

THE KURDISH QUEST FOR AUTONOMY IN SOUTH-EASTERN TURKEY: A  
CASE STUDY ON THE NATIONALISTIC AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS  
FOR KURDS IN TURKEY UNDER THE AKP GOVERNMENT (2002-2015)

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
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## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated to all the victims of the attacks in Istanbul (7 June 2016) and Ankara (17 February 2016, 13 March 2016). May you never be forgotten.

*“The world adheres to elitist distinctions that terrorists do not. Whether an attack is launched in a nightclub in Paris, a Turkish square, or a mosque in Afghanistan, all victims deserve attention, regardless of their nationality, culture or religion. Terrorists kill indiscriminately; we dishonor their victims when we callously ignore their deaths.”*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP .....	Justice and Development Party or <i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i>
HDP .....	Peoples' Democratic Party or <i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</i>
EU .....	European Union
PKK .....	Kurdistan Workers Party or <i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê</i>
US .....	United States of America
CHP .....	Republican People's Party or <i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i>
MHP .....	Nationalist Action Party or <i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i>
USD .....	United States Dollar
TL .....	Turkish Lira
PYD .....	Democratic Union Party or <i>Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat</i>
KHRP .....	Kurdish Human Rights Project
GAP .....	South-Eastern Anatolia Project or <i>Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi</i>
GDP .....	Gross Domestic Product
OECD .....	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
FETO .....	Fetullah Gulen Terrorist Organization

## **ABSTRACT**

**THE KURDISH QUEST FOR AUTONOMY IN SOUTH-EASTERN TURKEY: A CASE STUDY ON THE NATIONALISTIC AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS FOR KURDS IN TURKEY UNDER THE AKP GOVERNMENT (2002-2015)**

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George Mason University and University of Malta, 2016

Thesis Director: Prof. Stephen Calleya

This thesis describes the developments in Turkey with regards to its Kurdish Question. A case study is built using the greed or grievance approach in order to present the differences between the Kurdish minority living in South-Eastern Turkey and the Turks living in the rest of the country in terms of their economic situation and their nationalistic sentiment. This research analyses the extent to which such variables have contributed to the violence occurring between the two parties under the umbrella of the PKK, a designated terrorist group by the US, EU and Turkey, as well as the developments of the Kurdish Question in relation to these variables under the controversial AKP government. This study was conducted by means of analyzing data produced by other researchers and synthesized using various theoretical approaches in order to obtain a tangible final outcome in terms of the greed or grievance approach as presented by Paul Collier.

## CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

The Kurdish question in Turkey has been an issue for Turkey since the formation of the state itself in 1923. Many scholars and politicians have debated the issue in Turkey and internationally. There is variety of literature one could explore on the issue as well as the historical reasons of why this problem has become such a burden to Turkey's security, with years of struggle between the state and military groups such as the Kurdistan Workers Party or *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* (PKK). Over time, talks between the state and the PKK brought about ceasefires and peace, however lately the situation seems to have taken a negative note, with various reports of insurgences and terrorist attacks occurring in Turkey. This re-emergence of the military group occurred under the governance of the Justice and Development Party or *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) which has been in power since 2002.

This thesis intends to address the issue of greed or grievance in Turkey's Kurdish population, which is mostly concentrated in the South-East of the country. Using theoretical underpinnings, the Kurdish question will be analyzed on the nationalistic as well as the economic fronts. Both elements of the question may be deemed to be very diverse, however both are very important elements which need to be understood in order to understand the dynamics at play in the struggle between the two parties. AKP policies

and actions will be analyzed in order to understand better the role of the current government in the conflict at hand.

This thesis is set out to answer the question **‘How does the Economic situation of South-Eastern Turkey play out under the AKP in relation to the nationalistic sentiment of Kurds and the PKK in Turkey?’** In order to make justice to this research, a brief introduction of the historical perspective will be given outlining the birth of the Turkish state, as well as the dynamics in which the AKP and the PKK were both born. The two groups at hand are the main reason why this question is relevant since they have both featured in far too many academic reports and debates over their conflicting interests. The interplay and relationship between both the AKP and the PKK, a designated terrorist group in Turkey and the European Union (EU) has provoked my interest to conduct such research.

The South-Eastern region of Turkey is considered to be one of the poorest areas in Turkey, especially when compared to the developed and urbanized cities of the Western parts of the country. Unemployment and illiteracy in the region left ample room for the Kurdish groups to take up arms against their government in view of the group’s inability to obtain an autonomous or independent region of its own. Elements such as nationalism and the economy help to explore this research from the greed or grievance perspective. Obtaining a good overview of the ‘greed or grievance’ approach will allow an explanation of operations of groups such as the PKK in Turkey which may be justified through nationalistic reasons, or through possibly a case for greed, were a terrorist group

seeks to occupy land for non-altruistic purposes by claiming to be the rightful owner through grievances.

In this respect, plenty of literature will be explored in order to understand theoretical underpinnings which could explain the dynamics of nationalism and relative deprivation. In turn these theories will be applied to the Kurdish question which in turn will be synthesized into the greed or grievance model. Such approach allows the researcher to understand gradually the developments in Turkey using theoretical approaches previously researched by many scholars in the field of Conflict Resolution. Furthermore, other approaches and recommendations will be advised at the end of this thesis in order to increase the relevance of this study with possible future contributions from other researchers.

## **1.1 Historical Perspective**

In order to understand Turkey's Kurdish question one must begin by understanding the dynamics of identity which currently exist within Turkey between the two groups. Such questions of identity are found in the formation of Turkish state, which began after the First World War with the end of the Ottoman Empire. These events brought about the dissolution of the Empire with every European power trying to get their hands on what is today Turkish territory in the Treaty of Sevres of 1920. This treaty never came to place following the rise of Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who led an amateur army of people which sought an Independent Turkish State. This led to the establishment of modern day Turkey in 1923.

In order to ensure that the transition occurred permanently, the leader of the newly founded state assumed power and started to implement revolutionary social reforms. Such

changes involved removing the legacy of the Ottomans from Turkish society and assuming a more secular, democratic and Europeanized identity for the Turks. Such move ensured that Turkey would assume a leading role in the geo-politics of the region.<sup>1</sup>

Such changes involved extensive reshaping of the Turkish identity. The initial phases of such a change involved removing the old ottoman religious institutions in order to have a new secular republic. This process found its start through the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924. This was a major move since this Caliphate had a significant importance for the Islamic world.<sup>2</sup>

This was not the only change done by Ataturk. Other institutions such as the law and education were also overhauled. Arabic was eliminated from Turkish education and instead was replaced by a Turkish education system which emphasized the end of transmission of Islamic languages in Turkey. All these efforts were being undertaken in order to ensure that the power of Islam was significantly reduced from the role it had within the state. Also, religion would no longer feature as an important pillar in Turkish society.<sup>3</sup>

Since Ataturk's revolution saw its earliest formation in Anatolia, the new Turkish identity was taking shape in form of ethnic-nationalism, since all Anatolians were ethnically Turks. Schoolbooks were also overhauled to reflect this change, and Ataturk

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<sup>1</sup> Dietrich Jung and Wolfango Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East* (London ; New York: Zed Books, 2001). Pg. 60

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds*, Revised edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008). Pg.42

<sup>3</sup> Jung and Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads*. Pg. 60

commissioned a group of linguists in order to change the dynamics of the language from an Arabic based alphabet to a Latin based alphabet. <sup>4</sup>

This maneuver by Ataturk to change the predominant Islamic identity of Turkey came at the detriment of the number of ethnic minorities living within the Turkish territory. Such minorities, at the time, were seen as a threat to the newly formed state's interest. Since the early stages of the formation of the Turkish state, national security issues quickly became part of the new state's image. Ataturk himself acknowledged this threat in a number of speeches. As a result, a series of suppressive measures started to be directed towards minorities by the leader himself. Hence, one could say that the fear of separatism is as old as the Turkish nation itself.<sup>5</sup>

The Kurdish question finds its roots at the time of foundation simply because the Kurds were the largest ethnic minority on Turkish territory. One might also note that through the Treaty of Sevres, the Kurds themselves were very close at obtaining their own land. One must also notice that the Kurds themselves, fought alongside Ataturk's forces to liberate Turkish territory, and in return Ataturk himself had promised an autonomous region for the Kurds, however this was all forgotten once Turkey was established as a Republic. The initial reaction of the newly founded Turkish state was to refuse to admit the existence of any minorities within its territory. This meant that a series of governmental policies were put in action in order to suppress these minorities. It soon became illegal to speak the Kurdish language, practice Kurdish culture as well as wear

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<sup>4</sup> Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, First Edition (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace, 2007). Pg.25

<sup>5</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayse Saktanber, eds., *Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey*, First Edition (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2002). Pg.115

any type of Kurdish traditional costume. Many of the Kurdish village names were replaced with Turkish names and many Kurdish families had to change their last name to a more Turkish name. This led to decades of Kurdish suppression within Turkey.<sup>6</sup>

By the time Atatürk died in 1938, with the new Turkish identity in place, Turkey started its road to modernization. However, many within Turkey were suspicious of the role the West had in store for Turkey. With the rise of the Soviet Union, it was clear that Turkey would have a number of hostile enemies at its door step, and following the events of 1915 with Armenia, Turkey's neighborhood was indeed hostile. This meant that a good degree of internal stability was needed since Turkey needed to be an anchor of stability in a turbulent neighborhood. Hence, once more, any signs of Kurdish nationalism posed a threat to the state since it had enough power of disrupting Turkey's stability.<sup>7</sup>

### **1.1.1 Rise of the PKK**

In order to understand the dynamics of the group, one must trace its roots within neighboring states with Iraq in particular. In the years leading to the creation of the PKK, many changes occurred in Turkey and its neighboring states. Policies towards minorities were severely harsh in Turkey and uprisings by Kurds in Iraq did not go unnoticed by the Kurds in Turkey. Kurdish organisations in Iraq were built, such as the Kurdistan

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<sup>6</sup> MICHAEL M. GUNTER, "The Kurdish Question in Perspective," *World Affairs* 166, no. 4 (2004) Pg. 200

<sup>7</sup> Ali Kemal Özcan, *Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan*, 1 edition (London u.a.: Routledge, 2010). Pg. 81

Democratic Party which had promised to reach out to Kurdish communities in neighboring states.<sup>8</sup>

With Kurdish uprisings in neighboring states, the international community remained relatively silent over the issue, which gave time for the PKK to form itself in the South-East of Turkey. Once the violence erupted, the United States as well as the European Union urged Turkey to recognize its minority. One must notice, that early aid received by Turkey following World War Two was primarily focused in securitizing its borders against the threat from the Soviet Union, in no means was it related to the Kurdish issue. It was only once violence broke out in the early 1980s between the PKK and Turkey, that US foreign policy started to address the issue. With a creed for socialism, the PKK was also seen as a threat by the United States. Hence the US started aiding Turkey in its fight against the newly formed terrorist group.<sup>9</sup>

The Coup d'état's that occurred in Turkey in 1960 and 1971 also induced more damage to Turkey's Kurdish question, hence contributed further to legitimize the rise of the PKK. These military coups were popular amongst those who sought for Turkey to become a more modern and secular powerful state. However, this meant that this would induce further suppression of Kurdish identity, and following these coups, whoever sought to publish or broadcast in Kurdish was immediately arrested. Kurdish political parties were also shut down. In 1967 a law was implemented in order to ban imports of

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<sup>8</sup> Denise Natali, *The Kurdish Quasi-State: Development and Dependency in Post-Gulf War Iraq* (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 2010). Pg. 5

<sup>9</sup> Henri J. Barkey, *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000). Pg. 159

publications or recordings in Kurdish which were finding their way through to Turkey from Kurdish diaspora in Europe and elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

This effectively meant that the Kurds were becoming more isolated in the South-East, prevented from creating their own state in line with the industrial developments occurring in the Western part of the Turkish republic. This disadvantage was becoming increasingly visible in the South-East over time and many Kurds had to move to Western Turkey to find employment and proper education.<sup>11</sup>

It is here that the state started to recognize the economic inequality between the West and the Southeast. At this stage, a series of economic investments started to take place in order to ensure that no security threat arises from the situation.<sup>12</sup>

At this time of economic difficulties, Kurdish youth started to organize around Marxist principles. These groups took nationalistic characteristics in retaliation of the oppression that they were enduring. During this time, such groups were crushed militarily, especially since their rhetoric assimilated to the Soviet ideology which was perceived as a threat since Turkey was already a NATO member.<sup>13</sup>

It was at this time, that the founder of the PKK came to scene. Abdullah Ocelan was a student of Political Science at Ankara University, a fairly controversial University to date. He was one of those arrested following the military coup of 1971 for association with leftist group. Ocelan himself admitted that it was during this time in prison that he developed the ideology which formed the basis of the PKK. After spending seven months as a political

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Pg. 64

<sup>11</sup> Aliza Marcus, "Turkey's PKK: Rise, Fall, Rise Again?," *World Policy Journal* 24, no. 1 (2007): 75–84.

<sup>12</sup> Mesut Yegen, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 4 (1999): 555–68.

<sup>13</sup> James Brown, "The Turkish Imbroglio: Its Kurds," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 541 (1995): 116–29.

prisoner in Ankara, he was released, and started the formation of his own Leftist-Kurdish group.<sup>14</sup>

Eventually, the Kurdistan Workers Party (*Parti Karkerani Kurdistan - PKK*) was established in 1978. The group had separatist goals and hoped to obtain this through a series of violent attacks targeted towards other Kurdish groups which collaborated with the state. The PKK was not the only group which operated during the 70s. Eventually the instability brought by these groups led to the 1980 military coup which reformed the constitution and induced authoritarianism and reduced human rights in order to protect the stability of the Turkish state. With the military trying to restore stability in the country, throughout the 1980s, the Kurds became the main target of the state. In 1984, the PKK started its war against the Turkish state which continues to the present day.<sup>15</sup>

### **1.1.2 The rise of the AKP**

The rise of the AK Party in Turkey must be explained through the rise of the secular mentality in Turkey. Since Ataturk, Turkey has been a defender of secularism within its territory, this was even engraved in its constitution. However, those Turks who still venerated the glory days of the Ottoman Empire found this new secularization process uncomfortable. Kemalism did leave an impact on Turkey, with massive changes taking place within the higher structures of governance of the state. One must always keep in mind that such changes in civil society might have gone down well with the majorities living in cities, however rural areas were much less concensual to the new secular state. This led for Turkey to start witnessing the rise of Islamist parties in the

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<sup>14</sup> Özcan, *Turkey's Kurds*. Pg. 89-91

<sup>15</sup> Birol Ali Yeşilada, "Problems of Political Development in the Third Turkish Republic," *Polity* 21, no. 2 (1988): 345–72, doi:10.2307/3234810.

1970s. At the time, the military was entrusted with ensuring that Kemalist principles were adhered to by any government elected. From 1970 up to 2001, four parties were banned by the Constitutional Court for adopting anti-Kemalist rhetoric and principles.<sup>16</sup>

In reality, a larger political pressure by Islamist parties started to come around during the 1990s. Until then, there was no real support for the Islamist rhetoric, and any emerging party was quickly shut down by Turkish forces. The real threat came around when in 1994 the ‘Welfare Party’ was elected in local council elections in Istanbul and Ankara. Following these victories, the Welfare Party also won the largest number of seats in parliament during the 1995 elections, putting the party in the governing coalition. However, with the military sensing the threat of Islamists taking over the country, it stopped the Welfare Party from taking power. A general ban was issued on the party in 1997, leaving supporters of the Islamist ideology to look for alternative routes in order to gain access to the country’s governance. However, this action promptly sent a message to Islamists, who realized, that they would only gain power if they tone down their Islamic rhetoric. The AK Party stemmed its roots from the Welfare Party, which after its ban changed its name to the Virtue Party, which was also banned a few years after its inception. The Justice and Development party, was then born, and instead used the ideological stance of conservative democracy.<sup>17</sup>

Recep Tayyip Erdogan was elected as mayor of Istanbul in 1994 under the auspice of the Welfare Party. During his time in office, Erdogan increased his rhetoric of

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<sup>16</sup> “Turkey: The New Model? | Brookings Institution,” *Brookings*, November 30, 2001, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/turkey-the-new-model/>.

<sup>17</sup> “AKP Party Turkey,” *International Relations*, accessed August 14, 2016, <http://internationalrelations.org/akp-party-turkey/>.

Islamism which was reflected in his policies. He managed to do other reforms in terms of infrastructure, sanitation and environment. All such reforms confirmed Erdogan's success as mayor. However, Erdogan was sentenced to 10 months in prison in 1998 for provoking religious hatred when he read a poem which said: "The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers..." Such conviction should have meant the end of the young Mayor's career; however this was not the case. Eventually Erdogan rose as one of the founders of the AK Party in August 2001.<sup>18</sup>

In 2001, Turkey was going through the worse economic scenario since World War Two. The coalition in power was very weak since it was rigged with corruption scandals. Severe illness which struck Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, in office at the time, continued to weaken the situation. In the 2002 general elections, the newly founded AK Party received only 34% of the national vote, however gained 66% of the parliamentary seats due to an electoral threshold which automatically eliminated parties which gained less than 10% of the votes.<sup>19</sup>

Only the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the AKP went above the 10% threshold. Two thirds of the Parliamentary seats went to the AKP, enabling the party to rule with an absolute majority. Abdullah Gul, co-founder of the AK Party, took office due to Erdogan's earlier conviction which prevented him from taking office. However,

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<sup>18</sup> "A Brief History of Today's Turkey, Part 1: The Rise of Erdoğan and His AKP," *NU Middle East Review*, March 30, 2015, <http://www.numiddleeastreview.com/a-brief-history-of-todays-turkey-part-1/>.

<sup>19</sup> "The AKP Years in Turkey: The Third Stage | openDemocracy," accessed August 14, 2016, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/gunes-murat-tezcur/akp-years-in-turkey-third-stage>.

soon after, Gul amended the constitution to enable Erdogan to take power as Prime Minister of Turkey.<sup>20</sup>

The new party in power now started trying to align its policies with European Union expectations. This meant that Turkey now saw an increase in discussion on issues such as human rights, a stronger judiciary, improved democratic practices and a stronger social services agenda. However conservative policies soon started to create friction amongst the Kemalists and the Secularists. Erdogan started slowly to introduce changes such as criminalising adultery, appointing religious conservatives to authoritative positions, changes on bans regarding the use of hijab in public buildings, and also increasing tax on alcohol to discourage consumption. With the military still a protector of Kemalist values, the AKP feared a military take-over. In 2007 snap elections were held by Erdogan which consolidated even further the party's power. This infuriated even further military leaders who in 2008 took the case to the constitutional court, were the judges delivered a judgement in favor of the governing party. This was the beginning of a series of actions by Prime Minister Erdogan which ensured that the military would lose its influence over state matters.<sup>21</sup>

In its initial rhetoric, the AKP came to power with the stance of a pro-EU Turkey, with a commitment of revival in relations in 2005. As explained by Prof. Calleya, Turkey at the time seemed to have two geo-strategic options to follow, namely, the European regional pattern or the Middle Eastern regional pattern. However, with slow progress on the Cyprus issue, as well as an EU budget unwilling to accommodate an agrarian Turkey,

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<sup>20</sup> "A Brief History of Today's Turkey, Part 1."

<sup>21</sup> "AKP Party Turkey."

Erdogan's Turkey seemed to start drifting away from the European Union in 2007, in search of its own definition of politics and regional strategies. Turkey's reforms no longer kept up momentum in line with the standards required by the EU.<sup>22</sup>

With a weakened military, the AKP found itself in a position of consolidating further its control on Turkish administration. This came together with a sense of less tolerance of political opposition. In recent years, the AK Party continued to criticize opposition groups and independent media. Further constraints on the police and judiciary ensured that such institutions would only act at the party's interest.<sup>23</sup>

Also, with an established authority on the military, one could note that Kurdish nationalism became one of the greatest challenges towards Turkish stability. Reflecting this challenge, AKP policies conflicted drastically with Kurdish issues. With demands from Kurdish nationalists of incorporating Kurdish education in the national system as well as territorial autonomy, violent clashes with the state were inevitable.<sup>24</sup> In the 2011, the AK Party promised a constitutional reform which would highlight an increase in civil liberties and democratic principles. All opposition parties were in favor of such amendments. However, such changes were already addressed in previous constitutional changes and the only pending issues were related to the Kurdish question. With this regard, the AKP to date is still reluctant to allow further freedom to the Kurds.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Stephen C. Calleya, "EU-Turkish Relations: Prospects and Problems," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 40–47, doi:10.1215/10474552-2006-005.

<sup>23</sup> "How New Is Erdogan's New Turkey?," accessed August 14, 2016, [https://www.academia.edu/14174882/How\\_New\\_is\\_Erdogans\\_New\\_Turkey](https://www.academia.edu/14174882/How_New_is_Erdogans_New_Turkey).

<sup>24</sup> "Turkey's Kurdish Challenge | openDemocracy," accessed August 14, 2016, [https://www.opendemocracy.net/article/turkey\\_s\\_kurdish\\_challenge](https://www.opendemocracy.net/article/turkey_s_kurdish_challenge).

<sup>25</sup> "The AKP Years in Turkey: The Third Stage | openDemocracy."

The Gezi protests sparked in Istanbul in May 2013, reflecting the frustration of the general public with the governing party's disregards for the discrimination to ethnic and sexual minorities, the environment, as well as the authoritarian consolidation of the party amongst other issues. The reaction by security forces was brutal and violent, nothing close to what the right of freedom of speech in a liberal democracy would be like. A number of protesters also died out of abusive treatment by security forces.<sup>26</sup>

With constitutional limits on how many terms a Prime Minister could stay in power, in 2014, Erdogan started a move in consolidating further power to the president. In 2014, Turkey voted for the first time for a Presidential election which enabled Erdogan to retain his power position from an alternative role. Through this election, Erdogan managed to consolidate further his power as President of the Republic. Kocamener pointed out at the shift in rhetoric of the President, this new rhetoric emphasized a 'new Turkey' which would give away the values of secularism which it previously enforced. The author also noticed that this new rhetoric also brought about the revival of old Ottoman national values which emphasized Islamism at the expense of civil liberties and fundamental rights. Clearly such rhetoric started conflicting with European Union values.

To emphasize even further the consolidation of power, the 2015 parliamentary elections were held twice after the AK Party failed to obtain parliamentary majority in the June elections and refused to form a coalition. This led for President Erdogan to call for a second election in November which the AK Party won by 49.5%.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> "The Gezi Park Protests in Turkey: A Qualitative Field Research - Articles," accessed August 14, 2016, <http://www.insightturkey.com/the-gezi-park-protests-in-turkey-a-qualitative-field-research/articles/1416>.

<sup>27</sup> "How New Is Erdogan's New Turkey?"

With his role as President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan started a number of campaigns to further consolidate his power. Since 2015, one could notice heavy persecution to all free media as well as targeting individual journalists. Reporters without Borders, in their annual World Press Freedom Index report, ranked Turkey 149 out of 180 countries for its actions against free press during last year.<sup>28</sup> Many who show disagreements on public media in Turkey are also prosecuted by the government. Terrorism laws are enabling the government to issue court orders which allows confiscation of whole news agencies by the court. In May 2016, Today Zaman's news outlet was taken over by the government, after the court in Istanbul ruled that the paper is instigating terror to destabilize the country.<sup>29</sup> This action brought to light internationally the real crackdown occurring in Turkey over all freedom of press.

One of the most prominent organizations in Turkey, Hizmet – led by Muslim cleric Fetullah Gulen, also is currently deemed a threat to Erdogan's power. The organization has provided services to the global Islamic community in the education and religious sectors for many decades. The cleric, a former allied of President Erdogan, publicly denounced the government's actions in the handling of the Gezi Protests. Eventually, after going into self exile, the cleric became a target for the AK Party. Gulen is also deemed responsible for a number of leaked telephone calls which demonstrate

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<sup>28</sup> "Turkey : Erdogan against the Media | Reporters without Borders," *RSF*, accessed August 14, 2016, <https://rsf.org/en/turkey>.

<sup>29</sup> "Turkish Court Orders Takeover of Opposition Media Group - CNN.com," accessed August 14, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/03/05/middleeast/turkish-newspaper-takeover/>.

President's Erdogan deep influence on the press, as well as a number of corruption scandals which led to mass arrests of AK Party officials in 2013.<sup>30</sup>

Recently, on 15 July 2016, a number of military personnel attempted a coup in the hope of taking over power in Turkey at the expense of President Erdogan. During this attempted coup, the military tried to take over media outlets, the international airport in Istanbul, as well as a number of strategic locations. However, the military failed in arresting the President and take over completely Turkish media. This led for an appeal by the President on CNN Turk directed towards the Turkish public to take over the streets and stop the coup. Eventually, with direct confrontation by the public, the attempted coup failed and thousands were arrested in connection with the attempt in various Turkish provinces.<sup>31</sup>

In the midst of the coup, President Erdogan blamed cleric Fetullah Gulen for the staged coup. This led to a huge crackdown nationwide on all Gulen supporters. Turkey has formally requested extradition of the cleric from his self-imposed exile in the US. To date, the US failed to answer such requests due to lack of evidence which could demonstrate the cleric's involvement in the coup. The ongoing mass cleansing of

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<sup>30</sup> "Stunted Democracy: Erdoğan, the AKP, and Turkey's Slide into Authoritarianism, by Howard Eissenstat | Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)," accessed August 14, 2016, <http://pomed.org/pomed-publications/eissenstat2015/>.

<sup>31</sup> "Turkey Coup 2016 Explained: What Happened and What Is a Military Coup? - Mirror Online," accessed August 14, 2016, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/what-happened-turkey-attempted-coup-8432395>.

institutions from Hizmet associates, depicted as ‘enemies of the state’ clearly demonstrate Erdogan’s consolidation of power at the detriment of civil liberties and democracy.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> “Turkey Increases Pressure on U.S. for Gulen’s Extradition - The Washington Post,” accessed August 14, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkey-increases-pressure-on-us-for-gulens-extradition/2016/07/26/8249d682-533b-11e6-b652-315ae5d4d4dd\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkey-increases-pressure-on-us-for-gulens-extradition/2016/07/26/8249d682-533b-11e6-b652-315ae5d4d4dd_story.html).

## **CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW**

Following an extensive background on the current situation in Turkey presented in the introductory chapter of this thesis, this chapter will further discuss the theoretical implications which one could assimilate to the Kurdish question in Turkey and how such different theoretical approaches tie into the research question.

To start off, theories of nationalism will be explained. This entails that an extensive definition of the concept of Nationalism will be presented through the lenses of classical theorists in the field such as Anthony Smith and Harry Anastasiou. With a definition of Nationalism one could have a look at the implication of nationalism in mobilizing masses as well as delving into the quest for autonomy of the Kurds in Turkey.

The theory of relative deprivation will also be presented in order to explore in more detail the eventual factors causing a case of economic relative deprivation for the Kurds in Turkey, which may be leading to violence. In order to gain understanding of the concept, an in-depth definition will be presented as found in the writings by Ted Robert Gurr, as well as the literature in research done by Smith et al, who in their research give a comprehensive conclusion based on extensive literature by classical authors. Following a presentation of the definition, an in-depth analysis of the theory will be given in relation to economic deprivation to explain the rise of violent non-state actors in South-Eastern Turkey as explained by the relative deprivation theory.

Following the explanation of Nationalism and relative deprivation, an immersion into theories of Greed or Grievance will be presented through the writings of Paul Collier, who is considered to be the pioneer of this theory, as well as Ian Zartman, who through his publication manages to offer a different view of the theory whilst offering constructive critiques of Collier's writings. In order for this theory to be explained, a detailed definition of greed and grievance will be presented. Subsequently, the environments from which greed and grievance type conflict erupts and its association to the economic element will be explored in this research. Also a definition of conflicts of the greed and grievance type will be given for more in-depth understanding of the economic causes provoking a conflict in South-Eastern Turkey. Eventually, solutions to the greed and grievance type conflict as presented by Collier will be presented also through this thesis.

## **2.1 Nationalism**

In order to be able to understand the concept of nationalism, and the role this plays out in the Kurdish question in Turkey, a definition of Nationalism will be presented. Eventually, following a concrete definition of Nationalism by prominent theorists in the field, this section of the thesis will attempt to explain theoretically the rise of nationalism within a group such as the Kurds. Subsequently a further investigation of the implications that Nationalism presents for the Kurdish Question including the mobilization of masses towards the quest of autonomy as well as the concept of autonomy itself will be explored. In due course other relevant elements related to the research question being explored will also be delved into, such as the economic aspect.

### **2.1.1 Definition of Nationalism**

In the book entitled 'Nationalism', theorist Anthony D. Smith defines nationalism as a combination of programmes on behalf of a specific community with a wide universal vision of culture groups. Hence for him Nationalism is a midway between local movements such as populism and nativism and the world ideologies of racial fascism, and socialism or communism. He continues to define that in the modern day one could find every type of nationalism: from ethnic separation, to conservative bureaucratic nationalisms of the West. In his definition, given that this was given prior to the Cold War, he also acknowledges the existence of communist nationalism in developing countries.<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, in a later publication by Hutchinson and Smith, the authors try to come up with a set of definitions for nationalism provided by a diversity of classical authors on the topic such as Ernest Renan, Stalin and Max Weber. The Authors describe how Renan rejects the statist concept of the nation in order to identify the nation as a form of morality. For Renan the nation is a solidarity sustained by a distinctive historical consciousness. On the other hand, the author describes the definition given by Stalin on nationalism where he argues that a nation comes into existence only when several elements come together such as economic life, language and territory. The Authors also delve into the definition given by Max Weber where he affiliates nations to ethnic communities as population unified by a myth of common descent.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1979). (Pg. vii)

<sup>34</sup> John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 1994). (Pg. 15-16)

Hence out of all the definitions of Nationalism given above one could easily conclude that Nationalism may be defined as something shared by a specific community given on a specific territory based on notions such as language, culture, identity and economic life. Such elements are preserved from a generation to the other in form of descent and continuous affiliation to an ethnic community which a nationalistic group is living in.

### **2.1.2 Explaining the Rise of Nationalism**

In Smith's fourth chapter of the book 'Nationalism', Smith continues to define Nationalism in terms of race, color and national identity. In order for him to explain phenomena occurring in Nationalism, such as violence and autonomy and which are very relevant to the research question posed in this thesis. Smith refers to these phenomena as one of the most serious revivals of modern nationalism. For the author, this revival is often confused with racism; hence many are those who condemn any manifestation of this type of nationalism. According to Smith, this may lead to war or genocide. He continues to explain that every nationalist person strives to have his nation state defined as a social group with a common and distinctive history and culture, a definite territory, common sentiments of solidarity, a single economy and equal citizenship rights for all members of that particular group. Smith also goes into what he calls Pan-Turkic racial nationalism where Turkey under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk renounced the idea of uniting the Turkish speaking countries and instead created a modern nation state in Anatolia, and the surrounding territories following the Turkish war of independence. He explains how this pan-Turkic nationalism is until today instinctively characterized by

physical training and militarism<sup>35</sup> – evidence being the strong military presence of Turkey in every part of the country.<sup>36</sup>

In his attempt to explain further the formation of the Turkish State, Harry Anastasiou underlines how legitimate human needs by one party in a conflict, and interest by another party in the same conflict may have the same goals or targets. This would help us understand better the Economic dimension of the research question. With the two parties playing a role in the economic dimension in South-Eastern Turkey, the state has the power to invest and improve the situation, whilst another party might be feeling a subordinate in his own land. In his elaboration, Anastasiou also explains how there is an element of self-serving justice from the parties which might also explain policies by the government in the region to improve drastically security, as well as actions taken by violent non-state actors in the region.<sup>37</sup> In light of this research, one could say that the Turkish government might presume that it might have a “moral superiority” over the South-Eastern region of Turkey which may be seen in the forced Turkification of Kurds since the birth of the Turkish state in 1923.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, for Hutchinson, it is important to distinguish between cultural and political nationalism. For him cultural nationalists perceive the state as accidental, since the basis of a nation is the distinct civilization which came about due to a unique history, culture and geographic existence. Unlike the rest of political nationalists,

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<sup>35</sup> Smith, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. (Pg. 86-102)

<sup>36</sup> Gokhan Bacik and Bezen Balamir Coskun, “The PKK Problem: Explaining Turkey’s Failure to Develop a Political Solution,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 3 (March 2011): 248–65, doi:10.1080/1057610X.2011.545938. (Pg. 251)

<sup>37</sup> Dennis J. D. Sandole et al., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution* (Routledge, 2008). (Pg. 33)

<sup>38</sup> Mesut Yeğen, “Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 119–51, doi:10.1080/01419870601006603. (Pg. 119)

Hutchinson describes how natural elements such as family bring elements of solidarity; hence such nationalistic passions would be nested in nature and history of a particular national group. Hutchinson moves on to explain nationalistic conflicts as an attempt to reunite the different aspects of the nation such as traditions, agriculture, economy, science and religion. Hence for Hutchinson, conflict is built into the cultural nationalist conception of the nation.<sup>39</sup> For Hutchinson, this would explain the rise of violent non-state actors in the Kurdish region in the recent years, even though the Kurdish question existed in Turkey since the early formation of the Turkish Republic in the early 1920s.<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, one could say that in order for a nationalistic sentiment to rise within a diverse group, one must have the presence of a social group with a distinct history, culture and possibly language. For a mobilization to occur one could say that there must be a hindrance to the production of a nationalistic identity by a particular group. In addition to this, one could say that nationalistic passion and the will of conducting a way of life differently than the larger opposing group would eventually lead to mobilization of opposition due to the imposition of a different way of life on a given minority.

### **2.1.3 Nationalism and Mobilization of Masses**

In his contribution to the handbook of Conflict Analysis and Conflict Resolution, Anastasiou describes in his historical outline that, nationalism is viewed as a legitimate moral and political force securing the rights and independence of people from the

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<sup>39</sup> Hutchinson and Smith, *Nationalism*. (Pg. 122-126)

<sup>40</sup> Mustafa Coşar Ünal, "Is It Ripe yet? Resolving Turkey's 30 Years of Conflict with the PKK," *Turkish Studies* 17, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 91–125, doi:10.1080/14683849.2015.1124020. (Pg. 96)

onslaught of globalization. In light of the research question for this thesis, this statement is also another interesting contrast with the facts surrounding the autonomous rhetoric by Kurds. Anastasiou moves on to explain how today we find a presumption that the nation is sacred, hence in this sense, one could see the claim for an independent Kurdistan more legitimate. Hence Anastasiou explains how “the nationalist approach to ethno-national politics has proven disastrous both in the interstate and international arenas.” This explains the intensity of a nationalist dispute between two parties for conflict analysts to provide solutions. Hence, according to Anastasiou, masses would always continue to mobilize.<sup>41</sup>

In Smith’s chapter on the ethnic resurgence in the West he goes into the nationalistic dynamics of minorities and mass societies. He describes scenarios where large numbers of people living in vast, impersonal cities felt *atomized and insecure*. He describes that this may be the case since their traditional bonds and roles have been destroyed. Smith insists that such individuals might be also the unemployed or the underemployed workers who may have lost their sense of purpose and identity. Smith emphasizes how these types of groups are very gullible to promises made by organisation leaders, who in turn promise to sweep thier particular group away from a corrupt society and replace it with an organic community which would restore their identities. Smith explains how such context could be a result of economic deprivation in a capitalist society – which may very well be the case in Modern day Turkey where a class system can be observed as a result of ethnic divisions between Turks and Kurds. He also explains

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<sup>41</sup> Sandole et al., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*. (Pg. 32)

how a majority government may face the crucial problem of social cohesion in places where there are minorities which do not share the main assumptions and values in the underlying political system. Smith contends that minorities will then start challenging the status quo of the majority's institutions, in the name of freedom and the right to differ.<sup>42</sup>

Walker Connor on the other hand persists in explaining the rise of nationalistic movements towards the formation of a nation state. The author defines this as national consciousness in mass as a modern advent. Walker describes the fact that until recently, we did not see masses from rural areas and marginalized communities rising in nationalistic movements. Hence Walker claims that until recent years, nationalism was something reserved for the elites of a particular nation and was not extended to the masses. Walker concludes his argument by claiming that once a sufficient portion of a population internalizes a common national identity, the same national identity would become a force to mobilize masses.<sup>43</sup>

Hence one may conclude that mobilization of masses for nationalistic purposes may occur due to the perceived ideas that a quest for one's own nation state is legitimate and sacred. This eventually is derived due to the fact that a particular group that is not able to be recognized as a diverse group may be feeling insecure and threatened by a larger group. Due to the inability to be recognized as a national group, a minority might feel that its identity may be undermined and eventually start to mobilize to challenge the status quo. This would only occur if there is enough following for the national identity in question and hence able to challenge the status quo through the mobilization of masses.

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<sup>42</sup> Smith, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. (Pg. 150 – 151)

<sup>43</sup> Hutchinson and Smith, *Nationalism*. (Pg. 154-159)

#### **2.1.4 Nationalism and Autonomy**

To explain autonomy one could move into Smith's arguments, where he also delves deep into the issue of autonomy and separatism and describes how most movements in the West demand for group autonomy, group cohesion and group identity. For Smith, such groups want to be free and self-governing citizens with equal rights and duties, following their own laws and customs without external regulation or interference. Also for Smith, the groups desire unity and are bound to be recognized through a homeland which is rooted to their ancestor's soil which would in turn would unite further the group as a fraternal unit. Also, Smith acknowledges that such groups want to be recognized as distinctive and unique, hence they want to be allowed space for their own individuality and stand out from the majority and be different and build their own destiny. For Smith one of the most evident claims for minority movements in quest for autonomy is Economical. They are usually claiming that the central government favors more prosperous central regions and the expense of the poorer regions. Hence this for the minorities results in the draining of resources of their outlying regions in order to support and feed a more stagnant central area, rather than territories where minorities might be residing.<sup>44</sup> This statement by Smith ties in very well with the research question analyzed in this thesis since it delves into the Economic aspect of the Kurdish Question which many might overlook when analyzing the claims for autonomy by Kurds today and explains the rise of violent non-state actors in South-East Turkey. Smith eventually confirms this in his conclusion to his autonomy segment by claiming that today autonomist movements conform to the basic patterns of nationalism. For him they might

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<sup>44</sup> Smith, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. (Pg. 153-155)

concern oil, tourism, university locations or language rights. Serhun supports Smith's statements by claiming that it is always collective autonomy, collective solidarity and collective identity which are sought in all cases. The argument follows that this would bring ethnic regeneration which is embodied in the concept of 'nationhood.'<sup>45</sup>

Elie Kedourie gives a more diplomatic definition of a quest for Autonomy by a nationalistic group. For him in a nationalistic doctrine, language, race, culture and maybe religion lay the assumption of a primordial identity, hence a nation. For Kedourie, the theory of nationalism itself has no intention of classifying nations as to those who are eligible for nationalism or not. However, for Kedourie there seems no doubt that the theory itself manages to divide humanity into separate and distinct nations. For the author, the same theory claims that nations must be made up of sovereign states and these states must emphasize that its members should reach freedom and fulfilment by cultivating the peculiar identity of their greater whole nation. Kedourie recalls Schleiermacher's idea that nationalism is a comprehensive doctrine which leads to a distinctive style of politics for every nation.<sup>46</sup> Hence one could conclude that for Kedourie, a quest for autonomy by the Kurds in Turkey is inevitable since for him both peoples are very distinct in their style of politics which makes them incompatible to live under one nation. This may be very well seen in Serhun's description of Ocelan's request

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<sup>45</sup> Serhun Al, "Elite Discourses, Nationalism and Moderation: A Dialectical Analysis of Turkish and Kurdish Nationalisms," *Ethnopolitics* 14, no. 1 (January 1, 2015): 94–112, doi:10.1080/17449057.2014.937638. (Pg. 98)

<sup>46</sup> Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 4 edition (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993). (Pg. 67-68)

for democratic autonomy which promotes local representation for the different communities in Turkey.<sup>47</sup>

In his description of secession, Mayall, on the other hand depicts a more practical vision on how a quest for autonomy should be conducted by a nationalist movement. For Mayall, this should not be acquired by legitimate means such as international arbitration, since this would be strongly counteracted by the right of the larger state sovereignty. Hence Mayall recalls the notion that the only way for a group of people to acquire self-determination is the conventional way, which already constituted the current state order, thus conflict. For Mayall it is only obvious that a group of people may have to turn to a ‘provocative invitation.’<sup>48</sup>

Hence one may conclude that a quest for autonomy through a nationalistic lens may be deriving from an incompatibility in the way of doing things for the Turks and the Kurds. However, one must not overlook the Economic issues as underlined by Smith. One must emphasize that there seems to be a consensus amongst authors of nationalistic theories that issues such as solidarity and collective distinct features will eventually bring about a movement for nationalism and subsequently autonomous demands. These demands will not be taken lightly hence the use of force may be seen as the only way to be able to sustain the claims for autonomy or self-determination for a particular group such as the Kurds.

Following the above arguments, one may also conclude that the Kurds are in fact a national group with the presence of nationalistic elements as described by theorists

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<sup>47</sup> Al, “Elite Discourses, Nationalism and Moderation.” (Pg. 99)

<sup>48</sup> Hutchinson and Smith, *Nationalism*. (Pg. 273-276)

above. Issues such as commonalities in the features of a group such as history, culture, territory and ethnicity are all present to be cultivated over time to give rise to a national identity. Subsequently, it has been observed that the rise of mobilization of masses through national group consciousness eventually develops into what we today know as violent non-state actors with a particular goal. Violent groups operating in the South-Eastern region of Turkey today have the goal of Autonomy, although recent developments show how this request of autonomy might be side-lined for a more immediate request of the removal of the current administration from power. This stands to show how national identity might have ‘the perceived other’ or ‘enemy’ which may be acting against the interest of the minority. Subsequently, one may conclude that such presence countering the nationalistic sentiment of a strong minority would have a deeper affect in instigating conflict between parties.

## **2.2 Relative Deprivation**

In this part of the literature, for the purpose of this research project, one could have a look at the motives of relative deprivation and how these lead to violent actions from part of a group. Through the theories of Ted Robert Gurr and Smith et al, one could have a very comprehensive outlook of all the classical notions associated with this theory as well as the relevance to the case study being approached in this thesis.

To explain better the concept of relative deprivation, a presentation of the definition of relative deprivation will be given. Following this, a more in depth look at how relative deprivation in terms of economics may develop into aggression and

subsequently how aggressions could develop into revolution or civil war as presented by the theorists mentioned above.

### **2.2.1 Definition of Relative Deprivation**

Ted Robert Gurr, in the second chapter of his book called 'Why Men Rebel', defines relative deprivation as the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the expectation and the reality of collective value satisfaction that disposes men to violence. For the author the study of a frustration-aggression relationship provides the psychological dynamic for the proposed relationship between the intensity of deprivation and the potential for collective violence.<sup>49</sup> Gurr hypothesizes that the potential for collective action varies strongly with the intensity of the relative deprivation found amongst the members of a particular group. Gurr develops the idea even further to define relative deprivation more specifically as the:

*'...actor's perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping.'*<sup>50</sup>

For Gurr an individual's point of reference for assessing his relative deprivation may be his own past condition or standards as articulated by a leader or a particular reference group. The author also moves further to define values as the desired events, objects or conditions to which men strive. He puts an emphasis on values since he claims that they are most relevant to a theory of political violence as they are seen as the general

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<sup>49</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, "Why Men Rebel," Princeton, NJ (Princeton University Press, 1970). (Pg.23)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. (Pg.24)

categories of conditions valued by mankind. For the relative deprivation model as presented by Gurr these values may practically be welfare values, power values or interpersonal values. The author moves on to define welfare values as those which contribute directly to the well-being and self-realization. These may include physical goods such as food, shelter, access to health services and physical comforts. The author defines also power values which determine the extent to which men are able to influence the actions of others and avoid unwanted interference by others in their own actions. These power values are seen by Gurr as important issues when dealing with political violence since these include the desire to participate in collective decision making, self-determination and security from a political regime or disorder. The author also defines interpersonal values and describes them as psychological satisfactions which mankind seeks in non-authoritative interactions with other individuals or groups. These include ideas such as status and prestige.<sup>51</sup>

Similarly, for Smith et al, relative deprivation is the judgement that one perceives himself worse off when compared to the standard of others. This comes accompanied by feelings of anger and resentment. For the authors, social scientists use relative deprivation to predict a wide range of significant outcome variables such as collective actions, deviance as well as intergroup attitudes. Importantly for the authors, there must be an element of comparison for relative deprivation to occur. Also, there must be some sort of consciousness by a group or individual that they are at a disadvantageous position when

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. (Pg. 24-25)

compared to others. Hence should this disadvantage be perceived as unfair by an individual or group, a sense of angry resentment would develop.<sup>52</sup>

Hence one could say that for the purpose of this research project, relative deprivation is the judgement by a particular group when they see themselves compared to other groups in the same country. Many factors take place in this judgment in order for the final outcome to result in aggression. However, unfairness or perceived economic disadvantage should be present in order for aggression to take place towards the 'other' in such a scenario.

### **2.2.2 Relative Deprivation and Aggression**

For Gurr, value expectation must be defined as a justifiable value position that a group believes it is entitled to get or maintain, and not what it hopes to get. He moves on to explain also value capability or potential of a group which, for Gurr, is the average value position that a member of that group perceives it is capable of attaining or maintaining. Hence this is what men believe that skills, their fellows and their governors, would allow them in due course to keep or attain.<sup>53</sup> This notion as presented by Gurr could be very well defined for the purpose of this research when assessing the Economic issue of Kurds in South-Eastern Turkey when compared to the Turkish population in the rest of Turkey.

Gurr moves on even further to define these values in terms of obtaining or maintaining these values. He explains that personal opportunities are relevant since these

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<sup>52</sup> Heather J. Smith et al., "Relative Deprivation A Theoretical and Meta-Analytic Review," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 16, no. 3 (August 1, 2012): 203–32, doi:10.1177/1088868311430825. (Pg. 203)

<sup>53</sup> Gurr, "Why Men Rebel." (Pg. 28)

are the individuals inherited or acquired capabilities for value-enhancing action. He also defines societal opportunities which are the normal courses of action available for the members of a particular group for enhancing their value action. More importantly, he also explains participation values which are attained through normalized channels for participation and joining the political elite. Gurr then explains political opportunities as being the normal courses of action to members of a collective group to be provided with value satisfaction.<sup>54</sup> In relation to the research question being explored in this thesis one could have a look at political representation in Turkey and the role of AKP in reviving a single party rule to prevent the Kurdish *Halkların Demokratik Partisi* or the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) party in taking power.<sup>55</sup>

To move on and explain violence deriving from Relative Deprivation, Gurr explains that unexpected deprivations such as suppression of a political party or decline of a group's status relative to its reference group are likely to precipitate feelings of relative deprivation amongst whole groups of people. For Gurr, the intensity of relative deprivation is the extent of negative effect that is associated with its perception, hence the levels of discontent or anger to which this relative deprivation gives rise. Gurr defines that aggression could be categorized in three different sources and is not always derived from frustration caused by relative deprivation, for the author aggression could be also derived from instinct or learnt violence. Gurr describes frustration as being derived from interference from goal-directed behavior. Hence for Gurr, aggression derived from

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid. (Pg. 28)

<sup>55</sup> Mehmet Bardakçı, "2015 Parliamentary Elections in Turkey: Demise and Revival of AKP's Single-Party Rule," *Turkish Studies* 17, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 4–18, doi:10.1080/14683849.2015.1136084. (Pg. 5)

frustration is designed to injure physically those to whom the frustration is targeted to. The author also denotes that aggressive responses tend to occur only when they are evoked by a response outside of a particular group. Gurr however also denotes that frustration does not always lead to violence, and violence only occurs where there are men motivated by the prospects of gain.<sup>56</sup> For the purpose of this research, one could imply that violence is a result of frustration accumulated over time since violence surrounding the Kurdish question in Turkey was something which started decades following the Treaty of Lausanne which gave Turkish Independence.<sup>57</sup>

On the other hand, for Smith et al, relative deprivation and aggression come about when groups or individuals start making assessments and comparisons between themselves and others. For the authors it is imperative that the assessment of the situation should be coming from the individual or the group and not externally. Once the group or individual compares themselves with the others as well as with their own past and make a cognitive appraisal of their own disadvantage, a justice related effect of regarding the perceived disparities as unfair would occur. Hence anger would develop revolving into intergroup attitudes as well as collective action.<sup>58</sup>

Smith et al, criticize Gurr for viewing relative deprivation from a very macro level. They insist that by looking at relative deprivation at a macro level may prove to be impossible to draw conclusions, and rather be making weak statements on the case at stake. Smith et al emphasize that individuals have unique properties and each may have

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<sup>56</sup> Gurr, "*Why Men Rebel.*" (Pg. 29-31)

<sup>57</sup> Bacik and Coskun, "The PKK Problem." (Pg. 249)

<sup>58</sup> Smith et al., "Relative Deprivation A Theoretical and Meta-Analytic Review." (Pg. 204 -205)

their own issues of discontent and anger, hence one cannot safely view macro data alone when studying relative deprivation.<sup>59</sup> For the purpose of the case study presented in this research, one would say that it is unfeasible for the researcher to conduct a micro approach to investigate the relative deprivation, however this would surely set up the stage for further future investigation.

For the purpose of the case study being presented aggression occurs following a stage of comparison or assessment of a number of variables such as economic status or prestige of a group. Once a particular group gains consciousness of their deprivation of the group from reaching full potential due to hindrance from governmental administration or other groups, a sense of aggression and frustration develops due to the interference from achieving their desired goals.

### **2.2.3 Relative Deprivation and Violence**

Gurr also explains revolutions and how this only occurs when a great portion of society would feel cramped beyond their tolerance. To explain further revolutions, Gurr evokes the writings of Durkheim and the concept of Anomie. The author explains how Anomie is a breakdown of societal standards governing social behavior or normlessness. This could lead to widespread deviant behaviors and the establishment of alternative norms which constitute rebellion. When this rebellion becomes engraved in the majority of a given society, it provides the potential for a revolution which would reshape the normative and the social structure. He also explains how anomie occurs in environments

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. (Pg.206)

of low value capability.<sup>60</sup> This could be very well tied in to the case study being presented in this research in order to be able to explain the current violent campaigns being carried out by violent groups in South-Eastern Turkey as well as the recent bombings in Ankara of which responsibility was claimed by Kurdish violent groups.<sup>61</sup>

Gurr presents three models by which to explain the relevance of relative deprivation to violence and when aggression occurs. For the purpose of the case study being presented in this thesis, one could have a look at the progressive deprivation model in order to explain the relation of the Kurds with the AK party. The progressive deprivation model states that improvement in people's value position generates expectations about continued improvement. If value capabilities stabilize or decline after a period of improvement, progressive relative deprivation is the result. For Gurr this model can be used to apply cases of social change or revolution which generally take the shape of political violence as a consequence of decreasing progressiveness of social structures, beliefs and norms. The author explains even further and defined conditions of rising expectations such as rates of increased literacy rates, funding for reform and most importantly the mobilization of previously non-participant citizens for purposes of political and associational activity.<sup>62</sup> In order to tie this notion to the case study presented in this research one should have a look at all the reforms the AK party has put in place

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<sup>60</sup> Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*. (Pg. 42-43)

<sup>61</sup> Güneş Murat Tezcür, "Violence and Nationalist Mobilization: The Onset of the Kurdish Insurgency in Turkey," *Nationalities Papers* 43, no. 2 (March 4, 2015): 248–66, doi:10.1080/00905992.2014.970527. (Pg. 258-261)

<sup>62</sup> Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*. (Pg. 53-57)

aimed for South-Eastern Turkey, as well as the failed attempt to a democratic opening to the Kurds in Turkey.<sup>63</sup>

For violence to occur, according to Smith et al, people must obviously care about what they lack whilst not instigating or blame themselves for what they lack. Additionally, people must view the process that is producing the deprivation as illegitimate. The authors admit that collective action is just one of the various options available at the disposal of a group. However one might say that Smith et al might be failing into producing a relevant answer in explaining how violence is developed, for them, collective action is just a result of criticisms by a group or individuals which eventually would make the group acceptant of violent politics or civil disobedience.<sup>64</sup>

One could conclude that violence occurs when a particular group feels that he may be cramped beyond tolerance at a disadvantage to other groups. This would eventually create a state of anomie where group violence develops and individuals within that group start to embrace the violence towards the other groups. As presented by Gurr in the case of the Kurdish question in Turkey, one could see a large embracement of group violence following the demise of violent groups such as the PKK led by Abdullah Ocalan and their quest for autonomy and further reforms. More recently, violence in South-Eastern Turkey erupted following the AK Party's refusal to form a coalition government with the Kurdish HDP party. Hence all these actions were perceived as hindering the Kurdish population from reaching their full potential in Turkey. One might

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<sup>63</sup> Mehmet Ugur Ekinci, "Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Question," *Insight Turkey* 16, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 234–36. (Pg. 234)

<sup>64</sup> Smith et al., "Relative Deprivation A Theoretical and Meta-Analytic Review." (Pg. 208)

say that violence was the only solution for the Kurds once all other channels were exhausted.

One could conclude by claiming that understanding relative deprivation and its references to violence are very important to understanding the case study being presented in this thesis. The role of violent groups in the Kurdish question is very prominent especially in their work for the quest of autonomy and the removal of the AK party from power in Turkey.

With a better understanding of relative deprivation one could easily have a better look at the literature on economics which will be presented further on in this dissertation and how this dynamic plays in the context of the Kurdish question. Furthermore, in the literature that will be presented in the chapter on economics, using the theories of relative deprivation coupled with the knowledge on the economic situation on the Kurdish issue, one could understand how this shapes public opinion and how the Kurds in Turkey view the AK party administration as well as fellow Turkish citizens.

### **2.3 Greed or Grievance**

Through the theory of greed or grievance one could try to explain other factors which are at play in the Kurdish question in Turkey. This theory would help in giving a better insight to the issue of violence and how it plays around the Kurdish question in Turkey under the AKP governments. With the versatility of this theory one could also incorporate many socio-economic issues which the Kurds may grieve upon such as education, demographic representation as well as natural resources present in the South-Eastern Region of Turkey.

To present this theory, a proper definition of greed or grievance will be given respectively using theorists such as Paul Collier who is the main pioneer of this theory as well as Ian Zartman who seems to have reservations about Paul Collier's ideas and how these are viewed. Eventually a further look into what are the main elements that one would find in a greed and grievance type conflict would be investigated in order to be able to relate even further to the case study being presented in this research. Eventually a definition of how a Greed and Grievance conflict should look will be given as presented by the theorists Collier and Zartman with both having conflicting views on how this type of conflict should really look like. Finally, in this section a presentation of the different approaches to a solution for a greed and grievance type conflict as explained by Collier and Zartman will be given in order to set up the stage for possible solutions for the situation in Turkey and the Kurdish issue in general.

### **2.3.1 Definition of Greed or Grievance**

Starting off in his paper on the economic causes of civil conflict and their implications on policy, Paul Collier defines grievance as being the litany of elements that a group may have against a government such as oppression, unfairness and even victimization of part of the population which that particular organization claims to represent. He continues to explain the fact that rebel groups may even hope for governmental atrocities in order to be able to legitimize even further their claims. Collier implies that the general discourse on grievance is the way that most people are able to understand a cause of conflict. For the author, a deep analysis of a conflict is needed in order to understand better the causes of a conflict which then becomes a matter of tracing

back the grievance and counter-grievance in the history of the conflict at stake. For the purpose of this research, understanding Kurdish grievance towards the current AKP administration is a must especially in the light of economic development in South-Eastern Turkey.<sup>65</sup>

As further proof for the existence of grievance, Collier explains how rebel movements need good international public relations in order to motivate their recruits to kill for their cause. Also, good international public relations are imperative since most militant organizations are dependent on international financial support. For Collier, grievance is to a rebel organization what image is to a business entity. The author explains further how a sense of grievance may be based upon objective grounds such as lack of representation or economic inequalities; however, Collier also implies that grievance may also be conjured up by massaging prejudices in a particular group of people. Collier underlines the need for strong outside support for a particular cause. For the author, outsiders who accept discourse at face value are important since these are the parts of the audience who care most about the discourse on oppression, inequality and injustice.<sup>66</sup>

On the other hand, Zartman seems to disagree with Collier on the definition of grievance, since for him Greed and Grievance type conflicts existed during the colonial times with the rise of anti-colonial nationalism. For Zartman, the focus was on the denial of nationalist sentiment. According to Zartman, thus, one must focus purely on nationalist

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<sup>65</sup> Paul Collier, *"Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy."* Oxford University, April 2006. (Pg. 2)

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. (Pg.2 – 4)

sentiment rather than the economic explanation for grievance. Zartman admits that economic explanations produced class conflict in a Marxist way, however one could not say that economic relations per se are the cause of conflicts such as the one explored in this research. Zartman also implies that grievances have a role in formulating a durable outcome for a conflict, an idea which Collier seems to have overlooked.<sup>67</sup>

Collier also moves on to explain the concept of greed in relation to the ability of a particular organization to finance itself in order to support its motivation in a conflict. For Collier, predatory behavior during a particular conflict may not initially be the objective of a rebel organization, but its means of financing that particular conflict. This highlights the importance of the notion, as for him, rebels are motivated by grievances, imagined or real, however rebellion only occurs when rebels can do well out of war. Hence he implies that rebels are not necessarily heroes struggling for a particular cause in their conflict, but its predation and its feasibility is what eventually explains conflict. Hence greed may be defined as the act of plundering on resources or access to financial means which eventually would lead to rebels being in a comfortable financial situation that may obscure grievances and fuel their will to further the conflict.<sup>68</sup>

Again Zartman seems to be in disagreement with Collier on the notion of Greed, since for Zartman, the same way that misdistribution of resources in a country has no relation to conflict, so is the drive for personal gain in resources. Also Zartman implies that greed is the stage occurring before grievance in a conflict. For Zartman, greed starts

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<sup>67</sup> I. William Zartman, "Greed and Grievance: Methodological and Epistemological Underpinnings of the Debate," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 2 (October 1, 2011): 298–307, doi:10.1111/j.1399-6576.2011.01120.x. (Pg. 299)

<sup>68</sup> Collier, "*Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy.*" (Pg. 3)

to exist when the opposing force, such as the AKP government as explained in this research, denies all the issues of grievance prior the particular group or minority gains consciousness of these issues. Zartman also implies that issues of greed or grievance are existant on both sides of a conflict, being the government as well as the opposing movement.<sup>69</sup>

Hence one may conclude that grievance is all the detrimental elements presented by a particular group or movement which are not being addressed by a central power overruling the particular group. On the other hand, greed may be defined as all the economic resources which are being mobilized towards the feasibility of a conflict by both parties. One could say that greed may also take form of policy which might lack consideration towards minorities by a central power governing a state in conflict. As one of the theorists mentioned above implies, these elements in a conflict are to be given equal importance since both have a role in fueling a conflict equally.

### **2.3.2 Environments triggering Greed or Grievance Type Conflict**

Paul Collier then moves forward in presenting evidence for his arguments and presents some scenarios where there is a higher risk of conflict. For Collier, one of the most important risk factors is states with income coming from the export of primary commodities. For the author, these present a higher risk of conflict. For the purpose of this research, Turkey might not seem to be a state which is highly dependent on one particular export for the sustainability of its GDP, however South-Eastern Turkey is the only region in the country which is oil producing and the region also contains a good

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<sup>69</sup> Zartman, "Greed and Grievance." (Pg. 300)

deposit of asphaltites<sup>70</sup>, making the region, according to Collier, particularly prone to conflict.<sup>71</sup> Collier also explores historical elements in the conflict, elements such as previous state of war between parties increases the risk of further conflict in light of that particular historical conflict. Since the rise of the Kurdish question occurred, following the treaty of Lausanne as explained by Ali, one could observe political unrest over the Kurdish situation in Turkey, Iraq and Syria.<sup>72</sup> However, Collier also claims that the weight of history on a particular conflict is highly dependent on the size of the diaspora that particular group may have in other countries. Diasporas are able to financially support a military group existing in their homeland, which for Collier, diasporas seem to make life for those left behind much more dangerous in post-conflict situations.<sup>73</sup> The author underlines also the possibility of foreign governments or groups which have common enemies with the particular group to offer financial support, such as was the case with the US financing the Kurdish cause in Syria during 2015 against the Assad regime.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Reyhan Kara-Gülbay and Sadettin Korkmaz, "Occurrences and Origin of Oils and Asphaltites from South East Anatolia (Turkey): Implications from Organic Geochemistry," *Journal of Petroleum Science and Engineering* 90–91 (July 2012): 145–58, doi:10.1016/j.petrol.2012.04.014. (Pg. 1)

<sup>71</sup> Collier and Bank, *Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for policy.* "Washington D.C.(Pg. 5)

<sup>72</sup> Othman Ali, "The Kurds and the Lausanne Peace Negotiations, 1922–23," *Middle Eastern Studies* 33, no. 3 (July 1, 1997): 521–34, doi:10.1080/00263209708701167. (Pg. 1)

<sup>73</sup> Ipek Demir, "Battling with Memleket in London: The Kurdish Diaspora's Engagement with Turkey," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38, no. 5 (May 1, 2012): 815–31, doi:10.1080/1369183X.2012.667996. (Pg. 818-820)

<sup>74</sup> "Turkey Warns US, Russia over Support to Syria Kurds," *University Wire*, October 14, 2015, sec. From Ap, <http://search.proquest.com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/docview/1721982405/abstract/BB25BBD124444FACPQ/1>.

For Collier, another major factor driving a greed & grievance type conflict is the ethnic composition of a given country. For the author conflict is concentrated in countries with little education. For the case study presented in this research, elements of educational disparity is evidenced between the Turkish and Kurdish populations within Turkey<sup>75</sup>, hence making the Kurdish-concentrated South-Eastern part of Turkey more prone to conflict. Also for Collier, a growing population within a country constitutes in larger risks of conflict.<sup>76</sup> For the case study presented, this is quite actually the reality, with the Turkish population growing drastically since the 1950s as presented by a study by Beyzatlar and Kustepeli.<sup>77</sup>

Collier also underlines the importance of ethnic compositions of a given country, as one of the main reasons for conflict to occur. For the author, if there is one dominant ethnic group in a country, there is enough grounds for that dominant group to take control of the country, however there will be implications of discrimination on other groups present in ethnically dominant countries. For Collier, a country which is ethnically and religiously homogenous is surprisingly dangerous.<sup>78</sup> This may also be a factor surrounding the Kurdish question. According to Robins, the official figure presented in the 1991 census claimed that 7.1% of the Turkish population is in fact Kurdish, however

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<sup>75</sup> Ali Araylı, "Inequities in Literacy and Education in Turkey," *International Review of Education/Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft/Revue Internationale de pédagogie* 46, no. 1-2 (2000): 117-46. (Abstract)

<sup>76</sup> Collier and Bank, *Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for policy.* Washington D.C. (Pg. 6)

<sup>77</sup> Mehmet Aldonat Beyzatlar and Yesim R. Kustepeli, "Infrastructure, Economic Growth and Population Density in Turkey," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, January 3, 2012), <http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1978869>. (Pg. 46)

<sup>78</sup> Collier, *"Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy."* (Pg.7)

Robins himself states that Kurdish research claims that in fact the Kurdish population in Turkey stood at around 24% in 1991.<sup>79</sup>

In contrast to the elements presented by Collier, Zartman recalls that in order for civil wars to occur, the most important element needed is the individuals on the ground such as farmers, shopkeepers, and potential workers who choose to enlist to rebel armies that are necessary to pursue a war. As Zartman recalls, the main elements present in a society for a civil war to take place would be a situation of hardship and dissatisfaction with the current situation, as well as the absence of any type of non-violent means for change. Zartman however agrees with Collier, that poverty does increase the likelihood of conflict but denounces Collier's idea that grievance issues have a minor role when compared to economics of conflict.<sup>80</sup>

Hence one may be able to conclude that the perfect environment for a greed and grievance type conflict to take place would be the scenario of socio-economic inequalities as well as nationalistic repression for a particular ethnic minority in a given state. In turn this would also require the mobilization of the masses which are victims of these inequalities in favor of a movement which will try to fight a central government in power.

### **2.3.3 Definition of Greed or Grievance Type Conflict**

For Paul Collier, a rebellion is not a protest. Such as in the Kurdish case, protests might cost little and involve small risks and offers a sense of allegiance to a particular group. For the author, protests are forcing a debate on a particular issue. On the other

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<sup>79</sup> P. Robins, "The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and Kurdish Issue," *International Affairs*, Vol. 69, October 1993. (Pg. 657)

<sup>80</sup> Zartman, "Greed and Grievance." (Pg.300-301)

hand, Collier states that a rebellion requires a larger commitment and involves a larger amount of risks and is much more dangerous. For economists, collective action over a problem for seeking justice, rebellion is the solution. Rebellion brings also larger advantages in case of success. It brings about the prospects of gaining control of lucrative revenues, for example through predation of natural resources. Eventually for Collier, this will eventually affect the composition of recruitment since it will bring a higher economic advantage for the recruits. For the author, volunteers who seek to join the movement will eventually be drawn more by the criminal intents rather than the altruistic intents of the movement. Eventually Collier claims that even an altruistic-minded leader will have problems to control his men. Hence for the author rebellion is strongly tied to three economic conditions of a particular state, availability of loot able resources, low average income to create a pool of potential recruits at a cheap price for the recruiting organization as well as slow economic growth and rapid population growth which would make a rebellion more likely due to low education and few employment opportunities.<sup>81</sup>

In contrast to this, Zartman denounces the work of Collier due to the ways he uses to collect evidence of greed and grievance type conflicts. Zartman implies that in order to identify such conflict one should use indicators rather than evidence to be able to document factors relevant to a conflict. Zartman implies that rebellion requires both greed and grievance factors simultaneously and that the role of both factors is very important in maintaining a conflict. For Zartman in order to explain this type of conflict one should have a look at factors where inequalities are accepted, and where they reach

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<sup>81</sup> Collier, "*Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy.*" (Pg.8-11)

the point of rebellion. To this, Zartman does admit that one might find it difficult to find relevant data and indicators to find a possible answer.

One might conclude and define that to be able to define a Greed and Grievance type conflict one needs to take into consideration not only the evidence in statistical data such as the evidence of an armed struggle, but also indicators such as mobilization as well as rise of nationalism. Eventually for such a conflict to be maintained one must identify the fine line in every conflict where uprisings start to occur and opposition to the central power start to form. Once this line of rebellion is recognized, one could identify how this conflict has formed and when it would end.

#### **2.3.4 Solutions to Greed or Grievance conflict**

According to Collier, there are various ways to be able to solve this type of conflict. His most obvious choice for a permanent solution, should one take into consideration the grievance of the conflict, would be to re-draw the borders of the country. For the author, homogeneity of populations would only make the two separate countries stronger, since for him should one accept that diversity makes countries stronger, one would possibly be down the road for further civil conflict, possibly even international conflict.<sup>82</sup> Although Collier had in mind the Yugoslavia conflict for this scenario, one could also apply this to the Kurdish question in Turkey and the challenges to relate to the Kurdish Regional Government given the current AKP's foreign policy towards the Kurdish regional government in Iraq.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid. (Pg. 16)

<sup>83</sup> Marianna Charountaki, "Turkish Foreign Policy and the Kurdistan Regional Government," *Perceptions* 17, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 185–208. (Pg. 186)

However, one must say that Collier agrees that to solve a conflict one must take it on a case by case basis and assess separately the risks of conflict in each society. For the author the first step in conflict prevention is to decompose the overall risk into constituent components and then put most effort into reducing those risks which are most important and the most reliant on policy.<sup>84</sup>

For Zartman, in order to find a solution for greed and grievance type conflicts one should be able to be locked in a conflict where no one is winning. In this eventuality, state leaders would be expected to launch a series of reforms which would address the original eventualities of the conflict at stake. Should a conflict arrive at a stalemate, as described by Zartman, with no settlement, one might say that the unresolved conflict became intractable and unresolvable. For Zartman only a victory or settlement is possible through recognizing and tending the needs and creeds which set the basis for a conflict.<sup>85</sup>

One might say that a conflict of greed and grievance might be solved in elimination of one of the parties or else, one could say that this type of conflict can be solved through a series of reforms that have started the conflict initially. Should such reforms not be enough, one could say that a conflict may become unresolvable and only a new drawing of borders would be viable to calm a particular situation and solve permanently the issues at stake.

After having a look at the greed and grievance issues in relation to Collier's and Zartman's writings one could conclude that greed and grievance issues are definitely existent in the Kurdish question in Turkey. Both the AKP government and the Kurdish

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<sup>84</sup> Collier, *"Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy."* (Pg17)

<sup>85</sup> Zartman, "Greed and Grievance." (Pg. 304)

opposition have their own elements of greed and grievance issues. Also many of the environmental elements that may fuel a greed and grievance type conflict are present in this case study to be able to conclude even further that such a type of conflict exists in Turkey today.

In conclusion, one could say that eventually, using this type of theory one could also get a possible direction of a solution for the Kurdish issue in Turkey by understanding even further the dynamics of the conflict itself and eventually move to a more comprehensive and permanent solution. Since this conflict has been ongoing for several decades one may say that it has become very difficult to find a solution without taking into consideration autonomy for the Kurdish region.

Overall, from this chapter, one may conclude that through the explanation of the nationalism theories presented in this research one could observe that the Kurdish group in Turkey may be in fact presented as a national group with a land attributed which is currently administered by others. Hence one would explore even further in this research how nationalism plays an important role when exploring notions of autonomy, and quests for self-determination as requested currently by Kurdish groups in Turkey. Features of nationalism allow such a national group to gain nationalistic consciousness within their group and make demands which when upheld could eventually develop into violence, as is the case of the PKK and other groups operating South-Eastern Turkey. The main argument from nationalistic theories, in light of this research, would be that a minority within a majority dominated state is bound to be acting in the nationalistic interest of the

self. Thus, the rise of the violent actors on behalf of the Kurdish group may be justified through a Nationalistic view of affairs.

Relative deprivation as existing in the Kurdish question in Turkey might be the case for a variety of issues. In this dissertation, a presentation of the economic situation of South-Eastern will be given in order to be able to legitimize the notion of relative deprivation in economic issues for the Kurds in Turkey. Once a better understanding on the existence of relative deprivation in economic issues will be given in this research, a better understanding of how aggression and violence erupted over time, and intensified under the current AKP administration would be easier to comprehend. Thus the importance of the relative deprivation theory is crucial to the understanding this study as posed by its research question.

Also, on the other hand, by having a look at theories of greed and grievance one could understand that the right environment for such a conflict to erupt is present in the Kurdish question in Turkey. The role of economics can be very well viewed in light of the theory of greed and grievance as presented in this chapter as it will determine the right for self-determination as seen through this theory. Should autonomy be requested by the greedy side of the Kurds, political unrest would still be a persistent issue in a possible Turkish Kurdistan. Hence in order to obtain the proper and legitimate grounds for autonomy, economic and nationalistic issues should be explored amongst other issues as something of legitimate grievance.

Together these theories help in making justice to the research question at hand, and reviewing such conflict with a more critical eye over what is currently happening in

Turkey. With the exploration of theories of nationalism one will be able to justify the idea that the Kurds are in fact a national group and gain the ability of defending this paper from otherwise stating claims. A review of the theories of relative deprivation will shed more light on the economic difficulties Kurds are facing in the South-Eastern regions despite the different efforts that may be taken in order to revive the region's economy. With a build-up of knowledge on the two dynamic factors of nationalism and economics, a more in-depth analysis of the relation between greed and grievance will be further explored towards the end of this research in order to understand better the relation of the Kurds to their homeland after gaining more understanding of the economic realities and nationalistic dynamics of the region and Turkey as a whole in terms of the greed or grievance approach.

Following the understanding of the theoretical dynamics of the research question being explored, the stage has been set for a systematic understanding of the conflict explored in this study. The purpose of this chapter has been accomplished in providing the readers of this study in a more in-depth and systematic way of going through the research being presented in light of the theories highlighted in this chapter.

### **CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY**

In order to be able to apply the theories explained in the previous chapter, an in-depth exploration of two factors concerning the Kurdish question will be explored. A case study will set up the stage for the quest for ‘autonomy’ to be explored and analyzed in light of the development of this factor under the AKP. Also the question of ‘economics’ in the Kurdish question in Turkey must be accurately assessed in this case study. Hence, each of the mentioned facts will be presented through relevant work from the current situation under the AKP as well as reviewing works on the Kurdish question by previous governments in Turkey. This will entail that an in depth exploration of what is being done surrounding the issue of economics as well as exploring the Kurdish question on issues of autonomy. These two sub-factors of the Kurdish question will be dedicated utmost attention in order to be able to address the research question. In due course other factors surrounding the Kurdish question will be addressed in order to be able to depict a holistic image of the sub-factors of the Kurdish question being addressed.

When one is taking into consideration the quest for autonomy by the Kurds in Turkey, one needs to go deep into the Kurdish nationalist sentiment over the years, namely, since the Treaty of Lausanne which declared a Turkish Republic. Eventually, one would move on to explore further the more recent developments under the AKP and how this relation evolved in light of the quest for autonomy. Also a presentation of the

current situation and the main focus for groups representing the Kurdish minority in Turkey will be presented to evaluate how this dynamic might have changed or might been reinforced over time. One must also keep in mind that Turkey is a strong influential country with a robust military, one of the factors depicting a strong sense of nationalistic sentiment amongst Turks too. Hence a due consideration to the relations between Turks and Kurds themselves will be given in light of the Kurdish quest for autonomy over the years.

Later in this reasearch, a presentation of developments in the economic sub-factor of the Kurdish question in Turkey will be given, in order to properly evaluate the existence of relative deprivation in the economic realm of the issue. For the sake of the research question being explored, one should have a look at the economic results and data present under the AKP government for the South-Eastern region of Turkey and how these have grown or evolved over the years under the current administration. Also one should not overlook the socio-economic realities of the Kurdish majority living in the South-Eastern region of Turkey and possibly even elsewhere within Turkey. In order to assess constantly such data, one should also have a look at the evolution of data prior to the election of the AKP in 2002. By keeping in mind the theories of relative deprivation one will be able to eventually set up the ground for a case of relative deprivation in order to explain the rise of violent groups in the region.

In the synthesis of this research an assesment of the economics in South-Eastern Turkey as a legitimate factor for greed or grievance will be presented with an analysis on the rise violent non-state groups in the region currently fighting for Kurdish causes and

demanding autonomy. Eventually, this research will also make predictions of how the Kurdish cause is likely to develop and be resolved, keeping in mind the theoretical framework already set up in the previous chapter of this thesis.

In order to set up a basis for this case study, the main method of research will be a qualitative approach. This involves plenty of analysis of text and documents of primary and secondary source, on both of the variables being addressed in this paper. Primary sources for this research will mainly include economic statistics, public opinion polls or surveys, negotiations between Turkish governments and Kurdish groups, speeches as well as census data with relevance to the question being addressed. Such sources would be able to give a more practical feel to the research question being addressed, and gain a better understanding of the data available which can help to answer the question at stake.

Secondary sources for this paper include articles, peer reviewed journals as well as books in order to get a better understanding of the relation between Kurds and the AKP in particular. Using such sources helps in understanding where the situation might be heading and possible measures that could be taken in order to solve the issue at stake.

Other tertiary sources will be included such as news articles will be utilized in this paper to give a more up to date understanding of this evolving issue. One must keep in mind that the Kurdish question in Turkey is something which is evolving on a daily basis with both the AKP and Kurdish groups releasing statements to the press in Turkey on the issues they are disputing. Justice will be done to this paper through the mentioned resources due to the simple accessibility and ample availability of the material to formulate the analysis needed.

As mentioned earlier, the sub-factors of the Kurdish question being explored in this research will be based on the development of the conflict under the AKP government. To order to be able to explain better how the factors are influenced by the current administration, reference to secondary sources will be made in relation to the AKP government. Many think tanks and scholars in Turkey as well as globally have issued plenty of articles and scholarly publications involving the Kurdish relation as well as the dynamics of the AKP government in Turkey. By understanding the dynamics of the AKP one will understand the nature of the party itself on how it views issues such as nationalism in Turkey with relation to the quest for autonomy for Kurds as well as the socio-economic issues that the Kurds in South-Eastern Turkey are facing. The descriptive works of think tanks or scholarly work would help better in providing an insight on the subject and the dynamics of the complex AKP due to the researcher interest in the Nationalistic sentiment in Turkey, hence it is of crucial importance to understand the dynamic of the AKP and how this influences the Kurdish and Turkish scenarios.

When it comes to the depths of the two variables of the Kurdish question explored in this question, a presentation of primary data extracted from other research will be of vital importance to present a clear and objective view of the current as well as the past situation. Looking at progress reports, negotiations and speeches from relevant parties will shed more light on the question of autonomy. However, one must not overlook public opinion on the issue in Turkey in general as well as South-Eastern Turkey on autonomy which also has a role in shaping the dynamic of this conflict. In light of the issue on economics, having a look at primary data published in other studies such as

economic statistics, budgets, employment rates and other factors showing socio-economic growth and development is a must. Such data will be compared to other parts of Turkey rather than just the South-Eastern region and a general observation on how the economic factor might have developed over time will be formulated.

For the purpose of this research, it is imperative to assess the sources in order to ensure the least amount of possible bias. The use of think tanks must be justified and assessed in order to ensure the omission of partisan publications. Also news sources utilized for the purpose of this research must be analyzed to ensure their objectivity as well as their integrity. Looking at relevant material on the Kurdish question, with a special focus on the sub-factors being explored will also shed more light on the dynamics of the relation between the quest of autonomy and the economic factor of the Kurdish issue. The theoretical understanding gained during the literature review section of this thesis will serve in providing a framework for exploring data and direct the hunch for the researcher in unearthing relevant information on the case being explored.

The background information section in the introductory part of this paper has set us up with a brief history of the Turkish republic, the PKK as well as the AKP. This will set a backdrop on the issues that will eventually be explored in the following chapters. In order to understand further the Kurdish question that is being explored, one must not omit developments in the international arena concerning neighboring countries of Turkey with similar problems such as Syria, Iran and Iraq. This will help in shedding more light on the AKP's actions in a particular time or date concerning the variables explored in this paper. Due attention will also be given to the power dynamics of the AKP such as military and

judiciary power, which help in keeping the party in power and instigate reforms in the constitution.

This research has sought to contribute to the ongoing analysis of the phenomenon of the rise of violent action for nationalistic sentiment and provide a more comprehensive platform to explain the Kurdish question in more detail from a lens that is underestimated in literature on the analysis on the ongoing conflict in Turkey. Eventually through the theoretical framework explored in the literature review one shall be able to conclude this research by proposing any possible further studies which in order to shed more light on the research question being explored. Through more research on the issue one would be able to propose and assess in a more viable way and come to a diverse range of solutions for the Kurdish question in a timelier and effective manner.

## **CHAPTER FOUR - THE CHALLENGE OF NATIONALISM IN THE KURDISH-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP**

In this chapter, a presentation of the different dynamics through which the Kurdish plea of self-determination is taking place in terms of nationalist sentiment will be given. To further understand better the historical context of the conflict taking place, an overview of the Treaty of Lausanne, which forms the Republic of Turkey as we know it today, will be given. Following the analysis of the implications of this Treaty to the Kurdish question, a deeper presentation on the rise of the PKK will be given.

By explaining the rise of the PKK, a better explanation and analysis will be given on the different sentiments that the Kurdish population may have towards the Turkish state. As a non-state actor, the PKK has fought for autonomy or the right of self-determination for a variety of reasons. After a presentation on the AKP Kurdish policy over the years will be given. As a national group, the Kurds have been the target of a number of policies by the AKP over the years, many of which took place after a series of events from 2002 till present.

After understanding AKP policies, a presentation of the political participation trends of the Kurds will be given. Also here one will be able to analyse how under AKP administration, the political participation of Kurds has increased and gained more momentum. However, in an attempt to consolidate his power further, President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan has taken measures to suppress this political revival for the Kurds. Eventually, a presentation on the implications of EU accession on the Kurdish question will be given in order to understand how the Human Rights issue dynamic works in the Turkish Kurdish question and how the EU plays a role in defending Kurdish human rights.

#### **4.1 Background on the Treaty of Lausanne**

According to Othman Ali, following the end of the First World War, the Kurds in the treaty of Sevres, like other nationalities within the defeated Ottoman Empire, were presented with the possibility of forming their own nation-state. The division of the Ottoman Empire had left uncertainty and a political vacuum in the Kurdish regions of South-Eastern Anatolia and Northern Iraq. The Kurdish nationalists, like other nationalists within the former Ottoman Empire, tried to take advantage of this situation and establish a Kurdish state through the treaty of Sevres.

However, following the Turkish war of independence and the formation of the treaty of Lausanne, British strategy was then primarily oriented towards containing the Soviet Bolshevik threat, and in the Middle East this necessitated enhancing the territorial unity of Iraq, Iran and Turkey. For this reason, the United Kingdom as the leading hegemon of the time, started to encourage nationalism as a counter narrative to Turkey's Pan-Islamism, opposing the establishment of a Kurdish state in an attempt to appease Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Turkey during the Lausanne peace negotiations by offering to drop the articles on the formation of a Kurdish State in return for Turkey joining the League of Nations. The Lausanne Treaty, which was signed on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 1923,

creates a clear division amongst the Kurdish lands in Turkey, Iraq and Syria. This division however meant only autonomy for the regions within their state rather than independence for a united Kurdistan.<sup>86</sup>

In the following decades, Ataturk's fiercely nationalist Turkey denied the very existence of the Kurds, banning their language and officially referring to them as "mountain Turks."<sup>87</sup> According to Andrew Mango, during the years of the War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk recognized specifically the multi-ethnic character of the Muslim population of Turkey, while he emphasized firmly on the need of unity under a Turkish State. Ataturk also promised that a local government system would accommodate ethnic specificity. After 1923, any idea of the self-rule of individual Muslim ethnic communities disappeared from the Turkish political agenda. Mustafa Kemal concentrated his energy on the consolidation of his power and to his secular cultural revolution. He had no intention of letting the Kurdish question fragment and obstruct the formation of a wider Turkish Nation.<sup>88</sup>

## **4.2 Rise of the PKK**

During its inception, the party declared its movement for the self-determination of the Kurdish nation in Marxist terms. PKK propaganda called for the creation of an independent Kurdistan that would include the vast Kurdish-populated regions in the Middle-East (Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq) as well as the advancement of proper democracy and setting up socialism within the Republic of Turkey. The PKK, from the

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<sup>86</sup> Ali, "The Kurds and the Lausanne Peace Negotiations, 1922–23."

<sup>87</sup> Yaroslav Trofimov, "The State of the Kurds," *Wall Street Journal*, June 19, 2015, sec. Life, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-state-of-the-kurds-1434712156>.

<sup>88</sup> Andrew Mango, "Atatürk and the Kurds," *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 4 (1999): 1–25.

beginning, tried to take advantage of the Kurdish population's resentment towards the government in Ankara. Kemal Ataturk had built the Turkish Republic on the basis of a nationalist ideology, which would only portray as he describes – “one nation, one language, and one flag”. This disabled the Kurdish population’s ability to portray its national identity. For decades, the Turkish state had violated the rights of the Kurdish minority, even refusing to grant the Kurds the right of education and expression in their own Kurdish language. The Turkish state did its best to suppress Kurdish identity and used coercion to "Turkify" the minority with no success.<sup>89</sup>

Turkey has been struggling with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, known around the world as the PKK, since the beginning of their operation in the 1980s. During the early 1990s, Turkish security forces and military conducted a fierce counterinsurgency campaign against the PKK, as a result of which, later on the PKK leader Abdullah Ocelan accepted a hefty military defeat. Ocelan was in turn captured and arrested in 1999, and the PKK subsequently declared a unilateral ceasefire against the Turkish State. According to author Pusane, by the early 2000s, the PKK was weak in terms of its military capacity, and the majority of its affiliates were seeking refuge outside Turkey's borders. However, after a few years of calm, on 1 June 2004, the PKK put an end to its unilateral ceasefire and once again began to attack civilian and military targets in Turkey. However, today one must realize that the PKK was able to survive this period and rebuild itself in a relatively short period of time. In the late 1990s and the early 2000s, the Turkish struggle against the PKK was identified as a success story in terms of counterinsurgency.

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<sup>89</sup> Barkey, *Turkey’s Kurdish Question*. Pg. 85-107

However, it soon became obvious that the Turkish military defeat of the PKK did not really bring an end to the group's insurgency. The PKK recovered quickly and renewed its commitment to violence in 2004.<sup>90</sup>

The movement started again its armed struggle in 2004. The PKK's military activity after the five-year break following the arrest of its leader took Turkey by surprise. Interestingly, the group's return occurred at a time when, at the time, the newly elected President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Islamist government of had just begun to slowly reducing the power of the secular Turkish army and slowly consolidate his party's power over society and politics. Following to the fall of Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein and the creating of the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq, the PKK saw a unique opportunity to retaliate once more against Turkey and to re-establish its old structures throughout the South-Eastern region of Turkey and Iraq. The PKK revived in the Kurdish territory the old tradition of guerrilla warfare and brought back the rural-type insurgency in the South-Eastern region of the Turkish Republic. This time, the PKK affiliates crossed over to Turkey through the treacherous Iraqi-Turkish frontier with small units of insurgents under the command of experienced former Iraqi rebels, staging carefully planned nights raids against the isolated and vulnerable Turkish military targets on the mountainous border. Quite efficiently, the PKK reoccupied a considerable section of South-Eastern Turkey's countryside and established

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<sup>90</sup> Özlem Kayhan Pusane, "Turkey's Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency," *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, no. 5 (September 3, 2015): 727–41, doi:10.1080/00263206.2014.979801.

structures in order to consolidate the group's control over the rural and urban Kurdish population throughout Turkey.<sup>91</sup>

According to Pusane, the state of Turkish politics in 2005 presented a mixed sentiment about the extent to which Turkey wanted to take peaceful action on the Kurdish issue. Between 2005 and 2009, an increasing number of academics, politicians, and policy makers had emphasized the idea that the use of military force alone cannot constitute an effective struggle against the PKK. Also a number of several high-ranking military officers had accepted that non-violent methods should be considered in the struggle with the PKK. In 2005, the then new party in government Justice and Development Party (AKP) acknowledged, for the first time, that the state had erred in its handling of the Kurdish question. Later on, in 2009 the AKP government initiated the policy of the Kurdish opening, which aimed at ending the PKK violence and resolving the Kurdish question through peaceful means. Although this process created a nationalist debate in Turkey from its early stages, the AKP embarked on a new peace and resolution process in 2013, which envisaged building a process of dialogue through the jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK's declaration of a second ceasefire, and the government's implementation of a number of reforms that would improve the quality of democracy and extend fundamental rights and freedoms in the country, especially in the South-Eastern region. Following these negotiations, Kurds gained the right to use their language in education as well as on mass media outlets within Turkey.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Spyridon A. Plakoudas, "The Pkk and the Guerrilla Tradition of Turkey's Kurds," *Middle East Review of International Affairs (Online)* 18, no. 4 (Winter 2015/2014): 39–49.

<sup>92</sup> Pusane, "Turkey's Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency."

In 2015, the latest ceasefire was broken once more after the PKK had warned the government a number of times over the building of military posts, roads and dams for military use in the South-East of Turkey. It was stressed by the PKK that should the government not refrain such action, it would mean the end of the ceasefire and the start of a war. The PKK has also held the Turkish state responsible for the bombing that killed 33 socialist activists in the border town of Suruc in 2015. Since the end of the ceasefire, Turkey is now facing a continuous dual fronted war against terror from the internal (PKK) dimension and the external dimension (Da'esh).<sup>93</sup>

### **4.3 The AKP Kurdish Policy**

To gain better understanding of the way the AKP approached the Kurdish issue, according to scholar Efeğil, one has to analyze the basic points of the 1991 Kurdish report<sup>94</sup> prepared by the Welfare Party's Istanbul Provincial Head – Recep Tayyip Erdogan – today, President of the Turkish Republic. The report's proposals in 1991, which are still today very conflicting with traditional opinions among military and state elites, for the first time, accepted the existence of a Kurdish question. According to the report, South-Eastern Anatolia was historically called Kurdistan. The report also confirmed that the Kurdish language is different from Turkish. According to the same report, the Kurds in South-Eastern Turkey have suffered from both military operations led by the state as well as from the PKK terrorist attacks. The report emphasized the

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<sup>93</sup> "Who Caused the Collapse of the Turkey-PKK Ceasefire?" *Middle East Eye*, accessed July 2, 2016, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/who-caused-collapse-turkey-pkk-ceasefire-1520761153>.

<sup>94</sup> "President Erdoğan's Stance on Kurdish Issue the same since 1991," *DailySabah*, accessed July 2, 2016, <http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2015/03/25/president-erdogans-stance-on-kurdish-issue-the-same-since-1991>.

massive difficulty to finding a solution by using only military measures. Except for some marginal Kurdish groups, including the PKK, most Kurdish people did not demand independence from Turkey – the report indicated that they desired only to be able to freely practice their cultural traditions, expose their cultural symbols and use their local tongue.<sup>95</sup>

For many Kurds, the acceptance of their identity and culture by the Turkish state authorities was much more important than independence. The report drafted by Erdogan in 1991 indicated the following concrete suggestions:

*“...the end of punitive measures upon local people, ensuring regional economic development, the improvement of human rights, development of the Kurdish culture, the establishment of a Kurdish institute, the free publication of Kurdish newspapers and journals, the formation of local parliaments, decreasing the central government’s powers and allowing the free use of the mother tongue.”<sup>96</sup>*

After the 2002 general elections, the AKP officials have advocated for the implementation of policies as proposed in the 1991 report drafted by the same Erdogan. In support of the same report, Prime Minister Erdogan in his speech in Diyarbakır of August 2005 pointed out that he was, and still is, against any regional and ethnic separatist movements such as the PKK, whilst approving of cultural pluralism. During his speech he also remarked that he noted that in the past state authorities made some serious errors with regard to the Kurdish question. While supporting the movement towards

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<sup>95</sup> Ertan Efeğil, “Analysis of the AKP Government’s Policy Toward the Kurdish Issue,” *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 1 (March 1, 2011): 27–40, doi:10.1080/14683849.2011.563938.

<sup>96</sup> “A Brief History of the Turkish Government’s Language Planning Policy for Kurdish,” *Aiden Carter*, accessed July 2, 2016, <https://www.scribd.com/doc/297269499/A-Brief-History-of-the-Turkish-Government-s-Language-Planning-Policy-for-Kurdish>.

improved democratic standards in Turkey, President Erdogan expressed his willingness for local cultures to be freely tolerated under the Turkish Republic.<sup>97</sup>

According to Efeğil, although the statements made by Erdogan in Diyarbakir were very re-evolutional at the time, the AKP government did not really try to make an attempt at solving the Kurdish issue until October 2007 when PKK terrorists and the military had a clash in Hakkari. After this attack, pressures from the political and social arena brought the issue to the forefront of the AKP's agenda. At this point, the AKP improved their efforts to solve the Kurdish problem and most importantly the issue of PKK terrorism, which were formerly accepted as taboos in Turkish political and social life. The AKP in 2007 started a program of reform addressing the Kurdish question. These reforms included permission for public Kurdish theatre performances, the appointment of Kurdish-speaking officials to the South-East of Turkey, allowing the press to print and broadcast in Kurdish, permission for Kurdish ceremonies and sermons in mosques, freedom to speak in Kurdish in prisons, changing the names of districts, villages and towns back to their original Kurdish names. The government also pledged to the disarmament and then dissolution of the PKK. This was done through some legal amendments to the Turkish Criminal code. The government also proposed a series of constitutional changes, however these were highly criticized due to their ineffectiveness.

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<sup>97</sup> "Başbakan'ın 2005'te Diyarbakır'daki Konuşması," *Sabah*, accessed July 2, 2016, [http://www.sabah.com.tr/siyaset/2009/12/17/basbakanin\\_2005te\\_diyarbakirdaki\\_konusmasi](http://www.sabah.com.tr/siyaset/2009/12/17/basbakanin_2005te_diyarbakirdaki_konusmasi). - [Translated using Google Translate]

<sup>98</sup> Efeğil, "Analysis of the AKP Government's Policy toward the Kurdish Issue."

Interestingly enough, during this time of revolution in Turkish policy making towards the Kurdish question, nothing was done towards the Kurdish Symbol. To date, Turkish authorities are very reluctant to have Kurdish flags and emblems displayed in public. This is still evident through the recent diplomatic upheaval between Turkey and the US over troops in Syria wearing emblems from the Democratic Union Party or Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat (PYD), the Kurdish youth branch fighting against Da'esh together with the US troops.<sup>99</sup> This event continued to stir diplomatic upheavals since the PYD is an affiliate to the PKK with the latter listed as terrorist organization in the US and the EU.<sup>100</sup>

#### **4.4 Kurdish political participation in Turkey**

According to Ersanli et al, the representative capacity and participatory ability of minorities and the politically disadvantaged communities have the ability to create a series of problems in most already divided societies. For the authors, many of the problems are most often related to ideological, political and legal issues that may make the process of representation very difficult for these already disadvantaged communities. For the authors this is the case for the Kurdish issue in Turkey, which for them stands out both as a domestic and as an international problem. Such a problem may be seen as an international issue due to the dispersal of the Kurdish diaspora in bordering Middle

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<sup>99</sup> "Turkey Upset over Images of US Soldiers with Kurdish Symbols | Fox News," accessed July 2, 2016, <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/05/27/turkey-upset-over-images-us-soldiers-with-kurdish-symbols.html>.

<sup>100</sup> "Tens of Thousands Protest in Turkey against Kurdish Violence," *University Wire*, September 20, 2015, sec. From Ap, <http://search.proquest.com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/docview/1713882093/abstract/A044821482B4506PQ/1>.

Eastern countries as well as in Europe. Moreover, in Turkey there is evidently red tape for the participation and representation of the Kurds as a distinct community with different ethnic identity, language and culture. In Turkey this red tape is often justified through public opinion, which according to the authors links the issue of representation to the illegal Kurdish party, the PKK.<sup>101</sup>

This can be easily seen through the developments in the last national elections for the Turkish parliament in 2015. The first election in June saw a dramatic rise in popularity to the advantage of the HDP, the recently established pro-Kurdish party. On the other hand, it saw a dramatic decrease in the constituents of the ruling AKP party. Not wanting to form a coalition, the AKP went for a second election in November, which they won triumphantly following a series of events related to terrorist activity from the PKK and Da'esh. Within this broad arc of events lies the crucial story of the rise and fall of the same pro-Kurdish party. For the first time in the history of Turkey, a pro-Kurdish party attracted enough 'Turkish' support to surpass the 10% election threshold and gain rightful access to parliament. However resurgent political positions from the AKP have solidified the narrowing of political expression in Turkey. The HDP today is struggling to negotiate its legitimacy amongst its constituents and make productive use of whatever time it has left in the Turkish parliament due to a number of measures taken from the AKP to ensure the eradication of the party.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Büşra Ersanlı and Günay Göksu Özdoğan, "Obstacles and Opportunities: Recent Kurdish Struggles for Political Representation and Participation in Turkey," *Southeastern Europe* 35, no. 1 (February 2011): 62–94, doi:10.1163/187633311X545689.

<sup>102</sup> "Rise and Fall of the Dream Called HDP," *openDemocracy*, February 23, 2016, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/westminster/umit-cizre/rise-and-fall-of-dream-called-hdp>.

To make matters even worse, on 20 May 2016, the Turkish parliament passed a constitutional amendment which would revoke the immunity of current lawmakers in a move aimed to facilitate the ability to prosecute members of the HDP on the accusations of assimilation to the PKK, and oust them from parliament. The party in government under the command of Erdogan and at the time Prime Minister Davutoglu and the far-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP) voted in favor of the amendment, backed by a number of deputies from the main opposition, Centre-right Republican People's Party (CHP). In return, as HDP parliamentarians are facing the possibility to stand trial for supporting terrorism, the HDP itself will be criminalized. This, will probably also aggravate the party's legitimacy problem and facilitate the Interior Ministry's removal from office of elected HDP mayors in the various districts around Turkey, especially in the South-East, from office. Similarly, obstructing HDP candidature in the next elections will become easier. All these efforts are aimed at pushing any Kurdish party which has the ability to flourish over the 10% threshold to enter parliament, which in turn will allow the AKP to grab the seats the HDP took in the 2015 elections. The ultimate objective is to ensure the AKP holds a stronger parliamentary majority, to the detriment of the pleas made by the Kurdish population for further political representation.<sup>103</sup>

#### **4.5 EU accession process, Human Rights issues and the Kurdish Question**

Turkey's Kurds face a unique situation as the Turkish Government attempted to join the European Union (EU). Turkey's ongoing human rights abuses towards anyone

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<sup>103</sup> "Ouster of Kurdish MPs Threatens to Fuel Separatism in Turkey," *Al-Monitor*, May 23, 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/05/turkey-kurdish-hdp-lawmakers-lifts-immunities-arrest.html>.

who dares to support the Kurdish side of events are a major factor behind the EU's unwillingness to proceed with further opening of chapters towards Turkey's EU accession process as well as the prospect of Visa liberalization which would have ensured easier travel measures for Turkish citizens in the Schengen area. Whilst for many it may come natural to think that the Turkish government takes a more rational approach to the "Kurdish Question", as well as a more serious image in the eyes of Europe in its drive to become a member of the EU, exactly the opposite is taking place. According to Gabbay, Turkey's ambitions to obtain EU membership have in fact caused it to increase its repression of the Kurdish minority in Turkey in an attempt to demonstrate to the EU that it is a "united country". According to the *Kurdish Human Rights Project (KHRP)*, the Republic of Turkey's abuses of its Kurdish minority include the widespread use of torture and the use of its military forces against civilians. The KHRP also notes that military officers often go unpunished for their violent tactics against Kurds, and that the Turkish State generally refuses to account for Kurdish fatalities and injuries at the hands of its state agents. Recent anti-terror legislation revised in Turkey has paved the way for further abuse of Turkey's Kurds.<sup>104</sup>

Today in Turkey, self-censorship is a very common practice due to fear of many individuals to criticize the state or government publicly. Such actions by any civilians could result in civil or criminal suits or investigations. The government is harassing and

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<sup>104</sup> Shaul M. Gabbay, "State Borders Vs. Cultural Historical and Religious Social Networks: The Case of Turkish Kurds', Kurds in Iraq - and Their Struggle for Self Determination," *European Scientific Journal* 10, no. 29 (October 2014), <http://search.proquest.com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/docview/1652465548/abstract/17623E6905C4729PQ/1>

prosecuting people who are sympathetic to any non-mainstream religious, political, and Kurdish nationalist or cultural views or ideas. Authorities are also using excessive force to disperse protests, detaining thousands of persons, including many journalists, academics, lawyers, and students, for taking part in demonstrations, and charge many of them under the anti-terror law. Particularly one may note that authorities used excessive force in response to the Gezi Park protests of May 2013, leading to mass casualties and an overall diminution of freedom of expression and press all over the country.<sup>105</sup>

More worryingly, U.S. Department of State's 2015 Human Rights Practices Report concerning Turkey states:

*“During the year many individuals, including journalists and minors, were indicted for insulting the president or prime minister; insulting the organs and institutions of the state; taking part in anti-government plots; and being members of outlawed political groups. Some journalists were indicted for attempting to influence the judiciary (including publishing an opinion about how a pending case should be resolved or protesting in favor of a particular outcome).”<sup>106</sup>*

As explained by Gunter, a successful Turkish EU application would have the additional fortuitous side effect of granting that country's ethnic Kurds should have their full democratic rights just like any other Turkish citizen, which to date been denied to Kurds on many occasions. Gunter slams the EU Commission for their refusal to address the Kurdish problem as a cohesive issue. For the author, the EU seems only willing to address the issue by agreeing with the AKP administration that the problem in Turkey is only an issue of Human Rights or Terrorism. Despite Turkey's present unwillingness to

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<sup>105</sup> Bureau of Public Affairs Department Of State, “2013 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices,” Published February 14, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013/>.

<sup>106</sup> “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015,” accessed July 2, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm>.

improve the Human Rights standards relating to its Kurdish question, the EU may hold the key to a Turkey which might be willing to negotiate more with their Kurdish Minority, should the EU accession prospect be more tangible for the Turks.<sup>107</sup>

In conclusion, one could say that theories of nationalism as presented by Anthony Smith and others are easily applied to the Kurdish question in Turkey. Undoubtedly, the Kurds are a nation, which are currently under administration of the Republic of Turkey. The exploration of the above analysis may deem to be imperative for the purpose of the research question being explored in this paper. By understanding further, the nationalist sentiment and all the different dynamics that underline the quest for self-determination by the Kurds under some form of self-government, will be able to shed more light when it comes to synthesizing this paper.

Understanding the historical background of the conflict at hand will help in realizing how the conflict erupted and what were the initial dynamics at play between the national groups in Turkey. In turn, by understanding the dynamic of the problem today, one can conclude that the Kurdish question of Turkey has evolved and new players have come into play. The role the EU is increasingly taking in trying to pressure Turkey to increase its human rights capacity is crucial. The EU accession process and the visa liberalization process are very crucial for Turks as well as the popularity of the AKP.

An overview of the AKP policies over the years have also presented a better understanding of how the dynamics evolved to what we know them today. The variety of policies that the AKP party took in terms of education are admirable. However, one must

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<sup>107</sup> "The Kurds Ascending: The Evolving Solution to the Kurdish Problem in Iraq and Turkey", M. Gunter, David Romano: 9780230112872, Palgrave Books," Pg. 93 - 106

admit that such measures are not reflecting the reality of the Kurdish situation today. The AKP's efforts in preventing Kurdish infiltration in political participation is one of the actions which may correlate to a revival in Kurdish national sentiment. Such revival may be evident in the June elections of 2015 where the HDP party gained over 10% of Turkish constituents.

The rise of the PKK presents also a perspective of conflict as seen by the Kurds. Such analysis presented a better understanding of why the Turkish state may be seen as an enemy by the PKK. An analysis of the various ceasefires that failed is also given in order to understand the triggering mechanisms of the PKK which pushed the group into mass mobilization targeting Turkish Civilians and the state.

Altogether these different factors create a basis for further understanding and analysis. In the forthcoming chapter an in-depth analysis of economic situation in South-Eastern Turkey will be presented in order to continue building up a case in an attempt to understand if the Kurds are able to set up a case for greed or grievance as explained by Paul Collier.

## **CHAPTER FIVE - ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING KURDISH-TURKISH RELATIONS**

In order to understand better the Kurdish and Turkish relations present today within the Republic of Turkey, one must understand the economic dynamic of the South-Eastern region of the country. To be able to understand this phenomena, an introduction to the dynamics of the economic system in Turkey present before the rise of the AKP will be presented. This will help in further understanding the following explanations of the various achievements for the Turkish economy as a whole during the AKP rule.

Following the introduction to the economic background of Turkey, an in-depth investigation will be presented on the South-Eastern Anatolia (GAP) project in South-Eastern Anatolia. This will help understand the various initiatives taken in terms of shedding more light to the issue of Economic development of the Kurdish region in Turkey. Furthermore, the various efficiencies and deficiencies of the project will be presented for a dynamic analysis of the subject matter.

In turn, a presentation of the Socio-Economic conditions present in South-Eastern Turkey will be presented. This will be given justice through a variety of indicators which will be compared over a span of geographical distance and time in order to shed more light and understanding over the rise of violent groups in the South-Eastern region. Furthermore, in this chapter, a presentation of the various natural resources found in the

South-Eastern region will be given in order to gain more understanding on the possible effects of such extraction taking place in this conflict ridden region.

### **5.1 Turkish Economics Pre-AKP**

As explored by Subaşat, Turkey began to implement its liberalization policies under the military rule in the 1980s as a result of the balance of payment problems left behind from the 1970s. The foreign exchange regime and capital account were liberalized in 1984 and 1989. Full convertibility increased financial instabilities associated with highly unpredictable large short-term capital flows which in turn led to interest rate and exchange rate fluctuations as well as instability in investment and economic growth rates. The capital account liberalization aimed at financing the public sector deficit without having an effect on private investment, but an increase in immobile property interest rates resulted in a massive accumulation of public debt towards the end of the 1980s.<sup>108</sup>

However, for the following two decades, Turkey could not achieve sound economic indicators. Any attempts to define quality regulation in economic policy making in the 1990s were disabled due to the comeback of former party elites to the political stage in 1987, which led to excessive patronage politics that had a heavy toll on public and private banks.<sup>109</sup> According to Bank and Kardag, the financial dependence of private businesses and individual political elites in particular, eventually led to the outbreak of two financial crises, in 1994 and 2001, which had the lasting effect of delegitimizing established structures and further legitimizing religious counter elites.

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<sup>108</sup> Turan Subaşat, "The Political Economy of Turkey's Economic Miracle," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 16, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 137–60, doi:10.1080/19448953.2014.910396.

<sup>109</sup> Karadag, Roy (2010), "Neoliberal Restructuring in Turkey. From State to Oligarchic Capitalism", MPIfG Discussion Paper, 10, 7, Cologne: MPIfG.

When the AKP, as part of the latter group, credibly broke with a more religious conservative ideology and provided an alternative to the embedded corruption in the system, it succeeded in taking over the central-right camp and shaking up the political system.<sup>110</sup>

## **5.2 Turkish Economics under AKP (2002-2015)**

According to Toledano, Turkey's rise as a power on the regional scene is the consequence of the country's blistering economic growth over the last decade. In terms of GDP, the Turkish economy currently ranks eighteenth in the world<sup>111</sup> and its annual growth rate in 2011, hovered at around 11.4 percent, which was only second to China and India. The author acknowledges that although there was a huge surge in economic progress under the AKP, Turkey is still very much a developing country: the country's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is still relatively low by standards set by the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), considerably lower than European Union rates, and about a third that of Israel, which is considered to be the leading industrial nation in the Middle East. Nevertheless, improvements in the standard of living experienced by vast segments of the population are visible to anyone visiting Turkey today, and the newly acquired wealth is more evenly distributed among the Turkish population than it is in many developing and developed countries. According to the author, for people in the region this only enhances the legitimacy and appeal of the AKP model.

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<sup>110</sup> André Bank and Roy Karadag (2012), "The Political Economy of Regional Power: Turkey under the AKP", GIGA Research Unit: Institute of Middle East Studies (No. 204).

<sup>111</sup> "GDP (Nominal) Ranking 2016 - StatisticsTimes.com," accessed June 29, 2016, <http://statisticstimes.com/economy/countries-by-projected-gdp.php>.

Furthermore, for Toledano, this Turkish economic growth was driven largely by an accelerated process of urbanization. Today, approximately 75% of the country's population lives in urban centers while the remainders reside in villages and small towns; only fifteen years ago, this urban-rural ratio was nearly the reverse. For the author, as this population has migrated to Turkey's cities, it has changed not only its location but also its character: the drive toward urbanization has significantly raised the general population's access to modern education and increased the levels of participation in the national and global economies. While these former villagers have shed their rural way of life, their traditional culture and sensibilities have undeniably expressed themselves in the country's political landscape.<sup>112</sup>

However, many criticize this shift in demographics as a move to further consolidate the power of the AKP. According to the 2013 IMCE report:

*“AKP's urban policy agenda seeks to address three distinct objectives: boosting economic growth and employment, addressing the demands of the major developers and nurturing a pro-AKP contractor class, and manufacturing the populist image of a party serving its constituencies. As urban scholars often noted, urban neoliberalism often requires authoritarian mode of ruling in order to circumvent the popular pressures that might be challenging it. This is more so the case when urban policy is conceived as an instrument of transferring massive public assets and wealth to a new crony capitalist class. Under AKP, this was not simply limited to the formation of entrepreneurial municipal governance; it instead meant a major institutional transformation that re-scaled urban policy-making to the central state authority.”<sup>113</sup>*

This means that for the purpose of this research one must keep an open mind when analyzing policies and investment of the AKP in the South-Eastern region of

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<sup>112</sup> Ehud Toledano, “AKP’s New Turkey,” *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 11 (2011): 40–61, 117.

<sup>113</sup> “THE URBAN ROOTS OF GEZI, ISTANBUL,” accessed June 29, 2016, [http://www.toplumunsehircilikhareketi.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=artic%20le&id=292:the-urban-roots-of-gezi-istanbul&catid=8:makaleler&Itemid=15](http://www.toplumunsehircilikhareketi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=artic%20le&id=292:the-urban-roots-of-gezi-istanbul&catid=8:makaleler&Itemid=15).

Turkey due to the fact that a lot more investment is being done in Urban areas, where the AKP has the majority of their constituents. However one must notice that in the last elections held in November 2015, the AKP still held a good amount of constituents in the Southern Border with Syria.<sup>114</sup>

### **5.3 Investment in South-East Anatolia - The GAP Project**

The South-East Anatolian Project or GAP1 was begun more than 45 years ago and when completed, it will comprise of some 22 dams, 19 hydroelectric power plants and 37 irrigation systems in the Tigris and Euphrates river basins. Turkish government reports state that GAP will produce 27 billion KWH of energy per year and will irrigate 1.7 million hectares (4.2 million acres) of land. It is estimated that GAP will create over three million jobs and add a further 22 billion USD to Turkey's GDP through exports by 2018. Total Turkish GDP in 2014 was at around 798 Billion USD.<sup>115</sup> Reports estimate that GAP will increase the southeast region's income drastically. It is hoped that job creation will slow the movement of people to the big cities of Western Turkey and to the large provincial cities and towns of Diyarbakir, Sanli, Urfa, Mardin, Malatya, Elazig, Batman and Siverek. All of these cities are estimated to be mostly populated by Kurds. It is estimated that GAP will contribute 7.7% to the state's annual economic growth, double Turkey's agriculture production, especially of crops such as wheat, cotton and soybeans. Investments in education, health and housing are expected to contribute to the economic wellbeing and increase the standard of living of the South-Eastern region's eight

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<sup>114</sup> "Turkish General Election 2015," *HÜRRİYET - TÜRKİYE'NİN AÇILIŞ SAYFASI*, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://secimdataharim.hurriyet.com.tr/>.

<sup>115</sup> "Turkey GDP | 1960-2016 | Data | Chart | Calendar | Forecast | News," accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/turkey/gdp>.

provinces of Siirt, Adiyaman, Çirnak, Batman, Çanlı, Urfa, Mardin, Diyarbakir and Gaziantep that GAP will effect.<sup>116</sup>

According to the Turkish state owned news media Sabah, in 2015, Prime Minister Davutoglu announced officially a further investment of 10 Billion USD to the project between 2014 and 2018. In this new action plan an area of 1.1 million hectares will be opened to irrigation and around 5,000 small and 8,000-hectar fields will be planted, and erosion control practices will be implemented in an area of 40,000 hectares. Along with these actions, by the end of 2018, the rate of participation in the work force is estimated to rise to 39.1 percent, and the proportion of gross value added to Turkey's average is estimated to increase to 54.4 percent. This clearly shows that there is continuous effort by the Turkish Government to further invest in the GAP project. For the head of GAP administration, Sadrettin Karahocagil:

*“Building adequate and quality infrastructure in the region is one of the determining factors in realizing economic transformation and accelerating social development. In this respect, the completion of irrigation infrastructure is the priority target of the new action plan. The project contributed immensely to the development of the region. With an increase in irrigation facilities, agricultural and industrial output developed in the region. Total exports from the region came to only \$600 million in 2002, but this figure had reached \$8.9 billion at the end of 2013. Turkey's total exports increased 42 percent from 2007 to 2014. In the same period, the total export increase of the GAP Region reached 170 percent.”<sup>117</sup>*

For many critics of the project, the environmental damage caused on the region was not worth the development of the project. For Tasakalidou, the destruction caused by GAP projects, such as the Ilisu dam, has further rallied critics against the AKP and the

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<sup>116</sup> Robert Olson, “The Impact of the Southeast Anatolian Project (GAP) on Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey,” *The International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 9, no. 1/2 (1996): 95–102.

<sup>117</sup> “Turkey Will Invest \$10 Billion in Southeastern Anatolia Project,” *DailySabah*, accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2015/03/08/turkey-will-invest-10-billion-in-southeastern-anatolia-project>.

management of this project, as these developments are seen by some as part of an effort by the government to eliminate Kurdish culture. Historical sites have been destroyed to make way for construction, while resettlement plans, although abiding to international standards, may leave many displaced people without compensation due to the lack of institutional capacity in the region to document land rights. Above all for Tasakalidou, GAP has not so far produced the infrastructure, the projected productive increase, or security gains that the population of the region expected. Many parts of the region still lack reliable electricity supply. The Agriculture has also failed to modernize substantially. Feudalistic land ownership-like structures in the region are very entrenched, with wealthy landowners diversifying their holdings and small holders, predominantly Kurds, still lacking access to credit.<sup>118</sup>

#### **5.4 Socio-Economics of South-Eastern Turkey**

In order to get a better understanding of the Kurdish economic situation in South-Eastern Turkey, a presentation of some of the different social economic variables of the region will be presented. Studies on the education of the region, the governmental expenditure on the region, the income dynamics of the region as well as private investment in the area will be presented in order to gain a better understanding of the research question at hand.

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<sup>118</sup> "The Great Anatolian Project: Is Water Management a Panacea or Crisis Multiplier for Turkey's Kurds?," *New Security Beat*, accessed June 29, 2016, <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2013/08/great-anatolian-project-water-management-panacea-crisis-multiplier-turkeys-kurds/>.

#### **5.4.1 Literacy Rates in Kurdish Populated Regions**

Kirisci and Winrow, in their publication on *The Kurdish question and Turkey* (1997), explored the socio-economic factors of the Eastern and South-Eastern Turkey since these are the areas traditionally inhabited by Kurds. They admit that these are the areas that are believed to be the least developed in Turkey. They started off to explore illiteracy rates in the regions, getting data from as back as 1985. They found out that in 1985, illiteracy rates in Turkey's east accounted for 35.5% of the population, whilst in the South-East it accounted for 44% of the population. These figures are quite staggering since the next region with the highest illiteracy rate in Turkey would be the Black Sea Region with 24.7%. Similarly, according to a research done by the same authors, the number of doctors available per thousand people in 1990 was lower in the less-developed Eastern and South-Eastern regions than elsewhere, with only an average of 4 doctors per thousand.<sup>119</sup>

In a study conducted by Akbulut and Ozcen, published in 2012, they found out that literacy rates in these regions have increased over time. According to their research, in 2009 a little over 80% of those over six years of age in the Kurdish populated areas of the East and South-East were literate. This is a staggering increase in literacy rates over what Kirisci and Winrow found, however this still accounts for the lowest percentage in literacy rates in Turkey. Researchers Akbulut and Ozcen claim that the phenomena of higher literacy rates in the Kurdish region is attributed to the high fertility rates in the region. According to the researchers, the area has an average of 4.6 children per woman,

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<sup>119</sup> Kemal Kirişci, Kemal Kirisci, and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (Psychology Press, 1997). (Pg. 122-123)

and despite a huge investment by the government to improve infrastructure and increase investment in education for the region, it is still a massive challenge for this region.<sup>120</sup>

According to Celik et al, the AKP administration worked hard to reduce the gender discrepancy in education in the South-East region. Prior to AKP initiatives in the region, 70% of females attended primary education, whilst 90% of the males attended primary education. By 2012, according to the researchers, 98.86% of the children got access to schooling and the gender gap was eliminated. Mandatory education at secondary level was initiated in 2012, according to the author, in the South-Eastern and Eastern Turkey. However, the author reports that the levels of enrolment were still alarmingly low. Also, enrolment levels among female children remained considerably lower than those among male children in these disadvantaged areas. According to the author, in addition to these issues, the country fails to provide high quality education to all citizens. In this respect, geographic location and socio-economic structures successfully account for students' academic success.<sup>121</sup>

#### **5.4.2 Income in Eastern and South-Eastern Turkey**

Kirisci and Winrow also explored gross per capita income figures of 1979 and 1986, in relation to the Aegean region of Turkey. In 1979, the combined gross per capita income scores of the Eastern and South-Eastern regions of Turkey came only at 34.4% of the Aegean region in 1979 and only 29.2% in 1986. In relation to these figures, the

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<sup>120</sup> AKBULUT, Gülpınar; ÖZGEN, Nurettin (2012), Coğrafi Bölgelere Göre Türkiye’de Nüfusun Eğitim Durumu / The Education Status Of Population In Turkey According To Geographical Regions, The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies International Journal of Social Science – JASSS- Volume 5 Issue 7, p. 15-26, December 2012, Ankara. Journal of Social Science Volume 5 Issue 7, p. 15-26, December 2012

<sup>121</sup> Zafer Çelik and Bekir S. Gür, “Turkey’s Education Policy during the AK Party Era (2002-2013),” *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 151–76.

authors also went further and explored the newly registered cars in 1991, and found out that only 6.4% were registered in the Eastern and South-Eastern regions. These two factors, according to the authors, seem to suggest a relative lack of prosperity in the mostly Kurdish populated areas of Turkey. However, the authors reject the idea that such figures are a product of deliberate policy by the government. In their study they also notice that the Black Sea region also suffers from low socio-economic scores when compared to the Western regions of Turkey, even though this region is not highly populated by Kurds.<sup>122</sup>

A more recent study conducted in the year 2000 by Faucompret et al, found out that regional inequality in Kurdish dominated areas of the East and South-East was still evident. In a study the researchers made in comparing the GDP of the different regions in Turkey, the authors claim that the GDP figures in 2000 showed that the Eastern region only had 28% of the average GDP of Turkey for that year, whilst the South-Eastern region had 54% of the average GDP of Turkey. This shows massive inequalities between the regions which emphasizes the disparity outlined by Kirisci and Winrow in their study.<sup>123</sup>

In 2011, according to Eurostat, the purchasing power per capita in Turkey, when compared to the average of the 28 European Union countries stood at 53%. However, one could notice that the purchasing power per capita in South-East and Eastern Anatolia stood at the bottom of the table. The two regions scored at 27% and 26% respectively. On

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<sup>122</sup> Kirişci, Kirisci, and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*. (Pg. 122-123)

<sup>123</sup> Eric Faucompret and Jozef Konings, *Turkish Accession to the EU: Satisfying the Copenhagen Criteria* (Routledge, 2008). (Pg. 124-125)

the other hand, regions such as Istanbul which is highly developed stood at 80%. This stands to show that even by 2011 there were huge disparities in the income levels in Turkey. The Kurdish regions stood the test of time and scored low in different studies by different researchers over time.<sup>124</sup>

#### **5.4.3 Government Spending in Kurdish Regions**

According to Kirisci et al, governmental spending the Eastern and South-Eastern regions of Turkey has been proportionally higher between 1986 and 1990. The government spent in these regions around 78 million TL. On the other hand, the return of the government from these regions in the same period was only of around 26 million TL. In the same period, the authors explored the budget ratio given for the Eastern and South-Eastern regions. The authors found out that the government spent three times more money than it collected from revenues in the region. Hence one could say that during this period, there was a transfer of money collected from the wealthier Western parts of Turkey to the less developed Kurdish populated areas. Kirisci et al also explored the channels in which such money was spent. They report that the highest spending in the region went for the GAP project. This extensive project, once completed, as explained earlier in this chapter, has to give the region a set of fully functional energy resources consisting of 21 dams, 19 hydro-electric power plants and a whole extensive network of irrigation canals covering eight provinces in the region, seven of which are highly populated by Kurds.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> "Eurostat - Data Explorer," accessed April 28, 2016

<sup>125</sup> Kirişci, Kirisci, and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*. (Pg. 124)

Government expenditure did not decrease under AKP. The GAP project was revived and continued to develop, especially between 2008 and 2012. Turkish President Erdogan acknowledges that investing in the region is one of the many ways to counter the violence stemming up in the area.<sup>126</sup> Between 2008 and 2014, according to Government sources, there was a huge increase in the percentage of public spending ration which went on the GAP project, when compared to previous years. This stands to show that the AKP seems to be committed to the development of the Kurdish region of the country, and did not neglect infrastructural development, to help the agricultural sector of the region.<sup>127</sup>

#### **5.4.5 Private Investment in Kurdish Regions**

Kirisici et al point out the regions as not being matched by private investment. The area is characterized by low levels of savings and credits, according to the authors. In 1994 the authors report that local newspapers were reporting that a number of banks were closing their branches in the Kurdish areas, as a consequence of this, the banking sector in the area was weakening. In 1991, the Eastern region only had 2.1% of total bank deposits of the country. In addition to this only 1.5% of total bank credits for the year were issued in the same region. Similarly, in South-Eastern region contained only 1.6% of total bank deposits in 1991. Also, only 1.1% of total bank credit for the year in Turkey was issued in this region. This clearly illustrates that private investors prefer to invest in the more developed and prosperous parts of Turkey, where according to the authors, they would find more dynamic markets as well as a relatively more skilled labor force. For the

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<sup>126</sup> "Turkey to Spend Billions on Poor, Restive Southeast," *Reuters*, May 27, 2008.

<sup>127</sup> "GAP Regional Development Administration," *Gap.gov.tr*, accessed April 28, 2016, <http://www.gap.gov.tr/en/gap-finance-page-27.html>.

authors, low purchasing power and education in the region seem to discourage private investment.<sup>128</sup>

According to Barkey, private investment on a mass scale is something which is very difficult to take place in South-Eastern Turkey. With violent groups operating, no firm would be willing to invest in such a region, hence the low figures. Barkey claims that once an agreement is reached between the violent groups and the Government, there would be a whole range of Kurdish bourgeoisie, who currently reside in the West, who would be willing to invest in the Eastern region.<sup>129</sup>

Mete, a Turkish Scholar from Gaziantep University, in a recently published study agrees that the terrorist activity in the region is the major drawback when it comes for private investment. He also states that demands for autonomy by violent groups in the region make the political dynamic of the region more volatile, hence making investors even less willing to invest in the area. According to Mete, should a solution not be found quickly to the terrorism issue, the region shall suffer consequences in its social, political and demographic make-up.<sup>130</sup>

## **5.5 Natural Resources in Turkey**

The main natural resource for Turkey which is feasible for export is minerals. Turkey's most important minerals are chromite, bauxite, and copper. The country also exploits deposits of other minerals such as iron, manganese, lead, zinc, antimony,

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<sup>128</sup> Kirişci, Kirisci, and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*. (Pg. 124-125)

<sup>129</sup> Barkey, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*. (Pg.190)

<sup>130</sup> Mustafa Mete, "The Effects of Terrorist Activities on Development in the Southeastern Region of Turkey-Theoretical and Empirical Application," *International Journal of Economics and Finance* 8, no. 4 (March 23, 2016): 229.

asbestos, pyrites, sulphur, mercury, and manganese. The mining subsector provides the raw material for such key manufacturing industries as iron and steel, aluminum, cement, and fertilizers. Turkey exports a variety of minerals, the most important of which are blister copper, chrome, and boron products.<sup>131</sup>

In an interview conducted in 2012, Taner Yildiz, the Minister of Energy and Natural resources at the time claimed that the Mining industry is very important for Turkey for a variety of reasons. The mining sector provides the industry with a variety of necessary raw materials. Besides this, for the minister, it also fosters the development of rural areas through new investments in infrastructure and job opportunities. For Yildiz it also helps introduce in those areas new technologies, marketing and financing methods. He claimed that the Turkish mining sector's total value of production has grown to 10.5 billion USD in 2010. According to government sources this stood only at 2.6 billion USD in 2003. However, mineral imports grew to 3.7 billion USD in 2010 from 684 million USD in 2002 as a result to the large internal demand for production. According to the Minister:

*“...25% of the revenues proceeding from mining operations are used to fund infrastructure developments in the regions where the licenses are collected. At the same time, 50% of the fees paid for mining operations are invested to bring services to rural villages.”<sup>132</sup>*

The Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey through a study commissioned in 2014 to McKinsey & Company described Turkey as *‘The rising star of*

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<sup>131</sup> “Turkey Mineral Resources - Flags, Maps, Economy, History, Climate, Natural Resources, Current Issues, International Agreements, Population, Social Statistics, Political System,” accessed June 29, 2016, [http://www.photius.com/countries/turkey/economy/turkey\\_economy\\_mineral\\_resources.html](http://www.photius.com/countries/turkey/economy/turkey_economy_mineral_resources.html).

<sup>132</sup> “Our Final Aim Is to Transform Turkey,” *Engineering & Mining Journal (00958948)* 213, no. 1 (January 2012): 45–45.

*the mining industry in the next century*' and claimed that there are still major mining reserves that are untapped in the South-East of the country, which had no drilling until the 1980s. These reserves could all be used to increase the potential of the region.<sup>133</sup>

Turkey has also a small reserve of non-renewable natural gas, oil and coal, all mostly coming from the Kurdish regions of South-Eastern Anatolia. According to Mustafa Balat Turkey's energy consumption is high, but its domestic primary energy sources are oil and natural gas reserves and their production is low.<sup>134</sup> The data illustrated by Hacisalihoglu in 2005 demonstrates that although present, the resources which could be used for energy production in Turkey are very limited and close to insignificant when compared to the demand for energy in the whole country. In her study, Bilge Hacisalihoglu explains how the total extraction of coal, natural gas and oil in the whole of Turkey only amounted to 3% of the total consumption in 2005.<sup>135</sup>

In conclusion, one could observe that as illustrated in this chapter, there is an existing disparity between the Kurdish regions of Turkey and the rest of the country in terms of economic development. This chapter gives also definition to the different initiatives that the AKP has taken since its rise to power in 2002 in order to address this issue. The increased extraction of minerals in the region, as well as the GAP project have been strongly revived under Erdogan's leadership. However, this does not imply that other socio-economic indicators have improved in levels that match the investment.

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<sup>133</sup> Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Investment Support and Promotion Agency (2014), "Turkey's Mining Industry", Accessed June 29, 2016.

<sup>134</sup> Mustafa Balat (2008) "Energy Consumption and Economic Growth in Turkey during the Past Two Decades," accessed June 29, 2016, <http://www.sciencedirect.com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/science/article/pii/S0301421507003746>.

<sup>135</sup> Bilge Hacisalihoglu, "Turkey's Natural Gas Policy," *Energy Policy* 36, no. 6 (June 2008): 1867–72, doi:10.1016/j.enpol.2008.02.001.

Increased government investment and expenditure in the region has not brought forward an increase in private investment in the South-East. These economically deprived areas may feel the need for an increase in private employment and social mobility. An image of lower income in these areas when compared to the rest of Turkey was also presented. This factor coupled with the increased mobility to other Turkish cities of the Kurdish population in search of better economic conditions may lead to further frustrations amongst the populations of the region.

Levels of literacy and education in Kurdish populated areas of Turkey indicate the authority's lack of ability to implement effective policies for education. In return such low levels of education will also have an effect on the private investment sector which may not see the ability to succeed in investing in the region due to the inexistence of skilled labor.

Hence one could conclude that theory as presented by Ted Gurr is likely to be plausible. Progressive deprivation is the most likely to be taking place with the Kurdish population in the region. The region has seen a dramatic improvement in the first decade of Turkish administration in terms of infrastructure and investment, however governmental ability to induce further improvement in the region seem to have reached its limit. With lack of private investment and instability in the region, it is highly unlikely that this economic dynamic will change anytime soon. According to Gurr this can induce a case of social change or revolution which generally take shape in the form of political violence.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*.

As presented also by Smith et al, for political violence to take place, people must realize that they are unable to improve their situation. This implies that they cannot blame themselves for their economic deficiencies. One must realize that the PKK's request for autonomy of the region may be seen by the local populations of the South-East as the solution for the lack of governmental ability to recover from the current economic slowdown of the region. As illustrated by Smith et al, the population in the Kurdish region is able to perceive that the rest of the country may be doing well economically, however their region seems to be left out from all the prosperity which other regions may enjoy. This criticism to the government may become accepted by the majority of the Kurdish population in the region hence the result of collective action may come to no surprise to the author.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Smith et al., "Relative Deprivation A Theoretical and Meta-Analytic Review."

## **CHAPTER SIX – SYNTHESIS: GREED OR GRIEVANCE?**

With the evidence presented in the previous two chapters on the economic reality of the Kurdish region in Turkey, as well as the nationalistic sentiment present in South-Eastern Turkey, in this chapter one will find a synthesis to the research question posed through the greed or grievance theory as illustrated by Paul Collier. Through this approach one will find that the relation between the relative deprivation model as presented by Gurr, as well as the greed or grievance theory as presented by Collier is clear and highly valid.

Having established that the Kurds in Turkey are indeed an ethnic group with a distinct nationalistic sentiment, one can see how the variable of economics presented in the previous play out in terms of how grievance works, and in turn it also shows how this sentiment of grievance gives rise to violence. Furthermore, in this chapter a presentation of proof of the relevance of the grievance theory is given in order to understand further how the action taken by the PKK in Turkey is in fact one of grievance and prove that the struggle the Kurds have set up against the state is not one of greed. With the AKP working hard in the areas of development for the South-East one would expect the violence to cease or decrease drastically, which in reality is not the case.

## **6.1 The Greed or Grievance Approach**

In the theoretical section of this thesis we have explored how the relative deprivation model implies that there might be perceived differences between what a group of people ‘want’ and what they really ‘have’ in terms of socio-economics in a particular state. Further to this we have established in the fourth chapter that the Kurds are indeed a national group with particular differences from the ethnic Turks. In order to further understand the rise of the PKK, one could apply Collier’s theory and understand further how grievances play a role to the sentiment towards the AKP today and the Turkish government over time. Defining the economic discrepancies and the socio-economic differences in the South-East help in creating a clearer picture of what is going on inside Turkey. Also the political unrest environment created under the AKP helps to shed more light on Paul Collier’s framework.

In the two chapters explored previously, one can notice the elements of discrimination which are existent through the social inequalities in Turkey. These elements could be both of political nature as well as of economic nature. Other elements of discrimination are existent, however for the purpose of this paper were not explored such as the religious element and the structural element. All of these elements and variables constitute in grievance and frustration. The most prominent variables explored in this paper were the economic, political, educational and linguistic elements which all together, when explored in Gurr’s theory, constitute in generating a certain level of discontent, grievance, frustration and resentment amongst the members of the Kurdish ethnic group. As one could explore in Gurr’s relative deprivation theory, all these

feelings develop into a motivating force in the shape of legitimate ethnic mobilization, which in the case explored in this paper may appear to be a form of plea for secessionism in the shape of autonomy for the South-Eastern region or an independent Kurdish state.

The exploration of the economic dynamic of the conflict is imperative since for authors Regan and Norton, when making reference to Collier's theory, the economic variables of mass mobilization prospect suggests that civil war is likely to be ignited by self-interested behavior and internal rationality. For the authors such rebels are generally motivated by greed rather than grievance.<sup>138</sup> However in this paper, we have not found evidence where the PKK in this scenario is motivated by greed. In the South-Eastern region of Turkey one would find no substantial commodities such as oil, gas or minerals in substantial quantities which would generate enough income to sustain the needs of the secessionist movements. Various reports claim that most of the funding of the PKK comes from other criminal activities such as drug trafficking, and a substantial reliance on funds coming from Kurdish diaspora spread around Europe.<sup>139</sup>

In terms of the evidence as presented in this paper, authors Regan and Norton would claim that the concept of rebellion in terms of the PKK as a result of severe deprivation might be misleading. However, an economic model such as that presented by Collier would not deny that grievance plays a role in explaining civil conflict. As the authors explain even further, in such a case as that of the Kurdish question in Turkey, rebel organizations that are able to mobilize troops and sustain a war effort are those that

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<sup>138</sup> Patrick M. Regan and Daniel Norton, "Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 3 (2005): 319–36.

<sup>139</sup> LT Mehmet Asim Kanmaz, *Turkey's Fight to Shut Off the Flow of PKK Finances*, Global ECCO, <https://globalecco.org/353>.

are and remain economically viable. Without resources, even the most extreme grievances will be insufficient to generate civil unrest. When operationalized in terms of export commodities, according to the authors, the evidence seems to support the economic basis of civil violence.<sup>140</sup> However as explained earlier, evidence presented emphasizes that this is not the case in Turkey.

In their paper the authors also emphasize the:

*“...difference between relative deprivation and inequality as an explanation for civil upheaval may seem subtle at first, but the underlying causal mechanisms are profoundly different. In the former instance, the perceived deprivation is a psychological process in which judgment is made relative to one's own expectations. The aggregation of these individual perceptions and frustrations leads to a social movement intent on violent political change. The mechanisms of inequality work differently. Rather than an individual judging his or her situation relative to his or her own expectations and achievements, inequality is judged relative to others within society. Both explanations are consistent with each other, and both are likely to be evident concurrently. But those who argue for inequality as the causal mechanism are implicitly positing that issues of social and economic justice generate the motives behind armed opposition movements.”<sup>141</sup>*

Such a statement implies that the argument built in this paper is very valid in terms of grievance. Inequalities in terms of the injustices and socio-economic differences between Kurds and ethnic Turks in Turkey is the key driver to mass mobilization. This indeed supports the claim that Kurdish requests for succession are derived from the continuous denial of equality in Kurdish society being the political structure or the economic structure.

Tezcur also argues that frustration or discontent with the state's restrictions on Kurdish cultural and political rights and the socio-economic disadvantages, might have

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<sup>140</sup> Regan and Norton, “Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars.”

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

promoted ethnic and political awareness among Kurds hence the request for further political participation in Turkey's parliament through political parties such as the HDP. With the continuous denial of such request, increased resentment amongst Kurds is more likely to occur. As Paul Collier's grievance approach also asserts, this situation is rather conducive to the rise of ethno nationalist tendencies. Thus, if the grievance hypothesis is correct, one might expect that Kurds who live in the South-East region who are targeted by discrimination should be more likely to support autonomy or independence.<sup>142</sup>

The main source of grievance that this paper tried to approach were the differences in socio-economics between groups within the same states. As Gurr illustrates in his theory, the rise of conflict occurs when there is the presence of socio-economic differences together with suppression of particular political parties, together also with a decline to a group's status. For Gurr all these lead to relative deprivation which as a result also leads to aggression. One could easily claim that aggression as seen in Turkey in the struggle between the state and the PKK is not an issue of learnt violence, since there have been ceasefires for long periods of time which were broken mostly by particular events. As presented in the previous chapter on economics of South-Eastern Turkey, when one compares the economies of the South-East together with the economies of Western Turkey, where most ethnic Turks live, one can easily realize the differences in comparison and understand the impetus to violence even more.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Güneş Murat Tezcür, "When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 6 (2010): 775–89.

<sup>143</sup> Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*. (Pg. 29-31)

On the other hand, economics are not the only indicators of violence. One could find instances such as the conflict in Nigeria in the 1960's where the Igbo tribe attempted to succeed from the rest of Nigeria.<sup>144</sup> Alternatively, Gurr himself explains how many states such as Quebec or the Spanish Basques were all claiming succession even though they had economic prosperity and a degree of limited autonomy. These states, according to Gurr, still sought succession in the 1980s.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, Hale claims that economic prosperity may induce further a will of separatism rather than suppress it. The author presents how in the former Soviet context, the richer states other than the poorest pushed forward for independence the most. The author describes that well off ethnic regions have largely more fears and less to gain from remaining part of the larger state than other poorer regions do.<sup>146</sup>

However, one could also see how the AKP, through the revival of the GAP project and other initiatives in the South-East of Turkey are trying to approach the Kurdish problem differently through employing a larger emphasis on the socio-economic disparities that currently exist between the two ethnic groups within the Turkish state. One could also see how other areas are being addressed such as education and recognition. As Sarigil points out, many Turkish administrations, including the AKP in its early years, many times blatantly refused to recognize the Kurdish question and only pointed out at the socio-economic differences between the regions. Many times the

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<sup>144</sup> John R. Wood, "Secession: A Comparative Analytical Framework," *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 14, no. 1 (1981): 107–34.

<sup>145</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace, 1993). (Pg.82)

<sup>146</sup> Henry E. Hale, "The Parade of Sovereignties: Testing Theories of Secession in the Soviet Setting," *British Journal of Political Science* 30, no. 1 (2000): 31–56.

rhetoric used for the Kurdish question depicts the conflict as a weapon neighboring states of Turkey would use to destabilize and divide the Turkish state.<sup>147</sup>

In conclusion, one could observe how the Turkish state's claims in linking separatism to socio-economic deficiencies in the South-Eastern region is proof to the validity of this paper. With the huge effort that the AKP has put in trying to improve the South-Eastern situation in terms of economy, and all the socio-economic variables as explored in this paper, one could observe how the issues of Grievance as explored by Collier were trying to be addressed by the Turkish state to further reduce the impetus to violence.

Thus, the legitimacy of this paper in trying to address the Kurdish question from an economic perspective by presenting the Socio-Economic development of the Kurds over a period of time, with relation to Nationalistic creeds of the Kurds themselves in Turkey, is valid. One could say that the grievance approach to the Kurdish question is the most valid argument due to the lack of natural resources, as well as the need for the Turkish state to support the region economically due to the lack of will from private investors to reach out for the region. Such evidence does not really build an argument and a case for greed.

Although there is evidence of illicit activity by Kurds in order to finance their activities, one could not really say that this financing is enough for the region to survive and develop. Groups such as the PKK, as explored in this paper, are highly dependent on

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<sup>147</sup> Zeki Sarigil, "Curbing Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism in Turkey: An Empirical Assessment of pro-Islamic and Socio-Economic Approaches," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33, no. 3 (March 1, 2010): 533–53, doi:10.1080/01419870903118114.

the legitimacy they receive from their ethnic group. Thus losing support from their Kurdish national group would make the survival of the separatist group, PKK, highly problematic and difficult. A proof to this dependency on the ethnic group, as Pusane claims, is the ability of the Turkish state to crush any military opposition by the PKK, however the state to date seems to have lost the battle in crushing the Kurdish insurgency in the South-Eastern region<sup>148</sup>, where many attacks on government and authority buildings take place, as well as in Western Turkey<sup>149</sup>, where many attacks such as those recently witnessed in Ankara have left hundreds of victims.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> "Timeline: PKK Attacks in Turkey - Al Jazeera English," accessed July 9, 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2011/10/20111019164441520246.html>.

<sup>149</sup> "A List of Deadly Attacks in Turkey over the Past Year," *The Independent*, February 17, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/a-timeline-of-bomb-attacks-in-turkey-between-2015-2016-a6879841.html>.

<sup>150</sup> Pusane, "Turkey's Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency."

## CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSION

For sure, one can say that Turkey is one of the few countries in the world which suffers from terrorism on multiple fronts. As the rhetoric on Turkish media goes, Turkey suffers a war on terror on three fronts, the PKK, Da'esh and the newly listed 'terrorist' organization called FETO or Fethullah Gulen Terrorist Organization.<sup>151</sup> The latter implicated in the recent military coup attempt of 15 July 2016. Having said this, Turkey is probably one of the countries in the world which suffers the highest number of separatist terrorist incidents. The fight against terrorism is one of the main priorities of the Turkish administration and features high on the agenda of Turkish media, which is mostly state owned. This is also an ongoing concern of Turkish politics.

Up until the attempted coup of 15 July 2016, the main priority of the AKP seemed to be the fight against the PKK. However, in the last weeks, one could see how these priorities have shifted with the crackdown on Fetullah Gulen's affiliates taking the central priority on the AKP terrorist list. Further research in the future would for sure see a change in dynamics following the attempted coup of 15 July with regards to the Kurdish question. With regard to these events, one has still to wait and see how the relationship between the AKP and the PKK will work out, with two primary options available – the

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<sup>151</sup> "President Erdoğan: FETÖ Same as PKK, DAESH, Act Jointly," *DailySabah*, accessed August 6, 2016, <http://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2016/08/01/president-erdogan-feto-same-as-pkk-daesh-act-jointly>.

PKK might see an opportunity of state weakness, hence try to induce further damage to the AKP with an increase of attacks or else, the AKP might be willing to cut out a deal with the Kurds in order to be able to concentrate further on its crackdown on FETO.<sup>152</sup>

Everything seems possible and there already seems to be a small shift in momentum towards the Kurdish question. Regions in the South-East of Turkey are getting a change in their Turkish names to more Kurdish names to the favor of the Kurdish majority living in the area.<sup>153</sup> Also one could notice a more aggressive AKP rhetoric towards the PKK over the latter's local terror in the state's print media.<sup>154</sup>

With regards to the research question posed in this paper, to date, economic deprivation and poverty in south-eastern Turkey continues to prevail when compared to western Turkey. This issue can be seen as one of the important reasons that are inducing terrorism in Turkey, since many join the PKK in south-east Turkey due to the lack of economic opportunity such as employment. Also it is clear that unlike previous administrations, the AKP has tried hard to improve economic conditions in the Kurdish region of Turkey. However, the nationalistic element, as explored in this paper, leaves little room for peace in Turkey without a degree for autonomy for the Kurdish region.

With separatist incidents occurring very often in the Kurdish region, coupled together with a high degree of political unrest in the region, it is highly unlikely for economic prosperity in the region to occur. Natural resources may be the solution in

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<sup>152</sup> "Fetullah Gulen at Centre of Coup, Says Turkish Premier," *Trend.Az*, August 1, 2016, <http://en.trend.az/world/turkey/2564856.html>.

<sup>153</sup> "Turkey to Move Provincial Capitals in Mainly Kurdish Region | World | Reuters," accessed August 6, 2016, <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKCN10D1JZ>.

<sup>154</sup> "Enough Is Enough with Local and Foreign Enablers of PKK Terror," *DailySabah*, accessed August 19, 2016, <http://www.dailysabah.com/editorial/2016/08/18/enough-is-enough-with-local-and-foreign-enablers-of-pkk-terror>.

order for the Kurds to be able to boost their regional economy; however, this does not seem to be the main reason for which the PKK and the AKP are at war.

In this thesis, an exploration of the possibility for a causal relationship between AKP politics in the South-Eastern region of the country and the nationalistic sentiment of the Kurds with relation to their economic situation. In this research, no causal relationship has been found between the economics of the region and the impetus to violence. However, the nationalistic sentiment and the will for the Kurds to succeed in obtaining their own state and international recognition seem to prevail. In this paper, we have also observed how the AKP made tremendous investments in improving the economic situation of the South-Eastern region however such economic improvements did not really bring peace to the region or changed any of the nationalistic requests that existed prior to these investments.

Thus, one can easily conclude that economic policy in the South-Eastern region of Turkey is not having the desired governmental and national effect of reducing terrorist incidents. A new momentum in designing policy is needed. The AKP must realize that the creed of Kurds which existed for decades, and claimed the lives of thousands, probably will not disappear even if the region is economically equal to the West of the country. The policy must be directed at more national liberties and more recognition of the Kurds themselves. A degree of autonomy in the Kurdish region is probably the main starting point that the AKP or future administrations have to start working on in the future to be able to secure peace and prosperity for the South-Eastern region of the country.

As synthesized and emphasized in this research, one can observe how the role of nationalistic sentiment plays out in the Kurdish question in Turkey. The high expectations of the Kurdish population in obtaining their own territory within the Republic of Turkey or independently, promote further violence. Greed issues don't seem to be the most relevant since such activities are not able to support themselves in a future autonomous or independent Kurdish region. However, the ethnic minority's will to unite under its own flag and anthem seems to be the most plausible hunch in this research.

In future studies, there are other elements which one should also take into consideration when analyzing the Kurdish issues. Elements such as religiosity should be explored in future research. The Kurds are regarded in Turkey to be a more conservative group<sup>155</sup> within the country, observing fairly more than the average Turk the laws of Islam. With the secularization of the state, under the founder of the Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, to the rise of the AKP, which is by many considered as a more Islamic conservative party, one could analyze in the future how this dynamic of religiosity affects the conflict over autonomy of the Kurdish region.<sup>156</sup> Such elements such as religion for sure can be observed in terms of greed or grievance in future studies. Exploring these variables in future research will continue to emphasize the differences between the two parties and the need to find common ground and a solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey, which have featured local, and at times international, agendas for decades.

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<sup>155</sup> Soner Cagaptay, "Turkey Is in Serious Trouble," *The Atlantic*, October 5, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/turkey-isis-russia-pkk/408988/>.

<sup>156</sup> "Turkey - The New model?," November 30, 2001.

Other geo-political issues also could be addressed in the future. The fight of the different Kurdish forces, in Syria and Iraq respectively, to recover territory lost to Da'esh will surely not go unnoticed. The United States seem to support the Syrian Kurdish force, the PYD, in its fight against Da'esh through air strikes and weaponry.<sup>157</sup> US aid to the Kurds in Syria did not go down well with the Turkish government<sup>158</sup> since there seems to be the fear that these weapons and the momentum generated in Syria amongst the Kurds will eventually turn on Turkey once a settlement is reached. With all the efforts in Syria, the Kurds seem to control a considerable amount of territory bordering Turkey which in the future may transcend into a Kurdish autonomous region within Syria. Such action will surely provoke reaction with the Kurds in Turkey unless a settlement between the AKP and the PKK is reached prior to the settlement in Syria.

Also, following a move to mend ties with its neighbors, such as Russia and Israel,<sup>159</sup> Turkey might also be seeking different international allies which do not criticize the way the Kurds are treated in Turkey. With constant pressure from the European Union to reach an agreement with the Kurds, Turkey seems to be drifting away from the drive of prospective membership of the European Union. This process has been going on for decades and seems to hit one barrier after the other. Other pending issues, apart from the Kurdish question, such as the recognition of the Armenian genocide, and the Cyprus question are stalling the process for Turkey to enter the EU. Following the failed coup of

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<sup>157</sup> "ANALYSIS: Kurds Welcome US Support, but Want More Say on Syria's Future," *Middle East Eye*, accessed August 6, 2016, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/kurds-syria-us-general-292550977>.

<sup>158</sup> "Ankara Slams US Troops Wearing YPG Insignia, Says Loses Confidence in Ally," *DailySabah*, accessed August 6, 2016, <http://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2016/05/27/ankara-slams-us-troops-wearing-ypg-insignia-says-loses-confidence-in-ally>.

<sup>159</sup> "Turkey Mends Fences with Israel, Russia in Foreign Policy Reset," *Reuters*, June 27, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-israel-russia-idUSKCN0ZD29U>.

15 July 2016, the Turkey-EU relation seem to have hit once more a new barrier, with President Erdogan introducing a state of emergency which enables him to gain more power in parliament.<sup>160</sup> At this stage Erdogan is not observing the rule of law and fundamental human rights, which are a major requirement in maintaining momentum in Turkey's EU application. Future research could also analyze how Turkey's EU application might have effected developments in the Kurdish question. Future developments of the issue will shed more light on Turkey-EU relations as well as the Kurdish question at this day and age.

In conclusion, one could say that the Kurdish question will continue to develop further. As explored in this paper, the issue of Nationalism must be explored even further by policy makers in Turkey in order to arrive to a prospective settlement with the PKK. Recent major events, such as those of the failed coup of 15 July 2016, have shed more doubt on the way forward in the Kurdish issue, however the issue remains, hence the AKP will surely need to dedicate some of its resources to tackle the issue in parallel with other state issues. Future research can be used to shed more light on the Kurdish questions from other perspectives in order to compile a set of dynamics which would ensure a stable peace settlement for the benefit of all parties.

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<sup>160</sup> "Crunch Time in the EU-Turkey Relationship," *Carnegie Europe*, accessed August 6, 2016, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=63690>.

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