

**State Ideology and the Kurds in Turkey**

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## **Abstract**

This article evaluates theories of nationalism by examining the formation of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey. It deals particularly with different manifestations of the contemporary Kurdish question and provides an account for the late development of nationalism in the Kurdish regions of the country. It situates the Kurdish experience within the broader experience of the post-Ottoman world and analyzes the awakening of Kurdish national identity among broader segments of the population. It provides an alternative to Ernest Gellner's functionalist account of nationalism and industrialization by stressing the link between state policies and minority nationalism. It considers the political, psychological and other implications of state repression as well as the opportunities created in the diaspora or through external intervention. It argues that state policies in Turkey did not prevent and even contributed to the rise of minority nationalism. Finally, the article raises two interrelated questions: what types of nationalism have Kurds developed under conditions of limited expression and what options for conflict resolution are present particularly in light of Turkey's EU accession process.

Keywords: Turkey, Kurds, nationalism, minority rights, EU, Ernest Gellner

## **Introduction**

The Kurdish minority issue in Turkey has often been sidelined by other pressing issues in the Middle East. With few exceptions, theories of nationalism have also paid little attention to the Kurdish case,<sup>1</sup> even though Kurds are a puzzling case in the study of contemporary nationalism. While smaller and less ‘privileged’ groups in the late Ottoman Empire have developed national ideologies and programs earlier, the Kurds demonstrated a remarkable resistance to the ideology of nationalism. As Kurds are the “fourth largest ethnic group” in the Middle East, this ethnonationalist delay as well as the subsequent rise of violent forms of nationalism in Turkey pose a puzzle for theories of nationalism. This article addresses the experience of the Kurds, situating it within the contemporary politics of neighboring societies in the post-Ottoman world. In particular, the article demonstrates the dialectic nature of nationalism as a response to state policies and ideologies, suggesting the need for merging ideas and institutions in the study of the politics of nationalism.

## **Late Development of Nationalism**

The Kurds could fall into Miroslav Hroch’s category of “nations without history” defined as those nations “which had at no time in their pre-capitalist past been the repositories of an independent political formation.”<sup>2</sup> Experiencing a sense of unique history is one of the raw materials (but not a sufficient or necessary condition) for the construction of a modern national identity. As Elie Kedourie demonstrates the appeal to the past underlines the doctrine of nationalists and nationalism: “every nation is defined by its past and therefore must have a past to be defined by”.<sup>3</sup> Memories of previous statehood can be easily used to mobilize populations.<sup>4</sup> Examples include groups who have lost their statehood in modern times, such as Poland, or much earlier, such as Serbia, without losing the memory of once being masters of their own destiny. Such groups can *ceteris paribus* be more easily “awakened” to nationalism.

This is not the case with the Kurds, who did not possess a state of their own<sup>5</sup> and whose historic tradition intermingled with their neighbors. They enjoyed great military reputation as mercenaries in the regional empires of the Arabs, the Persians and the Ottomans. King Saladin was of Kurdish origin, but at same time, a hero in Islamic history who defeated the Crusaders and liberated Jerusalem from the Franks in 1187. According to McDowall, it is unlikely that Saladin or his fellow warriors ever thought of a Kurdish political identity: “Had his Kurdish identity been relevant to him it is unlikely that he would have given the fertile Shahrizur plain in the heart of Kurdistan as a fiefdom to one of his Turkish *mamluks*.”<sup>6</sup> During Ottoman times, the Kurds participated in the administration of the Ottoman Empire as Muslims and enjoyed a substantial degree of autonomy. Joining the Turkish national movement seemed to be the preferred option for most Kurds even until the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

Today, there are approximately 20-25 million ethnic Kurds scattered across various countries in the Middle East,<sup>8</sup> while the area of Kurdistan comprises the border areas of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. Despite their numbers, geography did not favor the early formation of national identity among the Kurds. Partition of territory and the inaccessibility of Kurdish lands from the West, seaports, and main urban centers of the region could partly explain why the Kurds are late-comers in the development of a national identity compared with both Muslims and Christians in the late Ottoman Empire.<sup>9</sup> Almost half of the ethnic Kurds live in Southeast Turkey with others in northern Iraq, northwestern Iran (plus an enclave in the northwestern part of the country), and small parts of northern Syria. The Kurds generally oppose geographic terms such as Southeast Turkey or Northern Iraq and lament the “partition” of geographic Kurdistan – as in many conflicts around the world, one nation’s legitimate contemporary border is another’s partition of a historic homeland.

The Kurds account for around 23 percent of the population of Turkey, but their reproductive rate is arguably double that of ethnic Turks, an important factor for the future of the Kurdish problem in Turkey.<sup>10</sup> The overwhelming majority of Kurds are Muslim with the exception of a few Christian, Jewish and Yazidi communities. Almost 75 percent are Sunni, like the majority of the Turks and Arabs, while the rest are Shia, like most Iranians.

While closer to their Turkish and Arab neighbors in terms of religion, the Kurds are closer to the Persians in language. The Kurdish dialects (or languages) belong to the Indo-European family, and they are related to Farsi, the official language of Iran. The main division among the Kurdish dialects is between northern Kurmanji and southern Surani to the south of the Turkish-Iraqi border, providing a linguistic division that does not affect the Kurds of Turkey. There are also communities of predominantly Zaza speakers in Turkey who are mostly Shia (usually referred to as Kurdish Alevites) and communities of Gurani speakers in Iran. In ethnographic terms, then, there are differences between Kurdish communities, however the latter are also significantly different from their Turkish, Arab and Persian neighbors.<sup>11</sup>

The public use of any Kurdish dialect, whether the prevailing Kurmanji or the less-prominent Zaza, has been discouraged, even prohibited, in Turkey. The Turkish State has denied basic human rights to its Kurdish-speaking citizens by banning publication of books and newspapers, television broadcasting, religious preaching and education in their native tongue. One justification for this was the lack of a standardized Kurdish language – also an explanation for the late development of a Kurdish national movement, since a common language enables a higher degree of communication with the members of the group while excluding outsiders.<sup>12</sup> The prohibition of the public use of any form of Kurdish was a major impediment for the dissemination of nationalist ideas, but the long-term consequences were positive: the

argumentation of the Turkish state created a strong incentive among Kurdish intellectuals to unite and select Kurmanji as the language of the Kurds. According to Martin Van Bruinessen, the number of Kurmanji speakers has significantly increased over the past decades, especially among those who opt for Kurdish identity but have Turkish, Zaza or a nonstandard Kurmanji dialect as their first language.<sup>13</sup>

The majority of the Kurds in Turkey, especially the urbanized ones or those who have gone to school or completed their military service, are bilingual. However, language has a complex symbolic and emotional character that goes beyond its primary role as an instrument of daily communication. As the Irish case suggests, proficiency in one language should not be confused with linguistic or ethnic identity unless a person has an integrative attitude towards this language, which implies identification with other speakers.<sup>14</sup> The personal profiles of the leaders of the PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan- Kurdistan Workers' Party) suggest a high level of proficiency in Turkish and assimilation to the Turkish culture. Apparently, proficiency in Turkish did not correspond with identification with Turkey itself. McDowall implies that the danger of complete assimilation and the loss of spoken Kurdish among the founding members of the Kurdish national movement accentuated their intensity of national feelings.<sup>15</sup> Thus, although the systematic effort to enforce Turkish among the Kurds was largely successful, it did not lead to the Turkification of the Kurdish segment of the population in national terms.

Yet the case of Ziya Gökalp, the major exponent of Turkish nationalism in the Republican period, demonstrates that assimilation was successful to a certain degree. Gökalp was most likely of Kurdish origin, born in Diyarbakir, the largest urban center in the region. In his work Gökalp tried to reconcile his vision of Turan with the reality of the Ottoman world, and primarily with Islam, which had been the common bond between Kurds, Turks and others in the Empire.<sup>16</sup> Although he recognized the existence of a distinct Kurdish ethnicity, he considered himself a Turk because of his

upbringing. During the Turkish War of Independence, a significant number of Kurds joined the troops of Mustafa Kemal who repeatedly appealed for Kurdo-Turkish unity. The religious connection was not the only reason for the absence of a strong Kurdish national movement during this period: rivalries between different Kurdish groups (primarily Alevi and Sunni), the fear of Armenian expansion against Kurdish-populated areas, and the low expectations of international support for an independent Kurdish state demobilized ethnic activists and diverted local support towards Atatürk's forces.<sup>17</sup>

Only in the 1930s did Kurdish intellectuals start making a systematic effort to produce knowledge about the Kurdish people to serve the purposes of a national movement;<sup>18</sup> as part of this effort, the first history of the Kurds in Kurdish appeared in 1936.<sup>19</sup> But during the following decades, the Kurdish national movement struggled to assert itself in an environment that had ceased to recognize a variety of other identities, such as ethnicity, religion, tribe or class. It also faced the new conditions implied by the establishment of the Turkish Republic and the hegemonic discourse surrounding the homogenization of its population. In other words, Kurdish nationalism missed the critical moment of national formation in the late Ottoman Empire and subsequently confronted a more repressive and organized state ideology in the Republican era.

Unlike its Ottoman predecessor, modern Turkey was apprehensive of expressions of ethnic particularism, and it aspired to full homogenization (Turkification) of its citizens. Atatürk dropped his references to Kurds and partly influenced by Gökalp, developed a cultural form of Turkish nationalism based on education. However, the effects of assimilation through learning (like those of language) were not always the expected ones. In fact, the roots of many post-Ottoman conflicts lie not in exclusion and oppositional nationalist programs but in ambitious efforts to forcibly integrate and culturally assimilate unwilling "half-others."<sup>20</sup> For

instance, the essence of the Macedonian or Kurdish conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not the exclusiveness of neighboring nationalisms, but the involuntary incorporation of unwilling inhabitants into competing national programs.<sup>21</sup>

McDowall points to the mixed effects of education. On the one hand, some intellectuals opted for Turkish nationalism. One intellectual in the late 1950s, Şerif Firat, argued that the Kurds were of Turkish origin and there was no such a thing as a Kurdish nation. Firat's arguments were convincing to the public and Turkish political elites because he was a Kurd by birth.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, some Kurds developed a distinct identity when they had their first contact with ethnic Turks. Another prominent Kurd, Mahmut Altunaker, had a complete different reaction and developed a sense of Kurdish identity after he left his native Mardin for Adana: "Until I arrived in Kutahya I did not know I was Kurdish. We used to throw stones at those calling us Kurds in Diyarbakir. We came to Kutahya and they called us Kurds. They baited us with 'Where is your tail?' Going to school was an ordeal. Then we understood our villagers were right, we were Kurds."<sup>23</sup>

Martin Van Bruinessen records the transformation among Kurdish nationalists who thought of themselves as Turks until university or even later. Like Altunaker, they discovered their Kurdish identity when they met "real" Turks. Until this time, many copied the manners and the style of the Turkish culture and were, at least at some point in their lives, admirers of Atatürk.<sup>24</sup> Abdullah Öcalan, the founder and leader of PKK, was rejected for a military scholarship, expelled from a Turkish University because of his political ideas and later on broke ties with the Turkish Left which he accused of chauvinism.<sup>25</sup> He perceived his exclusion from social and political opportunities as proof of his people's impotency although himself was a native speaker of Turkish and according to his own account he had no previous attachment to Kurdish nationalism.<sup>26</sup>

As suggested by Kedourie, similar stories are found elsewhere in Eastern Europe, indeed all over the colonial world.<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly, there are reactionary or dissatisfied individuals including intellectuals who reject the culture of their oppressors and establish the intellectual and institutional foundations of new national movements. Their ideas do not remain confined to the circle of intellectuals but with the spread of literacy they reach broader segments of the population.<sup>28</sup>

### **Megalomaniacs and Ruritians: Ernest Gellner**

The question of assimilation is a central theme of Ernest Gellner's constructivist approach and his thought-provoking parable of megalomania.<sup>29</sup> Gellner rejects primordialism which derived consciousness from "assumed givens" of social existence such as region, kin, religion, language, and social practices. He criticizes even moderate variations which derive modern nations from pre-existing ethnic ties.<sup>30</sup> In his view, nationalism is a function of modern industrial society where the needs for skilled labor necessitate the development of cultivated, standardized, education-based, literate cultures. The conditions of industrialization, however, are often uneven and disproportionately affect multinational entities, or as he terms it, the "Empire of Megalomania," represented in the current case by the Ottoman Empire or Modern Turkey. Many people living in Gellner's hypothetical Empire, mostly peasants, could not avail themselves of a standardized language. But the demands of an industrial economy favored homogeneity, and soon the Ruritanian people (the Kurds) were forced into closer contact with the Megalomanian culture through labor migration, and in the case of Turkey, bureaucratic employment. Their contacts with other cultures taught them that they were different and that their culture mattered in their daily survival. The Ruritians soon learnt to distinguish between the hostility of the aliens and the friendliness of their co-nationals in the Megalomanian cities. Faced with conditions of discrimination, some assimilated to the dominant culture. No

genetically transmitted trait and no deep religious custom differentiated them from the Megalomanians. Others turned to their Ruritanian background, and deplored the discrimination to which their co-nationals were subject and their alienation from their national culture. This led to the foundation of the Ruritanian national program.

As stated above, Gellner's framework is a useful tool in an examination of the Kurds. Gellner like his contemporaries including Kedourie were right in viewing nationalisms as a reaction or product of imitation of other nationalisms. However, what is rather debatable in Gellner's thesis is the strict dichotomy of two options: nationalist secession or assimilation. Could the Ruritanians, in fact, have survived in the Empire of Megalomania without sacrificing the essentials of their Ruritanian background? Are the two identities mutually exclusive or is there a space for multiple identities? Paul Magocsi suggests that between the purists at one end of the spectrum and the assimilators at the other, are the "adaptors": "those individuals who are able to assess the social and political realities in which they live and, after doing so, try to accommodate to those realities without necessarily surrendering the essentials of their own religious and national identities."<sup>31</sup> The question that unavoidably emerges is who constrains adaptation and why certain minority groups do not successfully adapt within specific political and cultural limitations.

Also problematic is Gellner's reliance on industrialization as the cause of nationalism despite a number of cases where nationalism existed before industrialization (e.g. the Balkans) or long after (the emergence of new national movements in the United Kingdom, Spain, Canada and Switzerland). His apolitical approach leaves little space for the role of state institutions in the formation, and gradual adaptation of national identities. In Gellner's Megalomania, people discriminate against each other's groups, thereby affecting their national orientation. For example, Ruritanians "soon learned the difference between dealing with a co-national, one understanding and sympathizing with their culture, and someone hostile

to it.”<sup>32</sup> However, Gellner does not say how state institutions affect discrimination between groups and under what conditions this discrimination can lead to hostility. Indeed, Kurdish nationalists usually pay less emphasis on the problems they face with fellow-citizens of Turkish background and most of often claim state repression and discrimination as the lead causes of conflict.<sup>33</sup>

### **State Ideology and Nationalism in Turkey**

Until the 1990s, the official position of the Turkish state was to negate the existence of a separate Kurdish ethnicity in Turkey, and Kurds suffered from cultural, political and economic repression. Mesut Yeğen who has examined the Kurdish question from the point of view of contemporary Turkish state discourse, argues that the Turkish state has consistently avoided the “Kurdishness” of the Kurdish question, preferring to refer to it as an issue of tribal resistance or regional backwardness, never as an ethno-political question. The Kurdish question has typically been identified with the “past” not the “present,” “tradition” not “modernity,” and “political and economic resistance of the periphery” not “national integration.”<sup>34</sup>

The media have repeatedly condemned the “failure of a succession of Turkish governments to prepare a master development plan for the Southeast to dry up the ‘PKK marsh land’ and eliminate the economic and political conditions which prepare a soil conducive to terrorism.”<sup>35</sup> Indeed, support for Kurdish cultural and political rights has been associated with terrorism. For a short period between 1991 and 1993 HEP, the People’s Labor Party (a party largely supported by the Kurdish electorate) took seats in the Turkish parliament. Of the 18 representatives of the Kurds, one was subsequently murdered, four have been imprisoned, and six were forced to flee the country.<sup>36</sup> A well-known case of imprisonment was Leyla Zana, wife of Mehdi Zana, the elected mayor of Diyarbakir who was himself imprisoned after the coup of 1980. Leyla Zana served time in prison on charges of treason and cooperation with the

PKK. She had previously caused reactions for using Kurdish in the Turkish parliament and informing the US Congress's Helsinki Commission about human rights violations in the country.

Shortly before the closure of HEP, Kurdish MPs tried to stir up a debate in the Turkish parliament concerning Kurdish rights.<sup>37</sup> Central to this debate was the perception by majority Turks that their country was the exclusive homeland of and for Turks. More importantly, MPs associated multiculturalism with territorial threats to the country's integrity. When HEP MP Mahmut Alinak addressed the parliament on behalf of Kurdish-Turkishness, he was told that he was addressing the parliament on behalf of Apo (*nom de guerre* of Abdullah Öcalan).<sup>38</sup> Another Kurdish MP accused his Turkish colleagues of saying that in Turkey those who are not Turks have only the right to (i.e., must) keep silent.<sup>39</sup> Yet another complained that the Kurdish people were ignored and their language forbidden; nor were they accepted ideologically as part of the country. Those who tried to develop an understanding of democracy and freedom, he concluded, were accused of being the dividers of the country, and seriously penalized.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, Turkey was portrayed by parliamentarians as facing an international conspiracy dismissing completely any legitimate normative claim made by moderate Kurds. Even the leader of the moderate Leftist party SHP, Erdal İnönü, saw both the UN and Europe as part of a conspiracy against Turkey, while other MPs called for unity and asked the people to unite against external forces trying to divide the country.<sup>41</sup> Generally speaking, these comments resonated in Turkey's national security fears (the "Sèvres Syndrome").<sup>42</sup> According to Ersel Aydinli, Turkish fears of being dismembered as a country have often been bolstered by references to the aborted Sèvres treaty of 1920 that attempted to divide the Anatolian lands.<sup>43</sup> This point suggests that nationalism apart from its modernist function has broader

security/military functions in states seeing themselves as vulnerable to outside intervention even when human rights issues are raised in the public agenda.

To this point, human rights were seen as “destroying the national treasure of Turkey,” the country was “standing on a ‘satanic triangle’ with enemies trying to divide it along Sunni-Alevi lines” while the EU was “trying to separate Turkey and turn third-world countries into weak entities.”<sup>44</sup> Active policymakers, saw also neighbours (particularly Greece and Syria in the 1990s) as a key cause of PKK terror. A hawkish conservative MP Kamran Inan, allegedly of Kurdish origin himself, argued in parliament that Turkey had two difficult neighbours, one in the West and one in the South. He went on to state: “The unchanging axis of Greek and Syrian foreign policies is Turkey and animosity towards the Turks.”<sup>45</sup> He even linked past ambitions of these neighbours with contemporary politics, arguing that “the one neighbour in the West has the *Megali Idea*<sup>46</sup> while the other Greater Syria.” Such fears led to hostility towards Greece and Syria, triggering counter-moves, including support for Kurdish nationalists feeding on the original fears – setting up a type of vicious cycle.<sup>47</sup> After the Öcalan arrest in 1999, Greece and Syria realized that they could not afford to play the Kurdish card any more, however soon after, the Iraqi war revived the regional dimension of the problem and Turkish fears of external interference by the US linked to a new anti-Americanism in the country’s popular culture.<sup>48</sup>

Once such constructions of political reality are made and priorities are set, it is very difficult and sometimes dangerous to challenge this now-hegemonic state ideology. Even so, as early as 1969, Turkish dissident İsmail Beşikçi turned the official presumption of established state discourse on its head by arguing that the Kurds, not yet a nation, would inevitably become one, once the feudal relations were dissolved.<sup>49</sup> Because of his openly-voiced opinions, Beşikçi lost his job at Erzurum Atatürk University and was imprisoned for 13 years. He received no support or

recognition from his colleagues: some even became witnesses for the prosecution, accusing him of communism and of propagating Kurdish propaganda in his lectures.<sup>50</sup> In the 1990s Doğu Ergil's surveys showed that the Kurds do not aim for statehood and that repression is unnecessary and counterproductive. Ergil became eventually a major target of criticism in the press and state policy circles for his reports.<sup>51</sup>

State repression weakened nation-wide political schemes which could potentially have attracted and strengthened the moderate Kurdish vote thereby integrating Kurds politically in the country's major political parties. The frequent coalitions between Catalan and mainstream political parties in Spain, the Indian National Congress Party in India and the Liberal party in Canada have all aimed to improve ethnic relations through a diverse membership.<sup>52</sup> These parties provided space for identity adaptation that Gellner tends to downplay in his metaphor of Megalomania and Ruritania and the implied stark choice between assimilation and minority nationalism. In the 1990s in Turkey, a coalition of this type could have taken place between the moderate left and moderate Kurd nationalists. Only by joining their numbers could either the moderate Turkish left or pro-Kurdish parties have entered parliament at this time. Such an alliance is today unimaginable as CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi- Republican People's Party) has assumed a nationalist position this decade and is now effectively eliminated from the electoral competition in the Kurdish districts.

Political Islam could provide another basis for cooperation with a view to enhancing nationalistic ambitions. As mentioned, religion formed the common bond between Muslims until the end of the Ottoman Empire when Gökald laid the foundations for modern Turkish ideology. The return of religion in Turkey has been manifested in the electoral programs of Adnan Menderes, Turgut Özal, and more recently Necmettin Erbakan and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who tried to adapt and synthesize religious and state principles, often triggering strong reactions from groups

apprehensive of the rising Islamic agenda in Turkish politics.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, religious parties have traditionally had stable support from the Kurdish populations in the Southeast, allowing space for political alliances beyond ethnicity and ethnic origin. Unfortunately, the Turkish State eliminated this option by suppressing religious parties, even banning from politics some of its more charismatic leaders and diminishing the options of ruling AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi- Justice and Development Party) while in power.

Against this background and in interaction with the hegemonic state ideology Kurdish nationalism finally began to develop, even though initial support was relatively insignificant. In his insightful contrast of Catalan and Basque nationalism, David Laitin discusses a similar point when he contrasts the violent struggle of the Basques with the non-violent struggle of the Catalans in Spain. He notes that the national feelings of the Catalans were stronger, and the relationship between violence and national identification was negative, leading him to conclude that the Basque secret organization ETA resorted to violence because of its failure to win mass support for its political agenda. ETA militants hoped by provoking the police to create a climate of terror and repression conducive to the dissemination of a nationalist program among the relatively passive Basque population.<sup>54</sup>

This applies to other cases, including the Turkish one. But unlike Spanish authorities, those in Turkey resorted to widespread counter-measures directed not only at the small group of people who opted for violent struggle but the entire population of the region.<sup>55</sup> According to a US State Department Report, Turkey has long denied the Kurdish population basic political, cultural, and linguistic rights, tolerated extra judicial killings and torture of civilians by the special police and paramilitaries and forcibly evacuated an estimated 560,000 people from their homes during the 1990s. Some non-governmental organizations put the number of evacuees as high as two million.<sup>56</sup> Even if these passive civilians did not welcome the Kurdish

PKK-led uprising, their subsequent treatment influenced their future national orientation.

More specifically, the politicization of ethnicity in Diyarbakir illustrates the effects of state repression on a passive population. During the 1990s, a significant number of homeless refugees ended up there – and never received compensation for their losses. Diyarbakir became the biggest city in Southeast Turkey, tripling in size over ten years and adding 600,000 new residents. During the 2009 municipal elections, the pro-Kurdish party DTP (Demokrat Türkiye Partisi- Democratic Turkey Party) won landslide victories in some districts. DTP's electoral success occurred even though some displaced persons have been returning to their villages and the region benefited from economic expansion during the years of AKP administration.

Ruling AKP competes for minority support and usually Kurds divide their votes between Kurdish DTP and AKP. Yet, state ideology becomes an obstacle in translating electoral competition into reasonable concessions of minority rights. Turkish state ideology frames the Kurdish minority issue in ways that stimulate actions that changed opportunity structures – setting in motion a type of self-fulfilling prophecy.<sup>57</sup> For instance, assessments of the PKK threat in Turkey and actions taken to counter these threats, made it more likely that the threat would indeed be realized. Of PKK, Turkish journalist Mehmet Ali Birand said as early as 1992 “We are harvesting what we have sown.”<sup>58</sup>

In the interviews conducted by the author most Turkish academics and journalists admitted the counterproductive nature of Turkey's Kurdish policies. What is also key in analyzing Turkey is to understand that state ideology is entrenched in institutions including military and judicial bodies that prevent reformulations of the national consensus even when key political figures realized the futility of state ideology. For instance, in early 2007, a Turkish prosecutor initiated a criminal inquiry against former President Kenan Evren<sup>59</sup> for suggesting that Turkey become a

federation.<sup>60</sup> Then, in 2009, President Abdullah Gül had to withdraw his use of the word “Kurdistan” after describing the administration in what Turkey officially refers to as Northern Iraq as Kurdistan.<sup>61</sup> Gül’s retraction as well as a threat to prosecute a former president and head of the Turkish military demonstrate how state ideology becomes entrenched in conflict prone societies. They also demonstrate the difficulties involved in reframing political discourses. Once a construction of reality is made and priorities are set, it is politically risky, often suicidal even for presidents and powerful former heads of the Turkish military to reconstruct these or to supplement them with new ones.

Another crucial dimension in the study of Kurdish nationalism involves the diaspora whose influence is generally undermined in most theories of nationalism. The conflict in the Kurdish region led to the creation of a sizeable Kurdish diaspora in Western Europe. The contribution of the Kurdish people abroad in the defense of their national cause has been extremely important. The intellectuals in the diaspora have added to the knowledge of the history, language and culture of the Kurds. The Kurds are probably the only stateless nation to possess a television channel (MED-TV) broadcasting thousands of miles away from its homeland. As mentioned before, the inability of the Kurds to communicate was a major impediment in the development of a Kurdish national movement. Means of communication favorable to the dissemination of nationalist ideas arrived late in Kurdistan. Then, when they finally arrived, the state eliminated their possible use of constructing a Kurdish identity. However, the advancement of communication allows even marginal oppressed groups to survive and develop an identity: Benedict Anderson’s thesis can be extended and modified to cover these cases. Satellite television can provide a more effective basis for the homogenization and development of national consciousness than printed books or newspapers because it attracts people who cannot read, particularly women deprived of education.<sup>62</sup>

Following the use of satellite TV (and possibly alarmed by it), the Turkish government pressured European governments to ban Kurdish channels or allow only regulated Kurdish language broadcasts. But the 1999 Helsinki decision, favourable for Turkey's accession process, initiated a wave of domestic and foreign policy reforms in the country, including a landmark decision to amend the law on broadcasting on 2 August 2002. At this point, an amendment lifted restrictions on broadcasting in local languages and dialects – as long as such broadcasts were not against the main principles of the Turkish Republic and the unity of the state. Nonetheless, the state reserved the right to audit broadcasts.<sup>63</sup> In April 2009 the Turkish government agreed to lift its veto for the position of Chief of NATO against former Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (also accused of showing no sensitivity in the Prophet Mohammed cartoons' controversy) in exchange for the closure of the Kurdish Roj TV allegedly linked to the PKK.<sup>64</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The example of broadcasting and communication as well as the influence negative or positive state policies could have on minority nationalism suggest that Gellner's functionalist approach could be supplemented with broader analyses of why, how and when certain nationalism develop in the modern era. As this article argues, state policies were not successful in preventing the rise of Kurdish nationalism. Repressive measures had a limited effect and, as demonstrated here, in certain areas, they even helped unite Kurds linguistically, culturally and politically. They also led to a delayed but violent manifestation of nationalist ambitions as the space for non-violent ethnic politics was restricted. This is not to claim that Kurdish nationalism was created by Turkish state ideology. Indeed, given the size and 'ethnographic features' of Kurdish communities, the rise of some form of Kurdish nationalism should have been expected at some point in the twentieth century. What is important about state ideology in Turkey is its blurring of the distinction between minority rights and

secessionism, making conflict resolution extremely difficult. Despite some progress on cultural rights for the Kurds in the past decade, there is still an absence of a culture of accommodation on issues of collective rights for minorities. More importantly, there is a fear that federal arrangements could unavoidable lead to secession even though the official leadership of the Kurdish minority party does not demand such arrangements.<sup>65</sup> In the Kurdish regions of Turkey some form of increased autonomy based on the current municipal structures and other constitutional or unofficial arrangements might be sufficient, however, given the dominant beliefs in Turkish political ideology and worsening conditions in the Middle East, the conflict will continue to be present.

An unavoidable question is whether the process of nationalist polarization in the country is irreversible in light of Turkey's EU accession. Could incentives of EU integration gradually transform state and minority ideologies as they have in Catalonia and Northern Ireland, or is the Middle East radically different as suggested by the lack of progress in Cyprus following EU accession? In assessing the effects of the EU on national ideologies it is important to see how the accession process serves domestic political and electoral purposes. Judging from its electoral performance, the current AKP government represents a coalition of moderates which includes non-radical Islamists, Kurds and mainstream centre-right and liberal forces who aim to secure and strengthen the nation economically and politically at a global level through accession. EU accession brings together these diverse forces and creates the incentives and issue linkages for compromises on minority rights. The Turkish government cannot afford to sacrifice accession and it might take future political risks against those opposing concessions on national issues as in the case of the Annan plan in Cyprus in 2004. Otherwise, an electorally winning coalition would be dismantled and AKP or any other party or coalition aspiring to take its position would be weakened in future elections. For this reason, government elites should seek space to

accommodate Kurdish ethnonationalism especially if the latter shows the capacity to reciprocate policies of moderation.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the relevant literature focusing on social movement theories and how these apply to the Kurds see David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.9.

<sup>3</sup> Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971, p.92

<sup>4</sup> The distinction between nations with and nations without history can be subject to criticism. Few contemporary nations can make an exclusive claim to the glorious past of an ancient or medieval empire. Does multiethnic Byzantium belong only to modern Greeks? Can Venice be the heritage of all Italians? In the pre-modern era, the “nation” was not the basic element for the formation of polities. The general pattern of social organization was the city (Venice, medieval German Estates, and so on), a fraction of what was later seen as the nation or empire that embraced different nationalities and was ruled by ethnically mixed aristocracies. In only a few cases did the modern nationalist principle of one culture-one polity exist as a result of geography (Japan, Korea, Thailand, Iceland. See Brendan O’Leary, “A Critical Overview,” in John A. Hall (ed.), *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 82/Cit.33. These superficially related phenomena should not be confused with the modern phenomenon of nationalism associated with citizenship through education, group *differentiae* in terms of the language of instruction, and unmediated membership in mass co-cultural societies (Ibid. 44).

<sup>5</sup> Like many nations, Kurds claim a glorious ancient past. The search for and discovery of glorious ancestors, in this case Medes, serves current political and identity needs during times of oppression. While not necessarily historically accurate, they are instrumental in the formation of modern national consciousness. The Kurds have indeed created empires, such as the Shaddadids who ruled predominantly Armenian populations in the Ani and Ganja districts of Transcaucasia (951-1174); the Marwanids of Diyarbakir (990-1096); and the Hasanwaihids of Dinavar in the Kermanshah region (959-1015). However, there is no memory of statehood from these empires.

<sup>6</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1997, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid p.4

<sup>8</sup> Kurd. (2009). In *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Retrieved April 29, 2009, from Encyclopaedia Britannica Online:<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/325191/Kurd>; McDowall estimates approximately 24-27 in his 1996 edition of his book. McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> This contrasts with the first wave of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire that affected the Serbs and Greeks living in areas with frequent commercial contacts with the west, or the second wave in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Bulgarian, Albanian, Turkish and Arabic).

<sup>10</sup> McDowall. *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> In this article “ethnic group” is used interchangeably with “ethnographic” in contrast to “nations” or “nationalities.” For Paul Magocsi, “nationality” refers to a group of people who are aware of sharing certain characteristics, such as distinct territory, common historical and ethnographic traditions, and the same language or series of related dialects. An ethnographic group also possesses the characteristics of a nationality but its members are not necessarily aware of belonging to a larger people, nor do they have the will to be a nationality. See Paul Magocsi, *The End of the Nation-State? The Revolution of 1989 and the Future of Europe*. Ontario: Kashtan, 1994, p.13. Christopher Hann points out that we can speak of national identity [nationality] only when this forms part of an actor’s own consciousness.

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Characteristics that we typically call “ethnic”[ethnographic] may provide a sort of objective “raw material” for the formation of nation or nationality, but they do not in themselves guarantee that it will be formed. See Christopher Hann “Introduction, in Paul Magocsi (ed.), *Of the Making of Nationalities There is No End*. East European Monographs. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. xvii.

<sup>12</sup> The link between the formation of modern national consciousness and language is a major theme in both Karl Deutch’s and Benedict Anderson’s work. Deutch argues that a larger group of persons linked by complementary habits and facilities of communication may be called a people. See Karl Deutch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*. Cambridge, MS: MIT Press, 1966, p.96. Benedict Anderson, in his widely cited *Imagine Communities*, sees print-capitalism as a main element in the formation of modern nations: “the creation of monoglot mass reading publics, a result of the invention of print and capitalism, displaced the axiomatic grip of script languages on men’s mind and eroded the transcontinental solidarities of Christendom, the Islamic *Ummah* and the rest. Print capitalism made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways” (nationalism). Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and the Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983, p.36.

<sup>13</sup> Martin van Bruinessen. “Shifting National and Ethnic Identities: The Kurds in Turkey and the European Diaspora,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 18, no. 1 (1998): 39-53.

<sup>14</sup> Liebkind Karmela, “Ethnic Identity – Challenging the Boundaries of Social Psychology,” in Glynis M. Breakwell (ed.), *Social Psychology of Identity and the Self Concept*. Surrey, UK: Surrey University Press, pp. 150-151.

<sup>15</sup> McDowall. *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p.419.

<sup>16</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “The Ideal of Nationalism: Three currents of Thought,” in Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*. p.135; Niyazi, Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. New York: Routledge, 1963.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Mango, “Atatürk and the Kurds”, in Sylvia Kedourie ed. *Seventy-five years of the Turkish Republic*, London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp.1-26

<sup>18</sup> An earlier expression of proto-nationalist feelings can be found in the work of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century poet Ahmat-i Khani. However, his view of a distinct Kurdish people surrounded by oppressive neighbors did not receive attention from a wider circle of intellectuals until two centuries later. For a relevant discussion see McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 4-5

<sup>20</sup> Djordje Stefanovic, “Seeing the Albanians through Serbian Eyes: The Inventors of the Tradition of Intolerance and their Critics, 1804-1939” *European History Quarterly* 35, no.3, (2005): 465-492

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 404.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 403; see also multiple comparable examples in Andrew Mango, “Turks and Kurds: Review Article” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), pp. 975-997.

<sup>24</sup> Van Bruinessen, “Shifting national and ethnic identities.”

<sup>25</sup> Mango “Turks and Kurds: Review Article” p.988; Kurdish activists have argued that Apo had never applied for a Turkish military scholarship.

<sup>26</sup> “Abdullah Ocalan: ‘We are Fighting Turks Everywhere’”, *Middle East Quarterly*, (June 1998) V:2

<sup>27</sup> For comparable examples across the developing world see Kedourie *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*. Norman Davies describes how in Prussia, where illiteracy was virtually eliminated, “universal state education may have taught Polish children to read German, but it did not stop them from transferring their skills to Polish matters.” See Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland*, 1984, p. 268. Similarly, Andrew Rossos says the small Macedonian intelligentsia began its education in schools operated by outside propaganda institutions in Macedonia and continued with their support in Athens, Belgrade and Sofia. Some members embraced the ideologies of their host countries but others “rejected this road partially or totally and assumed leadership positions in both Macedonian national and revolutionary movements.” See Andrew Rossos, “Macedonianism and Macedonian Nationalism on the Left,” in Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (eds.), *National Character*

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and *National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*. New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1995, p.225.

<sup>28</sup> Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*. p.112

<sup>29</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983, pp. 48-62.

<sup>30</sup> Gellner engaged in a debate with his student Anthony Smith and co-national Miroslav Hroch. The issue was the importance of pre-existing ethnic identities in the formation of modern national identities. Were certain pre-modern sentiments better equipped than others to become national cultures? For Hroch, the basic condition for the success of any national movement is that its argument at least roughly correspond to the reality perceived by those at whom it is directed. See "The nature of the Nation" in John A. Hall (ed.), *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 99.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Robert Magocsi, "Adaptation Without Assimilation: The Genius of the Greco-Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo," *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 38, no. 1-4 (1997): 277.

<sup>32</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983, p. 61.

<sup>33</sup> Looking primarily at ground-level interactions, Cornell Swante has criticized the Western view of Turkey's Kurdish problem as oppression of a minority ethnic group and argues that a Kurd can even become President of Turkey, something unimaginable for minorities in Rwanda, Kosovo, or Chechnya. See Svante Cornell, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics," *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* 45, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 31-46. However, in response to this one could argue that no Kurd has ever become President "as a Kurd," and even though Kurds have occupied high posts in the government, voicing support of even moderate multicultural policies remains difficult. Moreover, sociologist Nilüfer Narli notes that the Turkish majority lacks a reason to mobilize against politicized Kurds because most Turkish citizens know that state repression of Kurdish ethnonationalism will be nonetheless overwhelming. Interview with Nilüfer Narli, 28 December 2001.

<sup>34</sup> Mesut Yeğen, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 4 (October 1999):555-568, p. 568; Mesut Yeğen, *Devlet Söyleminde Kurt Sorunu [The Kurdish Question in State Discourse]*. İstanbul : İletişim Yayınları, 1999.

<sup>35</sup> Sukru Elekdag, "A master plan for the Southeast?" *Milliyet*, 21 February 2000; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement* p.26

<sup>36</sup> American Kurdish Information Network and Human Rights Alliance (eds.), *The Fast For Peace in Kurdistan and the Freedom of Leyla Zana*, Spring 1998, p. 89. Michael Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. pp. 68-72

<sup>37</sup> It was unusual, given that ethnic Kurdish representatives who claimed to be "Kurds" did not make it to parliament before or after Kurdish HEP. For failed efforts to discuss the Kurdish issue, see Turkish Parliament Debates, 31 October 1985; Turkish Parliament Debates, 19 January 1988. Cumhur Keskin argues that one could have been beaten up by saying the words "Kurdish problem" in parliament. See Cumhur Keskin, "Türkiye'nin Kürt Politikası ve Resmi İdeoloji" [Turkey's Kurdish Policy and Official Ideology], in Seyfettin Gürsel et. al (eds.), *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu* [Turkey's Kurdish Problem]. İstanbul: TÜSES, 1996, p. 78

<sup>38</sup> See TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, 3 March 1994, p. 375.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid p.368.

<sup>40</sup> See speech by Kurdish MP Mehmet Evin Sever, TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, 3 March 1994, p.383.

<sup>41</sup> TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, 18 December 1994, p. 960-961; TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, 21 December 1994, p. 396, 406, 416.

<sup>42</sup> In August 1920, the Sèvres Treaty was signed between the defeated Ottoman Empire and the victorious WWI allies. The short-lived agreement called for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in favour of Christian, Kurdish, and Arab populations, as well as the imperial great powers. See B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 130-31.

<sup>43</sup> Ersel Aydinli, "Between Security and Liberalization: Decoding Turkey's Struggle with the PKK," *Security Dialogue* 33 (2002): 209-25. Specific references to Sèvres are primarily (but not exclusively) made by the Kemalists. For a contemporary comparison of Kemalist and

- non-Kemalist approaches to history, see Michelangelo Guida, “The Sèvres Syndrome and ‘Komplo’ Theories in the Islamist and Secular Press,” *Turkish Studies* 9, no.1 (2007).
- <sup>44</sup> See more on TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, 27 November 2001.
- <sup>45</sup> TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, 7 October 1998, p. 11; see also Kutan’s references to the joint activities of Armenia, Syria, and Greece in Ankara Anatolia in Turkish, 6 October 1998, “Kutan Faults Syria, Calls for TNGA Debate on Tension,” *FBIS Translated Text*, 6 October 1998.
- <sup>46</sup> Greek doctrine of territorial expansion against Ottoman Empire, 1844-1921.
- <sup>47</sup> Yüksel Sezkin, “The October 1998 Crisis in Turkish-Syrian Relations: A Prospect Theory Approach,” *Turkish Studies* 3 (2002): 44-68, 2002; Hercules Millas, Εικόνες Ελλήνων και Τούρκων [In Greek] (Images of Greeks and Turks), Athens: Ekdotis Alexandria, 2001; Hercules Millas “History textbooks in Greece and Turkey,” *History Workshop Journal* 3, no. 1 (1991): 21–33; Alexis Heraclides, Ελλάδα και ο ‘Εξ’ Ανατολών’ Κίνδυνος [in Greek] [Greece and the Eastern Threat], Athens: Polis, 2001.
- <sup>48</sup> Turkish popular series *Kurtlar Vadisi -- Irak* (Valley of the Wolves -- Iraq) has been described as “a crassly anti-American and anti-Semitic 2006 film see Yigal Schleifer, “Turkish Delight”, *Foreign Policy*, April 2009.
- <sup>49</sup> İsmail Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolu'nun Düzeni. Sosyo-ekonomik ve Etnik Temeller* [The Order of East Anatolia: Socioeconomic and Ethnic Foundations]. Istanbul: E. Yayınları, 1969. For a detailed analysis of Beşikçi’s work, see Martin van Bruinessen, “Turkish sociologist, critic of Kemalism, and Kurdologist,” Paper presented at the conference *Kemalism als Herrschafts- und Staatsideologie*, Kampagne Freiheit für Ismail Besikçi, Berlin, Humboldt-Universität, 24-25 Oktober 1997  
<[http://www.let.uu.nl/~Martin.vanBruinessen/personal/publications/ismail\\_besikci.htm](http://www.let.uu.nl/~Martin.vanBruinessen/personal/publications/ismail_besikci.htm)> p. 17.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 18.
- <sup>51</sup> Ergil served as the president and director of the Centre for the Research of Societal Problems (TOSAV), an Ankara-based nongovernmental organization created to address tensions between Turks and Kurds. In different studies, such as the “TOBB report” he shows that Kurds demand human rights, not secession. See *Türkiye Odalar Birliği: Doğu Sorunu Teshisler ve Tespitler* [The Eastern Question: Diagnosis and Findings]. Ankara: TOBB, 1995; Interview with Doğu Ergil, 22 December 2001; Doğu Ergil, “The Kurdish Question in Turkey,” *Journal of Democracy* 11, no. 3 (July 2000): 122-135; see also Ümit Cizre, “Turkey’s Kurdish Problem: Borders, Identity, and Hegemony,” in Brendan O’Leary, Ian Lustick and Thomas Callaghy (eds.), *Right-sizing the State: The Politics of Moving Borders*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 222.
- <sup>52</sup> See for instance Omar Encarnación G. *Spanish Politics. Democracy after Transition*. Cambridge: Polity, 2008.
- <sup>53</sup> İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk-İslâm Sentezi*. İstanbul : Aydınlar Ocağı, 1985; Gokhan Bacik, “The Transformation of Muslim Self and the Development of a New Discourse in Europe: the Turkish Case,” *International Review of Sociology* 13, no. 1 (2003): 21- 38; Fehmi Çalmuk, *Erbakan’ın Kürtleri* [The Kurds of Erbakan][in Turkish ]. Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari, 2001. For a comprehensive study of Turkish political parties and their positions towards political Islam and the Kurdish question, see Barry Rubin and Metin Heper, *Political Parties in Turkey*. London: Frank Cass, 2002.
- <sup>54</sup> David Laitin, “Language Conflict and Violence,” *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 41/1 (2001). Reprinted in Daniel Druckman and Paul Stern (eds.), *International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000.
- <sup>55</sup> See Kemal Kirişçi, “The Kurdish Question and Turkish Foreign Policy,” in Lenore Martin and Dimitris Keridis (eds.), *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004, pp. 277- 320; Michael Gunter, ‘The continuing Kurdish problem in Turkey after Öcalan’s Capture.’ *Third World Quarterly*, 21(5), 2000, pp. 849-69
- <sup>56</sup> “1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor,” US Department of State, 25 February 2000  
<<http://www.egroups.com/message/balkanhr/165>>; on HADEP see Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 62 & 175  
<[http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/1999\\_hrp\\_report/turkey.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1999_hrp_report/turkey.html)>.

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<sup>57</sup> William Gamson and David Meyer, “The Framing of Political Opportunity,” in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 275–90, p. 287. For a more general analysis of spirals as positive feedback, see Robert Jervis, *System Effects Complexity in Political and Social Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, pp 174-175.

<sup>58</sup> In the summer of 1988, Birand interviewed Öcalan, causing a major uproar in Turkey. Birand’s comment appeared in *Sabah*, 25 April 1992, cited in Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic*. New York: New York University Press, 1997, p. 226.

<sup>59</sup> Former Chief of Staff and President, leader of the 12 September 1980, military coup.

<sup>60</sup> “Opposition DYP leader backs Evren,” *Turkish Daily News*, 6 March 2007.

<sup>61</sup> “Yet another Taboo dies in Kurdistan,” *Hurriyet*, 25 March 2009,

<sup>62</sup> The case of MED-TV suggests some of the limitations of communication theory in the study of nationalism. What matters in this case is not only the ability to communicate but the type of communication that certain technologies allow. If communication *per se* matters, then the bilingual segment of the Kurdish population of Turkey will be equally vulnerable to the influence of Turkish media. It is communication in one’s mother tongue and trust that information available is not censored by the state that explains the success of the satellite television. For background information on MED-TV see Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement* pp. 153-159.

<sup>63</sup> Neophytos Loizides and Elif Ersin, “The EU Challenge: A View from the Turkish Grand National Assembly,” in Joseph S. Joseph (ed.), *Turkey and the European Union: Internal and External Challenges*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 71-83.

<sup>64</sup> *Hürriyet*, “Rasmussen hedges on Roj TV ’mea culpa” April 6, 2009

<sup>65</sup> Neşe Düzel “Ahmet Türk: ‘Operasyon Konferansı Engellemez”” *Taraf*, 27 April 2009.