* approves his policies. It creates an easy line of reasoning: “You are one as a nation, you value your will, your will is our party, therefore you should agree with our policies”. This monolithic nation argument eases the delegitimization of the arguments of those who oppose its policies.

Leaders’ other category norms are unexceptionally composed of the politician category. The dominance of the use of politician norms in both claiming representativeness and weakening the rival’s prototypicality claims might be argued to result from practice employed in Turkish politics. In campaign speeches, or any other propaganda speech for that matter, leaders highlight their parties’ services and representativeness while they accuse the opponent parties for violating ethical norms of politics or exploiting the sources of the nation. Discussions are rarely issue-based; the rhetoric generally lacks parties’ trajectories regarding the country’s political and societal problems. This creates a rather apolitical ground on which the people of the country are led into choosing the best “server” rather than deciding between ways of doing politics.

The intended collective project determines the claimed exemplary member of the category in terms of norms and boundaries therefore the rhetorical analysis of social categories is crucial to reveal such interests. Erdoğan’s “Muslim national” or Kılıçdaroğlu’s “citizen” points to certain political trajectories; that is to say they are political projects rather than reflections of the nature of the nation. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the ways social categories are constructed by identity entrepreneurs since taking these categories for granted might end up in rendering them natural (Reicher, 2004).

The expectation of a new civil constitution in Turkey carries several implications about this process. Apart from its limiting implications regarding human rights (Özbudun, 2007), the constitution prepared by the generals of the 1982 military coup could also not provide an all-inclusive text in which different segments of the society would be incorporated as the Turkish nation. Consequently, how the nation is defined in the new constitution will be a highly debated topic; that is there will be a rhetorical struggle over the national identity definition. It is important to ask how come different parties have different constructions when speaking of the same national category. The answer lies, as it has been throughout the analysis, in the difference of political parties' collective projects, which in turn determines the frame of the national boundaries and national norms.

Regarding the issue of prototypicality, this study emphasized the strategic use of norms in claiming one's prototypicality. However it might be too assertive to argue that leaders' representativeness are formed only through their norm constructions. There are various reasons why people might find certain leaders as representative starting from their public images like being married and their personal characteristics³⁰ to the clothes they wear. CHP and AK Parti leaders probably were aware of the influence of local symbols in implying prototypicality; thus they always wore mufflers belonging to the football team of the city to which they gave speeches.

4.5 Limitations and Further Directions

There are certain limitations to the current analysis one of which is the inability of categorization processes in explaining all there is to know about mobilization. Constructions of social categories hint their strategic purpose in

³⁰ The 10th president of the Republic of Turkey, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, was frequently praised by the public for his economical spending in the presidential residence.

rendering certain outcomes though they do not guarantee that the public internalizes these categories. For instance, in crafting a new framework for CHP, Kılıçdaroğlu incorporates universal norms in defending human rights and differences in political view though it cannot be claimed that the targeted audience internalizes this framework and act accordingly. It requires different methods to assert such a conclusion such as surveying people about their motivations in choosing a certain party, comparing their national definition constructions with those of the relevant parties they support and systematically manipulating category definitions to inquire their effects. However, these attempts would only reveal the dynamics of category constructions; they do not explain the preponderance of national category constructions in public speeches, which the current study has aimed to tackle in line with the previous research (Reicher et al., 2006).

Another limitation is related to the lack of Independents' rhetoric in the analysis. Although it resulted from reasons that were beyond the researcher's control, it constituted a weakness in the study. Examining a different context might enable future studies to analyze Independents', or the Kurdish political movement's highly pivotal national categorization processes.

SAGA method, which has first been employed on schismatic groups' arguments (Reicher & Sani, 1998), has been used on competing though not necessarily antagonistic groups in the current study. Schismatic groups possess completely opposite views on a certain topic, thus the argument structure of these groups may seem like the mirror images of each other's. Therefore, an argument in one's rhetoric is usually reversed in the other, depicting mutually exclusive argumentation structures.

However AK Parti, MHP and CHP do not present such a structure in comparison to each other since they are political rivals but not exactly antagonistic groups. In the current analysis of their rhetoric, norms were sometimes used as interchangeably such that the very same statement could be named either as a national norm or as a norm attributed to some other category depending on the context. In fact, an extract arguing the will of nation referred both to the “democratic nation” and “politicians should benefit their nation” norms of CHP in the analysis depending on the context. Therefore, examining the excerpts out of their contexts may have seriously restrained the current analysis. The study necessitated an acculturated eye seeking the implications of leaders’ utterances because the influence of the context, of a previous sentence or even a pause between sentences were critical; so the process was highly interpretative paralleling Reicher et al.’s study on Bulgarian Jews (2006).

Future studies should compare cases where leaders might pursue different national categorization processes or divergent depictions of the context. The 2002 General Elections, the 2007 Local Elections, and 2010 Constitutional Referendum are all convenient cases in which leaders have pursued different outcomes, thus engaged in concordant category constructions. This study might provide the comparison point for such potential research.

Since the Kurdish issue is and will be an important venue for struggles over national identity, the rhetoric of the Kurdish political movement should be incorporated in future studies inquiring the strategic usage of social categories in Turkey. Lay perceptions of ordinary citizens regarding national constructions may also be examined since the scope of internalization of identity entrepreneurs’ rhetoric by the public remains an under-researched area in the previous literature.

4.6 Concluding Remarks

Stressing the rhetorical dimension of category definitions is crucial because social categories are argued by leaders who wish to mobilize masses in line with collective projects. They are, in a way, are tools for social change since people act on through their perceptions of the salient social identities. There are not real boundaries or norms inherent to a homogenized group of people, social constructions are attributed so as to achieve certain outcomes. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand constructions of social categories in order depict the intended mobilization.

It is immensely important to study the continuity in life; that is the lack of change and how people maintain a stable worldview by justifying the system they live in. However, focusing only on stability may lead researchers to essentialize and naturalize the category definitions which would prevent the facilitation of social change in return. Going back to the starting point of this analysis and through a forty-year-old work in social identity tradition; it is crucial to examine the dynamics of social change. As long as category definitions are perceived to be stable and read through the context, they will work to passivize people into accepting the reality as it is; although in fact they are constantly reconstructed by identity entrepreneurs.

The current analysis' focus is on the power of categories upon reality though it does not imply the absence of a reverse operation; that is the influence of social reality on social categories. The emphasis on the category definitions was made to address the human agency in altering the social sphere (Subašić, Reynolds, Reicher, & Klandermans, 2012) and social psychologists are pivotal agents of this process whose attempts in revealing the rhetorical dimension of social categories will hopefully enable a critical eye in accepting category definitions.

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APPENDIX A

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı : OKUYAN
Adı : MUKADDER
Bölümü : PSİKOLOJİ

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: