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FROM INTEGRATION TO ALIENATION
Diverging Perceptions of the Kurdish
Question in
the Turkish Modernization

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

Historical Writings and Academia

My thesis focuses on transforming the Kurds' sense of identity in the twentieth century and analyzing the factors influencing the transformation of the movement from a historical standing. The research lists the geopolitical and political factors that can be interpreted more broadly and narrowly, which have led to conflicts between Kurds and other peoples but, above all, the Turkish state, which is difficult to resolve. In the review, we will see how the extremely complex history of conflict, geopolitical constraints, inevitable dynamics of modernization, historical perceptual logics, and identity issues intersect. In the introduction part I focused on the historical background of the problem, the problem of objectivity, methodology and the structures of the thesis and how does academia interpret the Kurdish movement.

The starting point for the evaluation is the post-imperial stress that characterized the people who sought to redefine their place in the region in the area of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. The transformation and transition in agenda and the politics of the actors have been formulated here as transcriptions, processes, in which not only different narratives but also different codes of action and transmission are created. In addition, these transcripts typically form different eras from one another, and we will follow its logic in periodization for a while. Due to the complex nature of the subject, instead of focusing on one research question, I tried to process the interrelated

requirements that helped me follow the topic's history writing and derive a map of how to redefine/re-discuss this long-lasting conflict. In the brief introduction.

The thesis explores how the Kurdish movement was born and evolved as a conflict by invitation and how the Turkish state reacted to it in different interlinked periods. Four principal transcriptions: divide and control (divide et impera) the post-empire, the great enlightenment, and the radical democracy, help us to show how the Turkish-Kurdish conflict altered and converted by considering the local, regional, and global politics, their views regarding the issue, the tool actors used and their aims in using given tools. The first transcription of divide and control marks the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the division of the Kurds among four states, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Following the division of the Kurds, the post-empire stress period was shaped by the Turkish nation-building built on modernization, secularization, and Turkification. The third transcription represents the great enlightenment, the mobilization of the Kurdish youth in universities alongside the Turkish left during the 1960s and 1970s. In the latest transcription of the battle by invitation, the PKK re-interpreted its goals and moved from an independent Kurdistan to democratic confederalism, radical democracy at the beginning of the new millennium.

I used process tracing, widely used in history, to underline the significant shifts in historical writings on the Kurdish movement and the PKK. By doing so, I will attempt to compress the stages mentioned above to differentiate the transcriptions of historical writings. The data I will use to conclude was collected from the International Institute of Social History in the Netherlands, the PKK 's documents, court files, the newspapers, and the

Turkish parliament's online archive. Furthermore, I will use the mixed method of analysis, content, and discourse to analyze the content and discuss my findings in the relevant chapters, all in a bid to answer the questions the research seeks.

PART II

DIVIDE AND CONTROL

In this part I provided a historical perspective on the Ottoman Empire's "Millet system," the Kurds within it, and how the Kurds have functioned as a tool against one another in the geopolitics of one of the two most predominant empires, Safavid and Ottomans. In the second chapter, I discuss the two treaties that profoundly shaped the modern Middle Eastern history, focusing on the Kurds. The main argument of this part is that under the rules of empires, the Kurds – due to their geographic consolidation and place between Safadi and Ottomans – provided societal unity and immunity. However, by the division that came after WWI, such unity was "spoiled" the self-defense character of the Kurds as a society.

For centuries, the Kurds, like any other ethnic and religious community, lived within a horizontal society mainly based on religious affiliations. Based on the religious orientation of Sunni Islam, the Kurds were closer to the Ottomans, and, in fact, before the nineteenth century, Islam had been the main character of the Kurdish community. However, the geographical location of the Kurds made it convenient for both empires to use the Kurdish existence against each other. On the one hand, the geopolitical competition between the Safavids and Ottomans created a self-defense character for the Kurds. On the

other hand, the Kurds smartly used their territorial existence to gain some autonomy from the Ottoman Empire.

PART III

THE POST- EMPIRE STRESS

This part outlines the modern history of the Kurds and how they have been subjected to different assimilations. The primary focus will be on the Turkish case regarding the Kurds. By doing so, this part discusses how different and similar the history of modern Kurds in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey is and how the shift from empire to nation-state first created post-empire stress, which caused paranoia and replaced traditional Ottoman cleavages to the new types of cleavages in modern Turkey. After outlining the post-Ottoman period, in this part, look at contemporary history of the Kurds in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey with special focus of modernization and chevages.

PART IV

THE GREAT ENLIGHTENMENT: Mobilization and Radicalization

My goal in this part is to show how national and international politics shaped the early mobilization of the Kurdish movement. Turkey, specifically from the beginning of the Second World War, desperately looked for a seat in the western supra-national organizations. With the Cold War, Turkey became a member of NATO after the Korean War, and with Truman and Marshal's aid, anti-communism started, built systematically by the state's elites. While the

USA considered Turkey a “checkpoint” against the USSR in the Middle East, and the Mediterranean and Cold War propaganda created the image of “dangerous communists” among the Turkish population.

By looking at the Kurdish movement’s primary sources, court files and newspapers I aimed to discuss how the movement politicized and broke from the Turkish left. In addition, I tried discussing how higher education became an environment where the Kurdish youth founded the PKK. In this part, I argued that directly shaped by the first and the second transcriptions, this phase is not simply a period of mobilization and radicalization; it is also an expression of the collapse of the self-defense mechanism. Based on my understanding, I would argue that the formation of the PKK in this transcription was not because of the Kurdish conflict; rather, it marked the “end” or dissolution of the sense of the societal self-defense mechanism of the Kurds.

PART V

DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERALISM

This part deals with democratic confederalism. I briefly outlined the main pillars of democratic, confederalism that is, grassroot mobilization, self-defense and the mechanism of direct democracy that put into practice during the Syrian civil war, in Rojava. I argued that democratic confederalism is not just the re-ideologization of the PKK; it is the reintroduction of the collapsed mechanism of self-defense. In the latest conversion of the battle by invitation, the PKK re-interpreted its goal and has moved from an independent Kurdistan

to democratic confederalism, radical democracy at the beginning of the new millennium. Considering the end of the Cold War and the Soviet Union, this phase was influenced by Ocalan's idea of democratic confederalism and the new global order.

PART VI

READING the TRANSCRIPTION in the PRIMARY SOURCES

In this part, by looking at primary sources, newspapers, and party programs from both the Turkish and Kurdish sides, I aimed to demonstrate how and to what extent the conflict has evolved. I argued that the PKK has not been related to the Kurds but to Armenians and a group of gangsters and terrorists. Unlike the civilizing mission of the early Republic, in this period, the state was committed to protecting the Kurds and the unity of the country from the PKK.

Reading the documents made me conclude that the PKK forced politicians to accept that there were Kurds who had not been assimilated "enough". The PKK was able to interrupt the nation-building process of the Turkish state and push the state to act more aggressively. Before the PKK, the existence of the Kurdish population was presented within the context of assimilation into Turkishness, but after the PKK, it shifted to protecting Turkishness.

PART VII

CONCLUSION

I aimed to discuss the historical transition and process of the Kurds, the Kurdish movement, and the dynamics of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict in four transcriptions. At the beginning of the twentieth century, one of the most dramatic shifts occurred in Anatolia and the Middle East, where the six-century Ottoman Empire failed to survive. The Turkish Republic was established with the baggage of the Empire's collapse; the fear of losing power and territory again has deployed a massive state's ideology.

I claim that the history writing of the Kurdish movement in Turkey has flowed through four transcriptions, different interpretations, or exegeses of four periods, that introduce the alternative narrative of the subject and how the Turkish and Kurdish sides narrate it. The first transcription period is the first adaptive phase, which was the multilayered division formed after the Ottoman Empire's collapse. This division separated the Kurds from four different states in the region. The second transcription represents the post-empire stress, which was a direct consequence of the failure of the elites to save the Empire. In this phase, the Kurds were subjected to three different but, at the same time, severe politics of denial, assimilation, and state violence through Arabization, Persianization, and Turkification. The third transcription, the great enlightenment, might be between the 1960s and 1980s. It was the period of mobilization and radicalization of the Kurdish elites and the university youth.

The result of the last transcription of the Turkish-Kurdish relationship was the idea of the radical democracy that implies three fundamental aspects of the problem: the shift in PKK's goal, the internationalization of the Kurdish movement, and the rebuilding of the self-defense mechanism of the Kurds (which collapsed in the first adaptation period) through democratic confederalism.

I explored how and to what extent academia has discussed the conflict. I argued that the literature on the subject is mainly divided into three: related to mainly politicians, soldiers, and citizens, to evaluate the academic approach from the republican period. I found that while the Turkish state, by modernization and education, aimed to catch up with the Western world, the Kurds implied and interpreted higher education as an environment of political awareness and radicalization.

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