

1989-2014 YILLARI ARASINDA TÜRK SİYASAL HAYATI'NDA ETNİK PARTİLER VE DIŞ POLİTİKAYA ETKİLERİ

ÖZ

1990'dan beri kamuoyunda “Kürtlerin Partisi” olarak nitelendirilen partiler seçimlere katılmışlardır. Bu partilerin siyasi alandaki mevcudiyetleri sürekli olarak yasa dışı terör örgütü PKK ile olan ilişkileri üzerinden yorumlanmış, bu durum gerek yürütme gerekse yargı ile olan ilişkilerinde de belirleyici olmuştur. Siyasi alanın bir parçası olarak, bu partilerin gerek eylemleri gerekse 1990'lardan günümüze kadar hükümetlerle olan ilişkilerinin, Türk dış politikasına olan etkisi, üzerinde durulması gereken bir konudur. Makale ilk olarak, “etnik parti” kavramının Türkiye'de “Kürtlerin Partisi” olarak nitelendirilen siyasi partilerin durumlarına nasıl uygulanabileceği üzerinde durmaktadır. Etnik partinin tanımı hakkında oldukça zengin bir literatür bulunmakla birlikte bu çalışmada partilerin seçim performanslarının bu konuda önemli bir belirleyici olduğu varsayımından yola çıkmıştır. Ardından bu partilerin siyasi alanda kendilerini göstermesi sonucunda yaşanan gelişmelerin başta Avrupa Birliği ilişkileri olmak üzere Türk dış politikasına olan etkisi üzerinde durulmuştur. Günümüzde Türkiye'nin Kürt sorununun gerek içte gerekse dışta olan gelişmelerin neticesinde devam ettiği düşünülecek olduğunda, 1990'lı yıllarda yaşanan sürecin, parti siyaseti perspektifinden ele alınmasının literature önemli bir katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir..

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etnik Parti, Türk Siyasal Hayatı, Türk Dış Politikası

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İ. ERDİ SOMUNCUOĞLU
e.somuncuoglu@gmail.com
Orcid: 0000- 0002-1539-2719

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ETHNIC PARTIES IN TURKISH POLITICAL LIFE BETWEEN 1989 AND 2014 AND THEIR IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY

ABSTRACT

Since 1990, the parties that have been described as Kurdish or Pro-Kurdish political parties have participated in the elections. The political presence of these parties has always been interpreted through their relations with the illegal terrorist organization PKK, which has been decisive in their relations with both the executive and the judiciary. Decisively, as a part of the political sphere, the impact of these parties' actions and their relations with governments from the 1990s to the present day on Turkish Foreign Policy is a matter that needs to be addressed. Firstly, this article tackles with the concept of ethnic party and its possible applicability for the cases of "Party of the Kurds" in Turkey. Although there is a prosperous literature on the definition of the ethnic party, this study assumes that the election performance of the parties is an important determinant. Secondly, the effects of these developments on Turkish Foreign Policy, especially on the relationship with European Union will be analyzed. Even today, Kurdish Question is continuing due to the external and internal factors in the region. Therefore, the analysis of political developments in the 1990's from the party politics perspective, is expected to make a significant contribution to the literature of this Question for the prospective studies.

Keywords: Ethnic party, Turkish Political Life, Turkish Foreign Policy

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İ. ERDİ SOMUNCUOĞLU
e.somuncuoglu@gmail.com
Orcid: 0000- 0002-1539-2719

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INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty years, although there was an interest in Turkey's Kurdish issue and carrying this issue to the international level, the options of external politics and the concerns that Kurds might have as an independent actor has been failed to notice. This silence of the Kurdish movement in academic literature is related to the fact that hegemonic power pursues strategies within the framework of foreign policy practices, which are very sharply defined in its relationship with the Kurds. Because the official foreign policy traditionally applied in Turkey, where Kurds have been assimilated into the Turkish identity of the ethnic and cultural diversity serves as a normalizing function of local hegemonic order (Balçı,2013). This hegemonic discourse of the state has been consistently reproduced through practical repetitions and discourses of final foreign policy choices. In the reproduction of hegemonic discourse through the oral expression of foreign policy, the Kurds as a different ethnic entity were given no place; furthermore, Kurds have been condemned to silence in the international arena by both official foreign policies and academic texts.

THE CONCEPT OF ETHNIC PARTY

"The first use of ethnicity in 1953 is attributed to American sociologist David Riesman" (Yıldız 2001: as cited in Yanık 2013: 229). Although "ethnic" was first used as a concept in 1953, the concept is especially functional in terms of the validity of the nation-state formulation. Due to its cultural and social characteristics, "the concept of ethnicity" is at the forefront of the political formation of a nation. Once a certain ethnicity is determined, then a nation conceptualization and political formulation suitable for this ethnicity are shaped.

Although the concept of "ethnic" attributed a lot of interest in the political literature, there is no consensus on the definition of this term. The most important conceptual approaches to the concept of ethnicity are primordialism, instrumentalism and ethno-symbolism. For primordialism scholars, ethnicity is 'deeply ingrained in human history and experience' (Wolff 2006, 33). Therefore, ethnic bonds are primordial, unlike other bonds, they have an overpowering non-rational, emotional quality. Instrumentalists, on the other hand, argues that ethnic bonds are related to political and social projects which are instrumentally mobilized as a means to gain material goals (Anderson 1991: Gellner 2006). Ethno-symbolist approach aims at finding a trace between instrumentalism and primordialism by both accepting the fact that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, as instrumentalist do, while stressing on the "ethnic origins" of modern nations (Smith 2001; 122). In his influential study however, Özkırmılı argues that primordialism and ethno-symbolism can be listed under the umbrella branch "essentialism" (Özkırmılı; 2000: 15).

As its name implies, ethnic party consists of two concepts: ethnicity and political party. The study of political parties has long been at the center of political science discipline. Yet, ethnicity, and more generally nationalism, is relatively recent phenomena and started to be analyzed in the last quarter of the 20th century (Özkırmılı; 2000: 15). With the end of the Cold War, many ethnic conflicts occurred around the world, which caused an increase in the study of nationalism/ethnicity. The study of ethnic party, parallel to the analysis of ethnicity, thus, entered to the literature in the last twenty years.

Classification of a Political Party

Duverger divides political parties into two: cadre parties and mass parties. A mass party is an association that has a flexible framework of membership and its income is obtained by the members of the party. A cadre party, on the other hand, has stricter membership policies and its income is acquired from a limited number of resources (Duverger; 1950: 107). Tarık Zafer

Tunaya makes a similar classification, only with an extension. To mass/cadre classification, Tunaya adds homogenous/heterogeneous parties in terms of member profiles, and parties that are against the order of the state (Tunaya; 1984: 15-27).

Ethnic party concept, on the other hand, entered into political party classification with Donald Horowitz's classification. Horowitz (1985, 229-301) combined ethnic politics with political party classification and hence, designed three types of parties: ethnic parties, multi-ethnic parties and non-ethnic parties. Accordingly, an ethnic party is a political party which gets its support from a particular ethnic group and designs its policies according to the interest of this specific group. Multiethnic parties design a political strategy where the demands of all ethnic groups are taken into consideration. There is not any exclusion based on one single ethnicity. Non-ethnic parties, on the other hand, are the political parties which do not determine their political agenda according to ethnic demands but do politics on nation-wide.

However, for Horowitz a self-design of the party is not adequate to understand the nature of ethnic parties. In his formulation of ethnic party, the reaction of the electorate is also an important factor. If a political party claims itself as a multiethnic party but receive intensive support from only one ethnic group, that party should be considered not as a multiethnic party, but as an ethnic party (Horowitz 1985, p.299).

The additional dimension of voters' reaction to classification was challenged by Chandra (2005). According to Chandra, the criterion of being an ethnic party is not the distribution of support, but the party's political strategy and its message given to voters (Chandra, 2005: 3-4). If a political party's political activity, program and election manifestation include the demands of an ethnic group and aims to serve the interests of this specific group, that party could be defined as an ethnic party. For Chandra, Horowitz's electoral support does not take into consideration how this support is obtained. Therefore, classifying ethnic parties according to their discourses rather than public support helps to explain how ethnic parties attract such support from the targeted ethnic group (Chandra, 2005: 3-4). For Sonia Alonso as well, party programs and discourses are more important to consider whether a party is an ethnic party or not. (Alonso, 2005: 1). Accordingly, she delineates an ethnic party as a political party the political agenda of which envisages an independent statehood for the ethnic group it claims to represent. On the other hand, ethnic party formulation can be constructed on the identity of party members and the leaders. Van Cott describes ethnic party as a party whose leaders and members identify themselves as belonging to a non-dominant ethnic group (Van Cott; 2005: 3).

The Concept of Ethnic Party and the Pro-Kurdish Parties in Turkey

The fact that there have been six pro-Kurdish parties since 1990, should not misguide one to think that there are different Kurdish political actors who have founded different parties. Rather, all those six parties represent the same ideology and their cadre is almost the same. They needed to work under different party names because all of them were banned by the Constitutional Court. Thus, HEP, DEP, HADEP, DEHAP, DTP, BDP and HDP could be considered as the same party. Therefore, in this part, the name BDP will be used to represent all the Kurdish parties that appeared between 1990 and 2014, the year when BDP disbanded and political cadre joined to HDP. Continuity between aforementioned parties is not limited to the political cadre but party program. A brief look over the party programs of HEP, HADEP and DTP shows that "terrorism", "democracy" and "regional inequality" are fundamental issues of Turkey. Nevertheless, how political parties perceives these issues are critical and salient. For instance, "terrorism" did not used for the illegal and terrorist activities of PKK (which was never mentioned in any of these documents) but for the activities of the Turkish government to

prevent terrorism (HEP Program 1990, HADEP Program 1994, DEHAP Program 2003, DTP Program 2005). Party Program of HEP and HADEP start with the criticism of Turkish government in Kurdish Question and argues that “state terrorism” were used as repressive apparatus to oppress minority groups, in other words Kurds (HEP Parti Programı; 19, HADEP Parti Programı; 3-4). Party programs of DEHAP and DTP have less radical notion due to the important changes in Turkish political life. In 1999, Turkey was officially accepted as a “nominee” for the EU Membership. Turkey had several obligations in order to be accepted as a member country. “Democratization” was one of the important subjects. Therefore, DEHAP Party Program touched upon the abolishment of “Anti-terrorism Law” both as an apparatus for “state oppression” and an obstacle to the EU Membership due to its anti-democratic content (DEHAP Programı 2003; 32). On the other hand, DTP adopted a new terminology, “urgent need for the democratic transformation of Turkey”, in order to address social and political problems of Turkey (DTP Programı 2005; 17). Although DTP and DEHAP had relatively less critical tone towards Turkish government, they continued to not address the illegal activities of the PKK.

According to ethnic party definitions and characteristics presented before, to what extent the BDP is an ethnic party? For Horowitz the ethnic support base of the party is key to define a political party as ethnic party. BDP has been receiving the majority of its support from the regions which are inhabited by Kurdish people. For instance, in 2011 elections 32 out of 36 deputies in BDP’s list were elected from Eastern and Southeastern regions where Kurdish population constitute the majority. This is the general picture that can be seen in all the elections. Therefore, it is justifiable to say that BDP is an ethnic party in terms of Horowitz’s classification.

The evaluation of an ethnic party can be based on party’s political strategy and message offered to voters. To assess whether BDP is an ethnic party or not, then BDP’s party program should be analyzed. The program consists of three main parts: *Political Principles*, *Economic Policies* and *Social Policies*. In the section of *Political Principles*, Kurdish Question is defined as one of the most fundamental problems in Turkey. In the *Economic Policies*, economic gloom in the Kurdish regions and inequalities between Kurdish regions and other regions of the country are emphasized. At this point, BDP expresses that party’s one of the most important goal is to remove regional inequalities. In the *Social Policies*, the emphasis is made to education in mother tongue and spread of primary education to all over the country (BDP Party Program, 2014).

Thus, it could be assumed that the party’s program gives priority to the demands of Kurdish population living in Turkey. In that sense, according to Chandra’s classification BDP is an ethnic party. The party members’ and leaders’ identity is also important in the formulation of ethnic party. When the identity of BDP members are looked at, both founders and executives of BDP were predominantly Kurdish. Beside party’s co-leaders Gülten Kışanak and Selahattin Demirtaş, almost all the members were born in the Kurdish region and know Kurdish. Most of BDP deputies, declare Kurdish as one of the languages they can speak. Therefore, BDP can still be considered as an ethnic party according to the Van Cott’s classification.

Hence, all the different perspectives of ethnic party show that BDP is an ethnic party. Next part analyzes the political performance of this Kurdish ethnic party in Turkey. This will be done by analyzing the election results and BDP’s performance in those elections. Such an investigation will also show the potential of electorate support for a strictly Kurdish party in Turkey.

The Election Performances of Pro-Kurdish Parties in Turkey

The roots of the Kurdish political movement goes back to 1989, when seven SHP (Social Democrat Populist Party) parliament members were dismissed from the party because of attending International Kurdish Conference which was held in Paris by Kurdish Institute (Gurbey 1996: 26). Following this event, on 7th June 1990, those seven expelled members and three other SHP members united and formed the first Kurdish ethnic party HEP (People's Labour Party). After one year of its establishment, HEP made an alliance with the SHP in the general elections and managed to send 22 MPs to the parliament (Satana 2011: 7).

However, Diyarbakir deputy Leyla Zana's taking her oath in Kurdish in the opening of the Assembly increased the political pressure and paved the way to the closure of HEP in 1993 (Bildirici 2008: 53). HEP's predecessor DEP (Democracy Party) had limited chance for political maneuver as well, because of the increasing tension between the PKK and the state. Seven deputies' immunities were waived, and they were arrested (Muller 1996: 188). In the following years, the Kurdish ethnic parties were banned by the Constitutional Court for being a 'threat to the integrity of the state and the unity of the nation.' An analysis of the elections in the last twenty years indicates that Kurdish ethnic parties have been getting around %4 and %6 of total votes. In 2014 local elections, they won 11 provinces' municipalities. What is more, in each election, the party increases its own performance. Therefore, it can be assumed that their influence in the Turkish politics has been increasing slightly. Below is the analysis of Kurdish ethnic parties vote shares in the elections.

1995 General Elections

DEP which was formed after the banning of HEP, boycotted the local elections on December 1994 (Gunes 2012: 210). After its closure, HADEP (The Democrat Party of People) was formed and they participated to the general elections that occurred on 24th December 1995. The party only got %4.2 of the votes and could not be represented in the Assembly because of %10 threshold (Ergil 2000:129). Even though the party was successful in the southeast region where the Kurdish people were the majority, it was not supported in the West, including in the cities where there were considerable number of Kurdish immigrants.

General and Local Elections in 1999

As a result of HADEP's boycott of 1994 local elections, and the inability to pass the threshold in 1995, the Kurdish party had been represented neither in local nor in national levels since 1992. Despite this fact, the party's performance in local and general elections were promising. In the local elections HADEP won 38 municipalities including the major cities in the southeast region like Diyarbakir and Mardin. In general elections, the party could not pass the threshold again but increased its votes from 1.171.623 to 1.482.196 and got the %4.8 at the polls as a result of decrease in the popularity of pro-religious party of FP (Sayarı and Esmer, 2002)

In 1999 local elections, Kurdish ethnic parties, for the first time, had the opportunity to touch upon the local politics in the region. Until pro-Kurdish parties managed to get into the parliament with independent candidate strategy in order to get over %10 thresholds, local governance became an important source of self-governance for the Kurdish political movement.

2002 General Elections

HADEP was once again prosecuted by the Constitutional Court and before the Court's decision the members of the party formed DEHAP (Democratic People's Party). For the first time since 1990, the Kurdish party participated into an election in a peaceful atmosphere. The leader of

the PKK had been captured in 1999 and the organization had declared unilateral ceasefire. There had not been a guerilla activity for few years. DEHAP participated in the elections in this relative peace environment and increased its votes to 1,900,680 which referred to %6.23 of total votes (Margulies 2007). Although this could be considered as a success for the DEHAP, the party, was again, could not be represented in the Assembly because of election threshold. This election was important in the sense of indicating that, contrary to common belief, the peaceful environment enhances the political base of Kurdish ethnic party.

2004 Local Elections

Compared to previous election's success, 2004 election results was a disappointment for the Kurdish ethnic party DEHAP, which allied with small centre-left party of SHP. The party got %4.85 of total votes and its number of votes decreased to one and half million.

With the decreasing of the votes, the party lost four provinces' municipalities, namely Siirt, Bingöl, Ağrı and Van. It managed to hold the municipalities of other Kurdish cities of Diyarbakır, Batman, Hakkari, Şırnak and Tunceli. The decreasing of the votes could be linked to the successful regional and national policy of the AK Party (Justice and Democracy Party), which had been in power since 2002. AK Party abolished the Emergency State situation in the South East and Eastern regions as it promised in 2002 elections. Moreover, during the EU candidacy process, it made reforms which were appreciated by the Kurdish electorate. Thus, while AK Party was able to provide changes for the Kurdish electorate, DEHAP did not develop a new strategy for the changing conjuncture of the Kurdish regions.

2007 General Elections

In 2007 elections, the Kurdish ethnic party, this time DTP (Democratic Society Party) implied a different strategy and joined to elections with independent candidates to eliminate the preventive effect of %10 threshold. The 65 candidates ran in the elections in 40 provinces and DTP managed to win 22 deputies in 12 provinces. This was the first time the Kurds were able to be represented in the General Assembly with their own ethnic party. On the other hand, even though DTP managed to send more than 20 deputies to the parliament, vote shares of the pro-Kurdish party decreased by %2. It seems that the ruling party AK Party was again successful in the Kurdish regions. For Polat (2008), the granting of cultural and identity rights and certain democratization reforms in the first period of AK Party were the causes of this success. Meanwhile, the decrease in the DTP is also open to discussion because they participated in the elections as independent candidates not as a party; a fact which probably had influence in electorate's choice. However, it would not be wrong to assume that Kurdish ethnic party's claim that they had been the only representative of the Kurds damaged with the increase of the AK Party votes in the region.

2009 Local Elections

The local election of 2009 was important for Kurdish ethnic party to prove itself as the legitimate representative of the Kurds. In the elections, it got %5,7 of the votes and thus increased its vote share by %2 compared to previous elections. However, the party's increasing votes was not related to its strategies, but rather was related to AK Party's decreasing votes. As Güzeldere notes (2009: 292) 'in the entire southeastern region, the AK Party is still the strongest party, but compared to the outstanding results of %52 it got in 2007 parliamentary elections, the %38.34 marks a significant drop.' The decrease of the AK Party's votes could be linked to few elements: first, it could not back up the reforms it realized in the first years of its power. This situation created despair in Kurdish electorate. Second, the inability to take further steps in Kurdish question resurrected the PKK actions against the state, which decreased the

credibility of the party in the region. Third, the global economic crisis also affected Turkey and it sure had influence in the election results.

2011 General Elections

Similar to 2007 elections, pro-Kurdish party participated in the elections with independent candidates under the *Labor, Democracy and Freedom Bloc*, formed by Kurdish ethnic party BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) and other small leftist parties. The result was a success for the bloc, and by getting %6.64 of the votes, this time the party gained the right to be represented by 36 MPs in the Assembly. The result was a consequence of AK Party's decreasing popularity among the Kurds. The banning of DTP in 2009; the increasing legal pressure to pro-Kurdish people under KCK operations, nationalist discourse of Erdoğan in the election campaign caused a shift on votes from AK Party from BDP in the Kurdish regions.

2014 Local Elections

2014 local election signifies a point of departure for the strategy of Kurdish political movement. For the first time in its history, the movement participated in the elections with two parties: BDP and HDP (Democratic Party of Peoples). The reason of entering into elections with two parties (HDP in the western regions, BDP in south east and eastern region) was to increase the electorate base in the non-Kurdish parts of Turkey as well. With this strategy the two blocs took %6,61 of the votes, which was an important increase compared to previous local and general elections. Yet, it should be mentioned that this increase was seen in the Kurdish regions where BDP was influential. HDP could not be successful in the western parts of the country where the number of Kurdish electorates were limited.

Subsequently, a party could be considered as an ethnic party according to the identity of its support base, or according to its strategies and political program, or according to the identity of its members. From all these perspectives Kurdish parties that were formed between 1990 and the formation of HDP could be considered as an ethnic party. This shows that the ethnic Kurdish parties have a limited vote base in society and its votes change between 4% and %6. Moreover, the vote share of Kurdish ethnic parties after 2000 was mostly dependent on the success of ruling party in South East and East regions. Thus, it could be assumed that Kurdish political movement was not able to increase its vote share since its establishment in Turkish political scene.

Pro-Kurdish Parties and Turkish Foreign Policy

The Kurdish movement in Turkey, which includes legitimate pro-Kurdish parties and civil society organizations with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) as an illegal party, has followed an active relationship with EU institutions and non-state associations in Europe since the end of the Cold War. Despite some fractures and perceptions of betrayal, the Kurdish movement has generally adopted a pro-EU stance in Turkish politics. This part of the study is an attempt to understand the continuity of the Kurdish movement in world politics as well as the breaks and changes experienced through a post-structuralist foreign policy reading.

Indeed, post-structuralism not only provides useful concepts in the foreign policy analysis of the opposing forces, but also provides a better understanding of the foreign policy of hegemonic power by analyzing dissidents. To put it more clearly, the post-structuralist approach examines the discourse and policies of opposing elements in foreign policy and its impact on the functioning of power relations. This will pave the way for a clearer understanding of the existing power relations and the role that foreign policy plays in reinforcing these relations (Foucault, 1982). Post-structuralists prefer to analyze in detail how people and institutions are influenced in different historical periods with a specific way of thinking, which was shaped by

the relations of knowledge and power (Edkins, 2007: 88). Poststructuralist theory benefits from several methods for the understanding and explaining of international relations which are deconstruction and double reading (Ateř & Sayın 2012, 14). Deconstruction and double reading pave the way for scholars to disclose “parasitic relationships” between the opposed terms. For instance, the way of using the “state oppression” without mentioning PKK and its terrorist activities can simply be explained by deconcentrating and double reading the related documents and other speeches made by political parties.

The studies about the pro-EU policies of Kurds are usually based on identity-based explanations. According to this explanation, the dominant Kurdish movement in Turkey's EU membership application is seen as a process is forced to create space and opportunity for the state to make reforms in line with the demands of their identity (Marcus, 2007: 302). However, theories that treat identity as a dominant element in foreign policy analysis have a great weakness in understanding the changes and breaks in foreign policy preferences. Moreover, the realist tradition has the same weaknesses as identity-based explanations in the context of causality; for realist tradition advocates that the international system (neo-realist) and nationalist interests (realist) are independent from foreign policy, while identity-based approaches see identity as the main driver of foreign policy. For these reasons, realist tradition or identity-based approaches fail to understand the ongoing continuity in foreign policy following changes and breaks that occur independently of the existing identity.

After the Cold War, the promotion of democracy and human rights-based speeches were frequently expressed by Western politicians. Contrary to the common belief, the democracy promotion fostered by West, namely U.S. at the time did not play a role in Turkey's transition to multiparty system in the eve of Cold War. U.S. archival documents show that the second President of Turkey, İsmet İnönü took the decision of passing to the multiparty regime totally free from American pressure (Sıvıř, 2019: 382-383). However, Turkey's preference to align with Western bloc after the Second World War was also in line with the principle of Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic, as he stated " reaching contemporary civilization level" in terms of economic and political model. Therefore, the role of the United States in the transition to the multi-party system should not be a factor alone, but as a target since the national independence.

However, after the Cold War, the democracy stress of Western World started to affect Turkey's domestic politics. While American politicians stated that the promotion of democracy was at the center of foreign policy during the Bill Clinton era; with the decisions taken at the Copenhagen Summit of 1993, the EU has made democracy, human rights and the rule of law necessary for the member states. Turkey's application for full membership of the European Community in 1987 and the early 1990s, after the revival of the Customs Union process with the EU, the EC / EU's influence on Turkish politics has increased steadily. But what in this process the European Parliament (EP) resolutions on neither violation of human rights in Turkey nor the other institutions of the European Community's criticisms posed to Turkey in the 1980s, was referring Kurdish origin directly to people's problems. But unlike the 1980s, especially since the beginning of the 1990s, the EP has begun to show an intense interest in the Kurdish problem in Turkey.

The European Parliament has accused Turkey of using extensive force during the Nevrouz celebrations in March 1992 and claimed that the reaction of democratic states towards provocations should be limited to the rule of law. This was followed by the accusations made by the Council of the European Parliamentary Assembly (Europe Parliamentary Assembly, 1992). However, the detention and arrest of parliamentarians of DEP (Democracy Party) put

Turkey to the center of criticisms made by European Union (EU), which were about human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

EU- Turkey tension increased by the lifting of immunity of the DEP members and the closure of the party and this resulted in the freezing of the activities of the EU-Turkish Joint Parliamentary Committee on 28 March 1994. This was interpreted by the Kurds as the conditions created by the EU for candidate countries could be rendered functional in the mobilization of Kurds into Turkish political life. Similarly, determination of Turkish government about not giving any chance to Kurdish mobilization was an opportunity for the Kurdish side, because it meant that they could force Turkey for reforms during the time Turkey applied for the full membership in EU. The interpretation of the EU and the within the Kurdish movement within the framework of a two-way representation as friend and enemy respectively is the main factor in the formation of the pro-EU policy of the Kurdish movement. In addition to this the Customs Union agreement between EP, EU and Turkey was highly affected by the violation in human rights in Turkey. The EP has also warned European Council to take into consideration the trying of Kurdish members of parliament in Turkey's Grand National Assembly, while negotiation the Customs Union agreement (European Parliament, 1996). This warning and prints made by the European Parliament in 1995 gave results before the European Parliament's approval of the Customs Union and made grounds for the reform of dissolution of a political party in Turkey, which brought a limitation to the constitution. Another significant development in this regard took place at the Luxembourg Summit in 1997; Turkey was not included in the EU expansion plans and was requested to develop better relations with Kurdish citizens. This shows that the EU was an important actor for Kurdish people to be recognized as a political entity in Turkey.

These restrictions on identity in the Kemalist understanding of the state directly affected the state's attitude towards the Kurdish movement, and the ethno-political uprisings of the Kurds have been an issue that the state attaches primary importance for the protection of Turkish national identity from the beginning. However, with the establishment of a separatist PKK organization in 1984, the state's policy towards the Kurds entered a difficult process and the situation became more complicated with the establishment of the first Kurdish party in June 1990. The attitude of the state to these important movements among Kurdish groups has been to increase the restrictions for the ethno-politically differentiated Kurdish. Especially in the 1990s, legal indictments, detention and arrests became a common practice on the Kurdish movement. The first Kurdish party, the People's Labor Party (HEP), was closed on July 14, 1993 for alleged involvement in actions against the indivisibility of the state, and a year later, the second Kurdish party, DEP, was also shut down and some MPs were arrested.

Turkey's attitude against the Kurdish issue, especially the closure and the arrest of the deputies of Kurdish Parties, created the roots of EU's warnings about human rights violation and repression; this has led the EU to be seen as an important tool in the eyes of Kurdish politicians to put pressure on the Turkish political system (Watts, 2010: 139). For this reason, after the closure of DEP, Kurdish politicians and activists redefined their national aims as one of the fundamental human rights and tried to develop a good relationship with EU institutions and important European politicians. Kurdish movement, which entered relations with EU institutions, has intended to get the help of external actors on removing the pressure that Turkey puts on Kurds, and in a way, showed their support for the Turkey's membership in EU. For instance, although the Kurdish politicians and activists did not support the Customs Union agreement because of the negative effects it would bring to domestic economy, they cared more about the human rights and democracy aspect of it (Milliyet Gazette, 1995). Moreover, this issue under the Kurdish diaspora in Europe representatives of European governments and

intergovernmental institutions in violation of the rights of Kurds in Turkey had an important role to convince. In this context, diaspora communities lobbied EU institutions to lift the legal restrictions on Kurdish politicians and to seek opportunities for Kurdish parties and creation of a refuge (Kelly, 2002).

In a letter transmitted by PKK Presidential Council to the Helsinki Summit in November 29, 1999, their new movement strategy is decided as agreeing with EU on their purpose of persuading Turkey to support democracy, freedom and human rights (Badiki, 2003: 46). Capturing of Abdullah Öcalan plays a crucial role on this support of PKK since Kurdish politics had to cooperate with Turkey because they captured Öcalan. In this framework, People's Democratic Party (HADEP), who acknowledged that they have a strong support on Turkey's membership in EU, also hoped that Turkey complies with Copenhagen Criteria (Güney, 2002: 134). In addition to these official statements from the Kurdish party, 36 HADEP mayors in the southeast region issued a declaration underlining the important Copenhagen criteria such as democracy and the rule of law (Hürriyet, 13 Kasım 2000).

The Kurdish movement believed that the preconditions required by the EU from the candidate countries were an effective reform tool to ensure that the necessary steps were taken to mobilize Kurds in the Turkish political system. In order to reflect this belief, the following lines that Leyla Zana wrote first to Pat Cox and then to the president of the EP are quite meaningful: Detention in a country negotiating with EU, is much better than being free in a banned country (Hürriyet, 28 Şubat 2004). Considering the reflection of this relationship established by the Kurdish movement with human rights-based discourses on the relationship with the Turkish state, it should be noted that the marginalization between the state and the Kurdish movement has increased gradually. Especially, since the European institutions revealed that Turkey violates the human rights of the Kurds, it is confirmed that the Kurdish movement managed to normalize its state opponent identity in the eyes of their voters. Moreover, the fact that EU officials contacted Kurdish leaders instead of Turkish representatives has now shown that European authorities have overlooked Turkish authorities as representatives of the Kurdish people (Watts, 2010: 143). The most important result of this situation caused in the context of the Kurdish issue in Turkey is that, the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement formed two rival political structure. In short, the pro-EU stance served as a sign for the Kurdish movement to distinguish between Kurdish identity and an important external reference in its reproduction. Thus, the Kurdish movement has strengthened its position among Kurdish voters with this double confirmed identity and diversity; this has contributed to the success of the Kurdish party in the 2002 elections with a vote rate (6.2 percent) that it has not received so far.

On the other hand, EU's approach to the Kurdish question projects unequal tendencies and can be seen inconsistent (Vuorelma 2011; 73). In the lights of post-constructivist approach, these discrepancies can be divided into two parts as official and unofficial discourse. Brief look over the European Commission's progress reports disclose an inconsistency for Turkey and Kurdish Question. towards Turkey. Before the declaration of Turkey as a candidate state, the EU's emphasis was over the "human rights" and "finding a holistic solution" to the Question, 'while criticizing the violence of the PKK, the EP requested that the European Council and the European Commission take the initiative in seeking a negotiated solution to the Kurdish question through UN (Casier, 2011: 200). Throughout the 1990s, the EP continued its calls for a political solution to the question. However, what EU proposed as "political solution" not only emit an end for Turkey's military operations in the southeast and initiating open negotiation processes with Kurdish organization, but also lack of explaining how these suggestions would possible end terrorist activities of PKK. Apart from official discourse, the trace for discrepancies can be followed by unofficial discourse and contradictory attitudes. In his visit to

Turkey in 2011, French President Sarkozy's pointed out that "other possibilities for the future" rather than complete membership (euronews.com; 2010, 25th February). Coincidentally, 2011 EU Progress Report includes rather positive feedback on democratization process and "Kurdish Opening" of Turkish government much more than previous reports (Turkey Progress Report 2011). Therefore, it can be argued that the way EU discuss "Kurdish Question" is not as a subject under the democratization process of Turkey but as an excuse to "take out of the box" when its necessary.

CONCLUSION

In the first decade of the 2000's, two important developments should be mentioned in terms of being effective in reshaping the attitude of the Kurdish movement towards the EU. The first is that the EU calls the PKK on the terror list and calls on the Kurdish parties to disconnect from the PKK. Another development is the coming to power of the AK Party, which has both Islamic rhetoric with a successful wave of legal reforms during 2002-2004 to attract Kurdish votes and pro-EU stance. If these developments are evaluated in terms of the attitude of the Kurdish movement towards the EU, the first development led to distrust among the Kurds, while latter led the Kurdish movement to reshape the political strategy to consolidate votes from voters oppose to the AK Party in other words, transforming into a "party of Turkey". HDP's approaches towards especially the leftist groups may become clearer under this type of reading.

After the September 11 attacks, the war on terror climate also affected the PKK, and the PKK was included in the list of European countries as a terrorist organization. The end of the tolerance given to the PKK by the EU institutions and the initiation of an audit process against the activities of the PKK in Europe led to a distrust of the EU within the organization. In this regard, for the first time in the spring of 2002, the PKK was dealt with in the EU Council by its involvement in terrorist acts (Casier, 2010:400). But despite the descriptions made about the PKK until 2005 Progress Report on EU action PKK attacks in southeastern Turkey has been holding offenders directly. EP Report for the war on terror will be in solidarity with Turkey, the EU has taken one more step towards the PKK in Turkey 2007 Progress Report has urged the PKK to declare an immediate unconditional ceasefire (European Parliament Resolution, 2007: 54). In addition, in the 2007 Progress Report, the EU's warning for Kurdish party members to cut off their ties with the PKK was interpreted as betrayal of the EU within the Kurdish movement (Casier, 2010: 400).

Another perspective on the effects of Kurdish issue in Turkey's foreign policy is that, the Kurdish problem forced Turkey to adopt a more active policy in Middle East. The instability in the region paved the way for abandoning the policy of "stay away from the traditional Middle East" because of the threat caused by the problem. In fact, this can be interpreted as a positive development. This situation forced Turkey into a more effective and active monitoring policy in the Middle East instead of the abstinence policy. Indeed, after the Gulf War, the Kurdish problem continued to increase due to the expansion of the PKK and Turkey's role in the Middle East. The presence of the PKK in northern Iraq settled terrorist acts in Turkey the power vacuum where to turn to in a correct manner and has led to an active foreign policy. In this context, Turkey tried to use the Turkmens as trumps in order to gain effectiveness in Northern Iraq and showed the limits of its power to its close environment through cross-border operations. Turkey also had to get closer to Israel in order to maintain its influence in the region and US support (Çetinsaya,2006: 48).

Finally, it is important to point out the importance of the external factors in deciding what to do about the Kurdish issue and how to do it. In this respect, Turkish government cannot simply rely on EU as a guarantor of its security due to two important factors. Firstly, as it was

mentioned before, EU Progress Reports are not only ambiguous but also inconsistent to become a guide for Turkish government to adopt necessary policies for the Kurdish Question. As a transnational organization without military power makes EU a symbolic power not the guarantor of Turkey's security that Turkey needs a neighboring state with Middle East countries. Secondly, unofficial discourse and inconsistent utterances either from EU Progress Reports or member states like the example of France implies that Kurdish Question is not an obstacle for Turkey's membership but an excuse to put in front of Turkey when it's necessary. For instance, Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), which aims to respect the rights of national minorities, have been waiting for the France's signature up until today. Therefore, possible solution to Kurdish Question relies on the capacity of Kurdish political movement to act as a "party of Turkey". This capability, however, depends on both cutting ties with the terrorist organization PKK and convincing voters of Turkey that what they actually demand is simply the recognition of an ethnic and cultural identity.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AK Party	<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i>	(Justice and Development Party)
BDP	<i>Baris ve Demokrasi Partisi</i>	(Peace and Democracy Party)
CHP	<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i>	(Republican People`s Party)
DEHAP	<i>Demokratik Halk Partisi</i>	(Democratic People`s Party)
DTP	<i>Demokratik Toplum Partisi</i>	(Democratic Society Party)
HADEP	<i>Halkın Demokrasi Partisi</i>	(People`s Democracy Party)
HDP	<i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</i>	(Peoples` Democratic Party)
HEP	<i>Halkın Emek Partisi</i>	(People`s Labor Party)
KCK	<i>Koma Ciwaken Kurdistan</i>	(The Council of Communities of Kurdistan)
MHP	<i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i>	(Nationalist Movement Party)
PKK	<i>Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan</i>	(Kurdistan Workers` Party)