

Kurdish Peace Process and Ontological Insecurity Concerns

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Abstract:	<p>Through a case-study of Turkey's Kurdish Issue, this article investigates the complex ontological security challenges in asymmetric ethnic conflicts and their implications for conflict resolution. By unsettling the established self-narratives and routines, peace processes often generate ontological insecurity, and as a result, remain vulnerable to overturn. We demonstrate accordingly how the various initiatives in the post-2009 Kurdish peace process ended up re-escalating the conflict because they failed to construct new narratives and routines around which an altered sense of ontological security may develop. Moreover, we underscore that in asymmetric ethnic conflicts, such as Turkey's Kurdish Issue, the conditions of ontological security for one party often undermine those of the other. Therefore, while building consensus around a new shared narrative may not be possible or desirable, we argue that a lasting solution to the Kurdish Issue depends on the development of an agonistic ontological security around separate, co-existing narratives.</p>

KURDISH PEACE PROCESS AND ONTOLOGICAL INSECURITY CONCERNS

Through a case-study of Turkey's Kurdish Issue, this article investigates the complex ontological security challenges in asymmetric ethnic conflicts and their implications for conflict resolution. By unsettling the established self-narratives and routines, peace processes often generate ontological insecurity, and as a result, remain vulnerable to overturn. We demonstrate accordingly how the various initiatives in the post-2009 Kurdish peace process ended up re-escalating the conflict because they failed to construct new narratives and routines around which an altered sense of ontological security may develop. Moreover, we underscore that in asymmetric ethnic conflicts, such as Turkey's Kurdish Issue, the conditions of ontological security for one party often undermine those of the other. Therefore, while building consensus around a new shared narrative may not be possible or desirable, we argue that a lasting solution to the Kurdish Issue depends on the development of an agonistic ontological security around separate, co-existing narratives.

Keywords: Kurdish Issue, ontological (in)security, ethnic conflict, agonism

Introduction:

Ethnic conflicts are often impregnated with a myriad of security concerns. Apart from multiple forms of violence, concerns about the maintenance of distinct collective identities (Roe 2004) and power asymmetries intensify ethnic conflicts and hamper peace efforts. This article contributes to the recent literature on ontological security in conflict studies (Mitzen 2006; Kay 2012; Rumelili 2015a), by empirically investigating, through a case-study of Turkey's Kurdish Issue, the complex ontological security challenges in asymmetric ethnic conflicts. Turkey's Kurdish Issue provides an interesting case to study how state and different ethnic groups confront concerns for ontological (in)security in times of transition from violent periods to more peaceful ones, and in turn, how these concerns affect peace processes.

The Kurdish Issue has claimed around 40,000 lives, led to disruption of economic activity, evacuations of villages and internal displacement of around a million Kurds

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3 (Çelik 2010), broad range of human rights violations (disappearances, torture, killings)
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5 and limitation of political liberties in the Kurdish-populated eastern and southeastern
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7 Turkey since 1984ⁱ. The conflict has gone through various phases of escalation and de-
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9 escalation, and since 2009, has been marked by various governmental initiatives aiming
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11 to end violence. This peace processⁱⁱ is unparalleled in the history of the Turkish
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13 Republic; not only because of the talks between the Turkish government and the PKK,
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15 but also in terms of providing an opportunity for the resolution of the conflict.
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20 We argue that a notable shortcoming of the current peace process is its
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22 inattentiveness to the concerns of ontological security, namely those pertaining to
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24 maintaining a continuity and stability of Being (Mitzen 2006; Steele 2005). While
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26 promising to end physical security concerns, the process challenges –on part of both
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28 Turkish and Kurdish actors- existing identity narratives, perceptions of Self and Other,
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30 and established practices and routines; and as a result has unleashed a variety of
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32 anxieties. By remaining exclusively focused on the bargaining between the PKK and the
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34 Turkish state, the process has yet failed to include measures that promote broader
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36 reconciliation at the societal level, and construct new narratives and routines around
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38 which an altered sense of ontological security may develop. As a result, the process has
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40 remained highly vulnerable to overturn. We conclude that a lasting resolution of Turkey’s
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42 Kurdish Issue also necessitates the reproduction of ontological security through the
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44 formulation of alternative self-narratives that re-situate the Kurdish and Turkish identities
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46 in relation to one another and to the world at large, and that become embedded in new
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48 habits and routines. In particular, as in other similar ethnic conflicts, the creation of long-
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3 lasting peace necessitates the transformation of several levels of relationships (e.g.
4 individual-state, group-group, individual-group).
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8 In advancing this argument, we draw broadly on the literature on ontological
9 security (Giddens 1991; Kinnvall 2004; Mitzen 2006; Steele 2005, 2008; Roe 2008;
10 Zarakol 2010; Croft 2012; Malksoo 2015), and specifically on a number of recent studies
11 that have explored the nexus between conflict resolution and ontological security (Kay
12 2012, Rumelili 2015a). Thus, in the next section of the article, we start by providing an
13 overview of the literature on ontological security and its implications for peace processes.
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15 Our analysis of Turkey's Kurdish Issue and the current peace process extends this
16 emerging body of literature in the following way: We underline the ways in which
17 asymmetric ethnic conflicts, such as Turkey's Kurdish Issue, where one party uses its
18 stronger position to deny and delegitimize the existence of the other, pose more complex
19 ontological security challenges than international conflicts where parties do not question
20 the legitimacy of each other. In the course of the conflict, the Turkish state and Turks
21 have pursued ontological security by reproducing a narrative of national unity that
22 dismisses and delegitimizes the Kurdish narratives based on ethnic distinction. Thus, the
23 conditions of ontological security for one conflict party have undermined those of the
24 other conflict party. We argue that a lasting solution to such conflicts cannot be based on
25 a formula where one party's conditions of ontological security prevail over those of the
26 other. Instead, the peace process has to first disrupt the established narratives, and
27 thereby, generate mutual ontological insecurity, and then offer a new narrative around
28 which parties come to understand each other's distinct positions and needs in the conflict.
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30 This does not necessarily have to entail a consensus around a shared narrative, but it can
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3 take the form of co-existing narratives around which an agonistic sense of ontological
4 security based on mutual respect develops (Mouffe 2000:13; Maddison 2014; Nagle
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8 2014).

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10 In the third section of the paper, we proceed with our empirical analysis. We first
11 identify the dominant narratives and practices that constitute the ‘formed framework’ of
12 the Kurdish Issue for Turkish and Kurdish political actors. After reviewing how the
13 earlier periods of conflict have affected the parties from an ontological security
14 perspective, we concentrate on two phases in the Kurdish peace process, namely the *Kürt*
15 *Açılımı* [Kurdish Opening] (2009-2011) and the *Çözüm/Dialog Süreci*
16 [Resolution/Dialogue Process] (2013-). Drawing on statements of Turkish and Kurdish
17 politicians and civil society actors in the Turkish and Kurdish press and the proceedings
18 of several consultative and civil society meetings, we analyze whether there have been
19 any changes in the dominant narratives and practices. We argue that the earlier Kurdish
20 Opening initiative failed because it bypassed concerns of ontological security and
21 avoided explicitly challenging the established Turkish narratives of national unity. In this
22 context, further steps in the peace process, e. g. secret negotiations with the PKK and
23 return of the PKK fighters, ended up re-igniting the conflict by confirming the established
24 fears. We find that the current Resolution/Dialogue Process also remains susceptible to
25 the same risks because effective strategies to bring parties to a state of ontological
26 security have not yet been designed nor even thought of.
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53 **Ontological (In)security and Peace Processes**

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3 In recent years, a fledgling literature in political science has developed around the
4 notion of ontological security, mainly building on Giddens (1991). Giddens himself has
5 drawn on the works of R.D. Laing and D.W. Winnicott, to stress the importance of
6 developing a framework of ontological security that is based “on routines of various
7 forms”, which enable individuals “bracket out questions about themselves, others and the
8 object world, which have to be taken for granted in order to keep on with everyday
9 activity” and maintain a consistent biographical narrative (1991: 37). Thus, at issue in
10 ontological security is neither the security of a particular ontology nor ontological fixity.
11 Without essentializing any particular narrative or routine, ontological security stresses the
12 importance of the security that stems from their maintenance. Ontological insecurity, in
13 turn, refers to the rupture of this formed framework, and its established meanings,
14 practices and routines. Ontological insecurity generates profound anxiety, because it
15 forces the individual to confront existential questions, which were previously bracketed
16 out, and compromises his/her inability to sustain a coherent narrative about doing, acting,
17 and being (Kinnvall 2004).

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20 Applying these insights to the fields of political science and international
21 relations, Kinnvall (2004) underlined how religious fundamentalism and nationalism are
22 gaining popularity because of their ability to provide individuals with a sense of
23 ontological security in the increasingly volatile and uncertain post-9/11 world. Later,
24 Mitzen (2006: 344) has projected the concept from the individual to the state-level,
25 arguing that states seek not only physical security, but also ontological security, which is
26 the ‘security not of the body but of the self, the subjective sense of who one is, which
27 enables and motivates action and choice.’ The concept of ontological security has been
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mainly used to explain state practices, which are puzzling from the standpoint of rationality. Mitzen (2006: 341) has argued that the pursuit of ontological security leads actors to ‘routinize relationships with significant others’ and hence explains why intractable conflicts persist despite the risks they pose in terms of physical security, and Steele (2005: 526) has argued that states engage in risky humanitarian interventions, because ontological security concerns lead them to choose ‘courses of action comfortable with their sense of identity.’ While the importance of ontological security at the individual and state-level has, thus, been recognized, relatively less attention has been so far paid to ontological security concerns that manifest themselves at the group-level, e.g. minority concerns about maintaining a distinct identity. Group-level ontological security concerns assume importance especially in ethnic and other minority conflicts (Roe 2004).

As a security concept, ontological security challenges the exclusive association that mainstream as well as most variants of critical security studies make between security and survival (Steele 2008; Rumelili 2015c). It is associated with the adjectival use of security, as a ‘property of a relationship’, and refers to the security of that relationship that makes ‘each secure in the other’ (McSweeney 1999: 14-5) and provides ‘a sense of being safely in control of a cognitive situation’ (Roe 2008: 783). In that respect, it differs from the akin concept of societal security, which presupposes a threat to a pre-constituted society/identity (Rumelili 2015c).

Most recently, a number of scholars have studied how ontological security concerns impact conflicts and their resolution. In the context of the Northern Irish post-peace process developments, Kay (2012) has underscored the dichotomy between the reduction of violence and the persistence of existential anxieties. This dichotomy has

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3 occurred, according to Kay (2012: 238), because ‘the ontological foundations of the
4 conflict requiring reconciliation at the micro-level were left unaddressed’. Similarly, in
5 the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Lupovici (2012) has discussed how the
6 ontological dissonance that is caused by competing Israeli identities paralyzes the
7 negotiations.
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11 Similarly, Rumelili (2015c, 2015a) has studied how ontological and physical
12 security concerns vary in the course of conflict resolution. Like Kay (2012), the
13 contributors to the Rumelili’s (2015a) edited volume have underscored how various
14 conflict interventions that seek to address parties’ concerns for physical security
15 paradoxically generate ontological insecurity. This is because although conflicts threaten
16 the physical security of the parties involved, they help settle certain existential questions
17 about basic parameters of life, about being, self in relation to external world and others,
18 and identity; becoming sources of ontological security over time (Mitzen 2006).
19 Therefore, conflicts generate a state of ontological security and physical insecurity. The
20 prospect of peace, through the resolution of conflict, promises to end the concerns with
21 physical security, yet threatens to unsettle the stability and consistency of self-narratives,
22 and their associated routines and habits at the individual, societal, and state levels. Thus,
23 when conflicts enter into a process of resolution, physical insecurity is diminished, yet
24 the sense of ontological security is disturbed.
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48 According to Rumelili (2015b), this ontological insecurity can re-escalate
49 conflicts, sometimes unexpectedly. Because ontological insecurity undermines trust and
50 accentuates the perception of general threat from the outside world, it creates a setting
51 conducive to the manipulation of this distrust by political actors, who act to re-channel
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3 this anxiety into specific and habituated fears. Ontological insecurity may hamper the
4 negotiation process by leading parties to elevate minor outstanding aspects of the deal to
5 existential issues, generating new issues of discord beyond the ones addressed by the
6 conflict resolution process. It may also empower spoilers of the peace processes, because
7 the state of anxiety and uncertainty increases the attractiveness of the ideas, identities,
8 and behaviors associated with conflict. Therefore, Rumelili (2015b) argues that conflict
9 interventions should simultaneously address the concerns of ontological security and seek
10 to reinstate a new framework of ontological security based on new constructions of
11 identity and routines.
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24 In this article, we develop the link between ontological security and conflict
25 resolution further by taking into account the fact that the levels and conditions of
26 ontological security may be different for different conflict parties. None of the studies
27 discussed above have taken into account the fact that conflicts and their resolution
28 processes do not necessarily affect parties' states of ontological security in the same
29 manner or to the same extent. Especially in asymmetric ethnic conflicts, minority groups
30 can remain at a continuous state of ontological insecurity due to the discrimination and
31 prejudices that they face in the society, while majority group members enjoy a stable
32 state of ontological security premised on their privileged status (Bilali et al. 2014). In
33 other words, even though conflicts do generate a structure of stability in terms of threat
34 perceptions and identity definitions, in cases of ethnic conflicts, there is often a
35 fundamental asymmetry stemming from the non-recognition of the identity narratives of
36 minority groups.
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3 When conflict parties are in such differentiated states of ontological
4 security/insecurity, conflict resolution processes face greater obstacles. For example, the
5 delegitimization of a minority party's conflict behavior as 'terrorist' strengthens the
6 majority group's sense of ontological security, while amplifying its perceptions of threat
7 and concerns for physical security. At the same time, the 'terrorism' labeling aggravates
8 the ontological insecurity of the minority group, worsens the sense of marginalization
9 (Toros 2008), and in effect leading both to reject dialogue with one another. This creates
10 a vicious circle where the majority group can maintain its ontological security only by
11 rendering the minority group ontologically insecure and the minority group can only
12 pursue ontological security by countering the narratives which render the majority group
13 ontologically secure.
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29 Given these specific challenges encountered in asymmetric ethnic conflicts,
30 interventions should first target this vicious cycle by moving both parties initially to a
31 state of ontological insecurity. Because the minority group is already at a state of
32 ontological insecurity, in particular, the dominant group's sense of ontological security
33 need to be challenged. While, as Rumelili (2015b) notes, ontological insecurity
34 complicates and undermines peace processes, the disruption of established narratives and
35 routines is also necessary for parties to accept the changes that are necessitated by peace
36 processes. Ontological insecurity may empower spoilers of peace processes, but yet at the
37 same time it creates the necessary space for the construction of new identity narratives
38 and modes of relating to the Other.
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53 Following the disruption of established narratives and routines, the next necessary
54 step in peace processes from an ontological security standpoint is the construction of new
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3 narratives around which an altered sense of ontological security may develop. If peace
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5 processes fail to ultimately re-institute ontological security, they remain vulnerable to
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8 overturn because as Rumelili (2015b) notes, the anxieties unleashed by the disruption of
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10 established narratives and routines create a setting conducive to manipulation. In cases of
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12 asymmetric ethnic conflicts, we note that the re-institution of ontological security need
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14 not entail the development of a shared identity narrative at the societal level (Çelik 2015);
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16 in fact, the very imposition of such a narrative may exacerbate ontological insecurity.
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18 Prodding the majority group to recognize and empathize with the minority is a pre-
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20 requisite for long-lasting resolution of ethnic conflicts. However, we note that such
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22 interventions may trigger anger and resentment among the majority group members if
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24 they are not coupled with the construction of new narratives around which majority
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26 groups can re-institute their sense of ontological security. Instead of a shared narrative,
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28 peace processes should aim at the development of an agonistic ontological security
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30 premised on the coexistence of separate, but mutually respectful, majority and minority-
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32 group narratives (Çelik 2015).
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41 **Kurdish Issue and Ontological Insecurity**

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43 Like all conflicts, the Kurdish conflict in Turkey is implicated with ontological
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45 security concerns at multiple levels. The Kurdish conflict embodies at the same time the
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47 armed conflict between the Turkish state and the insurgent PKK, the disputes between the
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49 Turkish state and the Kurdish minority over issues of cultural and political rights, and the
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51 social tensions between Turks and Kurds throughout Turkey (Çelik and Blum 2007). In
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53 all these dimensions, the conflict has generated/reproduced a stable set of narratives,
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3 practices, and routines. These narratives and routines are situated within a ‘discourse of
4 ethnicity’, yet although socially constructed and sustained by ‘identity-related beliefs’
5 (Somer 2005), they have come to function as a ‘formed framework’, which provides
6 ontological security or insecurity at the individual, societal, and the political actor
7 (Turkish state and the PKK) levels. In this section, we first outline the dominant
8 narratives underpinning the conflict at the political actor, societal, and individual levels,
9 then trace the evolution of patterns of ontological (in)security in the conflict since 1984,
10 and finally discuss the impact of ontological security concerns on the two recent phases
11 in the peace process.
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24 *Dominant Narratives:*

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27 The Turkish state’s narrative has centered on the delegitimization of the PKK as a
28 terrorist group, and the representation of the PKK as a threat to territorial integrity,
29 possibly in collaboration with foreign enemies. This understanding has manifested itself,
30 most clearly, in the practice of refusing to recognize the PKK and political actors that are
31 considered to be associated with the PKK as legitimate counterparts. In Turkish political
32 discourse, until the initiation of the Kurdish Opening, the PKK leader Ocalan was
33 referred to never by name, instead by recriminatory adjectives such as ‘head-terrorist’ or
34 ‘baby-killer’ (Saracoglu 2009). Five Kurdish political parties have been shut down by the
35 Constitutional Courtⁱⁱⁱ for “being a focal point of terrorist activities. Turkish politicians
36 and bureaucrats have periodically refrained from shaking hands with politicians of
37 Kurdish political parties and inviting them to official receptions (Sabah 2010).
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53 These state narratives and practices have been grafted at the societal level onto
54 “Sevres syndrome,” a fear nationalist Turks hold that the foreign powers harbor a hidden
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3 agenda of trying to territorially partition Turkey along ethnic lines, just as was attempted
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5 by the Sevres Treaty of 1920. In recounting the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire,
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7 Turkish national historiography establishes an unquestionable causal link between ethnic
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9 demands, foreign intervention, and territorial disintegration, which is deeply ingrained in
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11 the minds of all Turkish citizens through national education. Turkish nationalism rests on
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13 the inclusive nationalist assumption that all Turkish citizens, regardless of their ethnic
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15 origins, are Turks (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997) and that an emphasis on ethnic origin is
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17 divisive of national unity. Despite the improvements in the recognition of Kurdish
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19 cultural rights in Turkey over the years, ethnic-based rights demands, such as education
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21 in native language, are still considered as challenges that need to be contained to secure
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23 the unity of the state.^{iv} The dominant Turkish nationalist narratives construct Kurds to be
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25 essentially of Turkish origin (Yeğen 2006; Akgün 2002), underdeveloped subjects who
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27 are to be modernized (Somer 2007) and eventually assimilated into the Turkish identity
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29 (Yeğen 2006). Those Kurds, who refuse to be assimilated, are then securitized as
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31 potential terrorists and foreign collaborators.
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39 While attitudes toward the Kurdish issue undoubtedly vary at the individual level
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41 among those who self-identify as Turk –ranging from the ultra-nationalists who reject
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43 Kurdish identity outright to liberals who advocate multicultural citizenship- the dominant
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45 narratives and practices of Turkish nationalism bear considerable weight and can easily
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47 be mobilized by political elites to justify violent and repressive measures toward Kurds.
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49 At the individual level, Turkish ontological security rests on a position of power and
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51 moral righteousness and superiority (Saracoglu 2009). While at an institutional level,
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53 Turkish nationalism penetrated into many institutions, most notably into military and
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3 schools (Altınay 2004), it also shows itself from time to time in everyday practices, such
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5 as in football matches, street demonstrations and alike.
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8 On the other hand, the PKK's narrative represents the Turkish state as a colonial
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10 power guilty of physical and cultural genocide against Kurds (PKK 2011). This narrative
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12 justifies the practice of treating Turkish state institutions and employees as enemy
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14 military targets. Over the years, the ideology of the PKK has evolved from its Maoist and
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16 Marxist-Leninist beginnings toward an eclectic form, incorporating first a nationalist
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18 agenda and later elements of liberal human rights discourses (Eccarius-Kelly 2012; Unal
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20 2013). According to the PKK (2011), the targets are the "Turkish colonialists",
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22 "international financial powers" and "the green gladio (Islamist deep state)", while Turks
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24 are not presented as enemies neither in the rhetoric of PKK nor by pro-Kurdish political
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26 parties.
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32 Kurdish nationalism, based on the existence of a Kurdish nation with a distinct
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34 history and culture, has a longer history dating back to the mid-19th century and spanning
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36 the Kurdish groups located in Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq (Izady 1992; MacDonald,
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38 1997; McKeirnan, 1999). Throughout the 20th century in Turkey, as well as in these other
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40 countries, Kurdish nationalism has been fostered by the negation, forceful repression, and
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42 degrading of Kurdish identity. While the specific political demands of Kurdish
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44 nationalism has varied across time and space, securing the recognition, respect, and
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46 dignity of Kurdish identity, and right of self-governance constitutes the backbone of
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48 Kurdish ontological security at the societal level (Al 2014).^v Currently in Turkey,
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50 Kurdish nationalism demands institutional and legal changes to respect the individual and
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52 collective rights of Kurds, codified in a constitution "composed through a social
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3 consensus based on protecting the democratic citizen and communities against the nation-
4 state,” “correct understanding of history and the present,” and acceptance of “self-
5 defence principle,” (PKK 2011) while there are some Kurds, who wish for an
6 independent state.^{vi} Kurds would like to be acknowledged as a nation with distinct history
7 and culture, whose existence has been denied by the Turkish state and society until the
8 early 2000s. The Kurdish nationalist movement always emphasizes the inequality
9 between Kurds and Turks, stressing that while Turks enjoy rights as a nation, Kurds have
10 not been granted similar rights.
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22 At the individual level, among those who self-identify as Kurd, there is
23 undoubtedly ideological variation. Not all Kurds support the PKK-led struggle to the
24 same degree, with some prioritizing their religious identity over ethnic identity, and
25 others having internalized the Turkish national identity (Sarigil and Fazlioglu 2014).
26 Nevertheless, the repressive and discriminatory practices toward Kurds have generated a
27 general sense of ontological insecurity that manifests itself in widespread practices of
28 hiding identity and place of origin, for example, by registering their auto license plates in
29 other provinces. Thus, Kurdish nationalism, with its demands for recognition and respect,
30 carry a strong appeal among all Kurds, even those who support other political parties.
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43 Thus, at the level of conflict parties (Turkish state and the PKK), the Kurdish
44 Issue remains a source of ontological security, as it enables both sides to reproduce
45 existing identities, narratives, and routines of violence. Despite the costs that accrue to
46 either side, this sense of ontological security gives the conflict a self-sustaining quality.
47 At the societal and individual levels, however, there is variation: the conflict, especially
48 the Turkish state’s response, reproduces the dominant narratives of Turkish nationalism,
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3 while sharpening their disconnect with Kurdish narratives. As will be discussed below,
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5 throughout the course of the Kurdish Issue, Turks have largely remained at a state of
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7 ontological security. As a result, the current peace process has generated a significant
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9 level of anxiety and ontological insecurity among Turks, and thus, remains vulnerable to
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11 the manipulation of spoilers. In contrast, Kurds have remained at a state of ontological
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13 insecurity and currently experience greater levels of anxiety due to the uncertainties of
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15 the peace process.
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20 As a result of their conflicting identity narratives, Turks and Kurds have attached
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22 different sets of meanings to the Kurdish Issue in Turkey, although as expressed earlier,
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24 neither Kurds nor Turks constitute a homogenous population. While many Turks saw the
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26 PKK as a criminal, terrorist organization, for many Kurds, it was a guerrilla organization
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28 fighting for the Kurdish rights. While Turks regard the imprisoned PKK leader, Abdullah
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30 Öcalan to be guilty of treason, for Kurds, he is the supreme leader who embodies their
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32 political will (Güneş and Zeydanlıoğlu 2013), dignity, and identity (Gunter 1998). In the
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34 course of the conflict, both parties constructed and experienced different realities: Turks
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36 socialized into the Turkish state narrative remained unaware of the pain and suffering of
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38 Kurds in eastern and southeastern Turkey. Even as awareness of the rampant human
39
40 rights violations spread, issues, such as displacement, continued to be interpreted and
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42 represented differently by the Turkish state.^{vii}
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49 Although since 1999, there is progressively a more open discussion of Kurdish
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51 Issue and cultural rights in Turkey, the dominant narratives of Turkish nationalism, and
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53 hence bases of Turkish ontological security have largely remained intact. Instead of
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55 producing new narratives upon which Turkish-Kurdish peace may be predicated, the
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3 Turkish political elite has adopted a double-speak strategy. Rhetorical moves that
4 recognized the legitimacy of Kurdish claims and past injustices toward Kurds have
5 always been followed with counter-statements re-producing the official narratives.
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10 Arguably, this double-speak has a political rationale: the support base of the AKP
11 governments, which have ruled Turkey since 2002, includes Turkish nationalists,
12
13 Islamists, as well as Turkish and Kurdish liberals (Kayhan Pusane 2014). For example, in
14
15 August 2005, the then prime minister, Erdogan gave a historical speech in Diyarbakır,
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17 where he said:
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22 “Turkey [is] a big and a strong country... It does not fit us to deny past
23 mistakes... A big state and a strong nation has the confidence to confront the
24 past and walk to the future... The Kurdish problem is not only the problem
25 of a section of this nation; it is the problem of us all.” (Radikal 2005).
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28 However, shortly after, in December 2005, Erdogan retreated back to the official
29 discourse to argue that “there is no Kurdish problem, there is terrorism problem” (Zaman
30 2005). No sustained attempt has been made at the symbolic level to produce an
31
32 alternative discourse upon which Turkish and Kurdish ontological security may be
33
34 resurrected. As will be discussed below, when the peace process fully started in 2009, the
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36 absence of an alternative discourse has made peace attempts especially vulnerable.
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42 At the intergroup level, discourses on Turkish-Kurdish fraternity coexist with
43 negative images that have solidified over years of conflict. On the one hand, neither the
44
45 Turkish state nor the PKK has produced narratives that securitize the societal groups. In
46
47 fact, the Turkish political elite frequently employed the representation of “Turks and
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49 Kurds are brothers” to condemn the PKK for its allegedly “separationist ideology”
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51 (Saracoglu 2009). Representations of Kurds fighting along Turks in the War of
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3 Independence between 1919 and 1922 are deeply embedded in history books and political
4 discourses, and also internalized by most members of the society.^{viii}
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8 On the other hand, research on intergroup relations show that despite these
9 prevalent representations, Kurds and Turks hold strong negative images about each other
10 (Bilali, Çelik & Ok, 2014). While Turks see Kurds as inferior in cultural status, weak,
11 incompetent and inefficient, but threatening (rogue image); Kurds see Turks as
12 aggressive, dangerous, and irrational (barbarian image). In addition, in the course of
13 conflicts, intergroup relations are negatively affected as a result of violent events that are
14 considered to be threatening the group's physical security or symbolic threat to its group
15 value. This change is greater on the side of the majority since they continue to see their
16 armed groups as legitimate while others' as "terrorist." As will be discussed in the
17 following sections, the peace attempts have largely ignored the growing salience of these
18 negative representations and hence the need to ensure societal reconciliation following
19 the resolution of the conflict.
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39 *Patterns of Ontological (In)security*

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41 Since 1984, the Kurdish conflict in Turkey has undergone various stages of
42 escalation and de-escalation, and in the course of the conflict, Turks and Kurds have
43 experienced varying levels of ontological and physical insecurity. In the early period
44 from 1984 to 1999, while the Kurds experienced ontological insecurity stemming from
45 the non-recognition of their claims to difference, the Turkish national narrative focusing
46 on national unity and homogeneity remained largely intact. Although the Kurdish
47 uprising challenged the main presumptions of Turkish national narrative, the Turkish
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3 state sidelined this challenge by framing the problem as one of security and terrorism. As
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5 a result, especially in its earlier stages, the conflict did not generate ontological insecurity
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7 among the majority Turkish population. The PKK's activities as well as the violence
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9 perpetrated by the Turkish security forces were concentrated in the Kurdish-dominated
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11 South-eastern provinces of the country. Therefore, in this early period, the conflict
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13 generated a greater degree of physical insecurity among Kurds than Turks.
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19 In 1999, with the capture of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and the declaration
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21 of Turkey's EU candidacy, the Kurdish Issue entered into a phase of de-escalation. The
22
23 PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire, and the Turkish state embarked on a set of political
24
25 reforms directed toward fulfilling the EU's criteria for membership. The reform packages
26
27 approved to align Turkey with European standards in democracy and human rights also
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29 included measures that addressed Kurdish concerns to some extent, such as the
30
31 abolishment of death penalty and broadcasting in languages other than Turkish (see
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33 Çelik, 2005 for a detailed analysis of legal changes). Although the recognition granted to
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35 the Kurdish language in this fashion conflicted with the Turkish national narrative
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37 premised on homogeneity, it did not generate a significant degree of ontological
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39 insecurity among Turks, mostly because the reforms were undertaken within an
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41 individual-rights rather than a group-rights framework and endorsed by the European
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43 Union. On the other hand, the piecemeal reform process undertaken to fulfill EU criteria
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45 fell short of meeting Kurdish demands and addressing the Kurdish ontological
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47 insecurities that stem from the non-recognition of their distinct identity by the Turkish
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The period of physical security unleashed by the ceasefire lasted roughly until 2005. Thereafter began a slow yet steady increase in the armed confrontations between the PKK and the Turkish state. With incidents such as the burning of the Turkish flag by Kurdish protestors in 2005^{ix} and PKK bombings of non-military sites in Ankara and Izmir in 2007, the conflict began to affect Western Turkey more directly, and generated physical insecurity among Turks (Çelik and Blum 2007). Moreover, escalating levels of discrimination and everyday violence directed against Kurds were witnessed (Toprak et al, 2011).

The 'Kurdish Opening' Process (2009-2011) and its Subsequent Failure:

In July 2009, for the first time in the history of the conflict, the Turkish government commenced a process, initially referred to as the “Kurdish Opening,” with the declared intention of ending the conflict. However, the process proved to be very short-lived because it focused exclusively on legal and political reforms and did not tackle the root causes and the meanings and understandings that underlie and reproduce the conflict. The legal and political reforms enacted as part of the process included the setting up of a public TV channel in Kurdish, legalizing the use of Kurdish in prisons, and changing laws dealing with the rehabilitation of minors involved in “terrorist acts”. However, these fell seriously short of meeting Kurdish expectations. Before the process was declared to the public, the government organized a number of consultative meetings with civil society actors and intellectuals. Neither in these consultative meetings nor in independent Turkish/Kurdish civil society gatherings, the ontological security concerns were openly acknowledged, but were mostly dismissed with blanket claims stated mostly by Turks

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3 that both Turks and Kurds desire peace, share a common past and want to “live together”
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6 (Ekopolitik 2009).
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8 What ultimately brought the end of the process were three developments: In
9
10 October 2009, 34 PKK members crossed the Habur border into Turkey in combat
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12 uniforms. Although the PKK organized the crossing as a gesture for the Opening, and
13
14 referred to them as ‘Peace Ambassadors’, Turks perceived the crossing and the crowds
15
16 gathered to welcome them as a parade of PKK victory. The quick release of the PKK
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18 members by the Turkish courts shortly after their arrival (Al Jazeera 2009) triggered
19
20 further anger among Turks and fostered anxiety that the state is ‘forgiving the terrorists’.
21
22 Harsh public reaction caused the government to make a U-turn and subsequently
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24 seventeen of them were sentenced to prison for 20 months for spreading “terrorist
25
26 propaganda” in 2011 (*Today’s Zaman* 2011, Kayhan Pusane 2014). For Turks, the fear of
27
28 the country being divided by the “terrorist PKK” enhanced by the long-lasting Turkish
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30 nationalist teachings was so high that they rejected seeing the Habur incidence the way
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32 Kurds saw it: a first-time event when Kurds could enter alive from the Iraqi border to
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34 Turkey; something to be celebrated.
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40 The second development was the KCK^x trials (2009-2012), where thousands of
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42 Kurdish politicians, activists, journalists and academics were prosecuted for being
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44 members of an illegal, terrorist organization. Shortly after the start of the KCK trials, the
45
46 Constitutional Court shut down the pro-Kurdish DTP (Demokratik Toplum Partisi-
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48 Democratic Society Party), making it the 5th Kurdish political party to be shut down for
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50 the same reason and arrested many Kurdish politicians affiliated with the party. The
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3 criminalization of these non-violent political organizations affiliated with the PKK
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5 further undermined the trust of Kurds in the peace process.
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8 Thirdly, following the general elections in June 2011, the sound recordings of the
9
10 secret meetings held between the PKK and the Turkish government representatives in
11
12 Oslo supposedly between 2008 and mid-2011 were leaked over the internet. As the
13
14 Turkish narratives about the conflict remained intact, these negotiations could not be
15
16 perceived by the Turkish public as an inevitable step in the peace process. The news that
17
18 the government has been negotiating with what are still regarded as ‘terrorists’ created an
19
20 immediate public uproar (Öztürk 2012), quickly delegitimized the whole peace process in
21
22 the eyes of many Turks and this, in turn, strengthened nationalist discourses, as well as
23
24 the ideas, identities, and behaviors associated with conflict. For example, the leader of the
25
26 ultra-nationalist party, MHP (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, Nationalist Action Party) argued
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28 that the peace process was designed to “absolve the terrorist PKK” (Objektifhaber 2011).
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30 Similarly, some journalists presented the peace process as a delaying tactic for releasing
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32 Öcalan and “giving in” to the PKK (Özsoy 2011).
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39 The dissatisfaction with the peace process led the PKK back into the cycle of
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41 violence. On July 13, 2011, the PKK killed 13 Turkish soldiers in what it claimed to be
42
43 self-defense. The next day, the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), a platform that
44
45 brings together the majority of Kurdish non-government organizations in Diyarbakır
46
47 declared “democratic autonomy.”^{xi} These developments, and in particular their coupling,
48
49 exacerbated Turkish anxieties about the peace process. In Turkish newspapers, the PKK
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51 attacks were universally condemned as an attack on peace, and the declaration of
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53 autonomy was represented as indicative of the Kurds’ ultimate desire for secession
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3 (Bianet 2011). The failure of the Opening triggered sporadic communal violence in
4
5 western Turkey. Following the increase in violence in 2011 and 2012, Diyarbakır, the
6
7 undeclared capital of the Kurdish region, started to witness clashes between the civilians
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9 and police again, especially during the funerals of the PKK members.^{xii} In the first nine
10
11 months of the 2012, for example, security forces intervened in 112 demonstrations -
12
13 mostly violently- in predominantly Kurdish eastern and southeastern Anatolia (Human
14
15 Rights Association 2012). Kurdish physical insecurity and vulnerability reached its apex
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17 in this period with the Roboski incident. On 28 December 2011, in Roboski (or in
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19 Turkish, Gülyazı/Uludere), acting on information that the PKK militants were crossing
20
21 the border, the Turkish air forces mistakenly bombarded 34 Kurds crossing the border to
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23 smuggle in cigarettes and gasoline. In early 2012, Kurdish public once more was shaken
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25 with the news that Kurdish minors imprisoned for “throwing stones” at security forces
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27 were allegedly exposed to sexual violence and beatings (Bianet 2012).
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34 Analysts have cited many reasons for the ultimate failure of the ‘Kurdish
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36 Opening’, its vagueness, incompleteness, and exclusion of key actors as well as the AKP
37
38 government’s electoral concerns (Gunter 2012). Both Turkish and Kurdish political
39
40 actors have blamed a series of ‘spoilers’ and ‘provocateurs’ in state bureaucracy for the
41
42 leak of Oslo negotiations and the KCK trials. However, we contend that the main reason
43
44 lies in the process’ inattentiveness to ontological security concerns. In the absence of an
45
46 alternative discourse around which an altered sense of ontological security may be
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48 reinstated, the Opening enhanced the anxieties of Turks and Kurds, while promising an
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50 end to conflict. In the context of their established narratives, the majority of Turks had
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52 hard times accepting that they no longer should treat the PKK members as “terrorists”,
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3 and the fact that their “sacred” Turkish state needs to talk to the “enemy” in the peace
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5 process. This state of general anxiety provided a context that is conducive to spoilers on
6
7 both sides.
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10 The re-escalation of the conflict allowed Turks to regain ontological security by
11
12 reverting to their stable and certain positions premised on their superiority and
13
14 righteousness. Violence brought increasing support for military measures and a
15
16 decreasing support for Kurdish rights (Bilali, Çelik & Ok, 2014). A survey conducted in
17
18 2012 by a pro-government think-tank, for example, showed that only 14% of Turks
19
20 supported the negotiations with the PKK and Öcalan (BILGESAM 2012a).
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24 More seriously, according to the Kurdish political elite, the disappointing end to
25
26 the ‘Opening’, and in particular the lack of empathy following the Roboski incident led
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28 Kurds to an ‘emotional break’ with Turks (Taştekin 2013). While dismissed in
29
30 government circles as PKK propaganda (BILGESAM 2012b), such claims assume
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32 importance from an ontological security perspective. On the one hand, an emotional
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34 break at the intergroup level makes it difficult to promote reconciliation and reinstate
35
36 ontological security in peace processes. On the other hand, an emotional break would
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38 empower Kurds to independently claim their identity without depending on Turks for its
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40 recognition.
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48 *The Dialogue/Resolution Process 2013-?):*
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50 The AKP government started a new wave of talks with the PKK and its leader
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52 Öcalan in early 2013. This new phase was different from the former in two ways. First,
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54 the government asked several BDP MPs, whom it refused to talk to in 2009 to shuttle
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3 between imprisoned Öcalan, the PKK outposts in the Kandil mountains and MIT.
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5 However, interestingly, to refuse legitimizing Öcalan and the PKK through these visits,
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7 the government and Prime Minister chose to refer to them as “İmralı” (referring to the
8
9 island where Öcalan is imprisoned) and Kandil visits, rather than their own names. Such
10
11 was a deliberate choice to mention that the government was not “negotiating” but
12
13 “fighting with terrorism” through peaceful means (Milliyet, 2013).
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18 Second, in an effort to increase the public support for the peace process, the
19
20 government gathered 63 people mostly from the media, academia and the civil society to
21
22 serve in the seven official regions of the country as the “Wise People Committees”
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24 (WPCs). These committees provided a channel for people for the first time to voice their
25
26 beliefs, fears and concerns about the Kurdish Issue. It was the first time, people officially
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28 assigned by the government, came to their places to hear their concerns about the way the
29
30 state has historically dealt with and is now addressing the Kurdish Issue. The WPC
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32 reports subsequently presented to the government revealed that both Kurds and Turks
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34 have years of anger, frustration, and fear, and because they were not taught to
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36 constructively channel these feelings, they express them sometimes in very hostile and
37
38 threatening ways.
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44 The WPCs were met with protests in some cities in western and northeastern
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46 Turkey. The WPCs detected, especially in the western parts of the country, a general lack
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48 of information, awareness, and empathy about the Kurdish concerns and the impact of the
49
50 conflict on Kurds. This is undoubtedly an important social barrier for the continuation of
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52 the peace process and signals the need to raise awareness, and bring different groups
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54 together to share their concerns and needs. Overall, three major concerns about the peace
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3 process were voiced by Turks. First, there is the tendency to characterize the Kurdish
4 issue as a manipulation of foreign powers, and the WPC members as “agents of imperial
5 powers, who have hidden agendas over Turkey.” For example, a participant in Samsun
6 commented: “The issue is not the issue of PKK or Kurds. It is the games of the
7 imperialist ruling the world over Turkey” (UKAM 2014: 59).
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15 Secondly, among Turks, the paramount concern is that the peace process will
16 entail (or facilitate) the territorial disintegration of the country. For example, another
17 participant in Samsun argued: “We are living together on this land for 1000 years. We
18 need to further this process if we want to live together for another 1000 years. But we
19 should not compromise our homeland, flag, and past values” (UKAM 2014: 57). Thirdly,
20 in some regions, opposition to the AKP government strengthens the distrust and
21 opposition to the peace process. In the meetings conducted in the Mediterranean Region,
22 the widespread perception that the AKP government is giving concessions to the PKK for
23 its own political benefit, in order to obtain the support of Kurds for the transition to a
24 presidential system (UKAM 2014: 47).
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39 The WPC reports indicate that in the Kurdish dominated regions of the country,
40 support for the peace process is generally strong, especially among those who suffered
41 physically from the conflict the most (Arıboğan 2013). WPs found out that Kurds mainly
42 were confused about the reasons for why Turks were not trying to understand their
43 positions and their suffering for centuries (UKAM 2014). Similarly, according to a study
44 conducted in Diyarbakır, the undeclared capital of the Kurdish-populated region in
45 Turkey, the Kurdish youth also complain from the same neglect, arguing that Turks’
46 image of Kurds come from the misrepresentation of Kurds and Kurdish culture in the
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3 media (Başer and Çelik 2014). Although the peace process has improved the conditions
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5 of physical security, a general anxiety about its ultimate outcome remains. In particular,
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7 Kurds are anxious about being cheated, an anxiety that is rooted in memories of being
8
9 cheated by various Ottoman and Turkish administrations (UKAM 2014). Different from
10
11 the Turkish anxieties about alleged Kurdish separatism, however, as the above examples
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13 show, Kurds' anxieties rest on a possible failure of the peace process and state's
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15 deception.
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20 There was an important positive turning point in the peace process on 21 March
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22 2013, when Öcalan's call on the PKK for a cease-fire was delivered by the Peace and
23
24 Democracy Party (BDP) deputies during the Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır. Upon
25
26 this call PKK started to withdraw its guerrillas towards the south of the Turkish border,
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28 but this process stalled when the PKK argued that the government was not taking the
29
30 necessary steps to respond to their move. While the peace process was in order, several
31
32 other developments also influenced the general perception of the peace process in various
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34 ways. In June 2012, initiated first as reactions to government's decision to build a mall to
35
36 Taksim Park, protests in Istanbul quickly spread to the whole country as anti-government
37
38 protests. What was significant about the Gezi protests in the peace process was that some
39
40 Turks, who once perceived the Kurdish Issue solely as terrorism problem, started
41
42 thinking that perhaps some "truth" could be hidden from them. Following this
43
44 rapprochement between Kurds and some Turks, the president of the pro-Kurdish BDP ran
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46 as a candidate for the presidency and achieved 9.76% of the votes, which can be
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48 considered as success given the much lower support the Kurdish parties got in the past
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50 elections.
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Meanwhile, the civil war in Syria has strengthened the transnational dimension of the Kurdish Issue in Turkey. Syrian Kurds established autonomous regions in northern Syria in January 2014, and the city of Kobanê in the autonomous Rojava region was encircled and brutally attacked by the armed forces of the Islamic State (IS) in late September 2014. The Turkish state refrained from assisting the Kobanê Kurds militarily, and initially attempted to stop those who rushed to the Turkish border to save their lives. According to the Rojava leader Salih Müslim “the Turkish authorities did not keep their promises” (BBC 2014a) of helping them. The developments in Kobanê aggravated the Turkish-Kurdish polarization in Turkey (Ayrıntı 2014). The position of the Turkish state, and especially, President Erdogan’s enthusiastic declaration that “Kobanê is about to fall” (Cumhuriyet 2014) further alienated Turkey’s Kurds, who felt strong solidarity with Kobanê Kurds. Violent protests erupted in many cities in Turkey over Kobanê, and clashes between different groups led to the declaration of curfew in five cities in eastern and southeastern Turkey (BBC 2014b). Turkish officials and society were generally inattentive to and dismissive of the familial and solidaristic ties between Turkish and Kobanê Kurds, and thus, portrayed the protests as vandalism, irresponsible provocations by spoilers of the peace process, illegal demonstrations of pro-PKK people by using reactions against IS as an excuse (Milliyet 2014).

Conclusion: Constructing an Agonistic Basis for Ontological Security

As noted in the beginning, ethnic conflicts pose unique ontological security challenges. Different from interstate conflicts, where the existence and status of the Other as a legitimate counterpart is rarely questioned, in intrastate ethnic conflicts, the

1
2
3 ontological security of the dominant group often rests on the assumption that the minority
4 conflict party is not legitimate. Through a case study of Turkey's Kurdish Issue, this
5 article has analyzed how ontological security concerns in ethnic conflicts impact peace
6 processes. We argued that the Kurdish peace process in Turkey remains vulnerable to
7 spoilers because it is not predicated on new narratives and routines around which Turks
8 and Kurds can reconcile and develop an altered sense of ontological security.
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18 Most political initiatives carried out in the context of the Kurdish peace process
19 have remained at the macro-institutional level, and the issues and needs at the individual
20 and group levels have not yet become focus of much discussion in Turkey. In the absence
21 of interventions to reconstruct a mutually recognized "Us" and feelings of solidarity and
22 understanding, there erupts a disturbing inconsistency between the conflict parties' self-
23 narratives and how they are called on to relate to the other. There is the need, first of all,
24 to couple negotiations and reforms at the macro level with micro-level interventions, such
25 as trust-building workshops, with the aim of building healthy channels of communication
26 and empathy between Kurds and Turks.
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39 In asymmetric ethnic conflicts, "the risks and costs for the high-power group are
40 generally greater, because by definition, rectification of the injustice involves upsetting a
41 status quo" (Rouhana 2004:38). To arrive at a state of ontological and physical security
42 for both Kurds and Turks, there is the need to challenge the dominant narratives through
43 which Turks achieve a sense of ontological security. These narratives are characterized
44 by assumption of superiority^{xiii}, denial of past wrongs, the criminalization of Kurdish
45 politics, the legitimization of state violence, and the characterization of Kurds as the
46 cause of conflict.
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Nevertheless, a lasting solution to the Kurdish issue in Turkey cannot be based on a formula where one party's conditions of ontological security prevail over those of the other. In other words, despite the asymmetric nature of the conflict, Kurdish ontological security cannot be reinstated at the expense of Turkish ontological security, solely by challenging the dominant Turkish narratives that placed Kurds in an ontologically insecure position to begin with. Narratives and routines that place Turks in an ontologically secure position after the resolution of the conflict also need to be constructed.

These new narratives through which Turks and Kurds attain ontological security need not be shared or consensual. Because in long-lasting conflicts parties develop conflicting narratives, the expectation that parties will reconcile their differences in a new shared narrative often generates rejection and new tensions. Based on the assumption that groups do not have to, and most probably will not, accept each other's narratives, what is needed in the short-term is the construction of separate narratives which convert the Other from an enemy/antagonist into adversary (Mouffe 2000:13; Schaap 2005; Hirsch 2012). Rather than a consensus, peace requires an epistemic opening to difference (Maddison 2014), and accepting the Other's right to narrate its story and be heard.

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41 _____
42 ⁱ Although the Kurdish Issue is a region-wide ethnic conflict dating back to the Ottoman Empire's last
43 decades, we focus on the present phase of the conflict in Turkey starting with the PKK's attack against the
44 Turkish state in 1984.

45 ⁱⁱ Turkish government officials have referred to the peace process by different names. When first announced
46 in 2009, the initiative was called the "Kurdish Opening,," later it was referred to as the "Democratic
47 Initiative," and, finally as the "National Union and Brotherhood Project." The government's hesitation to
48 retain the explicit reference to the 'Kurdish' dimension is indicative of its disinclination to recognize it as
49 such. Since January 2013, government officials have been referring to the process as the "Resolution
50 Process". However, the PKK leader Öcalan uses the term of 'Dialogue Process' to underscore that the PKK
51 and the government are in dialogue, but not yet at the stage of negotiations.. While choosing to refer to the
52 process since 2009 generally as the peace process, we also do not limit our discussion to the talks between
53 the government and the PKK, and adopt a broader notion of peace that includes societal reconciliation.

54 ⁱⁱⁱ Plus, one party has abrogated itself due to fear of closure.

55 ^{iv} As evident in the following claim made in a civil society workshop on the Kurdish peace process:
56 "Because of the incidences we had with the PKK in the last 25 years...[we think] these are beyond rights-
57 seeking and recognition." (Ekopolitik 2009).

^v As expressed by a prominent Kurdish Intellectual, Şerafettin Elçi “Kurds have an existence and characteristics stemming from history... Like everybody else, they also want [the acceptance of their] existence” (Ekopolitik 2009). On the importance of memory to ontological security, see Malksoo 2015.

^{vi} It is hard to estimate the percentage of Kurds who support this position since it is constitutionally banned to express such views of separation. However, it is safe to argue that most Kurds follow the views of their imprisoned leader, Öcalan, who for the last decade has been arguing for political and cultural rights of Kurds, rather than for an independent state.

^{vii} For example, the Turkish state translated displacement as “*yerinden olma*” (as a self-organized process) rather than “*yerinden edilme*” (as directed by some agency) (Çelik 2013). Such representation of displacement makes it possible for the state to escape responsibility for human rights abuses.

^{viii} As evident in claims made in a civil society workshop on the Kurdish peace process (Ekopolitik 2009).

^{ix} More recently, this incident was proven to be a provocation.

^x Koma Civakên Kurdistan (KCK, Union of Communities in Kurdistan) is a Kurdish organization founded by Abdullah Öcalan, to implement his ideology of democratic confederalism.

^{xi} It is argued by some that Öcalan opposed the return to violence and immediate declaration of autonomy (Düzel 2011).

^{xii} As examples to various violent events that took place during this period, see <http://rojevakurdistan.org/kuerdistan/7655-diyarbakrda-cenaze-toerenine-gaz-bombal-saldr--sp-14361>, and <http://www.etha.com.tr/Haber/2011/12/25/guncel/2011-kurt-sorununda-mccarthy-donemi/>

^{xiii} For example, the argument that Kurdish “ethnicity” cannot be equated with Turkish “nationhood” has recently been put forward by a member of the main opposition party, Birgül Ayman Güler of CHP (*Sol* 2013), who is also a professor of political science in Turkey.