

A CRISIS 'IN' CONFLICT FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Case of the Turkish/Kurdish War through Neogramscian Lenses

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Department of Political Studies in conformity with the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Queen's University

Kingston, Ontario, Canada

May, 2000

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Abstract

This thesis takes an alternative approach to understand the social basis of regional conflict. As such, it bridges the fields of Comparative Politics and International Relations. It builds a 'society up' model as a lens for an extensive case-study of Kurdish nationalism in the Middle East, with a particular focus on the Kurds of Turkey. The thesis provides a critique of the statist assumptions in International Relations and Comparative theories, suggesting that 'top down' theories lack the precision required to grasp the social basis of ethnic and national conflicts. From there, an examination of the profound transformations in global politics in the past fifteen years is tabled to reveal the need for an approach that can better capture the redefined agencies in global politics that are a result of globalization. A neogramscian theoretical framework is proposed, asserting that the Kurdish identity has been defined historically only in relation to how the Kurds are different from the dominant Turkish social order. Using an historical sociological methodology, the thesis moves to a history of Kurdish ethnonationalism, assigning agency on the Kurdish peoples themselves, rather than at the level of those empires and states that ruled over them. It is suggested that the Kurdish people were instrumental to both the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the consolidation of the modern state of Turkey. This historical sociology then examines the evolution of Kurdish identity construction under the domination of the Turkish state, and looks at the transformations of both Kurdish social forces and of Turkish society. In the final section, the dialectic of hegemony/counter-hegemony is used to provide a detailed examination of the multiple processes of social conditioning that the Turkish majority have upon the Kurdish minority, and vice-versa. The repressive measures taken by the Turkish state have internationalized the Kurdish conflict, and the responses by Kurdish nationals have been to deterritorialize the conflict through the development of cyber-nationalism. This has led to the establishment of a truly transnational national movement. This is a phenomenon that 'top down' theories of global politics are unable to capture effectively.

Dedication

To Mike Allen

I dedicate this work to my step-brother and friend Michael Allen. Mike was a transport pilot in the Canadian Forces and in the winter of 1991 he spent several weeks dropping humanitarian relief to hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees in the mountains of Turkey near the Iraqi border. It was Mike's stories and photos of these desperate people that sparked my interest in the plight of the Kurds. Sadly, Mike was killed in the summer of 1993 on a training flight in Canada. He was training others on the low altitude parachute dropping techniques that he used dozens of times all over the world. Mike is survived by his wife Frances, who was expecting their first child at the time of his death. We all miss him dearly.

Acknowledgments

There are many to whom I owe a great deal of thanks during my time at Queen's University. Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor Steve Page who has shown great patience with me over the years. With all of his departmental responsibilities, Dr. Page's door was always open for me. I would also like to thank Charles Pentland and Eleanor MacDonald, both of whom have read and made helpful comments upon my ideas and work in the past. I would also like to thank Phil Wood for his support and unrelenting expectations of high academic standards. Mention should also be given to the Ford Foundation and the Faculty of Graduate Studies for their financial support of me in the program.

I have had the good fortune of establishing some great personal and professional friendships here at Queen's. In particular, Asli Cirakman, Tom McIntosh, and Jean Rodrigue Paré have shown that colleagues can make great friends, and I am sure to value their friendships for the rest of my life. We have all supported each other, inspired each other intellectually, and have had some great times together. Without them, my experience at Queen's would just not have been the same. I cannot thank them enough.

My friendships and family outside of Queen's have been most valuable. John and Claire Sjolander have been solid in their support and friendship throughout my studies. Claire and I have enjoyed a productive and stimulating working relationship over the years, and it is a relationship I value immensely. My parents have been so supportive in so many ways, that I could not even scratch the surface. Suffice it so say, that my university studies would have been impossible without their love and support. My most heartfelt gratitude goes to my partner Kathleen Rühland. Her kindness and patience throughout my studies has been outstanding. Without a doubt, she has been my most important friend and ally, and I owe her a world of thanks.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

You are researching the Kurdish people? I must tell something. I am a Kurd. My close colleagues know that I am a Kurd, and I am sure that my bosses know as well. We don't ever discuss it. You must not listen to what they say about the history of the Turkish people – most of it is not true. Most of the people here are engineers, but they are engineers of a certain type. They are supporters of the Islamic Party, and after the elections they feel that it is their responsibility to include their version of Turkish history as part of their job with the city of Ankara. I must be like them....it is part of my job. My family moved to Ankara ten years ago when I got into the university there. There are many Kurds in Ankara. We have come for the jobs, for the universities, because we feel we have to. The village of my family no longer exists. Even if we wanted to go back, we couldn't. But we still remember, and we know what is going on back home. The PKK is making it worse for us in Ankara every day. The more they kill, the more we have to be like the Turks. But I have a job now. A good job. And my brother is now at the university, and he will have a good job soon too. We will both be engineers, and soon there will be many jobs for us in the East. There is oil, there will be much building and we will be needed. But when we get back to the East, we will no longer have to be like the Turks to keep our jobs. We will be able to be ourselves. My colleagues are coming now. We must change the conversation. They must not think that I am talking to you about who I am.¹

Within a minute or two, the plight of millions of Kurdish people inside modern Turkey could not have been summed up better. As the subject of inquiry for research, Kurdish ethnonationalism cuts across a myriad of core concepts central

¹ For personal reasons, this individual asked not to be identified by name.. He spoke with me on May 25, 1995. His story is included here as typical of the experiences of many 'displaced' professional Kurds who feel compelled to suppress their identity. However, it is an identity that is repressed, not lost.

to the disciplines of International Relations and Comparative Politics: state formation, state fragmentation, transnationalism, economic development, ethnic conflict, displacement and refugee issues, urbanization and industrialization, structures of violence, the role of the military, and regional politics to name but a few.

This thesis is an examination of Kurdish ethnonationalism with a focus on the Kurdish people of Turkey. Specifically, it examines the evolution of Kurdish ethnonationalism within a state and region that are grappling with, and striving towards, European integration. As such, the 'Kurdish question' cuts deeply into one of the central characteristics of life in 20th century Turkey – the balance between its Eastern and Western heritages. Like their Turkish counterpart, the Kurdish nations within the region find promise and strength in the primarily Western concepts of economic development and modernization. Unlike their Turkish counterpart, the Kurds generally reject the idea that this can be done within the existing political arrangement – namely the modern Turkish state. This is increasingly becoming the adhesive that binds disparate Kurdish identities together, and a shared history of repression and violence upon them has structured a unifying Kurdish identity that deals with the East/West dichotomy in a uniquely Kurdish way.

This thesis seeks to expand and integrate a neogramscian understanding of social hegemony into the process of Kurdish ethnonationalism in order to more effectively understand: 1) the historical evolution of Kurdish identity within an

environment of social and political domination, and how state-controlled assimilationist tactics, economic and development programs, and protracted campaigns of violence have actually resulted in increased vigour and homogeneity amongst Kurdish groups inside Turkey; 2) the impact this has had upon how the Kurds have evolved as a social force(s), as well as how this social force has both conditioned and contested Turkish social and political hegemony, and 3) how this structure of domestic and transnational social relations has been, and continues to be, the social conditioning that defines the (Turkish) state as an actor in its domestic, regional, and international relations.

Introduction: Statism and Euro-centrism, and a Neogramscian Alternative.

The thesis will be divided into three main sections as the best means by which its theoretical proposals can be fully integrated into the case-study. The first section will examine the limitations in the basic assumptions of conflict studies in order to establish a more appropriate framework for analysis. The unique nature of Turkish society as a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures and intellectual traditions suggests the need to first examine the Euro-centric nature of the statist approaches prevalent in both the fields of International Relations (IR) and Comparative Politics. Statism refers not just to the conceptual tools used by the academic disciplines of IR and Comparative Politics, but also to the proposed and preferred political solutions to the Kurdish crisis by both Kurds and Turks. In Chapter Two, statism will be defined, its preferences and Euro-centrism will be

examined, and its political and social legacies will be revealed. In particular, the western model of the ideal-type state based upon the historical legacies of the Peace of Westphalia will be examined in terms of the attempt to view all ethnonational movements through 'western lenses'. Furthermore, the acceptance of the European nation-state model by secular mainstream Turkish society and the formation of the modern Turkish state will be portrayed as one of the most insurmountable problems confronting Kurdish nationals in 20th century Turkey. As well, many forms of Kurdish ethnonationalism (both inside Turkey, and in Iraq, Syria, Iran as well as in the diaspora) can themselves be viewed in terms of their Euro-centric preferences in dealing with ethnonational issues.

Chapter Three will put forward a socially based theoretical model for the examination of Kurdish ethnonationalism. Rather than constructing social agency in terms of how ethnicity is related to existing states (i.e. statist, or state-centric), this model will use the Kurdish ethnonational grouping itself as the starting point for theoretical construction. In this sense, the model proposed will be social-centric with specific reference to the Kurdish people. In terms of ethnic-national studies, this is a new approach. Building upon the neogramscian literature more common to the related fields of International Political Economy (IPE) and Comparative Politics, whose agency and structure is social forces and social relations, the neogramscian model used here will be an attempt to bridge the gap between these fields of study through an examination of the Kurdish case.

As a theoretical construction whose central problematique is an effective understanding of relations of dominance/subordination, false consciousness, politicalization, and mobilization, the neogramscian perspective appears to be a natural candidate for the case of Kurdish ethnonationalism. However, with only a few notable exceptions (Fred Halliday, Fuat Keyman, Ayse Kadioglu, Mesut Yegen, and Edward Said²) neogramscian and post-structural analyses of Middle Eastern politics are rare. Throughout the entire fields of IR and IPE, the neogramscian approach remains at the margins. This thesis must establish why the neogramscian approach can better serve to understand the complex processes of Kurdish ethnonationalism and how these domestic and transnational social relations are the basis upon which state relations are built.

Though the objectives of neogramscian theory are clear, the approach is not without limitations. Thus far, the bulk of neogramscian IR has developed within the sub-field of IPE, or in the related field of Comparative Politics. While scholars such as Robert Cox, Stephen Gill, Anthony Giddens, Steve Smith, Craig Murphy, and

² See F. Halliday, "State and Society in International Relations: A second Agenda," Millennium, 16:2, 1987; F. Halliday, "Vigilantism in International Relations: Kubalkova, Cruickshank and Marxist Theory," Review of International Studies, 13, 1987; F. Keyman, "Problematizing the State in International Relations Theory," in C.Turenne Sjolander and W. Cox, Beyond Positivism: Critical Reflections on International Relations, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994; A. Kadioglu, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity," Middle Eastern Studies 32: 2, 1996; Yegen Mesut, "The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity," Middle Eastern Studies 32:2, 1996; and E. Said, "The Intellectuals and the War," Middle East Report 171, July/August, 1991.

Sandra Whitworth,³ to name but a few, use the concept of structured 'social forces' in their varying neogramscian perspectives of global politics, their central concerns lie primarily in the relationship between these social forces, capital, and production. There is no doubt that a neomarxist global perspective inherently involves complex relationships of dominance/subordination. However, theirs is primarily the subject matter of the global political economy; the central notions of nation, identity, national politicization, and structures of violence have yet to be rigorously integrated into the neogramscian school. Though this thesis will demonstrate the influential and increasing significance of European and Turkish economic modernization and integration on the Kurds, the core subject of Kurdish ethnonationalism cannot be reduced to (or be imposed upon) a neomarxist econometric framework. However, the neogramscian approach can be expanded to allow for the effective examination of the Kurdish question.

Such a project is not without precedent. Neogramscians dot the landscape of

³ See R. W. Cox, "Production and Hegemony: Toward a Political Economy of World Order," in H. Jacobsen and D. Sidjanski (eds.), The Emerging International Economic Order: Dynamic Processes, Constraints and Opportunities, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982; R.W. Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony, and International Relations: An Essay in Method," in Millennium, 12:2, 1983; S. Gill (ed.), American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; A. Giddens, The Nation-State and Violence, Berkley: University of California Press, 1987; A. Giddens, Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991; S. Smith, "The Canadian-Italian School of International Theory," in Mershon International Studies Review, 39, 1995; S. Whitworth, "Theory as Exclusion: Gender and International Political Economy," in R. Stubbs, and G. Underhill, (eds.) , Political Economy and the Changing Global Order, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994.

political and social research. In particular, feminist IR scholarship, studies in post-colonial relations, and examinations of exploitation and underdevelopment have been rich in neogramscian analysis.⁴ Once it establishes the parsimony of neogramscian theory, this thesis will provide the expansions and modifications that are required to look specifically at the process of Kurdish ethnonationalism in Turkey, and how those social relations condition regional and international politics. This section will seek to draw together theoretically the seeming paradoxes of an integrating and homogenizing Turkish society, and the emerging political objective of various Kurdish peoples to define an identity separate from their oppressors. While Turkey forges ahead with a national program of economic integration of its peripheries, a strong state-based national identity, and aspirations of regional hegemony, it alienates and oppresses its Kurdish minorities, thereby providing greater incentive for the Kurdish nationalist project(s).

At the same time, Turkey has developed a massive state apparatus of brutal repression and in attempting to deal with its minorities problem, the Turkish state has effectively internationalized its Kurdish war. The Turkish state has historically sought to exploit serious differences between Kurdish regional and tribal groups as a tactic to maintain greater control, and the long-term effects of this systematic

⁴ On feminist neogramscian IR, see for example, R. Grant, and K. Newland, Gender and International Relations, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991; In regard to gender, colonialism and post colonialism, see M. Duley and M. Edwards (eds.), The Cross-Cultural Study of Women, New York: The Feminist Press, 1986; and C. Enloe, Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Sense of International Politics, London: Pandora Press, 1989.

campaign has been the evolution of Kurdish ethnonationalism through the phases of the awakening of ethnic identity, the choice of limited social and political autonomy as a tactic for the continued evolution of ethnic self-determination, state-based Kurdish ethnonationalism, and a socially based counter-hegemonic movement that has no choice but to promote Kurdishness as an underground and repressed identity. The end result has been a slow process of unity amongst previously antagonistic Kurdish groups, the forcing of Kurdish national politics outside of the national borders of Turkey, and the deterritorialization of this national movement.

The development of economic resources within the Kurdish peripheries coupled with the education and urbanization of many Kurds (who by now have developed strong tactics for the preservation of their identity and culture within mainstream Turkish society), has forced many modern Kurdish/Turkish citizens to recognize both the national and economic potential of an independent Kurdish state. The policies of systematic violence against Kurdish resisters in the periphery, of forced relocation of millions of Turkish Kurds from the periphery into urban areas coupled with programs of cultural assimilation, of the legal denial of the identity and language of the Kurds in the mainstream, and state-based education and modernization projects, have all brought about the circumstances in which a unifying Kurdish counterhegemonic movement has become increasingly politicized and united through its rejection of Kurdish oppression as a 'natural order'.

For the time being at least, the vast majority of Kurdish nationals do not adhere to a state-based form of nationalism. While there is a militant vanguard who

use violent tactics as the instrument to further their cause, most Kurds have developed ways of maintaining their Kurdish identity within a repressive social order. This is itself a counter-hegemonic strategy. It is the very persistence of Kurdish identity that is the basis of their social power, and this persistence has formed a structured set of social relations that is both conditioned by, and is a condition of, the Turkish state. Moreover, Kurdish nationalism had not been historically tied to conceptions of nationalism that were territorially defined – that is, not until the oppressive regimes acting upon them opened a window in which such a form of sovereign self-determination seemed possible. This was the case during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

In the present, the Kurds know no national borders that represent their identities, and yet they are socially conditioned by states that tie identity to territory and use such an understanding as the justification for repression of the Kurds. Thus, Kurdish identity is a social condition within the sovereign states in which they reside. It is this socially defined understanding of the state that cannot be understood by any model of international politics that defines its agency primarily in terms of a state's external relations. As we shall see, Turkey's domestic and transnational social orders are ones that define it as a regional and international actor. The domestic and the international are realms that cannot be separated, either practically or theoretically. Unlike the statist assumptions embedded in the theoretical models of International Relations and Comparative Politics (and the consequent effect this has on the direction case-study research takes), the

neogramscian approach allows for this case work to effectively grasp the social basis of state fragmentation/state transformation at work inside Turkey – and throughout the region. It is through this lens that a different understanding of regional and international politics is possible.

The Historical Evolution the Kurdish Identity and Nationalism: Part of the Turkish State-Formation Process

Section Two of this thesis (Chapters Four, Five, and Six), will begin with a concise demographic overview of what can be termed Kurdistan. Since the Kurdish nation is dispersed among four sovereign states (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria), as well as in an increasingly active diaspora throughout Europe, Russia, and North America, it is crucial to first establish the 'ethnic landscape'. Chapter four will also look in some detail at the linguistic and regional divisions within the Kurdish identities. Some have argued that the Kurdish peoples are so diverse as to be no longer a singular ethnic grouping. However, that claim will be rejected, and the demographic overview will address the historical and geographic influences that have contributed to the disparate nature of Kurdistan. The demographic overview will also provide a general level of familiarity with recent trends and shifts in Kurdish populations that are a direct result of the protracted social conflict that they are engaged in. It should also be noted here at the outset that even the most basic of 'facts' in regard the the Kurdish people (such as populations, deaths in conflict, or forced relocations) are often contested and therefore difficult to establish with great

accuracy. This demographic overview will be a compilation of a number of diverse sources in order to provide a balanced picture.

Chapters Five and Six will reexamine the history of Turkish/Kurdish social relations through neogramscian lenses. An historical sociological method will be employed that will focus upon three pivotal moments in Kurdish history with an emphasis upon Kurdish identity as the driving force behind both the evolution of the Kurdish people(s), and the political arrangements that have been established by (and upon) them. Those three historical moments can be summed up as: the earliest known written texts of Kurdish self-consciousness as distinct from others; the translation of that consciousness into a national movement during and throughout the period of Ottoman fragmentation and Turkish state formation; and the evolution of Kurdish strategies for self-preservation under the dominant order of Turkish social and military hegemony.

In the first moment, the evolution of the lore and poetry in early Kurdish verse (the only oral and written histories of Kurdish tribes in Turkey) will be examined to establish the non-western understanding of the relationship between ethnically Kurdish peoples and Ottoman institutional authority prior to the modern Turkish state period. This moment is not intended to be a definitive history of the evolution of early Kurdish identity. Rather, it merely establishes the earliest recorded period of their distinct culture as a precondition of the form and type of political autonomy that they were able to establish in their role as part of the Ottoman Empire. These oral and written stories reveal a clear notion of ethnic and

tribal consciousness and 'relative political autonomy' that was to be discredited by the advent of the European model of nation-state and the victory of nation-states over the Ottomans' preference for a loose federal type of political order.

In the second moment, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, emergent Kemalist Turkish nationalism, the crucial period of negotiations leading to the Treaty of Sèvres, the inception of modern Turkey, and the Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925 will all be revisited in some detail.⁵ In short, this brief but hectic period in the history of Asia Minor witnessed the most active period of Kurdish nationalism. In the version of events that is presented in Chapter Five, we shall see the central role played by Kurdish tribes in both the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and in the emergence of the modern state of Turkey. Through an examination of historical documents only recently made available, this section of the thesis will suggest that while some Kurdish nationals hoped to establish an independent Kurdistan, there was no clear consensus, and that promises by European powers to Kurdish tribes were met with equally attractive promises by Turkish nationals. In the end, most Kurdish leaders sided with the fathers of the Turkish Republic, and in many ways, modern Turkey could never have been established without the political and military support of its significant Kurdish minorities.

Chapter Six will review the third crucial phase in Kurdish ethnonational history. Specifically, it will review the brutal series of events that saw the remaining

⁵ R. Olsen, The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989, 26-51.

Kurdish nationalists that had been absorbed into the state of Turkey rise in rebellion, but ultimately fall in military defeat. It is in this formative period that a clear distinction between Kurdish separatists and Kurdish ethnonationals solidifies. In the Sheikh Said Rebellions of the 1920s, the separatist Kurdish tribes were delineated from those tribes who preferred to work with Turkish nationals. This division amongst Kurdish groups paralleled religious, regional, and political divisions that conditioned their distinct political strategies. The repressive shift in Turkish policy regarding its minorities question is one that prompted the establishment of a massive Turkish military and repressive apparatus, and one in which all Kurds have been constructed as a singular 'enemy from within'. It will be argued that such an assumption has been promoted by military and political elites inside Turkey as a means to their own ends, and this assumption is a poor reflection of the social and political complexities of Turkey's Kurdish minorities. Chapter Six will conclude by revisiting the evolution of the internal Kurdish political movements inside Turkey from 1920 until 1980.

In neogramscian terms, the hegemony imposed upon the various Kurdish groups in this significant historical period was multidimensional. Initially, the Kurdish people were subjected to political structures imposed upon them by a global community – the great European powers in particular. Secondly, and partly as a result of the first, the Kurdish people were also subjected to the political and social control of the emerging Turkish nationalist social order which was being reorganized in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire. Key to the modern Turkish

state was a predominantly European style of state-based nationalism which emphasised homogeneity, central control, and the use of coercive force to deal with regional or nationalist resistance. Lastly, the Kurds of Turkey were being subjugated by their own leadership which had no organized means of obtaining political legitimacy from within its claimed social constituency, and which preferred 'western sovereign' solutions to the nationalist question. This 'westernization' of the Kurdish ethnonational consciousness is something that is generally poorly understood by academic case studies that employ statist conceptual tools. Ideas of state sovereignty were at this time still very much foreign and abstract for what was still a regionally based, and a tribally organized culture. In this context, Kurdish separatism inside Turkey was closely linked to Kurdish separatism in Iran, Iraq and Syria, and yet these separatists in each respective state only represented a minority of the overall Kurdish minorities within each of these sovereign states. The apparently growing separatist movements allowed the Turkish government to take a leading role in the military repression of the Kurdish people throughout the region, and this threat to domestic and regional instability was the justification for the military intervention into democratic rule in Turkey for no less than three prolonged periods between 1925 and 1980.

Hegemony, Counter-Hegemony, and Internationalization: The Contemporary Context of Turkish Society and its Kurdish Minorities

Moving out of the historical sociology of the Kurdish identity construction and nationalist movement phases, this thesis will proceed to an examination of contemporary (post-1980) Kurdish ethnonationalism. Section Three (Chapters Seven, and Eight) will provide detailed research on the contemporary Kurdish movement inside Turkey (and its obvious effects within the region) within a neo-gramscian, society-centered, framework. Specifically, a dialectic between the Turkish hegemonic order and the Kurdish counter-hegemonic movement has been selected as the best means by which the research presented can view the interrelationship that these two segments of society have had upon each other. Chapter Seven will suggest that the predominant role played by the Turkish military in the politics of modern Turkey has been a result of (largely) Kurdish insurgency movements. In this way, the Kurdish component of Turkish society has been crucial in the very definition of 'Turkishness' and the resulting forms of political and social structures within modern Turkey.

On the other side of this dialectic, Kurdish identity continues to be primarily a definition of self in relation to the dominant Turkish order. As part of the structure of this relationship of hegemony, these two chapters will display how the policies and tactics of the Turkish government have resulted in massive demographic shifts in the Kurdish populations throughout the region, and how this

has effectively internationalized (and globalized) this conflict. Chapter Seven will investigate the brutal policies in the 1990s that resulted in the systematic murder of Turkey's Kurdish political leadership, and how this has dramatically affected both the social relations of Kurdish groups themselves, and their social relations with the Turkish majority. The chapter present interview material and review unpublished investigations into the Turkish regime of terror against Kurdish and human rights groups in Turkey. Within the Kurdish minorities, we will see a rift between 'mainstream' Kurds who utilize a strategy of an outwardly Turkish identity, and an inwardly Kurdish one as a form of social resistance against the dominant Turkish order. As well, this important segment of Turkish/Kurdish society has built a significant social network to the massive and growing Kurdish diaspora on the outside. A second element of Kurdish nationalism has continued to exist inside Turkey; this group feels compelled to use tactics of violence as a means to achieve both sovereignty and ethnic self-determination. Although it has traditionally been rurally, regionally, and religiously based, it too has begun to permeate the social fabric of Turkey and the Kurdish diaspora.

The final chapter will present the counter-hegemonic Kurdish movement inside Turkey, with a specific focus upon the internationalization and globalization of Kurdish ethnonationalism. Chapter Eight will present an overview of the links between Turkey's mainstream Kurdish communities and the militant Kurdish movements. It will suggest that both the mainstream and militant movements have been effectively internationalized and deterritorialized. The chapter will also

present research to develop and support the concept of cyber-nationalism as the natural evolutionary step in the counter-hegemonic movement. It will argue that in the wake of decimated legal Kurdish political representation that resulted from the regime of terror inflicted upon Kurdish leaders in the early and mid 1990s, the response has been the utilization of communications and information technologies by Turkey's Kurdish community to build a global cyber-alliance of nationals that permeates every branch of the Kurdish community - inside and outside of Turkey. This building of an electronically connected set of social communities has brought to contemporary Kurdish nationals opportunities for consciousness raising and political organization that have never existed before. For the Turkish state, the advent of cyber-nationalism presents a new turn in its Kurdish question that renders its military and state-based forms of repression meaningless in terms of their objectives - but meaningful in terms of their social consequences.

Chapter Eight will also present some conclusions for the entire thesis. It will reiterate the need for theoretical alternatives to statist theories in both the fields of International Relations and Comparative politics. Through the methodology of an interpretative historical sociology built upon a neogramscian understanding of social relations, this thesis will have built an understanding of social group, state, regional and international politics from the 'bottom up'. That is to say, agency has been built around Kurdish national identity, and it has been from this basis that the research presented here builds its vision of every other higher level of politics. In this sense, the thesis has taken the opposite starting point of almost all IR (realist, pluralist and

structuralist) whose starting point is either the state, or global structures. It is upon these agencies that IR's understandings of the social are hung. The 'bottom up' model also differs from most approaches in Comparative Politics whose primary agency is usually either the state or society. This thesis will be an attempt to bring these two (the state and society) together, not for the benefit of a stronger basis of political comparison, but to develop a stronger basis for the understanding of social relationships upon politics at the regional and international levels.

Why IR, why Turkey, and why the Kurds?

One might assume that an academic investigation into the issue of Kurdish ethnonationalism in the field of politics should be done within the frameworks provided by the sub-field of Comparative Politics. IR, as a field of study, has traditionally focused upon the relationship between states, their respective foreign policies, broader considerations of the war and peace problematique, and more recently, investigations into the larger globalist structures of economics and their relationship to politics. However, as Edward Said points out, fields of study are 'made':

Fields, of course, are made. They acquire coherence and integrity in time because scholars devote themselves in different ways to what seems to be a commonly agreed-upon subject matter. Yet it goes without saying that a field of study is rarely as simply defined as even its most committed partisans – usually scholars, professors, experts, and the like – claim it is. Besides, a field can change so entirely, in even the most traditional disciplines like philology, history, or theology, as to make an all-purpose definition of the

subject matter almost impossible.⁶

My argument here is not that the central statist paradigm of IR should be abandoned.⁷ That is not to say, however, that within studies of global relations there should not be more room for alternative approaches. Specifically, there are limitations in the theoretical tools the discipline as a whole uses when examining ethnic conflict. Nationalism, and more specifically ethnonationalism, has always been very significant to International Relations as a field. Even for realists (the conservative status quo in IR), nationalism is the domestic glue that holds state actors together, or in some cases, an evil that often leads to unwanted instability in a world view that believes a stable international system is a safer one.⁸ As a result, sub-national and transnational movements have been relegated to the subordinate category of 'low politics' although they are significant for statist IR in the sense that they can drive and define the foreign policies of even the greatest of Great Powers.

Within the field of international relations, there is a significant body of literature dealing with ethnic and national studies at the non-state level. However, as Barry Buzan has pointed out, ethnic and national studies have

⁶ Edward Said, Orientalism, New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1978, p.50.

⁷ Or, in Kal Holsti's words, "The Classical Tradition." K. Holsti, The Dividing Discipline, Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984, p. 11.

⁸ See, for example, Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr, World Politics: The Menu for Choice, New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1996, pp. 43-44.

evolved as a problem-solving theoretical taxonomy of the realist and neorealist mainstream of IR.⁹ For the most part this problem-solving sub-field of IR still relies upon an understanding of conflict as inherent to an assumed state of nature that is competitive; it is a derivative of a world view that sees states as the only central actors in its definition of global politics, and it relies upon realism's assumptions that power attributes will either determine conflict outcomes – or result in a peaceful balance of power. As Buzan points out, studies of ethnicity and nationalism generally regard these phenomena as a problem for existing states in a relatively stable international state system.¹⁰ In this sense, protracted social conflicts are viewed from the top down, and rarely, if ever, are understandings of global politics built from the bottom up. As critics of statist assumptions such as Richard Ashley, Alexander Wendt and David Dessler point out, this often results in a world view that is wholly detached from the social complexities that are the very definition of states themselves.¹¹ In short, the problem-solving theoretical taxonomy within the field of IR that seeks to better understand ethnic, national and social conflict does so under the assumption that these conflicts are problems for existing states – not a part of a state's very

⁹ B. Buzan, An Introduction to Strategic Studies: Military Technology and International Relations, London: Macmillan, 1987, p.11.

¹⁰ ibid., p. 23.

¹¹ See R. Ashley, "The Poverty of Neo-Realism," Millennium, 13, 1988, D. Dessler, "What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate," International Organization, 43:3, 1989, and A. Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Affairs

definition or its very evolution.

This thesis proposes that the sources of identity construction for an ethnonational group lie both within the social and historical context of that group, as well as its relationship and conditioning by powerful state agents. Conditioning and influence make up a two-way street. In this sense, the only effective way of fully understanding the sources (as opposed to just the consequences) of Kurdish ethnonationalism lies in the precise investigation into the historical and social roots of this identity. Statist realist IR and liberal institutionalist IR would suggest that the Kurdish question is significant, but only in so far as it has an impact upon the foreign relations of those states directly affected by Kurdish populations, or in the institutional responses to it (the UN protection zone in Northern Iraq, bilateral relations, or even the emergence of a Kurdish political unit of some kind, etc.). However, behavioural positivist IR (i.e. that which believes the observation of regularities can bring knowledge and learning closer to the ultimate goal of an objective truth – both realist and liberal), can only ever precisely see ‘effect’, rather than investigate ‘cause’. Again, the sources and structures of conflict are relegated to the realm of low politics, and any serious investigation into it becomes the subject matter of Comparative Politics.

Perhaps an analogy can best illustrate why the field of international

Theory,” International Organization, 41:3, Summer, 1987.

relations needs to examine an ethnonational movement within an existing state unit through the theoretical lenses most often found in the related fields of Comparative Politics and IPE. It has been said that a good architect can design and build a structure that serves its function effectively. However, a great architect can design a building that is fully in tune with its environment, can withstand the test of time, blend into and help define its surroundings, and serve its function at the same time. To do this, a great architect must display a knowledge of several fields of expertise all at the same time, and yet never lose sight of a building's function. It seems as though the field of International Relations is full of good architects, but there are few truly great ones.

To take this analogy further, let us briefly apply it to IR. From its inception, the field of IR has been dominated by statist approaches towards describing world events. Though alternative understandings have always occupied the margins of the field (idealism in the 1930s, liberal internationalism in the 1950s, neomarxist structuralism in the 1960s, post-structuralism in the 1970s, post-modernism in the 1980s, and post-positivism in the 1990s, for example), the statist centre has remained intact – and dominant. The statist realist core of IR has been a functional paradigm, effectively explaining the two world wars, the Cold War, regional balances of power and other significant events of the 20th Century. At times, however, the edifice has collapsed in upon itself when attempting to understand certain phenomena, and these events have caused scholars of IR to reconsider its theoretical core (events such as the

weakness of realism to understand the processes of decolonization and post-colonialism, the failure of the US in Vietnam, the significance of oil and other economic resources in the 1970s, the emergence of regional economic and social integration, the domestic and social sources of conflict and foreign policies, the (re)emergence of social forces such as religion upon state relations, or the end of the Cold War itself).¹² For the most part, the response to these weaknesses by statist-realist IR has been to modify and 'beef-up' the existing structure rather than to completely embrace alternative approaches.

The emergence of neo-realism in the 1980s and liberal institutionalism in the 1990s have been premised upon the weaknesses of the traditional approach, and yet none of these modifications is completely willing to abandon the core assumptions of the statist approach (such as the war and peace problematique as the central problem, positivism as the basic theory of knowledge, and the state as the central agent). Like an architect whose building is weakened and its very function is therefore threatened, the response has been to modify and strengthen the existing design rather than looking to a related field of expertise that might help. Some buildings may be weakened by the rock or soil under them, others may be degraded by weather conditions in the area, wooden structures may be attacked by insects, some buildings may be so alienating and out of tune with those who work in and around it that some might want it removed. Should this

¹² See K. Holsti, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-140.

occur in the field of building design, the solutions have often been found in related fields of study.

When the conceptual building blocks of the realist approach to IR came into question in the 1970s, realists looked to alternative theories for solutions; however, those alternative theories were always imported so as to 'add to' the existing basic assumptions of realism. Architects do not generally apply architectural principles to geology to build a solid foundation. Rather, they tend to modify building design and structure to fit into, and work with, the existing geology – even if this means the abandonment or serious alteration of some of the pre-established principles of building design. The relationship between fields of expertise in the analogy of architecture is reciprocal and dialectical; the relationship between fields of expertise in the case of IR is unidimensional and egocentric. Rather than reaching out to related fields of study, the field of IR has looked inward to deal with its conceptual impasses, has taken from the outside without a reconsideration of its basic assumptions, or has redefined and narrowed its very subject matter so as to exclude that which it cannot understand. The domestic sources of foreign policy become the subject matter of country experts in Comparative Politics, the economic plight of the world's majority becomes the subject matter of Development Studies, the social basis of conflict becomes the subject matter of Comparative Politics, and the emergence of transnational and regional economic integration the subject matter for IPE. It is not merely the subject matter that defines IR. Rather, it has become a subject matter defined by the basic assumptions of its theoretical paradigms. The

exclusion of that which IR cannot understand because of its definition of itself is, in post-positivist terms, a theoretical and therefore political maneuver.

Like an architect who must be prepared to adapt to the knowledge developed in related fields of specialization, scholarship in IR has much to gain from related fields of study – even if that means an alteration (or modification) of some of the field’s most basic assumptions. To a large extent this has happened in IR in regard to examinations into the problems of underdevelopment, the increasing significance of environmental issues, the realities of economic integration and the development of transnational economic classes, or the growing awareness of the need for alternative agencies (such as gender) upon which theories of global relations can be built. However, in issues of war and peace, the realist and neorealist core continues to dominate. As far back as the early 1960s innovative scholars like Johan Galtung attempted to inject new insights into conflict analysis by building models of structural violence out of the works of Marx.¹³ Yet, the radical Peace Research movement was quickly relegated to the academic margins of conflict analysis, and the conflict taxonomy returned to its realist problem-solving core.¹⁴

¹³ J. Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Aggression,” Journal of Peace Research, 1, 1964.

¹⁴ For a very interesting take on the debate between realists and pacifists during the peace research debates and why the realists won, see, A. Rapoport, “Editor’s Introduction,” in, Clausewitz: On War, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 11-80.

The analogy between IR and architecture can be extended to include the types of projects being undertaken in both fields. The urban landscape is increasingly being sculpted by economic functional utility rather than social or geographical context, because as Robert Twombly points out, modern design has become a problem-solving discipline so far removed from social context that its need for innovation and uniqueness has been far exceeded by the economic utility and efficiency. The end result is an urban blandness replicated in every landscape, so much so that the urban dweller can no longer visually distinguish between upstate New York, Toronto, suburban Paris, Rome or Melbourne.¹⁵

In research on International Relations too, theoretical innovation has become a casualty of the need for utility in a largely problem-solving field. Throughout the Cold War, state-centric realism became the overall theoretical umbrella under which most 'conflict studies' were conducted. Realism's assumptions about the nature and role of the state were taken as givens, regardless of the social context from which various conflicts evolved. Even in the absence of a Cold War and an obvious global balance of power (whether constructed as a means to an end by superpowers, or a reflection of a Hobbesian state of nature), realism's core assumptions remain intact in neorealism's transmuted successors neoliberalism, liberal pluralism, and neofunctionalism. Like modern designers who refine functional designs for the utility of Pepsico,

¹⁵ R. Twombly, Power and Style: A Critique of Twentieth-Century Architecture in The United States, New York, Hill and Wang, 1995, p. 118.

Coke, McDonald's or Wendy's and in the process construct a homogenizing urban blandness, researchers in International Relations have succumbed to default theoretical assumptions irrespective of what it is they intend to study. In some ways, 'consumer identification' with the preferred theoretical status-quo has relegated theoretical innovation to the dustbins of the marginal or heretical. Like an urban landscape whose central identifications are Taco Bell, McDonald's, Taco-Bell, and McDonald's, the theoretical landscape of IR at century's end is Classical Realism, Scientific Realism, Neo-Realism, Structural Realism, and all of their liberal incarnations. The political spectrum of options for research in IR are about as wide as the options for the palette on the never ending urban strip of drive-throughs and take-outs -- one hundred variations on the same theme.

This thesis seeks to understand the social basis of conflict. However, its basic assumptions are radically different from those of IR's central paradigm: namely, that social structures and identities are at least as significant as state-based politics in matters of international politics, that war and peace cannot be divided into domestic and international categories, that there is no delineation between IR and Comparative Politics, that theory and theory building is an inherently political act, and perhaps most significantly, that knowledge cannot ever be truly objective and nor should that be a goal. Rather knowledge is socially constructed and conditioned, and therefore 'social context' is the basis of any claim of knowledge. From these assumptions, it is clear that the Kurdish

question is a question for IR. Not only does Kurdish nationalism affect the state actions of existing states in global politics, it is the very basis of state formation and state transformation. This should be one of the, if not the, most significant areas of study for a discipline that claims to examine global politics. In Edward Said's words, "Fields are made...", but so too are states. Not only are states made, existing ones evolve and no statist paradigm can see such a process if it limits itself to an examination of existing states and their respective foreign policies. Moreover, even the most ardent of realists or the most open of liberals must acknowledge the links between domestic social relations and a state's foreign affairs. Kurdish ethnonationalism is perhaps the most important social force within Turkey after only the Turks themselves. The conflict forms the basis of conflictual social relations within four states. The Kurdish consideration greatly affects both domestic and foreign policy within Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Moreover, the Kurdish conflict is a catalyst to the dominant role played by militaries and military elites in all of these states. These are all phenomena that cross disciplinary lines, and it is argued here that any delineation of this into purely statist or domestic frameworks would hinder an effective understanding of the interrelationship between the two.

Lastly, the Kurdish question is so vast and so complex that its focus must be narrowed down in order to provide some precision. This thesis's focus is mainly on the Kurdish people of Turkey. Of course, this will inevitably lead into their relationship and interaction with Kurds elsewhere, but the Kurds of Turkey

constitute the largest of the Kurdish minorities. Moreover the Turkish/Kurdish case plays well into the significant areas of transmigrations, diaspora communities, identity constructions within disparate Kurdish groups, language development, political organizations, and the role played by states and the international community. All of the above should help address the crucial questions: Why IR? Why Turkey? Why the Kurds?

CHAPTER TWO: THE LIMITS OF STATISM

Social Groups, the State and Conflict: The need to 'Bring Society Back In'

At the same time as the state system absorbs the entire world, the individual state may be losing part of its significance. ... But remember the definition of the state as an organization, controlling the principal means of coercion within a given territory, which is differentiated from other organizations operating in the same territory, autonomous, centralized and formally coordinated. If there is something to the trends we have described, they threaten almost every single one of these defining features....¹⁶

In 1975 Charles Tilly suggested that perhaps the state was in the process of losing part of its significance. In the classical sense of the definition of the nation state (a political entity which has population, territory, government and international recognition), perhaps it was true. However, twenty-five years have passed and it seems that the state is alive and well. Since the collapse of the Cold War system, the number of internationally recognized states has dramatically increased – and the number of ongoing conflicts over territorial jurisdiction is enormous. At the same time, many in the study of international relations and international political economy suggest that the close of the twentieth century showed a marked increase in the process of economic globalization in which transnational capital and the international division of labour are hallmarks of an

¹⁶ C. Tilly, "Western State-Making and Theories of Political Transformation," in C. Tilly, (ed.) The Formation of National States in Western Europe, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, p. 638.

integrated global capitalist system. In this sense, the role of the state in both its international and domestic contexts appears to be diminishing. The seeming rise in ethnonational movements and a rapidly integrating globalizing economy appear to be contradictory processes: one calls for more new nation-states to effectively administer national group interests, the other diminishes the traditional authority and need for nation-states altogether.

Perhaps Tilly's arguments are best described as an astute observation that the traditional significance of the nation-state is being called into question, but that states in their international (and domestic) roles have found new significance. On the one hand, states are at least in part responsible for fostering the conditions of globalization and do everything in their power to effectively regulate conditions favourable for the process (both internationally and internally). On the other hand, the very process of globalization has constructed a new set of international elites which brings impetus and vigour to ethnonational movements. This new category of privileged elites is the successful developed capitalist state itself. Only such a political entity (the folklore suggests) can ensure any ethnonational group or citizenry a 'fair share' of the international division of wealth and ensure their ethnonational survival in it.

The purpose of this chapter is to display how these two contradictory processes are in fact complementary, in order to develop fully a neogramscian conceptual framework of Kurdish ethnonationalism. First, the theoretical limits of a

statist understanding of 'international conflict' and 'national security' is required as these dominant approaches to the subject matter are wholly inadequate for understanding the Kurdish case. In the fields of both IR and Comparative Politics, conflict has traditionally been defined and conceptualized in purely statist terms. These statist understandings of international conflict have already been widely deconstructed by IR scholars. Often because conflicts that are 'civil' (or below the level of state-state politics) have had such an enormous impact upon global social and state relations, critical scholars such as Richard Ashley and Alexander Wendt have effectively demonstrated that 'statist' conflict analysis fails miserably in understanding its central objective – the basis of conflict. The most recent of these deconstructions (the agent-structure debate) is worth revisiting here for two central reasons.

Firstly, a political objective of this thesis is to give voice to the marginalized voices (and hence subject matters) of global politics. There can be no more marginalized a group than the Kurdish peoples of the Near and Middle East who continue to be systematically subjugated both by the silence of the international community, and by a number of states in that global community. To suggest that the 'relative'¹⁷ silence of the field of international relations in this regard is a result of

¹⁷ 'Relative silence', but still of great concern. As a cursory glimpse into the relative academic silence on the plight of the Kurdish people, the Library of Congress listed only 6 new English language books (edited and single-authored) in 1996. The best estimates suggest that the current Kurdish population is about 30 million in four states. In all but one of these states (Syria), the Kurds are engaged in low and high intensity conflicts. By brief comparison, the Library of Congress listed 189 new English language books on the Palestinian people – an ethnonational grouping whose population is perhaps 5 to 6 million, and a group whose prospects

the limits of the field's theoretical constructs is itself a political act. There is no 'theoretical objectivity' in narrowing a field of study in such a manner that it ignores those which are often the most crucial challenges it faces. The second reason to briefly revisit the agent-structure debate is to reveal how its impasse can be overcome effectively by a neogramscian alternative. The theoretical framework proposed here makes clear a distinct structural link between a globalized/globalizing definition of 'us/other' identities, and a similar process of defining the Kurdish people as 'other' by the groups who dominate them. This structural continuity is something that is missing in statist approaches to conflict specifically – and international relations generally.

Once the limits of statism have been established, this chapter will continue by examining the ethnocentric nature of understanding of the state itself in the literature of contemporary Social Theory and Comparative Politics. While the impasse created by statist assumptions in IR can be overcome by breaking through the traditional barriers of academic disciplines and drawing well developed concepts of state and society from related fields of study, the wholesale borrowing of needed conceptual clarifications comes with its own ethnocentric (and in this case, specifically Eurocentric) baggage. Even though theories of the state and social power are inadequately developed by scholars of IR, related fields of specialization that do address these concepts also have limitations. The particular type of ethnocentrism that is found in many theories of the state and society in Comparative

for peaceful national survival are greater now than any other point in the past forty years.

Politics is that derived mostly from the European experience of the state consolidation process. Though historically accurate and relevant to understanding state/social relations in modern developed societies (i.e. most western societies), a neogramscian conceptualization of the social relations is here redeveloped with specific reference to the Middle and Near Eastern historical experiences. Moreover, the conceptualization put forward here will not rely entirely upon historical experience as the basis for theory building, but will also seek to include the trends towards political, economic and social integration across state borders that have been widely addressed in the recent literature on interdependence and globalization. This has particular importance for the Kurdish case because, as already discussed, there is no other ethnonational movement that has experienced such a wide diversity of state and political environments all acting upon the movement at the same time. In this sense, the Kurdish case is inherently 'global' by virtue of their vast territorial and social influences.

Once a brief revisiting of the agent-structure debate and the limits of statist international relations is complete, Chapter Three will argue that the processes of globalization come at a cost – or at the very least, with profound political and social consequences. The cost is the marginalization of a number of social groups (sometimes, but not always, ethnic minorities). A working definition of globalization will be tabled that defines the process as far more than simply an economic trend. Globalization will be defined as the economic consequence of the

political project of modernity. Modernity,¹⁸ as a political and ideological project, has been transforming the state and nation-state before and throughout the twentieth century. It encompasses far more than globalization as a theoretical economic construct, and liberalism¹⁹ as a theoretical political construct. Moreover, this framework will be used to propose the neogramscian framework required to look at the case of Kurdish ethnonationalism within what will be called Kurdistan. It will be suggested that as Turkey attempts to join the new class of successful capitalist elites, it marginalizes its Kurdish minorities further, constructing their disparate identities into a (more or less) unified ethnonational grouping who themselves see the establishment of a modern state as the best means to ensure their national and economic survival within the global modernist capitalist system. However, the consequences of globalization condition ethnonational groupings in

¹⁸ Modernity is a difficult term at the best of times. An entire thesis on the concept might not even do it justice. A great many contemporary social scientists wield the concept like a brick. For our purposes, modernity is a term used true to Marshall Berman's definition: "...any attempt by modern men and women to become subjects as well as objects of modernization, to get a grip on the modern world and make themselves home in it." M. Berman, All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity, New York: Penguin Books, 1988, p. 8. This, of course, does not preclude the possibility that different and contending orientations regarding 'making themselves home in' the modern world do not exist at the same time.

¹⁹ It must be made clear that 'liberalism' in this context refers to the globalization of a single global economic market within the free market forces of global capitalism. E. Wallerstein, The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century, New York: Academic Press, 1974, Chapter One; E. Wallerstein, Historical Capitalism, New York: Verso, 1983. In this sense, globalization can be defined as primarily an economic process (a global 'level playing field'), with significant political consequences. As will be made clear later, such a definition is wholly inadequate for the purposes of this thesis.

different ways. Significantly for this thesis, the dominant national groups (those who capture and define state-based 'national interests') act upon and influence globalization in a manner which furthers their interests. The process of globalization then becomes part of the consolidation and perpetuation of a hegemonic consensus which assists in the construction of systematically subordinated ethnonational identities (the Kurds). In this sense, globalization is an inherently political process which has profound consequences for both the Turkish state (and the Turkish identity it claims to represent) and for the Kurdish minority.

The limits of statism,²⁰ and the Agent-Structure Debate

Alker and Biersteker's 1984 article "The Dialectics of World Order" points towards the theoretical hegemony of behavioural-neorealist approaches to

²⁰ 'Statist' refers specifically to what the literature often refers to as state-centric IR. For the most part, these are the traditions of 'classical realism', 'realism', and 'neorealism' (also referred to as structural realism, modified realism and scientific realism in the US, and neoliberalism or mainstream pluralism in radical discourses - especially in the UK). In this deconstruction, I use the specific terms 'realism' and 'neorealism' as given (I make no distinctions between the variations of neorealism). I have also put the 'neo' in neorealism in parenthesis (neo)realism when the deconstruction levelled at neorealism could be extended to also include classical realism - usually in relation to its state-centric assumptions. As well, as E.F. Keyman argues, the problems of state-centricity are also present in the study of Comparative Politics. In some cases, analyses are tied to their relationship to an understanding of the state, and in others, the state is only understood by its relationship to society. Keyman argues that the key to a balanced approaches lies in the ability to bridge this gap. It is for these reasons I avoid the term 'state-centric' (unless that is the term used in the literature to which I refer) here as it applies mostly to theories of international relations, and the impasse that is addressed in this thesis is one shared by statist IR and statist comparative politics. See E.F. Keyman, "Problematizing the State in International Relations Theory," in C. Turenne Sjolander and W. S. Cox (eds.) Beyond Positivism: Critical Reflections on International Relations, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994, pp. 153-181.

international relations theory.²¹ They direct our attention towards the reassertion of state-based IR theory in the 1980s, and (specifically for this research) the reassertion of understanding and managing conflict as the central problem confronted by this field of study. While neorealism differs from the classical approach (namely by its incorporation of a 'structural' mode of analysis at the macro or international level), it does retain some of the basic assumptions of the classical realist tradition. Crucial to this discussion, it must be noted that neorealist theories are 'state-centric' at the unit-level of analysis. More important, however, is the central problematique of neorealist theory; namely, questions of war and peace – and perhaps of even greater significance, how conflicts affect the behaviour of state-actors in global politics. While neorealism does attempt to examine a broader base of factors affecting actor behaviour than does the classical approach, questions of national security and international power relationships are nevertheless central to this theoretical tradition.

It seems appropriate then to examine the ability of statist IR to deal with ongoing protracted social conflicts. It will be demonstrated that even within the central problematique of the state-centric approach, we find a theoretical impasse which stems from a 'concept-driven' and 'problem-solving' field of study (as opposed to a truly theoretical one). This is derived from the fact that while statist IR is clearly state-centric, it has no developed social theory of the state. I suggest that it

²¹ H. Alker and T. Biersteker, "The Dialectics of World Order: Notes for Some Future Archaeologist of International Savoir Faire," International Studies Quarterly, 28:2 (June), 1984, pp. 121-142.

is 'concept-driven' and 'problem-solving' because its central concern lies in what statist IR narrowly defines as the subject matter of international relations – namely 'high politics', or the relations between states. When a serious protracted social conflict (such as is the Kurdish case) radically alters both the behaviours of state actors and their civil societies within, statist IR implodes theoretically. It does so precisely because the structural understanding of global politics (especially in the case of neorealism) does not extend into that which lies outside of its pre-defined subject matter – namely, it does not claim to offer a theoretical understanding of domestic politics and civil society.²² As the very nature of Kurdish ethnonationalism is itself a transnational phenomenon, statist IR can say very little about it. This is not just a tragedy for those who engage in (meta)theoretical debates of IR; it is a travesty, in the sense that an entire field of study becomes incapable of directing research to those very social processes and political events which so dramatically impact upon the lives of many citizens in the global community. Those marginalized voices remain so in perpetuity not because people 'just don't care', but because the scholars and experts have yet to develop the appropriate theoretical tools for understanding their plight. Tragic yes, but also ironic given that the clearly espoused goal of statist IR is to foster a better understanding of those issues important to global relations – namely issues of war and peace.

²² E.F. Keyman, *op.cit.*, p. 167.

State-centricity and no concept of the state

Richard Ashley posits that the neorealist approach to international relations theory is 'statist', resulting in its treating of the state unit as unproblematic.²³ Alexander Wendt furthers the argument by suggesting that neorealists' individualistic conceptualization of system structure implicitly suggests that the state is ontologically primitive and therefore neorealist theory is 'too weak' to support a social theory of the state.²⁴ The object of this section will be to explore these arguments in an attempt to suggest that statist IR is 'theoretically bankrupt' by virtue of being state-centric and yet unable to support a social theory of the state. The implications of this inability to conceptualize the state fully result in case-related academic research on social conflict that is based upon nothing more than vague generalities, offering an unfocused and distorted insight to the world 'as it is'. Moreover, the theoretical crisis based upon the conceptualization of the state (or lack thereof), makes statist IR and comparative social theory ineffective when dealing with conflicts such as the Kurdish conflict.²⁵

²³ R. Ashley, "The Poverty of Neo-Realism," in R. Keohane (ed.) Neorealism and its Critics, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 268.

²⁴ A. Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Affairs Theory," International Organization, 413 (Summer), 1987, p. 343.

²⁵ I am taking the assertion of Barry Buzan as a given. While Buzan and a number of other 'strategic' or 'conflict' analysts are clear that there are vigorous and significant debates within both classical realism and neorealism, all of the sub-fields of strategic studies and ethnic conflict analysis in IR work with statist assumptions in regard to the international system. In this sense, the theoretical limitations derived within what is termed here as 'statist IR' are as profound as (if not more profound than) within the sub-fields they spawn. B. Buzan, An Introduction to Strategic Studies: Military Technology and International Relations, London: Macmillan, 1987.

My first task here should not be too difficult. It will be to establish the state-centricism of (neo)realist theory. More important, however, will be to search for the basic assumptions behind the re-emergence of the 'state as actor' model and its general implications for international theory and conflict analysis. Both neorealist theorists and their critics agree that neorealism borrows the 'state as actor' assumptions from the classical realist tradition.²⁶ As Ashley suggests;

Thus, for the purposes of theory, the state must be treated as an unproblematic unity: an entity whose existence, boundaries, identifying structures, constituencies, legitimations, interests, and capacities to make self-regarding decisions can be treated as given, independent of transnational class and human interests, and undisputed (except, perhaps by other states).²⁷

Ashley goes on to suggest that the proposition that the concept of state might be considered 'essentially problematic' or 'contested' has basically been excluded from statist IR theory. Neorealism's response to such suggestions is to acknowledge problems of the state only to the extent that the state itself can mobilize resources towards 'domestic' concerns - if in fact the state is prepared to recognize such problems. This 'micro-ization' of what could potentially be trans-state phenomena is trivialized or ignored by neorealism's 'structural' component as the state is the primary theoretical agent, resulting in any structural observations being made at the 'supra' or 'macro' level only.

²⁶ H. Alker and T. Biersteker, *op.cit.*; R. Ashley, *op.cit.*; S. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: An Institutional Perspective," *International Organization*, 36 (Spring, 1985), pp. 185-205; and A. Wendt, *op.cit.*

²⁷ R.K. Ashley, *op.cit.*, p. 268.

We must also consider why statist conflict analysis continues to be the preferred understanding of international and social conflict, both throughout and after the Cold War. Joseph Nye suggests that the classical realist tradition was being seriously challenged by international events in the early 1970s.²⁸ He suggests that many came to question the state-as-actor model because there was widespread repugnance to the Vietnam War, détente was perceived to reduce the importance of nuclear competition, international trade grew more rapidly than world product, transnational corporations seemed to be developing patterns of international production, the 'Oil Crisis' gave the perception that 'weak states' could in fact be strong, and the perceived U.S. decline in economic predominance. While several of these assertions are questionable, there was clearly a response to these contextual perceptions within mainstream IR - particularly in the United States. Nye argues that many analysts overstated the obsolescence of the nation-state, the decline of force, and the irrelevance of security concerns in the 1970s.²⁹

Richard Little describes the re-emergence of the state-as-actor model in terms of an ongoing battle in the theoretical traditions of international relations theory. Little contends that the realist forces withdrew in retreat in the 1970s, only to regroup and mount a counter-attack under the flag of neorealism.³⁰ Of course,

²⁸ J. Nye, "Neorealism and Neoliberalism," World Politics, XL:2 (January, 1988), p. 236.

²⁹ ibid., p. 237.

³⁰ R. Little, "Structuralism and Neo-Realism," M. Light and A.J.R. Groom (eds.) International Relations, London: Pinter Publishers, 1985, p. 74.

neorealism, or scientific realism, as Richard Ashley has pointed out, had altered from the classical tradition namely by its attempt to incorporate a structural mode of analysis at the 'macro' level. Kenneth Waltz's Theory of International Politics has generally been regarded as the turning point in the re-emergence of the state-as-actor model.³¹ This may or may not be true; however, it clearly served as a theoretical basis for a wide range of problem-solving conflict analysis literature that proliferated in the 1980s and 1990s, largely, but not exclusively, from the United States.

Some of the implications of the statist approaches should be noted at this point. All sub-state and/or trans-state relations are inevitably reduced or imposed to state-level analysis, or ignored as superficial. Within or among states, notions of nationalism, ethnic self-determination, revolution, economic classes, inter- and intra-state trade, economic development, and regional disputes, to name but a few, are treated as sub-parts of a state-theory in which states are viewed as unitary power-maximizing actors. Even within the related field of Comparative Politics, where the relationship between state and society is often a primary theoretical concern, social and ethnic groups are understood primarily by their relationship to existing state-actors. Statist theories quite simply assume that states are the primary and most often unitary, actors against all evidence that might suggest otherwise. As Waltz contends, "[they] are individualist in origin, spontaneously generated, and

³¹ K. Waltz, Theory of International Politics, Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979.

unintended." ³² However, diaspora national groups, ethnic minorities within states, and multi-state nation-groups are skewed, or ignored, by (neo)realism's unitary state assumptions. These assumptions extend into the post Cold War era. For the most part, the resurgence of ethno-national studies views post Cold War ethnonational conflicts as merely a result of state fragmentation, and often the only political solutions deemed possible or acceptable is the reemergence of 'strong national states', or the creation of new ones. The sub-concepts of power, international organization, mediation, representation, economic development, refugee relocation, etc., are still thought of in purely statist terms. Ethnic and/or national identities are only significant either in relation to the 'national interest' of existing states, or significant in terms of their challenge to the existing international state order. Sub-state national identities are often not worthy of inquiry unto themselves. This becomes extremely significant in the case of Kurdish ethnonationalism when we look into the cultural understanding of states and state politics by a set of disparate identities that do not accept, and have never accepted the western ideal of the nation-state as legitimate. National identity and its necessary links to state politics is historically a European concept.

At the 'international' level, global collectivist actions are reduced to state-bounded relations. "In other words, global collectivist concepts - concepts of transnational class relations, say, or the interests of humankind - can be granted an objective status only to the extent that they can be interpreted as aggregations of

³² K. Waltz, op.cit., p. 91.

relations and interests having logically prior roots within state-bounded societies." ³³ Ashley's comments suggest that the state is regarded as ontologically prior to the international system. For neorealists, the international system is statist before it is structuralist. Moreover, such a perspective blurs, or eliminates, any insights toward many of the transnational or sub-national phenomena that Nye suggests challenged the classical tradition. In short, neorealism is regarded as a development of classical realism in response to the weaknesses of the classical tradition pointed out by concerned scholars in the 1970s and 1980s. Ashley suggests that not only does neorealism fail to address any of those concerns, its modifications open up a whole new set of limitations that are far worse than those limitations inherent in the classical tradition in the first place.

The structuralism of neorealism presents the agent-structure problem described by Alexander Wendt in 1987. Briefly, Wendt's observations were as follows. Neorealism considers the state agent an ontologically primitive unit. The result is a definition of system structures characterized by ontological reductionism.³⁴ The basic understanding is that the larger system structures only constrain the agency of preexisting states. The overall result is that neorealist structurationist theory cannot explain the emergence of existing states or generate new agents. This is highly problematic in a post Cold War era that is best characterized as in rapid flux – especially in regard to the emergence of new state

³³ R. Ashley, *op.cit.*, p. 270.

³⁴ A. Wendt, *op.cit.*, p. 342.

actors. In short, statist IR and Comparative Politics theories cannot develop an acceptable notion of change in the system or a social theory of the state:

The neorealist conceptualization of system structure is therefore too weak to support a social theory of the state: system structures cannot generate agents if they are defined exclusively in terms of those agents in the first place.³⁵

Kenneth Waltz responds to the suggestion that neorealism requires a social theory of the state by questioning the need for such an explicit theory within the broader context of systemic theories of international relations.³⁶ He argues that his theory responds to the existing international system by the observation of state-actors who act 'as if' they maximize power and wealth. However, 'as if' theory building is a clear indication that Waltz and others have built their vision of 'the world as it is' upon untheorized assumptions about international and social politics.³⁷

The untheorized assumption of statist IR (specifically the state-actor itself) present serious problems, particularly with regard to protracted social conflicts of a multi-ethnic or intercommunal nature. The inability to explain the emergence of nation-states themselves ignores the fact that the present international order is the historical end-product of everything that came before it. This fact has very serious implications for our understanding of the nation-state itself, and its imposition upon

³⁵ ibid., p. 343.

³⁶ K. Waltz, "A Response to my Critics," R. Keohane (ed.), Neorealism and its Critics, op.cit., p. 341.

³⁷ A. Wendt, op.cit., p. 341.

the non-European world. The unitary state-actors are differentiated only by their state sovereignty. For the statist, the sovereignty of the state means that only the state itself will decide how to cope with its internal and external problems.³⁸ While the concept of the sovereign state allows for some degree of legitimization regarding the state as a unit of analysis, it presupposes international society's creation of the state-system within which these autonomous variables interact. Many basic questions remain to be asked. How did these states come to be? By what means can new states be created? Why were they created in the first place? Who, or what, created them? How does this approach deal with the emergence of nationalist sentiment or the desire to create new state actors - as in the case of the Kurdish peoples? Does the Turkish national majority have the legitimate use of violence in dealing with national minorities by virtue of the fact that it is an internationally recognized sovereign state?

Ashley argues that the state-actor assumptions of neorealist theory suffer from the same critiques levied against utilitarianism by modern sociology. He argues that utilitarianism is characterized by its individualist and rationalist premises.³⁹ The individual state units exist prior to, and often independent of, larger social institutions. Social institutions are taken to be a consequence of the regularization of mutual expectations. Change therefore results as a consequence of changes in the demands and capabilities of the unitary actors. As Ashley argues,

³⁸ R. Ashley, *op.cit.*, p. 273.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 274.

modes of action, interaction, order, and change are deemed to be objective.⁴⁰ Economic rationality and the existence of an economy of universal norms are said to exist independently of any social-normative basis for the utilitarian model. With its state-actor as the basic unit of international analysis, statist social theory can be considered utilitarian in many respects.

These comments regarding the relationship between statism and utilitarianism are directly related to the crisis facing neorealist theory by virtue of being unable to conceptualize the nation-state successfully. It is difficult to understand how neorealists can envision any type of social order - either within or amongst state-actors. On the one hand, they assume a Hobbesian state of nature at the international level organized by power relationships resulting in some type of inter-state system (i.e. hegemonic stability, bi-polarity, etc.).⁴¹ However, rational self-interested actors would not become part of these larger organizations if they could 'free ride' from the benefits of other actors who pursue the same ends.⁴² Moreover, it is difficult to imagine the creation of nation-states themselves if the constituents within states existed in a similar state of nature before the creation of nation-states. Are we to assume that there are two states of nature - one within

⁴⁰ ibid., p. 275.

⁴¹ So serious is the 'Hobbesian impasse' (that is, a Hobbesian state of nature assumed at the international level, but not extended to the 'domestic' level), that Michael C. Williams suggests that perhaps a close reexamination of what Hobbes actually implied might provide a more complex (and theoretically consistent) 'state of nature' for IR theory. M. Williams, "Hobbes and international relations: a reconsideration," International Organization, 50:2 (Spring, 1996), pp. 213-236.

⁴² R. Ashley, op.cit., p. 278.

states, and another amongst them?

Utilitarian rationalism would suggest that rationalist self-maximizing actors could never create nation-states in the first place. By realist logic, states would have been created by alliances and power relationships of social groups within states - for example social classes, dominant national groups, or the desire for ethnic self-determination on the behalf of ethnic groups with the attributes to consolidate statehood. If this was the case, how could neorealist theory presume to be 'statist' before it is 'structuralist'? Wendt's agent-structure arguments are very powerful in this regard. Neorealists are taking a giant leap of faith, in terms of their own logic, to assume that states are unitary actors that preexisted the 'international state system'. Without a social theory of the state or any way to adequately connect sub- and trans-state social identities to existing states, it would seem unlikely that statist theorists could develop one. Ironically, what is generally termed 'state-centric' or 'statist' theory, has little or no social theory of the state. Their vision of international state structures are suspended in thin air conceptually.

A Marxist critique of the utilitarian 'state of nature' problem seems most appropriate to display some of the theoretical gaps in statist social theory. It would seem that the combination of a Hobbesian state of war, as well as stability through power relationships, would require some type of 'social contract' to enable the creation of nation-states. Clearly the holders of power would require the attributes, either internal or external, to maintain social order. Such an arrangement presupposes structural arrangements within, as well as amongst, states. Statists are

unwilling to concede to this logic at the 'domestic' level, and yet accept a hierarchy of power relations amongst state units themselves (i.e. small, medium, and great powers). The primacy of the state-agent within their structural theory is unsupported and therefore very difficult to accept.

In regard to the concept of power, the crucial attribute of the state-as-actor model, these theories are again bound by their own contradictory logic. For statist theories of IR and comparative politics, power is one of the core attributes that define the states themselves. Access to power, and the utilization of it, defines a state's status and role in the international realm. However, unable to create a social theory of the state, statist social theory has yet to define state-power adequately. Power for the neorealist international theory is therefore unmeasurable. States are differentiated by their sovereignty; however, sovereignty by itself does not define power. For the statist, power must always be reducible to capabilities. They accept military, economic, technological and other 'state' attributes as a basis to vaguely measure power. Are we to accept that one can only vaguely measure the military capabilities of the Turkish state in the civil conflict in Kurdistan, and that PKK and other Kurdish attributes are immeasurable? Surely there is a social basis to power, and surely it is significant in ensuring that the comparatively weak Kurdish military resources have not been overwhelmed by superior Turkish resources. These are questions that statist conflict analysis has continued to be unable to address effectively. They cannot address these questions (either theoretically or quantitatively) precisely because their larger state and international assumptions do

not open avenues for research that accept the social basis of power as legitimate and worthy of study.

As state-agents existed prior to their larger international systems, we are left to assume that states possessed these attributes before the emergence of an international state-system. Changes in the international political economy, military balances of power, or technological development within and amongst states, are often unexplainable for statist theories. (Neo)realism cannot accept systemic changes, the social basis of, or the social limits of the 'power bases' of state-actors.⁴³ Moreover, statist social theory and the research that is derived from its assumptions are forced to ignore, or trivialize, non-state agents that might possess power attributes and therefore effect change in the international system. Are we to assume that the Kurds do not affect state actions in the Middle Eastern region? Clearly they do. For the statist, this is difficult if not impossible to accept, as the Kurds are 'stateless' actors.

Joseph Nye suggests that classical realists had difficulty in determining how states defined their interests over time. While realists do admit that cooperation can be learned, as a theory realism says little about how state interests are formulated and redefined.⁴⁴ Neorealists, having borrowed the statism of the classical tradition, suffer from the same problems. By assuming that all states are unitary actors within a power-maximizing systemic relationship with other actors, we are left to believe

⁴³ R. Ashley, *op.cit*, p. 291.

⁴⁴ J. Nye, *op.cit* , p. 238.

that all states' interests are the same and do not change significantly. Only their 'power attributes' and relative position within the international system can affect their interests. This is simply not the case. Moreover, change in the international system cannot be explained by a change in the interests of the individual actors alone. If changes in the interests of individual actors could effect change in the international system (by itself a tenuous assumption) it would require the attributes to effect change in the larger international system. As those attributes (namely power within the structure and hierarchy) already control an actor's position and interests in the international system, it is difficult to see how national interests could play a role in the first place. By ignoring any substantial internal or trans-state systems, statism can only vaguely, statically, and imprecisely 'describe' an international system rather than define one.

Clearly statism has limited itself theoretically in regard to describing the world as it is, and how it evolves. Its state-as-actor assumptions create an inherent limitation that makes any social theory of the state almost impossible. Without an acceptable theory of the state it pronounces a 'systemic' or 'structural' concept of state-actors that is suspended in thin air theoretically. Moreover, it assumes that the state of nature that exists amongst states does not exist within states. It cannot explain the attributes of the state-actors that are crucial towards its international systemic vision. Likewise, it cannot effectively explain change in the international system as it has locked itself into a straightjacket of structural constraints with no micro-level systems supporting the macro-level system. By making the state

ontologically primitive within the system structure, statism has left itself little room to escape these criticisms and attempt to conceptualize the nation-state. In the final analysis it would seem that statism has the worst of two worlds. From the classical realist tradition it has taken the state-as-actor assumption that spawned an array of criticisms throughout the 1970s. Upon this, it built a structural theory and left itself wide open to the sociological criticisms of utilitarianism. If one believes that the social sciences can 'progress' by constructing social theories that learn from their predecessors, we must assume that neorealism is a 'giant leap backwards' as it has failed to learn much from either the classical realist or structuralist schools of international relations social theory.

Statist IR considers the effects of non-state actors upon the actions of existing states to be 'anomalous' behaviour. For example the tactics of the Palestinians in the past fifteen years have been deliberately designed to undermine the legitimacy and functions of the Israeli state. This 'unconventional' approach is not uncommon in national struggles whereby one nation-group is without a state. The various Kurdish ethnonational movements use similar tactics in three separate sovereign states simultaneously. The political and social tactics used by many ethnic and national movements seek to undermine basic assumptions about state power where they are most vulnerable. This is not just a theoretical discourse limited to the seminar rooms of IR departments throughout the world – it is the practical politics of ethnonational survival, and the often brutal tactics employed by all sides are a direct consequence of those basic assumptions made in 'the minds of men' about

state power, the legitimacy of violence, and the means by which national identities can survive. Guerrilla warfare tactics, and in recent years public uprisings and acts of public defiance, have been the attributes of Kurdish power. The most sophisticated, well trained, and disciplined soldier cannot force a guerrilla to stand and fight in unfavourable conditions when he does not want to. It might be easy to merely brush this aside as 'low politics' based upon one's theoretical assumptions, but that cannot ignore the fact that these ethnonational struggles do have a profound impact upon global and regional politics. The question for research then becomes: how do we fully understand the social basis of ethnic conflict and avoid the conceptual limitations of the statist lens?

As we have seen thus far, the dominant approach to understanding conflict internationally, regionally, and within states has been tied to statist assumptions. Before this thesis can move forward to a theoretical proposal that would, at least in part, provide a solution to this impasse, we must also look at the ethnocentric nature of what social theory understands to be the state. This next section moves forward from the debates of statism specific to conflict analysis and international relations, and considers the ethnocentricity of the western roots of state definition in the literature of comparative politics and contemporary social theory. As this thesis proposes to use much of this literature as an interdisciplinarian bridge to fully understand the social basis of the Kurdish conflict, it is essential to examine briefly the embedded Euro-centrism that the dominant vision of world history presented to us. This is particularly important in the case of the Kurds, as it will be argued here

that the type of state structures imposed upon existing Kurdish groups is one embedded in a larger European and Western project of political domination. So complete has this project been, that the Turkish people themselves propagate the ideal-type European nation-state as part of their rejection of their own Eastern traditions. In other words, the idea that the modern Turkish state should ideally be an ethnically Turkish nation-state is viewed by the dominant Turkish majority as the natural and inevitable path towards economic development, modernization, and western style secular liberalism.

In many instances, the Turkish version of the European ideal of nation-state has been replicated by Kurdish nationals who aspire to a similar ideal-type Kurdish nation-state. This mimicry has occurred regardless of the fact that historically the Kurdish understanding of 'statehood' was far more complex than simply 'one nation, one state'. The domination in thought of the political solutions to complex social issues has been so complete as to exclude the possibilities of other Kurdish and Ottoman experiments of loose federal systems. In the Turkish case, the relative political autonomy of ethnic minorities during the Ottoman period is now viewed as an Ottoman weakness that led to their ultimate decline relative to the great European powers. In the Kurdish case, the extreme cohesiveness of Turkish state-based national identity is viewed as the ultimate environment for Kurdish nationals. Of course, Kurdish nationals want their own state.

'Image', Society and State Formation

The idea that an 'image' is merely a construct that is grounded in fact only to the extent that it needs to be, is in the history of civilizations a modern idea. While there is no doubt that the modern notion of imagery implies only partial truth or an implied objective, we exploit and propagate modern imageries as do few civilizations before us. It is true that modern capitalism and advertising executives have developed 'image' and imagery to previously undreamed levels of sophistication; however, the modern image is not purely the domain of capitalism and its goal of profits.⁴⁵ It is almost ironic that states, governments, nations, and even individuals have become image-obsessed in a modern era driven by its love of progress, science, and the need for objective facts.⁴⁶

The modern distinctions between substance and image, news and entertainment, myth and reality, political objective and moral justification, 'fact' and fiction, are so blurred as to suggest that the (post)modern condition is not one of simple contradictions, but an unawareness of what is 'reality' that makes these simple dichotomies and contradictions impossible.⁴⁷ It may be true that this 'modern' problem is only possible because of an individual and societal need for objective and indisputable facts as the building blocks for applied knowledge. Before the Age of Reason and the advent of the modern scientific

⁴⁵ W. Cox and C. Turenne Sjolander, "The Global Village and the Global Ghetto: Realism, Structural Materialism, and Agency in Globalization," K. Burch and R. Denmark (eds.), Constituting International Political Economy: IPE Yearbook, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997, p. 150.

⁴⁶ ibid., p. 140.

and rational age, image was an inseparable part of the human condition and the collective social interactions that led to the political and social institutions whose evolutionary end products are modern nation-states. In contemporary terms, we view states as static, verifiable, definable institutions with clear attributes such as population territory and sovereignty. At one level, this is true. However, in historical terms we must view the modern nation-state as the end product of everything that came before it. Certainly one can see a clear historical relationship to the ideal-type national-states established in Europe out of the Westphalian system. But to suggest that this alone is the historical starting point of modern states is to ignore the inseparable social context from which they emerged. It is for this reason that the European self-image and image of Oriental 'otherness' is so significant for a full understanding of modern nation states, of Euro-centrism in general, and of Western hegemony specifically.

Westphalia and other 'myths' about Euro-state formation

There is little doubt that any discussion of modern nation-states will point to the emergence of the Westphalian system as both the historical and conceptual model for use in contemporary analysis.⁴⁸ As the story goes, the 'ideal-type' emerged out of a long ethnonational consolidation process that led to relatively

⁴⁷ ibid., p. 148.

⁴⁸ See, for example, B. Russett and H. Starr, World Politics: The Menu for Choice, New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1996, pp. 50-53.

homogeneous nation-states in Europe.⁴⁹ While the assumed homogeneity of European nation-states was (and to a large degree, still is) open to question, the eventual emergence of European global hegemony in the 18th and 19th centuries imposed this 'ideal-type' upon those peoples who became the subjects of Europe's imperial and colonial 'game of chess' into the 20th century. Still significant as the late 20th century grapples with the consequences of decolonization and the aftermath of the Cold War order, the 'ideal-type' national-states continue to inspire and be the justification for mass acts of both state and nonstate violence into the 21st century. The world's only true global hegemon (the United States), its partners in an increasingly globalized and polarized division of 'haves' and 'have nots' (Western Europe, and other advanced industrial democracies), and whatever other 'national actors' who can be persuaded to collude in the US's international goals, continue to rationalize the use of 'national defence assets' in pin-point, video-techno, and often painless (for 'us') acts of human slaughter (Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East, the Gulf War, and the 'Crisis in Kosovo'). In some cases, the costs in human life to the hegemon are high (Korea and Vietnam), in other cases the brunt of the loss is suffered by proxies (the Middle East, Central America, Africa), but in all cases, win or lose, the hegemon suffers but a fraction of the losses suffered by its opponents and proxies. However, for all sides, the national justification is both the cause and the solution, to these grisly events. Outside of the advanced and

⁴⁹ P. Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of Great Powers, New York: Random House, 1987, chapter one. Also see, H. Bull, The Anarchical Society, London: Macmillan,

well-consolidated national-states, it is the quest for national autonomy that often justifies massively organized acts of violence, regardless of whatever other economic or social subjugation defines these people's lives. In post-colonial Africa, parts of Southeast and Far Eastern Asia, South America, and North America, civil war and inter-ethnic rivalries have cost more lives in the 20th century than its two 'World Wars' combined.⁵⁰

It is the purpose here to revisit both the conceptual assertions, and some historical facts about the European state-building process. For the most part, contemporary western scholarship (Giddens,⁵¹ Mann,⁵² Tilly,⁵³ etc.) make a few huge assumptions about the European state formation process that are either historically insular and therefore incomplete, or are at very least open to question. For example, Anthony Giddens and Charles Tilly suggest that the model nation-state in Europe emerged out of a competition amongst European ethnic identities, and that the state consolidation process was slow and core-centered (i.e. Paris, London, Madrid, or Rome stretching into the hinterlands and absorbing identities through assimilation), and further that this process was

1977, Chapters 1 and 2.

⁵⁰ W. Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁵¹ A. Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

⁵² M. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

⁵³ C. Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

accelerated by the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason. By the time of the Enlightenment, most European states had begun to develop the scientific and economic infrastructures (both civic and military) to make territorially and demographically large states, as large as possible.⁵⁴

Absent from the contemporary western view of this state-consolidation process in Europe is any detailed discussion of European contact with and influence by the world outside of Europe itself. In this sense, the Giddens, Mann and Tilly historical versions of eventual Western hegemony are intrinsic to themselves. Absent from this version of events is the prospect that Euro-nation building was at least in part a collective response to non-European hegemony prevalent in the region in the 500-year period before the modern age of nation-states.⁵⁵ In particular, both the Persian and Ottoman Empires had an enormous impact upon both the imagery of the non-European world, and perhaps more significantly upon the European self-image.

A second huge assumption made by historical sociological understandings of European state-based hegemony is its ahistorical statist logic. For the most part historians such as E.H. Carr⁵⁶ and Paul Kennedy,⁵⁷ political

⁵⁴ B. Russett and H. Starr, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

⁵⁵ Russett and Starr's basic text on International Relations (IR) goes so far as to suggest that if students of IR want a more comprehensive and non-European understanding of state formation, that they should 'leave the discipline' altogether and read the literature of Comparative Politics. In particular, they cite William McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power* (1982) as a place to start. Russett and Starr, *op.cit.* p. 51.

⁵⁶ E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, London: Macmillan, 1939.

scientists such as Charles Tilly⁵⁸ and Joseph Nye,⁵⁹ or sociologists like Michael Mann⁶⁰ and Anthony Giddens,⁶¹ all assume that nationally and ethnically based identities and their agents (empires, early states, armies, etc.) were the only significant social influences upon the state-formation process⁶². Little or no mention is made of perhaps the greatest social struggle of the 500 years prior to the Age of Reason – the Christian/Islamic rivalry. There can be no doubt that this intense rivalry, with its affiliated powerful institutions (in Europe in particular), was of enormous significance in the construction of the European self-image, and the constructions of their images of ‘others’. Moreover, the early interrelationship between Christianity and the monarchies in Europe during the state-consolidation process was intensely affected by the drive of various forms of Christianity to push its influence both within European societies, and into the non-western world.

There is little doubt that the most powerful of Christian institutions in Europe viewed Ottoman control in the Middle Eastern region (the most sacred of lands) with intense concern – and implied rivalry. Given these clear social

⁵⁷ P. Kennedy, op.cit.

⁵⁸ C. Tilly, op.cit.

⁵⁹ J. Nye, Bound To Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power, New York: Basic Books, 1990.

⁶⁰ M. Mann, op.cit.

⁶¹ A. Giddens, op.cit.

⁶² On the statism of these historical/sociological perspectives and the need to

and religious contexts alone, it is obvious that Euro-centric, statist historical accounts of modern state formation that start at the Westphalian system, exclude the possibility that, at least in part, it was a response to prior Persian and Ottoman hegemony. The idea that European state formation was in this sense a counter-hegemonic strategy presents a historical context to the Euro-centric historical accounts of their own greatness. Even Edward Said's influential text on Orientalism can be viewed as one in which its historical account of European hegemony begins too late to fully capture the prospects that modern state formation was (at least in part) a response to the influence of great(er) powers at that time. While Said may have accurately conceptualized the occidental tendency to construct an image of the Orient in relation to a superior European self-image in the 18th and 19th centuries, this was in fact long after the beginning of the process that led to Europe's relative position as global hegemon. Prior to the period of Said's analysis, European self-images were not yet consolidated around homogeneous ethno-national identities, economic and social 'progress' had yet to be catalyzed by 'the age of science and reason', and politically effective large nation-states had yet to be consolidated. As a result, a European self-perception of relative subordination to the large and powerful Ottoman Empire (whether real or not) must be considered as at least in part a socially and historically significant driving force that eventually led to the Westphalian state system.

bring 'society back in', see, F. Keyman, op.cit., p. 167.

Euro-centrism, statism, and the forgotten lessons of the Ottoman Empire

The interrelationship between Christianity and the peace at Westphalia is clear. In fact, the first of sovereign rights granted to European monarchs in the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 (about one hundred years before Westphalia) were those rights that granted only monarchs the right to determine the religion of a given territory.⁶³ Territory was tied to religious authority, and by extension that authority was granted to the sovereign. Though this later became significant in Northwestern Europe in the 17th century, the emerging city states of the Balkans and Christian enclaves in the Middle East (especially Constantinople and Jerusalem) were considered important outposts for Europe's prevention of a possible expansion of Eastern religions into the European continent.⁶⁴ In fact, as Paul Kennedy and others have argued, the granting of sovereign rights and the very notion of territoriality were directly linked to the expansion and solidification of Christianity in Europe.⁶⁵ Unlike the diffusion of powers in the non-western world, where, for example, a higher authority superseded the sovereign in the Arab Islamic world, or loose federal systems existed in India, China and Middle Asia, the period of 1555 to 1648 in Europe was one of the legal establishment of 'rights' to entrusted elites (the sovereign) in the name of Christian expansion.

⁶³ B. Russett and H. Starr, *op.cit.*, p. 53

⁶⁴ R. Cranfield, *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 92-93.

Clearly the European notion of undivided territorial sovereignty was to take on an entirely new significance with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War and the idea that territory, and the protection thereof, were the legitimate grounds for war making and the related concept of sovereign, or national, defence. It is almost ironic that the inter-Christian conflicts within Europe through the 16th and early 17th centuries led to the secularized nature of European statism. In the aftermath of inter-Christian conflicts, European monarchs took advantage of the widespread devastation and increased the speed of their state-consolidation process. At the same time, these emerging states worked closely with local Christian churches, and eventually assisted in the formal institutionalization of Christian churches on a more national and territorial line.⁶⁵ Out of the experience of the Thirty Years War the secularization of the state had several very significant consequences. The first of these was the interrelationship between the 'moral authority' of Christian Churches, and the 'legal authority' of states themselves. Clearly Montesquieu wrote within a context of a collective European moral superiority that is derived from his preference for this secular division. His definition of Oriental despotism is a clear reflection of the European tendency to portray the non-European world in subordinate terms. Though not all European sovereigns represented the values of the same Christian churches in his time, they at least understood the 'civic'

⁶⁵ P. Kennedy, *op.cit.*, Chapter 1.

⁶⁶ See J. Herz, "Rise and Demise of the Territorial State," *World Politics* 9, 1957, pp. 473-493.

divide, the need for rights, and all other 'facts' which separated Europeans from the slavish and despotic tendencies of those from the more moderate climes. Of course, Montesquieu, by way of travellers' accounts, failed to mention the Oriental image of Christian enclaves as barbaric outposts of infidel Europe.

The second significant factor emerging out of the establishment of modern states in Europe in the 17th century was the European preference for sovereign states based upon ethnic or national identities. This was in fact, very unlike any of the 'Great Empires' in Europe or the region up until the 17th century. Certainly the Holy Roman Empire, the Persian and Arab Empires, and the Ottoman Empires can all be described as fairly loose national federations⁶⁷ by comparison to the nation-states consolidated in Europe through the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Much has been written of the national focus of European state building, and certainly the secularization of state-based politics that led to the legitimacy of the sovereign is clearly tied to a need for ethnically

⁶⁷ The "term loose national federation" refers specifically to the political arrangements of the Ottoman Sultans in the establishment of the Empire over a period of roughly 400 years. In some cases brutal military conquest of existing territories and empires resulted in a type of military occupation. However, unlike the European experience of attempted national and ethnic assimilation in the European state formation process, the Ottomans were less interested in ethnic assimilation and more interested in political, military and economic control. In other cases (especially in the case of the various Kurdish tribes in the East), the Ottomans opted for a set of agreements that allowed for local and ethnonational indigenous governments to remain intact, but under the larger umbrella of the Empire. As a whole, the Ottoman Empire was a set of arrangements (in some cases military occupation, in others by political agreement, in others formal treaty arrangements, and in some cases, alliances). The end result was no overall and systematic means of control, but a set of arrangements to suit each individual case. Given that all national minorities controlled by the Ottomans were allowed linguistic and the right to national self-

homogeneous states. Whether or not this led to more effective political organizations was open to dispute (and still is), but the rights of the sovereign to consolidate identities by whatever means possible was not a peaceful process. Hence, war making in the name of the sovereign became intrinsic to state-based identity construction, and religion continued to be its moral fibre.

As a consequence, while the non-European world was characterized as inherently slavish and despotic, its often loose forms of national federation were discredited by the European preference for highly centralized nation-states. This seems almost contradictory considering the often violent and brutal nature of European state-based national policies, but the 'legitimate' use of violence in the name of the national interest was considered (by Europeans) as civil, acceptable, and for the greater good of all. The eventual, and in the end rapid, collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century seemed to most Europeans the inevitable demise for an overextended and loose form of political organization. The very fact that the Ottoman Empire was unable to successfully maintain sovereign control over its peripheries whose ethnic and religious identities were never assimilated into mainstream Turkish society, seemed to verify every European preconception of what nation-states should be. Even into the 20th century, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire is viewed as a victory of Christianity over Islam, liberal democracy over despotism, West over East, and civility over slavish barbarism. In fact, such an opinion eventually came to

identification, I call this arrangement a form of loose federalism.

predominate in the collapsing empire itself, and the modern secularized and centralized Turkish nation-state is replete with unsuccessful attempts to assimilate its Kurdish minorities, and a denial of everything 'Oriental' in its present and past.

Conclusions

As stated at the outset, the imagery of the 18th century cannot be separated from the political and social context from which it emerged. Imagery entails both fact and fiction, but even fiction acquires relevance when it becomes the motivation for not just a specific world vision, but a world vision that causes individuals and entire societies to act in certain ways. Clearly the combination of a sense of moral superiority and the legitimization of sovereign violence gave Europeans cause to establish and enforce their 'just causes and forms of statehood' on non-European peoples everywhere. The eventual acceptance of not just European superiority, but the ideal-type secularized nation-state in the former Ottoman Empire itself should be ample indication of the totality of the Euro-statist project. Unlike the Empires before it, Euro-centrism was (and continues to be) able to construct in the minds of both the dominant and subordinate social collectives, a sense that this is an acceptable and natural order.

We have seen here both the theoretical limitations of statism, and the

implications of Euro-centrism upon our understanding of the modern state. The importance of such observations cannot be overestimated. As Alker and Biersteker have pointed out, the state-as-actor model of international relations theory has successfully reestablished itself as the dominant 'paradigm' in international theory generally, and conflict analysis specifically. Moreover, these theoretical traditions propose to address a central problematique of international conflict and power relationships. In Comparative Politics and contemporary social theory, social conflicts are understood by their relationships (civil) to state authority. It should be clear that the basic assumptions of statist theory are not exclusively the domain of 'pure theory'. In matters of praxis, similar assumptions affect the way many, leaders and individuals, perceive the world 'as it is'.

CHAPTER THREE: IDENTITIES AND STRUCTURES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

The global context of identity construction: statism and globalization

Unlike most national movements that reside primarily in one or perhaps two existing sovereign states, the Kurdish peoples reside in four states in which they claim some right to territoriality, and have been widely dispersed throughout parts of Russia, Europe, and North America. This diffusion of peoples who continue to claim a single national identity presents some interesting and complex questions for this increasingly globalized case of ethnonationalism. At the same time, the dominant national majorities in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria also confront the realities of an integrating, and globalizing, economic and political culture that some claim erodes traditional conceptions of national identity. This is particularly true in the case of modern Turkey, a state that aspires to be integrated into the single European economy in the 21st century. It is with the above considerations that this chapter constructs a neogramscian framework of social and ethnic identity that allows for a better understanding of the myriad of contexts that condition contemporary Kurdish ethnonationalism.

Much has been said in the recent literature on the international political economy about the phenomenon of globalization. It is argued here that globalization is not merely an 'economic' process in which national borders become increasingly irrelevant as international capital and labour become mobile, but rather

a sociopolitical process in which the relationship between states, civil societies, labour and capital are in transition.⁶⁸ Globalization is not just a recent phenomenon typified by the economic integration of Western Europe or the emergence of regional political economies in Asia and North America, but a long-term historical process that has been occurring since (at least) the industrial revolution. It is a process in which political and social relations have become increasingly global as the international capitalist and social order construct the capability to integrate both economic and social relations at a global level. The process has, of course, not been even and the relative levels of social and economic development are varied. However, modern industrial liberal capitalist pluralist societies have been the ideal - - even throughout the Cold War.⁶⁹ Within the discourse of literature on international relations, the tendency has been to explain globalization as primarily an economic process. In part, this is true. But emphasis on the economic aspects of globalization (in particular transnational capital, production and labour) reduces the political and social consequences of this long-term historical process to a consequence of economic globalization. However, it is argued here, the two (economic and social) are inseparable and depend upon each other for the process to continue. Neither is possible without the other. In the language of contemporary political philosophy,

⁶⁸ See for example the work on globalization by R. Robertson, Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture, London: Sage, 1992.

⁶⁹ R. Barnett and J. Cavanagh, Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations and the New World Order, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994, p. 13.

globalization is the inevitable product of a dominant global culture consumed by the post-enlightenment theology of modernity.

It is no coincidence that the emergence of modern liberal democracies arrived concurrently with merchant capitalism. The expansion of the democratic electorate within Western societies arrived simultaneously with the expansion of the working class, the emergence of the welfare state arrived with the transition from labour intensive capitalism to industrial capitalism, and so on. In all cases, the state was part of the process leading to the conditions in which capitalism and social relations could transform themselves – and that very same state modified its social structures and roles to ensure that the process could continue. As the 20th century draws to a close, capitalism seems to be transforming yet again (this time globally) and we should expect that state-society relations will change along with it.

It would be a tragic oversimplification to attempt to understand globalization as a purely economic process. With it comes new and uncharted relationships to civil societies: how identities are constructed and modified, and what the perceived political solutions are to grievances with the dominant social, economic and political orders. Of particular significance to this study, globalization is intimately tied into the processes of state (trans)formation, the construction of identities, and economic and social integration. These structural processes proceed at both the level of civil society and the relations of states at the global level. Statist social theory has thus far

only begun to understand such a process at the global level, irrespective of the huge social transformations brought about by globalization at the level of civil society.

Like all other major transformations in the role of the state and its relation to social groupings and classes, the globalization process has been pushed ahead largely (but not exclusively) by those states and political economies which occupy the core of the global capitalist system. Charles Tilly's observations at the outset of Chapter Two were written at a time when theorists of international relations began to ponder European integration, which in terms of this discussion was/is the next natural evolutionary step in globalization.⁷⁰ Working in concert with multinational European capital, states appropriated the globalization project and modified their roles to push it forward.⁷¹ Of course, the push toward European integration was in part a result of the perception that Europe needed such a common economic union in order to compete with the dominant American economy and the emerging Japanese economy into the 21st century. The emergence of regional trade blocs in North America and Asia can in part be explained by a similar perception (especially in response to the success of Europe's example). While the regulations of the regimes constructed (and the comparative role of the state) in the regionalization of

⁷⁰ C. Tilly, op.cit., p. 638.

⁷¹ C. Pentland, International Theory and European Integration, New York: Free Press, 1973; J. Harrop, The Political Economy of Integration in the European Community, New York: Edward Elgar Ltd., 1989.

political economies throughout the 1980s and 1990s are different, the end result is the same. At least in economic terms, states were scrambling to deal with a global capitalist system that was increasingly and more obviously global than it had previously been. What then have been the consequences of this process for individual states in the international system that have felt the threat of marginalization by this rapid process? Much could be said about the consequences of globalizing capital on the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the attempts to integrate Eastern Europe into the economically dominant West. However, the process of globalization (even as it is discussed in the literature as basically an economic process) has had profound effects for those states and economies in the semi-periphery. No better example can be found than that of Turkey.

Now that Chapter Two has explored the theoretical and ethnocentric limits of statism with particular reference to the limitations in understanding the social basis of ethnonational conflict, we must proceed to examine the most significant structural phenomenon conditioning the relationship between the Turkish and Kurdish peoples – that of globalization/modernization. First, this chapter will examine the attempts to tie identity to sovereign territory prevalent within statism. This is being done because of the general assumption that those conflicts most worthy of study are those that challenge the territorial integrity of the existing state system. However, as will be discussed, the compression of space that has resulted from the inter-connectedness found in globalization has seriously eroded the need for

territorially defined social movements. This is particularly true in the case of the Kurdish people. It will be argued that statist understandings of the globalization phenomenon have responded to this process by attempts to 'territorializing' that which is inherently a trans-state phenomenon.

The territorialization of this complex economic and social process is being done in ways not unfamiliar to realists – namely around the central concept of the sovereign state. Borrowed from the statist logic of classical realism, the tradition constructs simplistic dualist categories ('us' and 'other') in its vision of a globalized world. Of course, these simplistic dualisms are a mere generalization, but they have been appropriated by the statist logic of the Kemalists in Turkey in their bid to build a modern Turkish nation-state. In neogramscian terms, this appropriation of the statist construction of the 'us'/'other' dichotomy by Turkish nationals provides the key to understanding fully the relationship between dominant and subordinate national identities in Turkey's civil society, and increasingly, outside of Turkey's territorial sovereignty. It is a process in which both the Kurds and the Turks accept a definition of 'Kurdishness' in relation to the dominant Turkish social order. This imposed definition of a singular Kurdish 'other' is one that is not based upon anything inherently Kurdish. It is a process that empowers the Turkish national majority in a myriad of complex and subtle ways. Even though the definition of a singular Kurdish 'other' is a poor reflection of the social complexities within the Kurdish communities, many Kurds accept this monolithic classification. As a result,

the strategies for ethnic survival for many Turkish-Kurds has been to develop a multiple identity – one that is outwardly Turkish, and inwardly Kurdish. With a suppressed private ethnic identity that continues to be a part of how Kurds define themselves, and greater access to communications technologies that transcend territorial and social borders, the Kurdish movement in Turkey has been able to more effectively (re)connect itself nationally and globally. As a result, this has pushed their struggle outside of territorially defined politics. In short, the Turkish state continues to rely upon the mechanisms and tactics of state-based politics in dealing with what has been rapidly transforming into a non-state social and political movement. The harder the Turkish state tries to repress its Kurdish minorities, the more conscious many of its Kurdish citizens become (both inside of and outside of Turkey itself) of their repressed private identity.

Into the 1990's: statism, territorialization, 'us' and 'other'

Contemporary realist literature, confronted by the contradictions of globalization, has in the main proposed a return to the 'core' (realist) concepts of the discipline of international relations: the sovereign state, (state) power, anarchy, and national (thereby global) security. New 'transnational' or 'globalized' challenges to state authority – and therefore potentially to state primacy – are offered up for 'territorialization'.

The 1990s ... demand a redefinition of what constitutes national security. In the 1970s the concept was expanded to include international economics as it became clear that the U.S. economy was no longer the independent force it had once been, but was powerfully affected by economic policies in dozens of other countries. Global developments now suggest the need for another, analogous, broadening of the definition of national security to include resource, environmental, and demographic issues.⁷²

The Cold War system that dominated the realist interpretation of global politics throughout a good part of the 20th century presented an easy model from which the dualist categories of 'us' and 'other' could be constructed. Each side in a balance of power system constructed itself as 'us', and imposed the notion of 'otherness' upon their adversary in an often crude (yet politically effective) way. In many respects, the conceptual contribution of the Cold War was to enshrine the construction of the geopolitical/territorial 'us' and 'other'. With the collapse of the Cold War, however, the legacy of the 'us' versus 'them' dualisms continues to persist in a globalizing world, with predictable consequences for our understanding of globalization.

With the end of the Cold War and the East-West conflict, Europe is confronted by a number of new issues and realities. The new dangers to its peace and security arise not only from military factors but also from ethnic and territorial disputes, as also from political and economic instability, nuclear proliferation, intense nationalism, problems of economic development, migration of refugees, and environmental pollution.⁷³

⁷² J. Tuchman Matthews, "The Environment and International Security," in M. T. Klare and D. C. Thomas, (eds.), World Security: Challenges for a New Century, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994, p. 274.

⁷³ K.J. Rajendra, "European Security after the Cold War," International Studies,

For realists, the end of the Cold War has not meant the end of the anarchic global environment in which states use their 'power' to pursue national interests. As Rajendra argues, the collapse of the Cold War system has brought about a situation in Europe in which all is different – and yet, still the same. Obviously, the balance of power scenario pitting East against West is largely a thing of the past, but not absent are realism's basic assumptions about the central actors in global politics, the conditions under which those actors exist, and the circumstances under which stability can be achieved under the conditions of anarchy. The host of new challenges to (state) security are understood within the context of theoretical lenses which compartmentalize those challenges. The end of the Cold War may have brought about dramatic global transformations, but one can be forgiven for asking of realism: what has really changed – does the incorporation of new 'global' challenges significantly alter the theoretical constructs of realism themselves? For some, the only real change which globalization has brought about is marked in the absence of the Cold War system, and its absence is to be decried.⁷⁴

"Today, notwithstanding the reality and exaggeration of transnational phenomena, world politics is still keyed to territorially based and defined states."⁷⁵

31:4, 1994, p. 399.

⁷⁴See, for example, J. Mearsheimer, "Why We will Soon Miss the Cold War," Atlantic Monthly, August 1990, p. 266.

⁷⁵C. Gray, "The Continued Primacy of Geography," Orbis, Spring 1996, p. 248.

With these words, Colin Gray re-emphasizes the permanent feature of geopolitics: by its very definition, it is territorially based. As such, sovereignty and state power continue to be "pervasive in world politics."⁷⁶ Power relations among states result in power systems which are, for realists, relatively stable and therefore relatively peaceful. During most of the 20th century the important 'others' were those who attempted to challenge the stability of an international system of state-based power relationships. As Morgenthau himself argued, it is the state that ensures relative stability – if not 'peace' – at the level of domestic society, and it is the state that delineates the realms of domestic and international politics.⁷⁷ Given the desire for stability – if not 'peace' – at the level of the international system, the task of identifying 'good/us' and 'bad/other' states becomes fairly easy. 'Good' states are those that do not challenge the status quo of an international system of state-based relations. 'Bad' states are those that challenge the territory and therefore the sovereignty, of existing state units. Within this realist logic, and from a Western perspective, the construction of the image of the Soviet Union as an expansive and aggressive empire became relatively simple. The Soviets were evil, land grabbing, and therefore intrinsically 'other'. Of course, the construction of 'other' within the context of the Cold War was a two-way street; the U.S. was equally defined as

⁷⁶ ibid., 248.

⁷⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, 5th edition, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973, p. 479.

'other', the seat of an expansionist capitalist empire. What is important here is that 'otherness' became constructed by reference to a territorial, state-based, 'us', a theoretical construct which has not waned with the end of the Cold War standoff.

Following upon this, in the wake of the collapse of the Cold War system, Saddam Hussein's greatest transgression was not to be found in his genocidal treatment of domestic Kurdish populations, but in the violation of the 'basic rules of conduct' governing the behaviour of states in the international system; that is, he posed a threat to (state) sovereignty. His other transgressions were fodder for the construction of an image of the Iraqi state and citizenry (under the individualized label of 'Saddam') as evil, despotic, anti-western, and anti-progressive. In short, Saddam Hussein became the personification of 'otherness' regardless of the political and social context from which his and the Iraqi state's actions emerged.⁷⁸ Much has been said on the construction of 'otherness' (indeed, evilness) in the rhetoric of IR, but the central point here is that the use of such dualisms, fundamental to realism, did not end with the Cold War, and remains central to realism's theoretical construction of the post-Cold War (globalizing) world. Of course, it is possible to argue that the case of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait could only support the construction of territorially based dualisms given that it involved states as central

⁷⁸ W. Cox, "The Politics of Violence: Global Relations, Social Structures, and the Middle East," in Claire Turenne Sjolander and Wayne S. Cox (eds.), Beyond Positivism: Critical Reflections on International Relations. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, p. 77.

actors. However, the internal confusion and strife inside Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War (both religious and ethnic) suggests that for Iraq at least, the portrayal of that state as a unified territorial international actor was a tenuous assertion at best, and a convenient political tactic on the part of the Allies at worst.

The final section of this thesis will suggest that the current trend in Kurdish ethnonationalism has been one marked by an increasing de-territorialization of the movement. This has occurred for obvious demographic reasons (mostly massive Kurdish relocations), and because our increasingly integrated and globalized political culture has made such a de-territorialization possible – and in some cases, preferred. While the Kurds are an excellent example of ‘cyber-nationalism’ and the use of modern technologies to politicize and (re)construct ancient identities, they are not the only case. A current discussion within realism calls for the ‘territorialization’ of that most ‘global’ of phenomenon – cyberspace. The territorialization of cyberspace provides us with an excellent example of the ways in which realist discourse appropriates a phenomenon that seems to permeate the sovereign boundaries of the territorial ‘us’ and ‘them’ into a theoretical model that must reestablish those boundaries as they provide the central agency within realism. Sovereign states, it is argued, need to use this manifestation of globalization in order to advance state power – and therefore to ensure geopolitical stability through the

exercise of hegemonic control.⁷⁹ Territorialization of that which has so far largely defied territory is not only necessary to preserve state control, it is the only possible 'solution' which can be proposed to the anarchy of the Internet by a perspective which continues to privilege the state as the foundation of international politics.

The information revolution often associated with the processes of globalization is not so easily compartmentalized, and yet realist tools are deployed in a similar fashion to understand it. Cyberspace, currently a potential 'other', can be 'tamed' (and made 'us') in one interpretation through the creation of an information monopoly that deliberately imposes a hegemonic order not unlike that described by the hegemonic stability theories of the Cold War era. The new hegemonic order, however, is one in which state security apparatuses engage in the territorialization of cyberspace. Control over the emerging information highway holds the potential, in

⁷⁹ Martin Libicki describes this process of hegemonic control in a strikingly realist manner. He argues that:

In some ways, extended information dominance is a version of traditional arms shipments. But supplying bitstreams has several advantages over supplying arms. First, bitstreams do not leave the kind of fingerprints that arms do. Secondly, bitstreams multiply forces while arms add to them. Thirdly, bitstreams are easier to deliver and easier to turn off.... Fourthly, once a bitstream is generated, making a second copy is cheap, while a tank sent abroad is a tank one no longer has. Lastly, offering allies specific illuminated vision of the battlespace does far more to lend one's own perspective on the conflict than the mere provision of material can.

M. Libicki, "The Emerging Primacy of Information," Orbis, Spring, 1996, p. 267.

this reading, to replace the coercive tools of military force predominant throughout most of the 20th century.

As Martin Libicki has argued:

Information can make [such] intervention easier and reduce the still immense geographical impediments to conventional military assistance. If warfare evolves to hide-and-peek, and seeking systems can be unplugged from the forces they serve, the United States may be able to help almost as much as it does now with conventional arms and personnel, but more frequently and for far longer with indirect rather than direct assistance. By extending information dominance to its allies, Washington can itself remain concealed while multiplying its allies' power – in some respects, by ten – or a hundred-fold.⁸⁰

Libicki then goes on to suggest that globalized information creates political stability at the level of international relations since it promotes "transparency of action," which makes the manipulation of destabilizing events and political protest movements effectively impossible.

From a broader perspective, a global watch on the global village may actually be conducive to the kind of world the United States seeks.... With the United States' global military dominance essentially assumed, every other power operates at a disadvantage. It must challenge the status quo in order to achieve equality.⁸¹

At the same time, however, Libicki readily admits that his central thesis presupposes that stability can be achieved through the American monopolization of cyberspace. Without such a monopoly on the diffusion of information and information technologies, 'others' (developing countries, in his estimation) can create havoc

⁸⁰ ibid., p. 266.

through the attempted control over, or interruption of, cyberspace, and thus attempt to challenge U.S. hegemony. If there is no effective hegemonic control, therefore, "....the world's descent into crime, chaos, corruption, and craziness would require that too much energy be spent to protect civilization and too little to expand cyberspace."⁸²

Libicki's comments are significant in that they represent both a theoretical and a real appropriation of the mechanisms of globalization by realist thought. The arguments of Colin Gray, Martin Libicki, and other realist scholars of contemporary geopolitics suggest that the post-Cold War era is one in which increased attention is placed upon the need of states to reassert 'control' in the face of a transnationalized or globalized reality in order to ensure stability into the 21st century. The irony, of course, is that it is only through the imposition of the territorialized dualist categories of 'us' and 'other' that the global can be apprehended, and potentially controlled. The environmental crisis, the proliferation of narcotics, the profound demographic shifts, and even the emerging cyberspace, must be understood territorially, or they cannot be 'managed' – understood – at all. Global processes which put into question the centrality of the state (as an important source of information and the manipulation of it, for example), are themselves 'other' (threatening, representing different values), and must be territorialized in order to

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 271.

become 'us'. What is central is that the construction of 'us' and 'other' depends, much as it did during the Cold War, upon the existence of state sovereignty and territory – upon the possibility of externalization.

Of course, as globalization entails a splintering of civil society at the same time as it universalizes economy, politics, culture and ideology, 'others' are increasingly evident within the territorially defined 'us'. Here too, realists have tried to externalize 'the enemy within'. As Michael Desch has argued, realist theory assumes a link between the end of the Cold War and the emergence of domestic instability in industrialized societies:

The longer the period of reduced international security competition, the more likely are developed states to be plagued by the rise of narrow sectoral, rather than broad encompassing, interest groups. Recently, the United States has experienced increased manifestations of dissatisfaction with the broad scope of the federal government.⁸³

Beyond a call for the creation of further war systems and the multiplication of external threats,⁸⁴ the construction of the "enemy within" corresponds equally well to the Cold War's need for 'otherness'. While the preferred option remains territorial externalization – Mexico pulls jobs out of the United States (the "great sucking

⁸² ibid., p. 273.

⁸³Michael C. Desch, "War and strong states, peace and weak states," International Organization, 50:2, Spring 1996, p. 260.

⁸⁴Desch goes so far as to argue, in a traditional realist vein, that "war, and other external threats play an ongoing role in expanding the scope and maintaining the cohesion of many states." ibid., p. 237.

sound"), the 'Arabs' bomb the World Trade Centre, and in the original press release, are responsible for the Oklahoma massacre, Colombia is responsible for the U.S. drug problem, Japan is responsible for the performance of the U.S. economy – the construction of a domestic 'other' is possible. The Michigan Militia, for example, and to a large extent, young black men, thus become 'foreign' (having incommensurable values, threatening, and constituting a 'drain' on society) and 'other' rather than an inherent part of 'us'. The splintering impacts of globalization are understood as a consequence of geopolitics (the end of the Cold War), and are externalized through the extension of the 'us/other' dualism.

'Difference', 'otherness', and 'us' under globalization

Statist analyses of the changing global order leave us with the importance of understanding constructions of the 'other', although these are hampered in realist scholarship by the need to externalize, and if possible, to territorialize, conceptions of 'otherness'. As indicated at the outset of this chapter, a new understanding of globalization must take ideas and identities, as well as economics, seriously. It is precisely because globalization cannot be merely reduced to or imposed upon either a state/anarchy or class/integrative approach that globalization must be conceptualized as a series of processes. It is not important merely as a theoretical or conceptual consideration. The ways in which the processes of globalization redefine social and state agencies are intrinsic to how it affects peoples' experiences of (and

reactions to) it. It is argued here that the processes of globalization have led to (and continue to have) important consequences for political action at the close of the 20th century.

Who are the beneficiaries and who are the victims of globalization is a very complex question indeed. It may be the case that a large number of people, states, classes, etc. are neither beneficiaries nor victims – their lives and social relations are neither better nor worse as a result of globalization, they are merely different. As an ethical consideration, however, it is the dispossessed and subordinated peoples whose voices continue to be silenced in a rapidly changing world. The categories of 'us' and 'them' which have been the subject of this chapter are obviously categories of empowerment/disempowerment. It is therefore important for social theory to examine more closely how the processes of globalization transform agencies in their project to define the empowered and subordinated in the new 'global village'.

Within the construction of 'other' in the context of globalization, we find the increasingly universal tendency to create 'other', not in one's own image, but rather as all that is not in one's own image. Seen this way, there is a profound distinction between the concepts of 'difference' and 'otherness'. Difference is to be celebrated, and in some cases, empowered. The key to difference lies in the aesthetic (physical difference), and the underlying values in the celebration of difference can be found in the equality of individuals regardless of their difference. Differences in gender, race, language, religion are to be included in the category of sameness (or 'us'). The

obvious physical differences of these groups (to the traditionally empowered) are to be overlooked, provided they are 'same' in terms of their belief in the mythology of the equality of all individuals. Within popular culture (and an increasingly universal popular culture), an emphasis upon the exotic nature of difference (beautiful Asian or black women in the traditionally western commercial image – slim, fashionably dressed, cosmopolitan, etc.) is exploited and propagated as the reality that 'they' are a part of 'us'.

The construction and exploitation of this aesthetic imagery⁸⁵ is the pop(ular) face of globalization. 'They' are a part of 'us' because they look so good in our clothes, live in our cities, proffer the notion of individual difference,⁸⁶ eat the same

⁸⁵ Aesthetic imagery is not a conventional means for analysis in IR/IPE, but not an entirely new methodology either. See for example, James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro, International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics, Lexington, Lexington Books, 1989. What an analysis of the imagery of globalization entails here are the theoretical, and hence, political implications of a dominant discourse that constructs how people 'think globally'.

⁸⁶ 'Individual difference' is used in the sense that persons of colour, different cultures, languages, etc. are of the same category (modern individual) and yet are different from the traditionally empowered (mostly white western males). However, the universalizing tendencies of the category 'modern individual' necessarily must include persons of difference in order to be truly global. The globalization of the notion of 'modern man' therefore celebrates difference as it aspires to global categories. In this sense, what was social group difference in the days before globalization becomes individual difference. The primacy of modernity in the definition of globalism obfuscates the possibilities that social grouping can be both traditional and modern at the same time. Therefore, those of formerly subordinate social categories can and should be appropriated into the dominant social grouping provided they are 'modern'. They become part of 'us', though they

food, like the same movies, and read the same books. 'They' are the universalized 'us', who accept the rules, values, myths, and truths of a singular transnational modern individual. The 'us' and 'other' dualisms of realist literature become transformed, as an increasingly homogenized modern cosmopolitan identity (one only possible because of globalization) integrates difference into 'us' and constructs a new 'other'. The new 'others' at the end of the 20th century are those who challenge the emerging social and economic hegemony built upon the notions of individual values, modernization, the celebration of difference, free markets at the global and national level, secularism, and so forth. The 'others' are both a part of what was once considered 'us' (America's 'poor white trash', vigilantes like the Michigan Militia, the politically correct, blacks who cling to the ideas of collective racial oppression, women who do the same),⁸⁷ and the old 'others' who either reject the notion of modernizing globalization altogether ('Islamic fundamentalists', most native peoples, Christian fundamentalists, communists, etc.) or those unfortunate enough to come from a place in which globalization has no interests whatsoever (sub-Saharan Africa, parts of Central and South America, parts of Asia, and parts of the Middle East, the Kurdish areas in Turkey, etc.).

are still different.

⁸⁷ M. Davis, City of Quartz: Excavating the Future City of Los Angeles, New York: Verso, 1990, p. 83.

The brilliance of the incorporation of 'difference' into the identity of 'us' at the level of popular culture and the mythology of the values of globalization is that it excludes the possibility that all 'others' are systematically exploited because of their race, gender, language, or religion. The image of physically attractive, black, successful, exotic, refined, and cultured women equally at home in New York, Bangkok, Paris, or Hong Kong suggests that anyone can be 'us' regardless of difference. It undermines the possibility of systematic exploitation based upon any of those attributes traditionally associated with subordination, and suggests that those very assets can be transformed into positive attributes. An individual must simply begin to think of herself as a 'modern woman' in the era of globalization. Her success, the popular folklore suggests, is based upon attitude and values. She is 'one of us' because she acts and thinks like us. For this new imagery within globalization, the old 'progressive' politics of the past (the politics which are built upon the empowerment of the disempowered) are not progressive at all – they are anti-modern, promote difference and hate, and ignore the paramountcy of individual rights.⁸⁸ The incorporation of difference into the category of 'us' has been made possible by an emerging global culture in which communications, markets

⁸⁸ M. Berman, All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity. New York: Penguin Books, 1982, p. 128.

and marketing, capital, labour, and information move with ease at speeds only dreamed of twenty years ago.⁸⁹

The social and theoretical implications for IR of the incorporation of difference into the global definition of 'us' are profound. First, it makes the dualisms of most of the 20th century seem simplistic and potentially dangerous.⁹⁰ Of course, not all Soviets were godless land-grabbing expansionist communists, not all Arabs were fundamentalist zealots bent on the destruction of western values, and not all women were poor, exploited and underprivileged. While global politics of the 20th century were played out primarily within the context of these simplistic dualisms, economic and social globalization continued unimpeded. The second (and perhaps more significant) implication of globalization's redefinition of the dualist categories 'us' and 'other' is the profound implication such a redefinition holds for social and economic power relations as we move into the twenty-first century. The agencies of most theorizing throughout 'modern times' have been relatively ⁹¹ easy to define

⁸⁹R. Barnett and J Cavanagh, op.cit., p. 15.

⁹⁰ E. Said, Orientalism, New York: Vintage, 1978, pp. 291, 320.

⁹¹"Relatively" is used here with some caution. Obviously there have been vigorous contemporary theoretical debates with regard to agency. "Relatively" is used here to suggest that while these debates have been vigorous, once a definition of agency has been established, it is 'fixed' within the context of those who define it. Though some contemporary social theories are wary of dramatic changes within and amongst agents/agencies, few have successfully contemplated the rapid and dramatic social transformations possible in an era of globalization. In this sense, most existing contemporary social theory has 'relatively' fixed agents. Moreover, if the globalization project is one in which hegemonic social agents aspire to constantly

(state, nation-group, social class, gender, religious group). Globalization presents more complex social categories which include 'difference' within their very identity. Such a blurring is more than simply a theoretical problem. The resulting power relations of social groupings becomes more complex, interrelated, constantly changing – and therefore difficult to see. The prospects for false consciousness of both the dominant and subordinate social groupings within a rapidly shifting (by its very definition) globalization process are extensive.

Within the discourses of both progressive and regressive politics, globalization has often reduced contemporary theoretical discourses to the following: “Who defines the categories?”, “Who belongs and who does not?”, “What is the project?”, “Can there be a project?”, “Can we even begin to construct theory – or should it always be deconstructive, discursive, etc.?” In short, globalization is more than an economic and/or political transformation that redefines and obviates traditional social categories. It is a process that requires and constructs broader and homogenizing categories by necessitating difference as part of its very definition. From this, globalization forges ahead in reconstituting new power relations that are as exclusive and subordinating as the ones it destroys. However, reemerging hegemonic social orders are less visible, always changing, and therefore potentially more destructive. The popular notion of a pluralist (in the sense of aesthetically and

change themselves and absorb 'difference' into 'us', fixed agency for the possibility of theorizing becomes impossible without value distinctions which make the location

culturally mixed) class of 'modern individuals' whose interests are efficient, modern, and progressive is not an inclusive category. On the one hand, it may celebrate difference as it aspires to global representation. However, the popular myth of the modern global individual is not in any way indicative of the way the vast majority of people experience globalization.

Theoretical efforts to deconstruct the processes of globalization risk constructing their own orthodoxies and power structures which are oblivious to the rapidly transforming world around them, perceiving part but not all of the puzzle. At the end of the 20th century, quantum leaps in technology and communications have made the speed with which these transformations occur almost as significant as the 'modern condition' itself. In 1982, Marshall Berman defined modernism as:

...any attempt by modern men and women to become subjects as well as objects of modernization, to get a grip on the modern world and make themselves at home in it... It implies an open and expansive way of understanding culture; very different from the curatorial approach that breaks up human activity into fragments and locks fragments into separate cases, labelled by time, place, language, genre and academic discipline.⁹²

However, the modernization of the end of the 20th century is one that makes the possibilities for "getting a grip on the modern world and making ourselves at home in it" almost impossible. The mythology of the modern individual is the seductive side of a process which makes it increasingly difficult for 'us' (aspiring modern

and identification of hegemonic social orders possible.

⁹² M. Berman, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

individuals) to belong to the real 'us' (the successful elites who propagate the myths of difference within the definition of 'us'). The fact remains that globalization has increased the disparity of wealth at phenomenal rate, has further subjugated the world's dispossessed, and has decreased the size and space of the privileged elites.⁹³ The popular myth of a wealthy, black, well-educated, beautiful woman in the cosmopolitan world is a lie propagated by the few who want 'them' (the 'other') to believe it is true and possible. For every wealthy person, there are hundreds (if not thousands) who are poor. For every wealthy black person, there are thousands enslaved in poverty and ghettos. For every well-educated person there are hundreds who are under-educated and have decreasing access to education.⁹⁴ The aesthetic popular image of beauty is an unrealistic construction of advertising executives and multinational corporations.⁹⁵ Those who live in the elite wealthy cosmopolitan centres (or the Third World replications of it) are but a fraction of the modern world's citizens. And yet, such an image of the 'difference' in 'us' is imposed upon the world's increasingly growing dispossessed population as the 'reality' of the age of globalization. Worse still – many believe it to be true.

⁹³ M. Davis, op.cit, pp. 195-6; also, R. Barnet and J Cavanagh, op.cit, p. 427.

⁹⁴ R. Barnet and J. Cavanagh, op.cit, p, 427.

⁹⁵ N. Wolf, The Beauty Myth, Toronto: Vintage, 1990, p. 278.

Homogenizing global culture and identity

Modern times has fostered a media technoculture that sees consumers in America, all over Europe, China, Japan, Russia, Africa and South America watching and singing along to commercials depicting happy modern individuals quenching their thirst with a Coca-Cola or happily devouring a Big Mac. In most cases, traditional language barriers have been broken by universal jingles which seem to suggest that for at least one moment all of the diverse peoples of the world can stand as one and "sing in perfect harmony." That moment is, of course, when we have all bought a Coke.⁴⁶ Beyond the sophisticates of the global corporate advertising empire, 'modern times' provides truly global images and idols. Michael Jackson sells as many CD's in South America as he does in the United States, Bart Simpson represents the neighbourhood brat in as many languages and cultures as translators can find, and movie-goers in Japan, Thailand, Taiwan and South Korea flock to see

⁴⁶ M. Pendergrast, For God, Country, and Coca-Cola, New York: MacMillan, 1993, pp. 305-6. Pendergrast's extensive work examines the corporate and advertising 'globalization' of the Coca-Cola empire over the past 100 years. By 1971, the 'Coke' empire began to construct an "iconal" image of Coke which transcended national identities. Pendergrast goes on to describe the 1971 "Hilltop" (or "Teaching the World to Sing") ad:

On a hilltop in Italy, Coca-Cola assembled some 200 fresh-faced young adults from every corner of the world, clad appropriately in their national costumes.... The vision of the idealistic youths crooning to a weary world soothed like a hymn in an outdoor church, and their firmly clasped bottles of Coca-Cola were hopeful peace talismans. ... It didn't strike anyone as preposterous that a soft drink was somehow supposed to save the world....

the latest action thriller that Arnold Schwarzenegger has to offer.⁹⁷ Beyond the universalization of (American) culture, the late 20th century is one in which Saddam Hussein barricades himself with his aides watching CNN for updates on the Gulf War, Kurdish separatist movements are coordinated through the Internet, and PKK soldiers communicate on cell phones in the field to avoid short wave radio jamming and detection. The seeming homogenization or universalization of global culture is, in the Marxian dialectical sense, impregnated with its opposite.⁹⁸

The aesthetic and cultural myths of modernizing globalism provide the basis for a multi-level social consciousness on the part of modern individuals.⁹⁹ While it is true that the global aspirations of the modern condition create a myth of the modern individual that celebrates difference in the construction of 'us', social groups based on real difference persist in the modern world and continue to be central agents in

⁹⁷ R. Barnet and J. Cavanagh, *op.cit.*, pp. 153-160. Chapter Six, "Global Entertainment and Local Taste" looks at the interplay between this homogenizing global culture and preexisting local cultures. *ibid.*, pp. 137-160.

⁹⁸ K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, New York: Vintage, 1973 (Translated with a foreword by Martin Nicolaus). On production being consumption, and consumption being production, see p. 91. On Hegel and "the real" as the "...unfolding itself, of itself, by itself..." see p. 101. And finally, on the construction of the concept of national wealth, see p. 108.

⁹⁹I use the term 'modern individual' here with some trepidation. While I have suggested that the definition of 'us' in the context of globalization is based upon a notion of individuals in a globalizing context, this does not mean that social groupings and social group identities are not possible. In fact, as will be discussed, social group identity and social group politics are increasingly important within the modern condition.

the international political economy. Though there might be a homogenized global culture in which we all drink Coke, eat Big Macs, sing the same songs, watch the same movies, and so forth, our choices for alternative forms of entertainment and culture have also increased. It may be possible to be amused and socialized by global technoculture, but who we are, how we define ourselves, and how we act politically and socially are complex phenomena of which global technoculture is only a part. In fact, as the myth of the modern individual propagated by global technoculture is often not an adequate representation of the individual's life (singly or as a part of a group), the prospects for alienation from it are immense. At the same time, the technical and information explosion within globalization is so extensive that it may assist in the politicization and socialization of subordinate social groupings. It is very possible in 'the modern world' both to be amused by Hollywood's latest epic (or Pearl Jam's newest CD), and to use the Internet's homepage on the Kurdish front to find information about the most recent moves of the Turkish Government against villages in Eastern Anatolia. One facet of 'modern times' seeks to universalize our identities into a singular modern individual, while another satisfies a quest to know who we were, and assists in the construction of who we are socially.

Perhaps one of the most critical consequences of the process of globalization is the shattering of homogenous, standardized cultures in an international

order whose main political actors were the nation-states. Globalization paradoxically led to the emergence of local identities.¹⁰⁰

Realism and Marxism allow us to make certain observations about the construction of 'other' within a universalizing process of globalization. Each reveals a part of the impact of globalization upon the social. Universalizing explanations, however, limit our understanding of the construction of 'us' and 'others', while explanations based upon the externalization of 'others' do not allow us to understand how difference, and indeed, 'otherness', can be part of the construction of 'us'. L.H.M. Ling argues that "internationalization promotes, rather than eliminates, hybridity."¹⁰¹ Universalizing tendencies, while real, increase some material choices while they foreclose others. These choices are not merely aesthetic; they fundamentally define who we are, and how we are constructed socially within the processes of globalization. The difficulty for existing theoretical traditions in IR is that those constructions no longer resonate territorially, and some aspects of them are indeed universalizing, if not universal. We need to move beyond the 'us/other' dualism, but not so far as to argue that the 'other' is a universalized 'us'. Rather, the universalizing processes of globalization permit the construction of a multiple 'us', each of which contains within it its own 'other'. It is in the recognition of these

¹⁰⁰ A. Kadioglu, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity," Middle Eastern Studies, 32:2, April 1996, pp. 189-190.

¹⁰¹L. Ling, "Hegemony and the Internationalizing State: A Post-Colonial Analysis of China's Integration into Asian Corporatism," Review of International Political Economy, 3:1, Spring, 1996, p. 2.

'others' within 'us' that political strategies can be found, escaping the simplistic dualism, or the nihilism, of scholarly traditions on globalization.

Neogramscianism and the Turkish state

Since the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire at the end of WWI, there has been an intense conflict among Turkish elites and the dominant Turkish national majority as to the orientation of the Turkish state in regard to Western Europe and the Middle East. For some, Turkey must foster a strong national identity at the expense of its ethnic minorities, and construct a modern nation-state along the lines of its West European allies.¹⁰² For this group, a modern Turkish state requires secularized political institutions to ensure the political and economic stability required for Turkey to take its place amongst the prosperous members of the elite Western European state system. Images of Turkey's Ottoman and Islamic past are 'anti-progressive' and should be suppressed in favour of a more Western orientation. In this context, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk coined the phrase 'Mountain Turks' to refer to the Kurds and embarked upon a policy of official state denial of the Kurdish national identity – a policy which has remained virtually intact until very recently.¹⁰³ On the other hand, many in Turkey sympathize with the benefits to be

¹⁰² A. Kadioglu, op.cit., pp. 177-193.

¹⁰³ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (the nationalist founder of modern Turkey) first used this phrase to describe the Kurds in 1920. See, Nader Entessar, Kurdish Ethnonationalism, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992, p. 81.

gained by stable political institutions and the economic benefits modernization can bring, but are sceptical as to whether this must be done along a Western model. Strict denial of Turkey's rich and powerful Eastern imagery and history is to deny the social reality that is Turkish society. Islam, the Kurdish and Armenian minorities, and strong social bonds to the Middle East cannot be denied. Furthermore, much 'regressive' political action has been taken by factions of Turkey's elite social structure (in particular the military) in the name of Turkey's European and Western interests. There is strong scepticism among many of Turkey's intellectuals and the 'political left' that everything Western is progressive; for these segments of Turkish society, little is to be gained by the denial of Turkey's social realities.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, Islam continues to be a dominant social force in Turkey. Always useful in discrediting the excesses of Westernization, Islam cuts across Turkey's political spectrum and plays into all political issues.¹⁰⁵ It is within this vigorous intellectual and social debate that Turkey pursues its policies regarding integration into the Western European economic and social union.

There can be no doubt that the statist framework built upon a strong Turkish national identity (the notion of a homogeneous nation-state) represents the dominant

¹⁰⁴ Mesut Yegen, "The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity," Middle Eastern Studies, 32:2, April, 1996, pp. 216-229.

¹⁰⁵ "The Insolvency of Turkish Secularism," Middle East Report, April-June, 1996, pp. 3-7.

social order.¹⁰⁶ Turkey's state-sponsored industrialization and modernization programs have built a new middle class in Turkey whose economic interests lie primarily with those of the economic middle classes and multinational capital of Central and Western Europe.¹⁰⁷ Military and civilian regimes in the past twenty years have used the anti-Soviet threat, the Greco-Turkish rivalry, and the impending threat of Islamic fundamentalism as a justification for state-designed programs to speed Turkey's economic, social and military integration into Western Europe. However, with the threat of Soviet domination removed, and a general consensus that secularized liberal democracy provides the best form of government, the Turkish government and military has increasingly played up the political instability posed by Kurdish nationalism. This has been used as a justification for often draconian measures to construct a unified Turkish national identity. In some ways, the persistence of Kurdish nationalism based on the goal of an independent Kurdistan has kept the role of the Turkish military prominent in all aspects of Turkish social, political and economic life.

In 1920 a significant proportion of the Kurds¹⁰⁸ fought alongside Mustafa Kemal's nationalist Turkish movement in favour of the establishment of the state of

¹⁰⁶ A. Kadioglu, op.cit., p. 178.

¹⁰⁷ "Yuppies, Daisies and Godfathers," and "Neo-Ottomanism vs. Kemalism," Middle East Report, April-June, 1996, p. 3-7.

¹⁰⁸ D. McDowall, The Kurds: A Minority Group Rights Report, London: Minority Rights Group, 1991. McDowall uses the term 'a significant proportion of the Kurds'

Turkey. At that time, the Kurdish leadership was concerned that, under the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, most of Kurdistan would be included within a Christian Armenian state. For most Kurds and their various tribal leaders, the prospects of living under a secularized Turkish state seemed far better. Part of Kemal's strategy was to include the Kurds in the state construction process (the Kurds consisting of 1/6 of the total population), hence his use of the term 'Mountain Turks' to describe the Kurdish people. However, for the Kurds, fighting with Kemal was considered to be allying with the Ottoman Empire, and they expected 'relative autonomy' at the end of the conflict. No such autonomy was granted, as the new Turkish Republic immediately began to insist that the new state was to be built around a unified Turkish identity along the lines of modern European nation-states.¹⁰⁹ A state-wide campaign of ethnic group minority assimilation was instituted. Thus began the long and often fractionalized ethnonational struggle of the Kurds inside Turkey.

Thus far this chapter has attempted to establish the theoretical links between globalization as a long-term historical process and the perceived need it creates among semi-peripheral societies for a modern industrial state along the West European model. There is much in the Turkish example which diverges widely from the Western experience. In particular the role of the military and the

which in fact means the vast majority of the Kurds who would eventually live in the modern state of Turkey.

¹⁰⁹ A. Kadioglu, *op.cit.*, p. 181; M. Yegen, *op.cit.*, p. 217.

sociopolitical impact of Islam are unlike anything in Western Europe. However, one cannot deny that the dominant social order in Turkey persists with the construction of a 'state' based upon the European notion of 'nation-state'. Perhaps more importantly for the purposes of this thesis is the fact that this dominant social order includes economic integration as an integral part of the modern state-making process. This has had a profound impact upon the trajectory of Kurdish ethnonationalism (both inside Turkey and throughout the region) in a number of significant ways. The remainder of this chapter proposes a theoretical framework for the construction of ethnonational identity specific to the case of the Kurds. The 'dominant social order' referred to here refers to the alliance of social dominants inside Turkey (political, social, military, and economic elites) who all share the notion that Turkey can only succeed by becoming part of a globalized economic and social union if the Turkish state can create the conditions favourable to ensuring that Turkey is not left out. Also of significance, the discourse of identity politics inside Turkey borrows the statist dualisms of 'us'/'other' in the construction of social hierarchies which subordinate the Kurdish minorities there. The proposed theoretical framework is designed to see how social alliances marginalize those who do not share the unified Turkish national strategy, and as a consequence, contribute to the construction of a 'more unified' Kurdish national identity.

Ethnicity, nationalism and 'identity' in Kurdistan

It seems obvious that when looking at the case of the Kurds (or the various groups associated with a Kurdish ethnic identity), the central agent in understanding the construction of national social identity should be the central national social group itself. Though linguistic divisions, regional divisions, variations in state of residence, and a number of often contending political strategies suggest that Kurdish ethnonationalism is in no way monolithic, there exists a consistent notion of Kurdish identity and a relatively uniform political strategy in the attainment of ethnic self-determination through the establishment of a state of Kurdistan. Therefore, a working definition of 'ethnicity' and 'nationalism' based upon the specificity of the Kurdish case is required here. However, each of these definitions (taken separately or together) is not enough to establish the Kurds as a separate and identifiable group. The Kurds are both ethnically and nationally diverse. In the context of this thesis, ethnicity is used as a term to describe identity and the socialization of group identity. It relates to the very essence of 'belonging' based upon (though not necessarily including all of) a shared history, customs and culture, common language, geographic region, and socialized kinship.¹¹⁰

Though the concept of nationalism is often closely related to ethnicity (and often conflated with it), nationalism is defined here as a political project or strategy.

¹¹⁰ G. Nielsson, "States and Nation Groups: A Global Taxonomy," in M. Shaw (ed.), New Nationalism of the Developed West, Boston: Allen, 1985, p. 29.

In most cases, nationalism emerges along lines similar to ethnicity (a common language, shared history, customs and culture, geographic region, and socialized kinship), but this is merely a result of the fact that most nationalisms are the political strategy or project of social group identity.¹¹¹ The strategy might include the establishment of a nation-state along the lines of ethnic identity, but it might also merely be a strategy for the preservation of ethnicity within an existing political arrangement.¹¹² Defined as solely a political project or strategy, nationalism implies a need for political organization, structures, leadership and mobilization. The same is not true for ethnicity. In the context of the definitions here, ethnicity is more about 'identity' while ethnic-nationalism is more about 'the politics of identity'.

Above and beyond these crucial conceptual delineations, however, there are more complex social processes at work in the case of the Kurds which suggest the need for a different 'agency' which can incorporate the interrelatedness of identity and politics within diverse social contexts. First is the need to recognize social group identification as self-identification. This is required here because the term 'Kurd' is

¹¹¹ P. Phillips and I. Wallerstein, "National and World Identities and the Interstate System," *Millennium*, 19:2, 1985, pp. 128-129.

¹¹² Clearly not all nationalisms are based purely upon ethnic identity or even a 'national' identity. In cases such as Quebec, many political strategies exist which might be considered nationalist (according to the definition of nationalism as a political project) but which do not include the establishment of a state and are not concerned primarily about ethnic or national identity.

often imposed upon all who challenge the authority and legitimacy of the Turkish state – even if they do not define themselves as Kurds. Irrespective of the need for precise terms through which social scientists can construct theoretical generalizations, one cannot deny that each of the ethnic or national 'Kurdisms' claims a Kurdish identity for itself, and does so with the linguistic, regional, historical, and social characteristics which are common to all ethnicities. It is on this basis that each group's collective social action is derived.¹¹³ In other words, while it may be true that there are distinct and noticeable differences between different Kurdish groups, we cannot deny that all of these groups claim to be Kurdish, and that it is their Kurdishness which is the basis of each group's collective social action. This is crucial because while we can suggest differences within those groups who claim to be Kurdish and can plainly see intra-Kurdish rivalries, we cannot deny the fact that it is their very Kurdishness (or interpretation of it) which drives their political strategies.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ W. Cox, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

¹¹⁴ No better example of this complexity can be found than the case of the PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party). As a radical political organization, the PKK is infamous in Turkey for its use of violent tactics to politicize the Turkish mainstream (and other Kurds) to its cause. For the most part, the PKK claims to represent all of Turkey's Kurdish peoples. Of course, this is not the case and many Kurdish peoples and groups reject the tactics and objectives of the PKK. At the same time, there are Turks inside Turkey who sympathize with the PKK and work toward its goals.

The second major consideration is the need for more precise social agency that relates to the construction of the Kurds through the lens of 'otherness' or orientalism.¹¹⁵ Irrespective of the fact that there are a number of social distinctions within 'Kurdishism' (all who identify themselves as Kurdish), the notion of Kurdish ethnicity and Kurdish nationalism is seen as problematic by the various dominant political and social regimes under which the Kurds live. It is an understanding of all Kurds (regardless of their intra-group differences) as real and potential challenges to the existing regimes that drives the policies and reactions of those dominant regimes in regard to all Kurds. In some cases a claim to be Kurdish is a claim to 'otherness', while in other cases, a claim to be 'other' is a claim to be Kurdish. In both cases (self identification of Kurdishness or imposed 'otherness'), this leads into a process of systematic subordination based upon social group identities. The process is necessarily structural in the sense that the dominant order imposes itself upon challenges to the status quo and constructs 'otherness'¹¹⁶ out of those who challenge that order. This clearly happens across the sovereign boundaries of those regions where those who claim a Kurdish identity reside. In this sense it is a structural phenomenon.¹¹⁷ It is no surprise given the historical, linguistic, regional, and

¹¹⁵ E. Said, *op.cit.*, p. 49.

¹¹⁶ Note: Not all 'otherness' is Kurdish (e.g. the Armenians in Turkey). The construction of social group self-identities is obviously based upon the historical and social legacies of both ethnicity and nationalism.

¹¹⁷ J Galtung, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

kinship legacy of Kurdistan that this systematic process of subordination is translated into both continued Kurdish ethnicity and persistent Kurdish nationalism. Kurdish identity is a result of both a self-identity claiming a distinct culture and history, and a result of 'otherness' in the eyes of dominant social groups.

Constructed 'otherness' in the case of the Kurds is a discourse that has its links to the state and to the global and regional systems which condition state action. While the 'new yuppie classes' of mainstream Turkish society appropriate both the discourse of the modern Turkish statist project and the discourses of an integrated European capitalist system, they impose 'otherness' upon all who challenge this hegemonic order. They propagate the myth that a modern Turkish citizen can be of diverse ethnic or national origin so long as that citizen buys into Turkey's 'nationally defined' modernization and integration project. It is no coincidence that the greatest challenges to this project reside in the marginalized peripheries of Turkish society – namely the Kurdish regions. Previously, the Kurds were portrayed in mainstream Turkish society as radical nationalist zealots (usually terrorists) who would not conform to the Turkish ideal of a modern Western nation-state. For mainstream Turkish society (or at least the myths it propagated), the Kurds were 'other' – tribal, misinformed, provincial, regressive, anti-modern, etc.. The Kurdish peoples could not even legally speak their own language, and were only referred to officially as the 'Mountain Turks'. However, within the current language of 'globalization, modernization and integration', the Kurds are no longer portrayed just as 'anti-

nationals', but as socially, economically, and politically 'backwards'. Not only do the Kurdish peoples have the audacity to reject the mainstream Turkish nationalist project, they are incapable of grasping the benefits of modernization.

In keeping with the above, there is a double-edged sword in Turkish state policies in regard to the Kurdish question. The forced evacuation of Kurdish villages has both strategic and social objectives. Moving Kurds away from their traditionally remote areas allows the Turkish state greater political and military control over regions with considerable potential for economic development. Much has been promised by the Turkish national government in terms of resource and trade potential in the Kurdish regions of the state, and those promises are tied into the hopes of mainstream Turkish society for a future state that is as developed as other states in the European Union. The 'East' is the future of modern Turkey's economic development, and the 'East' belongs to Turkey. Secondly, forced relocation of Kurdish communities pushes the urbanization, modernization, and integration of Kurdish society into 'mainstream' Turkish life -- or so the thinking goes. Modern Turkey proudly proclaims that the urbanization and modernization of its Kurdish minorities has greatly improved their (the Kurds') lifestyles. If they join us and think like us, then the problem is solved. The forced movement of the

Kurds inside Turkey is a massive project involving more than ten million people in the past twenty years.¹¹⁸

However, the integration of Kurds into the mainstream has also fostered an environment (both inside Turkey and in the massive refugee communities in Northern Europe) that has allowed for a greater degree of political cooperation between the disparate Kurdish factions than ever before. With the assistance of the Turkish government (by its propagation of the globalization and modernization myths), many of these disparate Kurdish groups have taken the modernist project as their own. Realizing full well the prospects for economic development in the Kurdish regions, these people are organizing a counter-hegemonic movement which 'reappropriates' the language of the Turkish state and creates 'modern myths' which are Kurdish-nationalist in their orientation. Thus the Turkish modernization and integration program has become a double-edged sword. With the desired intent of eroding Kurdish identity through assimilation and modernization (make the 'other' more like 'us'), the Turkish government has actually increased the access of most Kurds to discover their ethnic identity and to coordinate more effectively their nationalist strategies.

Beyond the basic agents in the proposed theoretical model, a clear need exists to develop a notion of power and power relations that can link the diverse

¹¹⁸ Report of the Netherlands Kurdistan Society, Sept-Nov. 1994.

experiences of the Kurds. In the first instance, an examination of the contributions of structural theorists can be used,¹¹⁹ but these must be modified in order to develop a more complex notion of power relations within pure structuralism. Though Galtung and others suggest that social group relations develop along a basis of dominant/subordinate relations (in his words Topdog and Underdog), he says little of the power and power resources which create and perpetuate these relations. From the works of neogramscian social theory (e.g. R. Cox, S. Gill, and E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, etc.) can be imported contemporary interpretations of gramscian hegemony.¹²⁰ Because gramscian hegemony is a concept used primarily to understand the socialization process that led classes and social groups into accepting relations of dominance/subordination as part of a natural order, it relates directly to the understanding of Kurdish identities in the context of self-identification and constructed 'otherness' suggested here.

¹¹⁹ See for example, R. Ashley, The Political Economy of War and Peace, London: Pinter, 1980; or, J. Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Aggression," Journal of Peace Research, 1, 1964, pp. 1-32.

¹²⁰ The use of the term 'hegemony' in the works of R. Cox, S. Gill, E. Laclau and C. Mouffe (among others) is markedly different that its use by mainstream IR scholars (R. Gilpin, R. Keohane, J. Nye and others). In the context of this thesis, hegemony will be used true to the gramscian meaning of the term in which hegemony is the universalization of an ordered power relationship in which the subordinated is socialized into accepting and perpetuating the relationship as part of the 'natural order'. See, R. Cox, "Social Forces, States, and World Orders," and S. Gill, "Historical Materialism, Gramsci, and International Political Economy," C. Murphy and R. Tooze (eds.), Theoretical Foundations of a New IPE: IPE Yearbook, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993, pp. 51-78.

It is proposed here that there is no greater political power than that of socialization.¹²¹ While statist IR contends that the defining feature of international relations is the 'relative power' of self-maximizing states in conditions of global anarchy, it is suggested here that the political awakening of marginalized social groupings (the Kurds) to their subjugation by dominant social orders can undermine even the most sophisticated of state-power resources. Though the Turkish state might exacerbate and exploit inter-tribal differences between disparate Kurdish groups as a cynical ploy to maintain the dominant social order, once a process begins whereby the 'falsely conscious' challenge that order there is no turning back. You cannot put the genie back in the bottle.

The final step in the construction of a socio-structural theoretical approach is to merge this model and gramscian power relations into its social context for use in the examination of the Kurdish case. This can be done by developing a comprehensive theory of structural violence. Essentially structural violence accepts that the historical context within which a Kurdish ethnic and national identity emerged was one of hegemony/subordination. However, social relations are always markedly different and changing in terms of social group interrelations, relationships to their respective states, history, patterns of violence, and political strategies employed by the Kurds.

¹²¹ That is, in the words of Stephen Gill "the intransigence of social reality" in which consciousness varies in terms of individual's awareness of the social

Structural violence is defined here as the long-term relationship of dominance/subordination in which subordinated groups challenge the legitimacy of the dominant.¹²² It can be (at times) a physically violent relationship, but this is not necessarily always the case. However, the overall relationship (both short and long-term) is structured by the imposed hegemony of the dominant.¹²³ With a notion of long-term structural violence, case research can move in the direction of an examination the social history of the construction of Kurdish identity and Kurdish nationalism throughout a history of both physical and structural violence. This is very different from the type of research currently being conducted within the statist frameworks dominant in the study of international relations. Within the gaps in the

nature of their actions/inaction. S. Gill, *op.cit.*, p59.

¹²² See J. Galtung, *A Structural Theory of Revolutions*, Rotterdam, Rotterdam University Press, 1974, p. 13.

¹²³ Perhaps this is best explained through a simple example. In a basic domestic relationship a situation might evolve in which one individual exerts consistent dominance over the other. This dominance can entail the establishment of a dependence by the subordinate upon the dominant. The subordinated individual becomes financially, emotionally, and socially dependent upon the dominant. In some cases, the subordinated might have come to accept this arrangement as 'natural' or 'unavoidable' through a process of socialization. However, the subordinated may begin to challenge this order, or fail to accept the relationship as a collective. Such a challenge to the status quo does not always lead to physical violence, but the persistence of the imposed structural dominance of one over another makes the relationship structurally violent. If physical violence results from either the process of domination or a challenge to it, it is only part of a much larger (and generally longer-term) relationship of structural violence. The same can be said even if physical violence never occurs. In this sense, the relationship is not necessarily physically violent, but it is structurally violent.

use of physical violence, the unequal power relations and contending political objectives of the social groups remain structurally consistent. However, challenges to the status quo (or hegemonic order) tend to result in the use of physical violence by both the hegemonic regime and the subordinated group. Both claim the legitimate use of violence but for different reasons.

In the case of the hegemonic regime, a change in the status quo presents a challenge to the stability and survivability of the existing order. For a subordinated group, maintenance of the existing order presents a challenge to that group's perceived identity and existence. However, the 'pre' and 'post' phases of physical violence remain consistent in terms of the type of dominant/subordinate relations that exist between social groups and their respective interests.¹²⁴ Rather than a focus on only the outbreak of physical violence, structural violence seeks to include the long-term relations of subordination/domination which pre-exist violent physical conflict, and often continue after hostilities are halted. In this sense, it is a much more long-term and socially holistic type of conceptualization that exists within the narrow parameters of most international relations conflict analysis. A structural notion of violence within the context of globalization provides a theoretical link between the statist analysis of conflict provided by the mainstream of international relations conflict theory, and the economic analysis of conflict provided by marxist and post-marxist studies of the international political economy.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has put forward a number of theoretical propositions to establish the basis for the need for an alternative lens through which Kurdish ethnonationalism can be viewed. First, it was suggested that there are significant global transformations under way that dramatically affect social and national agencies. Under the label of globalization, the post Cold War world can be viewed as one in which there are seemingly contradictory processes at work. On the one hand, the world appears to be getting smaller as various peoples and nations have found the abilities to interconnect that have not existed to the same extent in the past. The result has been an imagery of an increasingly unified and homogenized global social community. It is an imagery that (re)constructs false consciousnesses along new agencies, reinforces existing consciousnesses, and provides opportunities for the political awakening of subordinated social groups. At the same time, national and ethnic conflicts seem to persist and the international community of sovereign states is proliferating. The chapter suggested that while the world is getting smaller, the opportunities for discovering and connecting existing identities are also growing. Through a complex discourse, it was established here that these seeming contradictions are in fact complementary.

²⁴ W. Cox, *op.cit.* pp. 66-67.

From there, this chapter examined the possible theoretical alternatives to understanding these complex transformations by the construction of a theoretical model that is based upon social identity, rather than a theoretical construction that is built upon the existing territorial sovereign agencies of state actors. The suggestion was that these socially identifiable agencies are subjected to, and also condition, the very processes of globalization itself. It was further suggested that upon an ethnonational agency it is possible to view the structured relationship of dominance/subordination that exists within and among territorially defined politics. However, as was discussed in Chapter One, the epistemological presuppositions of this research project are dialectical and normative. As such, any claim of truth is dependent upon its social context for meaning.

In keeping with the normative basis of both the theoretical and empirical components of this study, a historical sociological method has been selected as the basis to view the Kurdish question as a socially based international concern. This is of course, intended to suggest that theories built from the bottom up (starting with social agency and working toward state and global agencies) can better grasp the ethnonational and social basis of states in the international realm. As such, this thesis will first define the ethnic landscape of the Kurdish people, and then move into a Kurdish history with the objective of establishing their crucial role in defining and conditioning the social relationships that were an essential part of Ottoman and Turkish history. From there, it will be possible to use the dialectic of hegemony-

counterhegemony to understand the international components of both the role of Turkey in international politics, and the increasingly important aspect of the Kurds as a globalizing social force.

SECTION II:

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ETHNIC LANDSCAPE

Demographic Overview

Given that the Kurdish national group is divided geographically between four states in the Middle and Near East, and that there are significant regional and linguistic divisions within the Kurdish people themselves, this section will provide a brief demographic overview. It should be noted early on that certain difficulties exist in even gathering the basic facts about the Kurdish people. For often complex reasons, almost everyone has an interest in either bloating or shrinking basic statistics such as populations, refugee numbers, estimates of natural resources in Kurdish regions, etc. For example, the Turkish government regularly downplays the numbers of Kurdish people displaced by village relocation, those killed or injured in civil war(s), and even the number of Kurds living inside Turkey. Likewise, other states with Kurdish populations often downplay similar statistics. At the same time, there are often political and social dangers associated with Kurdish national identity, and as a result, even official census statistics are unreliable. Kurdish political organizations also have a clear interest in enhancing those basic numbers that support their cause. The most reliable demographic statistics on the Kurdish people come from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international institutions. However, these groups too are plagued with difficulties in gathering unbiased and reliable statistics.

Table 4.0 Population Estimates for Kurdish Peoples (Late 1990s, est.)

STATE of RESIDENCE	HIGH EST.	LOW EST.
Turkey	17,000,000	9,000,000
Iran	7,000,000	4,000,000
Iraq	4,000,000	3,000,000
Syria	1,000,000	750,000
Russian Federation	1,000,000	300,000
Germany	600,000	200,00
Netherlands	200,000	NA
France	200,000	NA
United States	160,000	NA
Other/Middle East	140,000	60,000
Armenia/Azerbaijan	100,000	NA
Other/Europe	100,000	NA
Italy	80,000	NA
Canada	22,000	NA
Other	50,000	NA
TOTALS	31,652,000	17,310,000

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¹²⁵ This chart is compiled from a number of sources. It is included here to indicate the vast differences and difficulties in establishing even the most basic of facts when dealing with Kurdish populations. Given the fact that it was

In order 'to see the forest through the trees', this thesis will table both the high and low estimates when they differ substantially, and indicate where these numbers came from. In other cases, some discretion must be taken and often even the most basic of numbers needs to be contextualized. While the 'numbers game' can be a dangerous one in the context of Kurdish ethnonationalism, demographic trends are indicative of the often brutal political and territorial struggles within the land the Kurds call home. Even the lower estimates made (usually by those states engaged in internal civil conflicts with Kurdish nationals), when taken as a total sum of the pan-Kurdish struggle, reveal an ethnonational conflict of enormous scale. In terms of population, the Kurdish nation has as many people as the states of Denmark, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands combined, or, more than six times the population of the state of Israel. The low estimates of Kurds killed in the various ethnonational conflicts since 1980 would be around 180,000, or, about three times as many Americans as were killed during the Vietnam Conflict. Though estimates vary widely, the number of Kurds dislocated by civil wars since 1980 amounts to at

illegal to publically speak Kurdish inside Turkey until 1990, and that fighting continued with Kurdish groups in Iran until 1988, and that fighting continued inside Iraq, estimates are varied. MED-TV (the unofficial Kurdish News Agency in Northern Europe) has made constant reference to 'over 30 million' Kurds since November 1997. The MED-TV estimates have been used for most European states and Russia, as Amnesty International roughly verifies these numbers. However, the MED-TV claim of 500,000 Kurds dispersed throughout the Middle East (outside of their resident states) cannot be verified by other sources. Other high estimate numbers come from R. Olsen, *op.cit.*; M. Collins Dunn, "The Kurdish Question," *Middle East Policy* IV, Sept., 1995, 1 and 2, pp. 72-86, and M. Gunter, *op.cit.* All of the low estimates are from J. Bulloch and H. Morris, *No Friends but the Mountains*, New York: Penguin Books, 1992, p. xii.

least one and a half times the number of Jews dislocated throughout all of Europe during World War Two. Even the lower estimates in the politically charged realm of measuring the size and scope of the Kurdish nation and its national struggles, suggest a nation of substantial proportions.

The Kurdish Population: Turkey

David McDowall estimated the total Kurdish populations to be 19.7 million as of the late 1980s. Given that the numbers he has presented for Turkey are dramatically lower than those of the MED-TV, the PKK, Amnesty, and the United Nations, his overview could be considered conservative (even in his own estimation). McDowall gives the following table:

Table 4.1 Percentage of Kurds to Overall Populations, late 1980s ¹²⁶		
Country	Percentage of Popn.	Number of Kurds (millions)
Iran	10%	5.0
Iraq	23%	3.9
Turkey	19%	9.6
Syria	8%	0.9
USSR (former)	—	0.3
Total		19.7

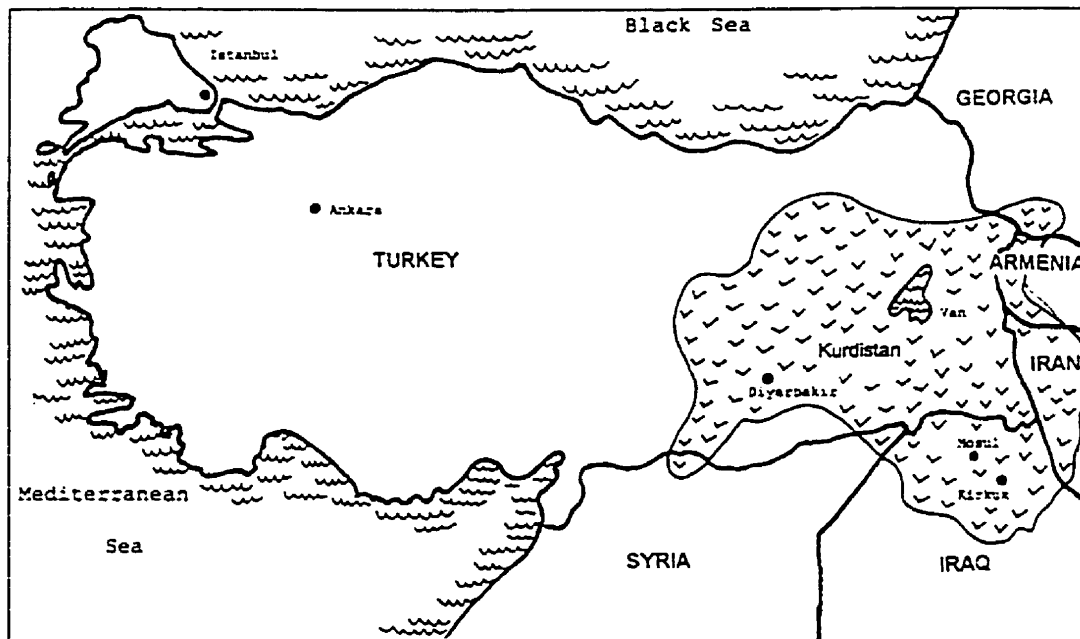
¹²⁶ D. McDowall, "The Kurdish Question: a historical review," in P. Kreyenbroek and S. Sperl (eds.), The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 32.

McDowall's estimates, as well as the compiled populations statistics indicated in Table 4.1, show a few general trends. Roughly half of all Kurdish people reside in Turkey (about 20% of Turkey's total population); Figure 4.1 shows that the bulk of those people are concentrated in the southeastern part of that state. The Kurds of Turkey do constitute a majority in the regions east of Diyarbakir, but there are also significant populations of Turks and Armenians in the same area. This, of course, has important implications that will be discussed later. Also of great importance to the entire Kurdish national movement are the enormous movements and relocation of people within Turkey. Since 1981, as many as 5-6 million Kurds have either voluntarily moved out of traditional Kurdish areas inside Turkey, or have been forced to relocate by the Turkish government.¹²⁷ In particular, border regions have been depopulated and entire villages have been moved as many as 100 kilometres. Istanbul is now the largest Kurdish urban centre, followed by the city of Ankara. Added to this fluid mix has been the transmigration of hundreds of thousands of Kurds displaced during the 1991 Gulf War and its consequent uprisings inside Iraq, and by political infighting in the UN-mandated Kurdish Protection Zone in

¹²⁷ M. Gunter, The Kurds and the Future of Turkey, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, p. 3. Gunter suggests that two million is a very low estimate given that it is the official number released by the Turkish Government. MED-TV and Amnesty International both suggest that internal displacement of Kurds since 1980 has been around 5-6 million (about 10,000 villages). Moreover, the Turkish National News Agency estimated the Kurdish population in the Istanbul area to be over 1.9 million during the time of the riots in the Gazi district of Istanbul in March 1995. That number is known to have increased to about 2.4 million at the

Northern Iraq.¹²⁸ The Turkish government has been insistent that all Kurdish refugees return to Iraq though tens of thousands (perhaps even hundreds of thousands) have remained inside Turkey, moved to Kurdish Iran, or joined the growing Kurdish diaspora in Northern Europe and the Russian Federation.

Figure 4.0 Traditional areas of highest Kurdish Population (Kurdistan)



Inside Turkey, the mass movement of Kurdish people has resulted in significant recent developments. The long-term policy of denying Kurds the right to speak the Kurdish language(s) and the official insistence that Kurds are Turkish

time of the arrest of PKK leader Ocalan in December 1997.

¹²⁸ M. Gunter, "The KDP-PUK Conflict in Northern Iraq," *Middle East Journal*,

citizens like all others have resulted in the fact that many Kurds have become less visible. Since the military intervention in 1980, the largest urban centres of Ankara and Istanbul have witnessed a dramatic growth in the number of (particularly young) Kurds.¹²⁹ Fully bilingual, and with full Turkish citizenship, many have conformed to the prevailing social order and have switched to Turkish names. However, many of these 'dual-cultured' Turkish citizens maintain close family and cultural associations with their counterparts inside Kurdistan. This semi-integration of Kurdish peoples into mainstream Turkish society has resulted in intercommunication between previously disparate Kurdish groups in a new class of educated and politicized Kurdish youth who are active within Turkish society, and have established some degree of economic prosperity that finds its way back into Kurdistan. The underclasses of Kurdish urban youth have spilled over into the growing Turkish diaspora in (mostly) Northern Europe. Within the hundreds of thousands of Turkish citizens and refugees in Germany, the Netherlands and France, are thousands of Kurdish/Turkish citizens (see Table 4.0). Relatively free of the watchful eye of the Turkish government, these Kurdish people have found a social environment that has become essential to the Kurdish national movements within Turkey, Iran, and Iraq.

50:2, Spring 1996, pp. 225-241.

¹²⁹ "Document: Forced Evictions and Destruction of Villages in Turkish Kurdistan," Middle East Report, April-June 1996, p. 8.

Iran:

The Kurds of Iran are a significant minority not only as a percentage of the total population (roughly 12%), but also in terms of their concentration in the northwestern part of that state. Iranian Kurds are located mostly along the important Turkish and Iraqi borders, and they comprise the vast majority in the regions they occupy. Though some urbanization of Kurdish populations has been occurring inside Turkey and Iraq, the same cannot be said for Iran's Kurdish minorities. Even during the tenure of the Shah and his modernization and education programs, the Kurdish minorities generally rejected relocating to the largest urban centres. Outside of Kermanshah (which is within the area of Kurdish majority populations), only Tabriz and Tehran have significant Kurdish populations.

In terms of mass migrations, Iran has recently been the recipient of influxes of Kurdish refugees as a result of the Iran/Iraq war (1980-88), the Gulf War (1991), the ongoing civil war in Turkey, and the PUK-KDP conflicts within the UN protection zone in Northern Iraq. Though numbers are difficult to find, the extent of mass migrations during these events would suggest that Kurdish refugees inside Iran numbered in the hundreds of thousands by the late 1990s. The United Nations has proclaimed that its protection zone inside Iraq guarantees the safety of Kurds there, but persistent Iraqi and Turkish military action, as well as internal Kurdish disputes, have resulted in fewer Kurds returning to Iraq than was expected. Though officially denied by the Turkish government, many reports suggest that the Turkish Army has engaged in a massive village burning campaign inside Northern Iraq. Again denied

by the Turkish government, Jane's Defence Weekly reports that as many as 10,000 Turkish troops have been stationed permanently inside the UN zone since early 1996. This presence has further dissuaded Kurdish refugees inside Iran from returning to Iraq, and their presence inside Iran may become permanent. While the official population statistics suggest that the Kurds amount to about 10% of Iran's 64 million total population (around 6-7 million Kurds), these are only Iranian/Kurd citizens, and the Kurdish population may actually be as many as a million persons more than the official census claims.

Iran's Kurds do have important linguistic and religious divisions. Though most of the Kurds inside Iran speak the Sorani dialect of the language, there is also a sizeable minority who continue to use the Gurani sub-dialect of ancient Persian (see Figure 4.2). Remotely located near the Turkish and Armenian borders, this major sub-minority is also staunchly anti-Shiite and anti-fundamentalist in its Islamic orientation. While the post-revolution Iranian government has since the Iran/Iraq War made great efforts to improve Iranian/Kurdish relations within the state, this has not extended to the Gurani regions. For the most part, the Sorani-speaking Kurds of Iran do adhere to a more conservative practice of Islam than do their counterparts in Iraq, but most reject the extreme conservatism of the early days of the Islamic Republic. In the early years of the Republic (1979-84) many violent clashes between Kurdish groups and the Republican Guards occurred, and Tehran used internal Kurdish disputes as an opportunity for exploitation throughout the duration of the war with Iraq. A good deal of mistrust continues to exist between

Kurdish factions within Iran, as well as between both Sorani and Gurani Kurds and the Iranian government. In the past two years, direct appeals for calm by Iranian President Khatami have resulted in a relatively peaceful coexistence.

Iraq:

Iraq's Kurdish minorities both constitute a very significant proportion of the total population of Iraq (around 25%), and represent the majority of the population in a fairly large geographical area. Until the Persian Gulf War, Iraq's Kurdish population was experiencing perhaps the most significant urbanization trends within all Kurdish regions. In particular, the cities of Mosul and Kirkuk had by 1990 emerged as significant centres of political and economic activity for Kurdish people. The massive movement of Kurds out of Iraq in the months following the Persian Gulf War, and the subsequent infighting between the PUK and KDP inside Iraq have led to a slowing of urbanization and some depopulation (mostly into Turkey and Iran).¹³⁰ At the same time, the creation of a UN protection zone has led to some movement of Kurdish people back into Iraq. The Turkish government has been so concerned about the activities of the PKK (the Turkish Kurdish Workers' Party) inside the UN zone that it has sent Turkish forces into the area at least three times since 1994, and since 1996 the Turkish Army has maintained a permanent military presence in the UN protection zone against the wishes of both the Iraqi government and the government of the United States. However, Kurdish migration into the

protection zone must be considered minimal in comparison to the numbers who have migrated into Iran and Turkey.

Since September of 1997 events have changed dramatically inside the UN protection zone. Firstly, the outbreak of open hostilities between PUK and KDP forces (the two central Kurdish political organizations inside Iraq who agreed to cooperative local rule from 1990 until 1994) resulted in a brief Iraqi Army invasion of the region in May of 1994.¹³¹ Iraq's invasion was at the request of PUK leaders who revealed to the Iraqi government the activities of the CIA and KDP operatives inside the KDP-administered zone of northern Iraq. Immediately before the PUK leadership requested Iraqi Army support, KDP and PUK factions had spent the summer and fall of 1993 arguing over the lucrative control of border posts between Iraq and Turkey. PUK and KDP border guards had been providing much needed funds to local governments by extorting high taxes and tariffs on goods moving into Iraq (mostly in violation of UN sanctions against Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War).

The Iraqi invasion of the UN zone included air support that was in violation of the UN 'No Fly Zone' in Northern Iraq, and resulted in US, British, and French air strikes against both Iraqi air and ground forces. The Iraqi Army pulled out of the region within weeks, but since that time Kurdish militia from both Turkey and Iran

¹³⁰ M. Gunter, *op.cit.*, p. 226.

¹³¹ M. Gunter gives a detailed description of the background leading up to, and the events of, the PUK-KDP conflict of 1994. See M. Gunter, "The KDP-PUK

have used the protection zone as a staging and training area for their respective civil wars. Since 1994, various Kurdish national groups have considered the US, British and French air forces to be 'their' air forces, and have used the threat of air strikes against Iraq as protection for all activities in the UN zone. However, Turkey has failed to comply with UN restrictions on ground and air force movements through the area. The PKK in particular have moved a large portion of their militia into the region, and the huge increase of Turkish military activity in Kurdish areas of Turkey prior to the arrest of Ocalan in 1997 resulted in mass movements of Turkish Kurds into Northern Iraq. These movements were further encouraged by the Turkish policy of the destruction of Kurdish villages in border regions, and movement was made easier by the fact that border crossings into Iraq were controlled by Iraqi Kurdish factions (both PUK and KDP). The increased mobility of all Kurds since the Gulf War has led both to some violence between Kurdish factions, and cooperation between the two linguistic dialects of Kurmanji and Sorani.

Syria:

Most research on the Kurds is focused upon its largest populations inside Turkey, Iran and Iraq. However, Kurdish minorities do account for nearly 10% of the total population of Syria. Culturally and politically, the Kurds of Syria are very

tioned to their counterparts in Turkey. They are located in two separate pockets in the most remote areas of Syria, one at the Syrian/Turkish/Iraqi border, the other along the Euphrates at the Turkish border. Only two small cities in Syria have significant Kurdish populations (Qamishli and Malikiyeh), but their close proximity to the Tigris and the borders of Turkey and Iraq have made these cities crucial cultural centres and meeting places for Kurdish tribes.

For the most part, the Kurds of Syria have enjoyed more cultural and political autonomy than their counterparts in other states.¹³² The reasons for this are complex, but they can be briefly summed up. Firstly, remoteness and Syrian preoccupation with much larger security and political issues in the region have greatly worked to the advantage of Syria's Kurds. Syria's concern over the volatile situation inside Lebanon, the larger Arab-Israeli conflict, Iran's influence in the region, and more recently the Gulf War have far overshadowed the political activities of the Kurdish minorities. Secondly, Syria has allowed Kurdish political activity (particularly in regard to Turkey and Iraq) to continue unimpeded as an important bargaining chip in its relations with these two states. One significant result of Syria's comparatively open policies regarding its Kurdish minorities has been the free mobility of Kurdish Syrian citizens within that state. Though the Kurdish minorities have remained concentrated in the Kurdish lands, Syria has been used as a transition zone by Kurds seeking political asylum, or Kurds interested in seeking better economic opportunities elsewhere in the Middle East. This has

resulted in (for example) a significant Kurdish community inside Lebanon.¹³³ While Syria's Kurds represent a small fraction of the overall Kurdish population, Syria itself remains an important centre for Kurdish political activity.¹³⁴

Armenia and Georgia:

Though a very small part of the overall Kurdish population, the Kurds of Armenia remain very important for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the Kurds have played a role in the violent relations between the Armenians and the Turks (both in the past and the present). Inside Turkey, a small number of very politically active Armenians remain and they co-occupy parts of Eastern Anatolia with Kurdish tribes. At times, various Kurdish tribes in the region have cooperated with Armenian groups and have provided assistance for Armenian terrorist activities inside Turkey. However, other Kurdish tribes co-operated with Ottoman and Turkish authorities during the massacre of thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of Armenians in the early part of the 20th century. These Kurdish tribes have never been forgiven by most Armenians, and relations between these groups continue to

¹³³ M. Collins-Dunn, op.cit., p. 84.

¹³⁴ ibid., p. 74, p. 84. Michael Collins Dunn estimates the Kurdish population in Lebanon to be "perhaps 80,000". He also notes a small population of Kurdish Jews who have long since migrated to Israel and who play no role in the Kurdish national movements inside Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

¹³⁵ Ismet Cheriff Vanly, "The Kurds in Syria and Lebanon," in P. Kreyenbroek and S. Sperl (eds.), The Kurds: a Contemporary Overview, New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 143-170.

be hostile. Inside Armenia, there continues to be a small but significant Kurdish minority. Of a nomadic heritage, these Kurdish tribes settled into the mountains near the Turkish border and continue in lucrative trade relations throughout the region. During the period of the Cold War (and to some extent today), the Turkish government in Ankara has insisted that the former Soviet Union aided PKK activities inside Turkey through the Kurdish communities in Armenia and Georgia. The Soviets always denied such activity (and the Russians continue to deny such links). However, the PKK itself has admitted openly the support and aid it has received from both the Soviet and Russian governments.

Unlike the Kurds of Armenia, the Kurdish people of Georgia do not have long-standing political conflicts with ethnic Georgians. During the years of the Soviet Union, the Kurdish population of Georgia increased dramatically, and like other practising Islamic minorities throughout this region, many were relocated throughout the Soviet Union. Today, no other state outside of the Middle East can rival Russia in terms of the size of its Kurdish population. In recent years, the Kurds of Georgia have remained outside of internal conflicts and have instead focused upon economic prospects in the region. Georgia also remains an important gateway into the Russian Federation for those Kurds who move into the diaspora as refugees from the civil war in Turkey. Though Russia is not a 'traditional homeland' of Kurdish populations, the presence of as many of one million Kurdish people residing in the state for a prolonged period of time has legitimized Russia's claims to be an important political player in negotiations between various Kurdish groups in

the region. Since the early 1990s a series of meetings between Kurdish political parties (Iranian, Iraqi, and Turkish) in Moscow has been received with unease by other state-players in the Kurdish question – especially Turkey. From the Russian perspective, peace and stability in this economically important region is essential to everyone's well-being.

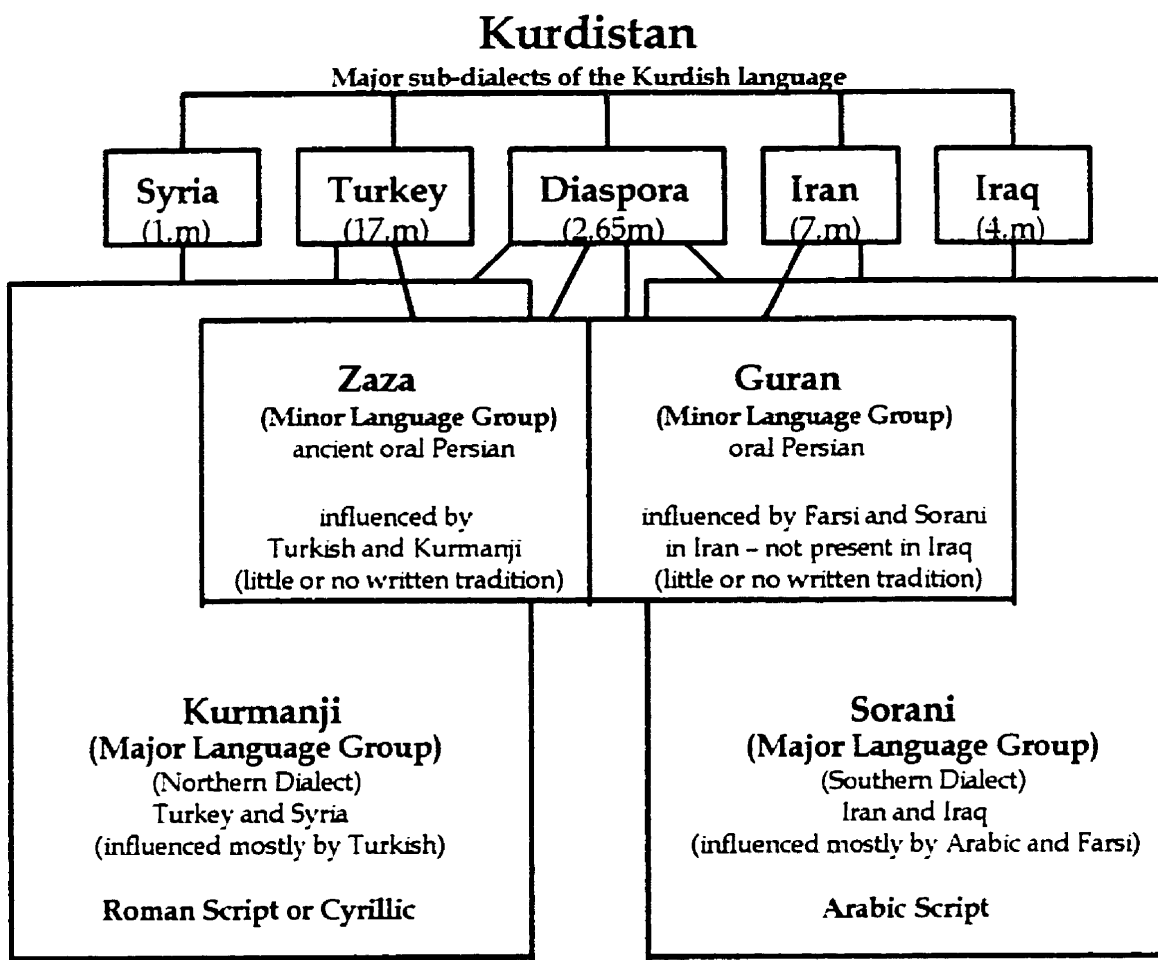
The 'languages within': Kurmanji, Sorani, Zaza, and Guran

In the limited literature on the Kurdish language, there is considerable disagreement as to whether one can even talk about a single unified Kurdish language, or if in fact there exist three or four separate languages. Certainly the push for the development of written Kurdish in this century has resulted in two very distinct dialects that are written in totally different scripts (Kurmanji/Roman and Sorani/Arabic). Though speakers of these separate dialects can be orally understood by each other in a limited way, the dialects have been greatly affected by radically different language environments in the past one hundred years. Added to this mix are at least two separate major sub-dialects that are similar to each other, very similar to ancient Persian, and are yet geographically separated from each other (Zaza and Guran). These sub-dialects of Kurdish have no written tradition, unlike a number of sub-dialects of the other two central Kurdish languages (Kurmanji and Sorani).

The Kurds were isolated mountain tribes, often nomadic for political and economic reasons, and as a result, all of the dialects of the Kurdish language have a

very limited written tradition. Moreover, as all Kurdish peoples represent a minority national group in the states in which they reside, the vast majority of Kurds are bilingual – or do not speak any Kurdish at all. This has led to the importation of words and phrases from those first and second languages (mostly Persian, Arabic and Turkish). Given that Kurdish is anathema to the governments of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, extremely repressive measures have been taken by each of these governments to eradicate or limit the Kurdish language. As a result, the large refugee communities outside of the Middle East have become increasingly important in the development and promotion of the language(s). In some ways, the development (and redevelopment) of the Kurdish language represents the political struggles faced by the Kurdish nation for at least the past 500 years. A very brief modern history of that development might help better understand the contemporary issues of language and nationalism in regard to the Kurds.

The Kurdish populations occupy the territorial limits of the Zagros mountains, and it has been these inhospitable mountains that have provided a geographical 'buffer' from the political interests of the great empires of the past. In particular, the failure of the Persian, Arab and Ottoman Empires of the past 1,000 years to subdue the people of the Zagros Mountains has left a cultural space in which the Kurdish language and culture have evolved. Though many Kurds claim

Figure 4.1 Breakdown of Kurdish sub-dialects ¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Chart drawn from the textual description of the Kurdish language given by P. Kreyenbroek, "On the Kurdish Language," in *The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview*, pp. 68-83. Sub-dialects and regional locations are verified by N. Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992, pp. 4-10. There is great significance in the distinction of Zaza and Guran and their relationship to ancient Persian. In particular, the Zaza speaking tribes of Turkey sided with the Persian Empire and their Gurani speaking kin in Persia in the 15th Century. As a result, the Ottoman Turks massacred thousands of the Alevi Kurdish minority (Zaza speaking Kurds), and the Alevi have since that time been socially and politically distrustful of other Kurdish tribes in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey.

to be ancestors of the Medes (northern allies of the ancient Persians), Philip Kreyenbroek claims that this theory was adequately challenged by linguist D.N. MacKenzie in the early 1960s.¹³⁶ Kreyenbroek claims that Kurdish must have developed from the western Iranian family of languages whose origins are similar to modern Farsi. During the northern expansion periods of the ancient Persian Empire, these early Kurdish people were pushed further into the interior of the Zagros Mountains in Eastern Anatolia. The two major verbal sub-dialects of Kurdish (Zaza and Guran) are in fact little changed from this early form of Farsi. In contemporary times, the geographical isolation of these two dialects (Zaza located entirely within Turkey near the city of Diyarbakir, and Guran located within Iran near the city of Bakhtaran), has led to each being greatly influenced by the prevailing languages in each region. The Zaza dialect has been influenced both by modern Turkish, and by the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish. The Gurani dialect has been most influenced by modern Farsi, and by the Sorani dialect of Kurdish. However, Zaza (sometimes called Dimli) and Gurani are still very similar to each other, and each can easily be understood by speakers of the other. ¹³⁷

The Arab Empire, too, reached its limits of control at the frontiers of the Zagros Mountains. The Arabs (and subsequently Islam) did put great importance on the Tigris and Euphrates river systems, and thus, their influence was profound upon those Kurds who now occupy the northern third of present-day Iraq and the

¹³⁶ P. Kreyenbroek, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

Table 4.2 Kurdish sub-dialect population breakdown by state¹³⁸

Approximate linguistic populations by state		
Turkey	Kurmanji	15.0m
	Zaza	1.1m
	Other	.9m
Syria	Kurmanji	.9m
	Sorani	.1m
Iran	Sorani	5.8m
	Guran	1.2m
Iraq	Sorani	3.8m
	Kurmanji	.2m

northwestern areas in Iran. Arab influence continues to this day, and the need to establish a written Kurdish language in the 19th Century resulted in the Sorani dialect of Kurdish being written in the Arabic script exclusively. As a result, Sorani

¹³⁷ N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, pp. 5, 18.

¹³⁸ These estimates are highly speculative, due in large part to massive dislocations of Kurdish populations since 1980. Of particular note, there may be very large numbers of ethnically Kurdish Turkish citizens who no longer speak any dialect of the Kurdish language. The same is true, but on a much smaller scale, in Iran and Iraq. The Turkish government also claims that large numbers of Turkish Kurds (mostly of Kurmanji dialect) are living and operating in PKK bases from Northern Iraq. Though the numbers of actual PKK members may be small, the numbers of Turkish Kurds in Northern Iraq could be as high as 200,000. It is also not altogether clear how many Iraqi Kurds (mostly of the Sorani dialect) still reside in neighbouring states (mostly Turkey, but some also in Iran) since the end of the Gulf War. Table compiled from percentages estimates of linguistic breakdowns in textual descriptions by P. Kreyenbroek, *op.cit.*, and E. Entessar, *op.cit.*, and verified by the following websites: <www.access.ch/tuerkei/GRUPA/gallery.htm>, and

has borrowed heavily from the grammatical structures and words of the Arabic language (or at least dialects of Arabic prominent in that region). While Kurdish regional dialects were already well developed by the 19th Century (existing as they did in pockets in mountainous regions), the written style of Sorani greatly assisted in solidifying this dialect as very distinct from the type of Kurdish being spoken by those who lived under the influence of the Ottomans in the same time period. To add further complexity, the Arabs were only marginally successful in establishing cultural hegemony over the former Persian Empire and the influence of Persian (or Farsi) on those Sorani-speaking Kurds within present day Iran created further sub-dialects within Sorani.

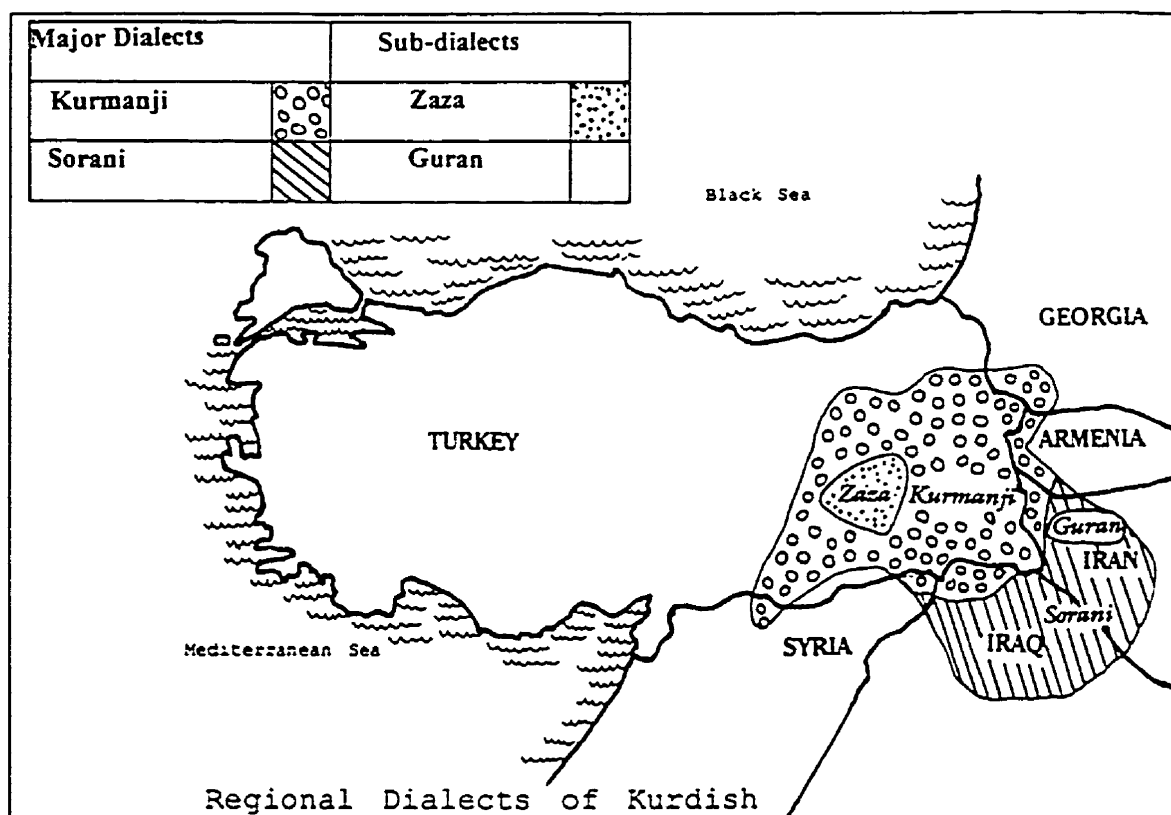
Ottoman influence over the Kurds of present-day Turkey was very different, but not without linguistic consequences. The Ottomans realized early on the difficulties of full cultural and military occupation in Eastern Anatolia, and set about establishing a number of alliances with Kurdish tribes in which relative political autonomy was allowed so long as those Kurdish tribes contributed to trade and military transit through the region.¹³⁹ This autonomy was viewed by most Kurdish tribes as full sovereignty, and many saw themselves not as part of the Ottoman empire, but rather as in alliance with the Ottoman Empire. Regardless, this degree of cooperation allowed for great cultural freedom for the Kurds. At the same time, it also resulted in the need to learn Turkish and establish Ottoman-style bureaucracies

<<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>>.

to deal with the Turks. By the late 19th century when the Ottoman Empire was in collapse, the Kurdish language was being written in the same Roman script adopted by the Ottoman government. With the exception of Zaza (which remained a spoken language only), all of the Kurds of Turkey began to formalize the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish. This extended into some parts of Northern Iran and Iraq, and to all of the Kurdish peoples inside present-day Syria.

Thus, by the time of the establishment of the modern Turkish state in 1920, Kurdish had been formalized as a language of two formal dialects, written in two separate scripts, and a number of very significant sub-dialects of each. Since the 1920s the present borders between states whose sovereignty includes traditional Kurdish regions has remained very stable. This has further solidified the distinctiveness of the variations of Kurdish. However, even with these great linguistic rifts, all of the dialects of Kurdish remain true to their claim to be Kurdish languages. Even the most distant of the languages to the two core languages (Zaza and Gurani) can be orally understood by most Kurds.

⁵⁹ J. Bulloch and H. Morris, op.cit., pp. 70-72.

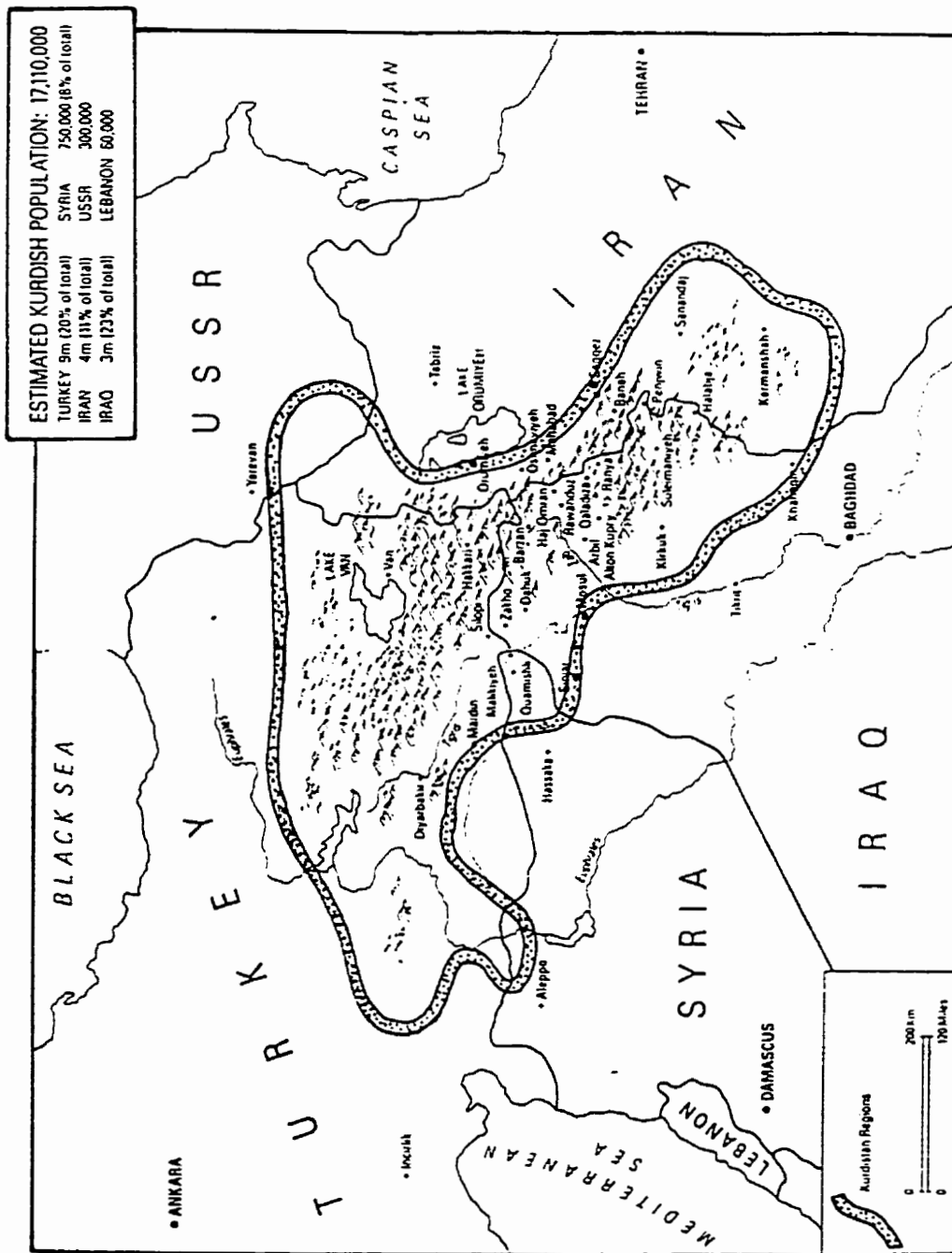
Figure 4.2 Regional Dialects of Kurdish ¹⁴⁰

Geography, language and culture in Kurdistan

As has already been stated, mountains define the Kurdish regions of the Middle East. Though the mountainous terrain has had very important consequences on the abilities of empires to control this region, it has also had a significant effect on the Kurds themselves. The above map (Figure 4.4) graphically illustrates the extent to which Kurdistan is defined by its terrain. Divisions within Kurdish tribes have

¹⁴⁰ Map drawn from textual descriptions of languages in P. Kreyenbroek, *op.cit.*,

Figure 4.3 Geographical Terrain of Kurdistan¹⁴¹



pp. 68-83.

¹⁴¹ Map taken directly from J. Bulloch and H. Morris, No Friends but the Mountains: The Tragic History of the Kurds, New York: Penguin Books, p. xii.

been as affected by the inhospitable mountains as have the sovereign divisions in the region. In particular, geographically isolated regions correspond roughly to Kurdish tribes that have had little contact with other Kurdish tribes, as well as little contact with those empires and states that have claimed the region as their own. Through many of these isolated regions flow the Tigris, Zab, and Euphrates rivers that have been (and continue to be) so important to all of the cultures, commerce, and (increasingly) crucial water supply for most of the Middle East.

Beyond the obvious fact that traditional Kurdish regions occupy the intersection of six major states, Bulloch and Morris's map also clearly displays how Kurdistan is directly at the centre of the closest intersection of the Caspian, Black, and Mediterranean commercial systems. It is no coincidence that most Kurdish tribes have long historical legacies as great traders and merchants, since those who sought to transport goods through this crucial intersection had to deal with them. In modern times the traditional routes of commerce continue through the Kurdish areas and have been complicated by the addition of two strategic resources – oil and water. Given that the Euphrates, Zab, and Tigris Rivers flow north to south (i.e. from the Kurdish regions into Syria, Iraq and Iran), and that these rivers have become crucial for survival and agriculture in this arid region, great concern has been placed upon the security of these water sources in the past twenty years. Syria and Iraq in particular have expressed grave concern over Turkey's interest in river diversion projects for possible irrigation and water purification to support the

growing water needs of Ankara and Istanbul. A water-pipeline from the Euphrates and Tigris to Turkey's urbanized west is considered a real possibility in the next ten years. In fact, water diversion has begun and construction of huge irrigation systems is slated for completion in phases over the next twenty years. Thus, the Turkish government has placed great military and economic development emphasis on those parts of Anatolia that are occupied by Turkish/Kurdish citizens. This emphasis has been accompanied by increasing numbers of Turkish nationals, further aggravating relations with Kurds.

The Iraq-Turkey oil pipeline has been closed since the Gulf War, but most agree that it will be reopened when Iraq begins to export more oil into a growing Turkish and European market. Work was already complete on a second section of the pipeline in 1990, running from the city of Kirkuk in Kurdish Iraq to the Tigris River, and following the Tigris into Kurdish regions of Turkey. When completed, the pipeline could transport Iranian oil through Iraq and into Turkey for further shipment on into the European market, further reduce the transportation costs of Iraqi oil by more than half, greatly increase the export potential of Iraqi and Iranian oil, and create jobs and economic activity inside Turkey. Turkey also hopes to establish itself as an important staging and refining centre for Middle Eastern oil destined for Europe by avoiding sea shipments through either the Suez Canal or through the Bosphorus, and instead transporting oil through Turkish pipelines. Turkey also hopes this will lead to an export arrangement with oil producers in Iran, Kuwait, and (to a lesser extent) Saudi Arabia. More recently, warmed relations

between Iran and Turkey have led to a proposed Iran/Turkey oil pipeline, and either of the proposed routes (either to the Black Sea through Turkish Kurdistan, or to the Mediterranean through Turkish Kurdistan) has profound implications and possibilities for economic development within traditional Kurdish areas. At the same time, negotiations are also under way between Turkey, Russia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in regard to a number of possible routes for oil out of Azerbaijan and Central Asia into the Black/Mediterranean Sea routes. Once again, a Turkish link in this pipeline would have to transit Kurdish areas, and the Turkish government has made clear its preference for a route through Eastern Anatolia. Some in Ankara have even suggested an 'oil superhighway' that would link all of the proposed pipelines to reprocessing and transit facilities in Western Turkey. Such a 'superhighway' would form the nucleus of a development corridor through Kurdish Turkey (for both oil and water pipelines).

CHAPTER FIVE: THE HISTORY OF KURDISH ETHNONATIONALISM IN A CLIMATE OF SUBORDINATION

Identity development under 'foreign' rule: The Kurds in Turkey

E. H. Carr reminds us in his classic What is History that often an historical analysis is as much a reflection of the context in which the historical work was written as it is an accurate reflection of those events it seeks to document. In what Halliday, Neufeld, Giddens, Mann and other critical scholars of international relations IR call 'historical sociology', Carr's tradition continues to direct research on global and civil societies. For many, in fact, the delineation between the two realms of political activity is itself an arbitrary one embedded with its own political and social preferences. Within such a post-positivist IR framework the history of Kurdish ethnonationalism that is tabled here is explicitly normative in its orientation. The history and development of the Kurdish peoples is not, and was not, a series of spontaneous and unrelated events erupting over a period of time. Clearly, Kurdish national development has evolved within a complex and ever changing set of social contexts. While there is always an inherent danger of reading too many preferences of the present into a description of the past, it is argued here that any claim of historical 'story telling' that is 'true', 'accurate', and 'objective' is far more dangerous than the normative approach. For it is in the very claim of having the truth that one's prejudgments, prejudices, and preferences cannot be subjected to critical self-reflection, re-evaluation, and rearticulation.

The historical construction presented here is one that asserts the evolution of Kurdish identity within a series of power relationships. In all phases of that development the Kurdish people were politically and socially subordinated to those states and empires that claimed political sovereignty and social dominance over regions occupied by Kurdish people. In fact, at no time in the past five hundred years has any form of sovereign political autonomy existed for the Kurds. However, degrees of 'relative autonomy' have varied greatly over both time and geography throughout the region, and these variations have profoundly affected different Kurdish groups in a variety of ways. Likewise, not all parts of Kurdish homeland(s) were uniformly claimed by the same states and empires over the years, and thus influences by dominant social and national groups have been uneven. The Zaza speaking Kurds of Eastern Turkey were never directly subordinated by the Persians, for example, and the Kurds of Northeastern Iran were only ever marginally affected by Ottoman and Turkish expansion in the region. While both share an historical legacy of subordination, it was not a uniform subordination in terms of the development of national identity, or in the strategies for ethnonational survival. This unevenness of a shared historical context goes a long way to explaining the profound differences within the Kurdish ethnonational movement. The shared experiences of political and social repression have likewise gone a long way to unifying and molding a singular Kurdish identity. In terms of the development of national identity, such a complex dialectic is not unique. However, one would be

hard-pressed to find an example with as varied and profound differences as the Kurds.

The 'modern' Turkish state's origins are directly related to the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and as such, are greatly influenced by the European state system of the early 20th century. Specifically, two important factors of the emergent Turkish state are to be discussed: first is the 'relative autonomy' that existed for Kurdistan during the Ottoman period, and the continued impact this has for modern Kurdish ethnonationalism; second (and related to the first point), the centralized concept of nation-state that was to be the model for Kemal Atatürk's modern Turkey. Based upon the lessons of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Kemalist Turkey was constructed on a notion of centralized administration and state power, and the homogeneity of the Turkish people. There was to be little or no tolerance for social and administrative diversity. However, this process of centralization and the 'construction' of a homogeneous identity was a slow one, and the history of these processes is basic to an understanding of the Kurdish identity.

Competing Empires and 'Relative' Kurdish Autonomy

Perhaps no historical moment is as significant to Kurdish nationalism as the three hundred year period (roughly 1514 to 1828) in which the Ottoman and Safavid Empires left political control over Eastern Anatolia to local tribes in an attempt to

create a 'no man's land' between them.¹⁴² Before this time, the Mongol and Turkoman invasions through this region pushed many of the local Anatolian tribes into the eastern regions of what is presently Turkey in the 13th and 14th centuries. However, neither the Mongol nor Turkoman armies were interested in permanently occupying these regions; they were merely interested in securing a passageway into Europe and the Mediterranean. As McDowall has suggested, the Ottoman victory over the Safavids at Chaldiran in 1514 presented enormous opportunity for local tribesmen. Based on the experience of the Mongols two centuries earlier, the Ottomans knew that military and political success in this region could not be achieved easily through military conquest. Instead, the Ottomans sought the cooperation of local Kurdish tribal leaders (amirs) in order to defeat the Safavids.¹⁴³ It was in this time period that local Kurdish identities solidified around tribal leadership, a characteristic which is still present today.

The interrelationship between the central Ottoman state and the local religious sects was one of the central organizing mechanisms of the Ottoman empire.

As Mesut Yegen argues:

The power of the Ottoman Palace had a dual source – the palace was the space for both Sultanate and the Caliphate. In other words, in the personality of the Ottoman sultan were represented both the political unity of all the 'Ottoman' peoples and the religious unity of all Muslims. An a-national logic conditioned the unity provided by the

¹⁴² D. McDowall, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 14.

Sultanate and Caliphate. Both the logic of emperorship and that of Islam exceeded the logic of the 'nation'. ... Thus, numerous 'nation-states' were established on 'Ottoman' territory.¹⁴⁴

The numerous national identities that flourished within Ottoman society were clearly arranged within a rigid hierarchy that contemporary political scholarship would label a 'loose federation'. However, such a label does not account for the strict military and administrative authority of the Ottoman state. While there is much evidence to suggest an Ottoman tolerance of ethnic and regional diversity, there is little to suggest that 'limited autonomy' was extended to allow any sort of military, political, or economic independence. The complexity of these political arrangements is also found in the geographical proximity and strategic significance of each 'autonomous' region within the Empire. Within Istanbul, for example, Ottoman society was primarily and increasingly Islamic, though Orthodox Christianity flourished within its isolated sects. Tolerance was granted to ethnic and religious minorities in terms of maintaining and perpetuating culture, but non-Turks existed under a specialized hierarchy with a clear objective of Ottoman control and domination. Similar hierarchical arrangements existed in other major administrative cores of the Empire, and generally speaking, greater autonomy was granted to local and regional hierarchies further into the periphery of the Empire. However, Ottoman bureaucracy was always paramount, and the elite status of the Sultan's armies was almost always assured.

¹⁴⁴ Mesut Yegen, op.cit., p. 220.

It was within the complex 'loose federation' that local Kurdish tribal leaders cut out a niche of relative autonomy for themselves. Tribesmen were able to maintain traditional tribal authority within the Ottoman periphery, provided their armies remained loyal to the Empire. In many cases, elite Kurdish armies provided the vanguard of the feared Ottoman military. Some Kurdish armies and regiments operated as mercenaries offered for hire by their tribal leaders, while others were directly enlisted as citizens of the Ottoman Empire. These divergencies were mostly regional, but general patterns emerged whereby entire Kurdish linguistic groups shared similar relationships with the Empire. Almost all Kurdish armies had a dual loyalty, but were generally Kurdish first – and Ottoman second. This hierarchy of loyalties was necessary to ensure the status of relative autonomy for Kurdish amirs, and resulted in numerous shifts in alliances throughout the period of Ottoman control. At the same time, local tribal leaders were able to maintain local control of the lucrative trade (and collect taxes) through their region, and as well, maintain a nomadic and isolated existence for the majority of their peoples. This 'loose' arrangement existed for a period of roughly four hundred and fifty years (from about the end of the 13th century to the middle of the 18th century), with numerous shifts in allegiances and inter-tribal relationships throughout the duration. It was not uncommon for widely nomadic tribes to switch sides based upon the politics of the day and suddenly proclaim allegiance with Persian officials. Alliance building and shifting also contributed significantly to the rapid collapse of Ottoman control in

the regions of Eastern Anatolia by the end of the 19th century.

16th and 17th Century Kurdish Images of the Turks as a Basis of Self -Identity

There the Greeks spent a happy night, with plenty to eat, talking about the struggle now past. For they had been seven days passing through the country of the Kurds, fighting all the time, and they had suffered worse things at the hands of the Kurds than all that the King of Persia, and his general, Tissaphernes, could do to them. (Anabasis of Xenophon, 440 B.C.)¹⁴⁵

The issue of Kurdish control over the region often now referred to by Kurds as Kurdistan is not a new one. Traversing Greek armies of 2500 years ago were but one of several foreign powers to encounter, and learn respect for, Kurdish mastery of their geography and protection of their identity. While most foreign (Middle Eastern and European alike) impressions of the Kurds are marked by images of fierce and violent warriors, this may be more a reflection of foreign intentions in this strategic region than anything endemic to the Kurds themselves. Modern and ancient Kurds alike have often thought of themselves as a passive and isolationist society, but a society that is willing to use its strengths to maintain its solitude. During the period of the great rivalry between the emerging European powers and the existing Ottoman Empire, the European view of the Turks was a varied imagery of a brutal and barbaric people. Outside contact with the periphery of the Ottoman Empire (specifically the Kurdish tribal regions) was varied. As a crossroads

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in, R. O'Ballance, The Kurdish Revolt 1961-1970, London: Faber and Faber, 1973, p. 15.

between Asia and Europe, and the intersection between the Ottoman Turks, the Persians and the Arabs, outside contact was frequent. To the puzzlement of those with political and military aspirations in the region, the Kurds proved to be elusive, cunning, fearsome, and above all, persistent in their very presence.

Like European images of the Ottoman Empire, Kurdish images of the Ottomans were equally diverse. In part this might be explained by regional diversities within relatively isolated Kurdish tribes, but even this is a simplistic assertion. While many Kurdish tribes enjoyed 'relative political autonomy' during the Ottoman period, they were in contact with the Empire. The Ottomans, like the Arabs and Persians before them, knew full-well the difficulties of establishing full political and military control over 'Kurdistan', and yet were also acutely aware of the significance this territory held as a crossroads between Europe and the exotic lands beyond¹⁴⁶. To some extent, this afforded many Kurdish tribes a privileged position within the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the process of Kurdish image-building of the Ottomans was often one of curious mistrust, the need for both isolation and cooperation, and (given the Kurdish successes in staving off other political aspirations in their region) cynicism. However, given the disparate nature of the Kurdish tribes themselves and their complex interrelationships, we see Kurdish images of the Ottomans as reflecting both simplistic monolithic understandings of

¹⁴⁶ S. C. Pelletiere, The Kurds: An Unstable Element in the Gulf, Boulder: Westview Press, 1984, p. 17.

the Turks, and an acute awareness of the diversities within Ottoman society.¹⁴⁷

A robust merchant and trading relationship through Kurdistan in the 16th and 17th centuries saw goods traverse into and through the region from the Caucasus (largely Georgia and Armenia), Persia, and the Tigris and Euphrates river regions and on into the Ottoman Empire. As discussed in Chapter Four, the Sorani and Kurmanji dialects of the Kurdish language began to solidify as distinct and nearly unintelligible to each other. The Sorani dialect saw the importation of many Farsi (Persian) words and phrases, while Kurmanji was mostly influenced by Turkish. Eventually the collapse of the Ottoman Empire led to separate oral and written traditions within the Kurmanji Kurdish language, with one dialect evolving into an Arabic written tradition (now usually referred to as Sorani Kurdish, or Arabic Kurdish), and the other using a roman script inside the modern state of Turkey. Also inside the Eastern Anatolian regions of Turkey is the Zaza dialect of Kurdish, that has evolved little through a lineage that some claim relates to the Medes (ancient imperial predecessors to the Persians), a migration north into Northern Iran, and a significant branch in an area of present-day Turkey between Sivas, Diyarbakir, and Erzurum.¹⁴⁸ Zaza has no written tradition even to this day, and like the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish, its traditions, myths, images, and poems are mostly of an oral tradition.

¹⁴⁷ D. McDowall, op.cit., pp. 12-14.

¹⁴⁸ P. Kreyenbroek, op.cit., p. 72.

17th century poems and epic tales formed the literary basis of informal Kurdish cultural schools by the late 19th century. Though it is not a literary work, the Kurdish ruler of the Bitlis emirate Sharaf Khan wrote in Turkish a detailed history of Kurdish rulers up until his time of writing (1597).¹⁴⁹ In it, Kahn clearly defines Kurds as distinct from Turks, and elaborates upon the urban aristocratic, tribal, and peasant divisions within Kurdish society. He also notes the oppression they faced by the Turkish suppression of their Kurdish pride and identity.¹⁵⁰ Even Turkish writers of the mid 17th century like Evliya Çelebi note the distinctions between Kurdish tribes and their complex political arrangements of regional alliances and military balances. Çelebi refers to the Kurds of the time as "...a well defined, distinct people...".¹⁵¹

Sharaf Khan's elaboration of the distinctions within Kurdish society differs from his depiction of the Ottomans in a monolithic way. Unlike many Kurds who viewed the world in a manner in which the Middle East was the centre of all global and political activity, Khan (who was well educated in the traditions of Europe at the time), saw the Turks in a manner very similar to his European contemporaries. He saw the Ottomans as textbook despots, who ruled in a crude yet effective way.

¹⁴⁹ M. van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems," P. Kreyenbroek and S. Sperl, *op.cit.*, p. 49.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid*, 49.

¹⁵¹ *ibid*, 49.

For Khan and other Kurdish amirs of the early 1600s, who were expected to share their wealth and spoils with all members of their tribe in times of need, the Turks lacked compassion and a sense of justice. Highly elitist and aware of the special role the amirs and agahs played in Kurdish society, Khan believed that the Turkish preoccupation with their territorial gains drove them to enslave the Kurds for their own purposes. Khan's belief is one that is still widely shared within many Kurdish communities inside modern Turkey.¹⁵² Khan also elaborated upon the fact that the Turks remained fully unaware of the complexities within Kurdish society (especially the 'class' divisions within each tribe), and the Ottoman knowledge of the Kurds extended only insofar as was required to maintain their exploitative alliances with the various tribes.

Mulla Jaziri is credited with the first known written Kurdish.¹⁵³ A Kurmanji speaking Kurd, Mulla Jaziri wrote from his home in Jazira (on the present day Syrian-Turkish border) in the late 16th and early 17th century. In a style typical of many Kurdish tribes, the Mulla's poems were largely epic tales of local and regional

¹⁵² ibid, 51.

¹⁵³ It is important to note that even though the 17th century produced a number of Kurdish literary works (mostly in the Kurmanji dialect), it was not until the late 19th century that formalized written Kurdish texts (almost exclusively in Sorani and Kurmanji) began to be published. Though Philip Kreyenbroek suggests that there is evidence of some Kurdish writing before Mulla Jaziri, Jaziri's work is still deemed to be the first. However, aside from formal political and national essays, most Kurdish literature has been the writing of traditional tales and poems that have orally been passed along through the generations. See, for example, P. Kreyenbroek, "On the Kurdish Language," P. Kreyenbroek and S. Sperl, op.cit. pp. 68-83.

Kurdish peoples and their traditional ways of life. The Jaziri sub-dialect of Kurmanji became the basis of the modern language, and in the wake of Mulla Jaziri's poems came a number of writers throughout the 17th century.

A second legacy of Jaziri's poems was the fact that Jazira came to be, and to some extent still remains, an important centre of Kurdish literature and publishing. This effectively cemented Kurmanji as one of the most important languages of Kurdish culture, and Jazira had important qualities that greatly affected Kurdish literary works of the 17th century. Unlike most Kurdish regions that exist in relative isolation, Jazira is located in one of the most travelled regions in the Middle East. Traders who traverse the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers pass through Jazira, and some have argued that Jaziri's (and others) are not merely a reflection of early Kurdish identity, but a culmination of all those who despised the Turks in the seventeenth century.¹⁵⁴ Unlike European images of the Turks, Jaziri's poems often read as political manifestos for Kurdish nationalism. This was even more evident in the works of Ahman Khani who wrote just a few years after Jaziri. However, very similar to some European images of the Ottoman's at the time, Jaziri portrays the Ottomans as brutal, untrustworthy, immoral, and uncaring. Several significant (even to this day) epic tales were written in Jazira throughout the 17th century.

The most important of these epics was written by Ahmad Khani in which he tells of the great military prowess of the Kurds and the empowerment it brings their

¹⁵⁴ ibid., 72.

tribes because these proud warriors are so sought after by both the Ottomans and Safavids. In *Mem û Zîn* Ahmad Khani portrays the Ottomans as astute managers who make inept warriors. These tales openly mock both the Ottomans and the Safavids for their inability to conquer Kurdistan, and suggest that each of these great empires is dependent upon the military skills of the Kurdish 'mercenaries'. Kurdish poems of the 17th century are replete with references to the Turks as obsessed with an Empire that they cannot effectively manage and maintain.

Mem û Zîn, which was written around 1685 and was adopted by Kurdish nationalists in Turkey as their official 'anthem' in 1908, was a clear cry against Turkish and Persian oppression, and a call to full Kurdish political autonomy. In it, Khani claims to be writing in Kurdish,

...so that people would no longer say that the Kurds are devoid of wisdom and lacking in culture, that all peoples have their books but the Kurds alone cannot boast a single one.¹⁵⁵

In van Bruinessen's analysis of the same text,

Khani laments the political divisions of the Kurds, which caused them to be ruled over by the Ottomans and the Persians. If only the Kurds were united under a strong ruler, he sighs, learning and the arts would be flourishing among them, and they would reduce all the Ottomans, Persians and Arabs to vassalage.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Khani, Ahmad (1685 – 1962) *Mem û Zîn*, Edited and translated by M.B. Rudenko, Akademiji Nauk SSSR, Moskva: 1962, p. 33. I thank Martin van Bruinessen for finding a published edition of this essay.

¹⁵⁶ M. van Bruinessen, *op.cit.*, 49.

The early Kurdish poetry of the 17th century, and the anecdotes passed along and eventually published in the late 19th century, made constant reference to the Turks as possessive, lacking an emphasis upon communal sharing, and unskilled at managing the complexities of Kurdish tribal alliances. Unlike the European portrayals of the Ottomans as exotic despots, Khani's writing suggests a counter-image of the Turks as poor empire rulers, and in particular, weak warriors. The Kurds, unlike the Europeans of the day, did not show fear of the Ottomans; they 'imagined' themselves as more clever by learning how to survive within the Empire by exploiting its weaknesses. While Kurdish lore viewed Ottoman expansionism into the former Persian Empire as being motivated by greed and brutality, Kurdish agahs (tribal leaders) catered to Ottoman aspirations through a complex set of local alliances with the Empire. All the while, the same tribes offered experienced Kurdish warriors (thought of as the best in the region at the time) to whichever side would offer the local tribe the most in trade. This pragmatic approach on the part of the multitude of Kurdish tribes became the bane of both the Ottoman and Safavid Empires.

Both Kurmanji and Zaza tales of the 16th and 17th centuries espouse the virtues of a nomadic lifestyle and mock those whose lives are captured by possessions that chain them to only one place – and hence a narrow life experience.¹⁵⁷ The characterization of the Turks by the Kurds as possessive was

¹⁵⁷ The first Kurdish newspaper (Kurdistan) was founded by the Badr Khan family

accelerated through the 18th century. With the Ottoman Land Code of 1858, the Turks had successfully fractionalized Kurdish society along the land ownership issue.¹⁵⁸ However, the depiction of possessive and often ruthless Turks found in early Kurdish lore was in stark contrast to the opinions of the ruling amirs in the period from 1514 until the 1830s. After the decisive Ottoman victory over the Safavids at Chaldiran in 1514, both the Turks and the Safavids sought political arrangements with Kurdish tribes in the border regions.¹⁵⁹ This greatly empowered the Kurdish amirs, and those who allied themselves with the Ottoman Empire thought highly of the Turks. Of course, those amirs who sided with the Safavids were not so kind.

In sum, the Kurdish images of the Turks in this period were diverse at best. Intermixed with cries of state-based nationalism that sound more 20th century than 17th, early Kurdish writings show a great divergency in their understanding of the Turks. Often for those empowered by alliances with the Ottomans (the powerful

in Cairo in 1897. It was used mainly for the publication of Kurdish nationalist statements, and as an educational tool for the promotion of the Kurdish culture. Though sporadic in its appearances, it was published for a period of twelve years until closed in Istanbul (it was moved there in 1905) in 1909. By the time of its closure, Kurdistan had published a large number of traditional Kurdish tales that have since been translated into several languages and widely distributed (especially in Northern Europe). For details on the 20th century reproduction of traditional Kurdish lore, see N. Entessar, op.cit., pp. 81-111.

¹⁵⁸ R. Olsen, The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵⁹ D. McDowall, op.cit., p. 14.

amir elites, agahs, and sheikhs), the Ottomans were acceptable so long as they afforded these amirs some political autonomy. For most Kurds at this time, the Ottomans were simply the latest in a long series of oppressors, and they granted the Kurds more privacy of affairs than did the Safavids, Arabs, Persians, or whoever else had aspirations in the region. It is clear that a complex system of power relations over the Kurds greatly affected 'images' both of other Kurdish groups, and those who aspired to dominate them. Perhaps this more than all else, explains the divergencies of the hierarchies of identity construction and image portrayals in Kurdistan at this time.

There are some significant conclusions to be drawn from this examination of the earliest known written texts of Kurdish identity. Firstly, it is interesting to note that the use of folk imagery in early Kurdish texts defines the Kurdish people not in descriptive and indigenous terms, but in relation to their differences from those who rule over them. That is to say, these texts do not describe the Kurds in attributes that are inherently Kurdish, but rather, the description is largely of how the Kurds are different from the Turks. This process of imagery and the construction of identity is similar to what Edward Said calls 'Orientalism'.¹⁶⁰ In Said's estimation, such a process of self-identification reveals a larger structure of domination and subordination. It is a structure that is in neogramscian terms, a successful

¹⁶⁰ E. Said, *op.cit.*, p. 40., At least initially, Said uses the term 'position of strength' rather than 'domination'. Later (p.73) he elaborates upon the operation of Orientalism with specific reference to Islam and uses the term domination.

hegemonic order.¹⁶¹ The natural order is so complete that those who live in a social system of structural subordination can only identify themselves in relation to the dominant social order.

A second conclusion that can be drawn from the images and texts of early Kurdish writing relates to the political aspirations of the Kurds themselves. The epic tales of Ahmad Khani that have risen to a level of 'national manifesto' for Kurds in the 20th century, are replete with calls for Kurdish political autonomy. Considering that Khani was writing in 1685 (i.e. before the successful completion of the consolidation of modern nation states in Europe), one must reconsider whether the social origins of national states are entirely a European concept. Clearly the Westphalian model is rooted in the European experience, and clearly it was the Westphalian model that greatly affected Atatürk's plans for the modern state of Turkey. However, the roots of Kurdish ethnonationalism may lie in an understanding of sovereignty that is far more conditioned by their own experiences than that of the European model. This too relates to an Orientalist process of identity construction, as the calls for national autonomy in the works of Mulla Jaziri, Sharaf Khan, and Ahman Khani may only be in relation to the Ottoman dominance under which they lived, and not necessarily a call for a modern national state in the sense that it has come to mean today. This reconsideration may be important in fully understanding the complex cleavages within the Kurdish national movements

¹⁶¹ R. Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony, and International Relations: An Essay in

throughout the 20th century. It may be somewhat ethnocentric (or at very least Eurocentric) to assume that all calls for national autonomy are necessarily calls for the establishment for a modern state based upon the now dominant European model. While Khani laments the political divisions with the Kurdish tribes in 1685, one cannot ignore the fact that it was strong local and tribal identities that allowed for relative political autonomy throughout Ottoman rule.

18th and 19th Century Kurdish nationalism within a declining Ottoman Empire

In 1989 Robert Olsen published the first detailed history of the Sheikh Said Rebellion. Though several previous Middle Eastern publications had looked into this crucial period of Ottoman and Kurdish history, most had been based upon personal anecdotes and speculation of the motives and actions taken in Kurdistan from 1880 until about 1925. Olsen was successful in gaining access to British Foreign Office, Colonial Office and Air Ministry records, and for the first time, his analysis was based upon records and notes of those present inside Kurdish Ottoman territory at the time of widespread rebellion.¹⁶² Further to that, in 1996 the Turkish government released for the first time the complete personal notes and correspondence of Mustafa Kemal (later known simply as Atatürk - or father of the Turks). With the assistance of translators in Turkey, and with part of Atatürk's

Method," Millennium, 12:2, 1983, p. 38.

¹⁶² R. Olsen, The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Shiekh Said

writings translated into English and published by Andrew Mango in 1999, we can begin to put together here a more complete historical overview of this formative period of Kurdish nationalism.¹⁶³

With the establishment of relatively autonomous Kurdish tribes within the Ottoman Empire that based their identities and imageries upon a style of nationalism that appeared almost to be in mode of the 20th century, the eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire was paralleled by emergent Kurdish movements that culminated in the Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1880-1925. In fact, some have argued that the Sheikh Said Rebellion was the single greatest contributing factor to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (excluding their military defeats outside of Ottoman lands), and further was instrumental as an impetus for the establishment of the modern state of Turkey in 1920.¹⁶⁴ Certainly Kemal Atatürk's plan to appease Kurdish tribes through an invitation to join the new Turkish state was evidence of the seriousness with which he took the persistence of Kurdish nationalism at that time. This history of emergent Kurdish nationalism is one that is only now well-

Rebellion, 1889-1925, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989, p. ix.

¹⁶³ A. Mango, "Atutürk and the Kurds," Middle Eastern Studies, 35, Fall 1999, pp. 1-25. My translators did not want to be mentioned by name, but all three are academics in political science in Turkey who have completed Ph.D. dissertations written in English. Two of these translators hold positions at Bilkent University in Ankara Turkey, and the third teaches at Middle East Technical University in Ankara.

¹⁶⁴ See, for example, William F. Tucker, "Introduction," in Olson, op.cit., pp. xv-xix.

documented, but not often told. Ironically, the man who would eventually establish the state of Turkey (Mustafa Kemal Atatürk) allied himself with the Kurdish resistance movements of 1920 as a basis to force the hand of British, Greek, Armenian and Allied interests in the region and assure the establishment of the Turkish state. Few western and Turkish histories of the time (and even to the present) discuss the direct links between the CUP (Committee of Union and Progress, the political organization that formed the government of post-Ottoman Turkey) and Kurdish resistance movements. However, a number of recent investigations by western scholars have found mountains of evidence to support these links in Ottoman, British Foreign Office and Air Ministry, and early Turkish government documents.

This brief historical section will examine more closely the crucial link that the Kurdish tribes played in both the internal collapse of the old Ottoman order, and their crucial role in the establishment of the modern Turkish state. Without the key role played by Kurdish tribes in driving out European, Russian, and Persian forces from the crumbling Ottoman Empire, the establishment of a sovereign Turkey could have been in doubt. However, within ten years of the state's creation its primary internal concern became the establishment of a singular Turkish national identity - and consequently the assimilation (by whatever means) of those Kurdish tribes that played so crucial a role in the establishment of that state in the first place.

Robert Olsen argues that the final phase of Ottoman history in which the

European outreaches of the Empire began to collapse was paralleled by four distinct phases of Kurdish nationalism inside Anatolia. Olsen delineates these phases as follows:

(1) the movement led by Sheikh Ubaydallah of Nehri and his Kurdish League, which marked the emergence of the sheikhs as the most important leaders among the Kurds, ending with his death in 1883; (2) the role of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry from its creation in 1891 until the outbreak of WW I; (3) the events of World War I to the Treaty of Sevres (10 August 1920); and (4) the aftermath of World War I and the postwar developments through the rebellion of Sheikh Said.¹⁶⁵

Olsen, at least, argues that while there was clear Kurdish national consciousness prior to the emergence of Sheikh Ubaydallah, its leadership was based primarily upon the local religious amirs and aghas, and their local identities operated at the level of self imagery and distinguished themselves as different from the Turks.¹⁶⁶ A loose set of independent alliances with a number of Kurdish tribes throughout all of Anatolia remained fairly stable from about the 13th century (the end of the Mongol occupation of the region) until about the start of the 16th century.

As discussed, the Ottomans sought a more formal arrangement with Kurdish tribes from around 1500 in order to incorporate local Kurdish armies into the larger Ottoman Army. Though both the Ottomans and the Safavids attempted to gain Kurdish allegiance, the Ottomans were far more successful, and by 1514 the majority of Kurdish tribes had established formal alliances with them. As a result, the Kurdish armies were instrumental in the final military victory of the Ottomans over

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 1.

the Safavids at Chaldiran in 1514.¹⁶⁷ In return for this, local Kurdish amirs and aghas were given full political authority in local affairs, and traditional Kurdish territories were left untouched and untaxed by the Ottoman administration. This allowed for the continuance of the nomadic lifestyle of most Kurdish tribes that had been a basic aspect of their political and social structure for at least one thousand years.

All was calm in Turkish Kurdistan until the start of the 19th century. Ottoman conquests in Europe (Greece in particular) were being challenged by the emerging and increasingly powerful European nation-states, as well as by Russia in the north. To some extent, the newly consolidating European states (and in the case of Britain, a collection of states now embarking upon a more global colonial project) were continuing the Islamic/Christian rivalry that characterised relations between Europe and the Middle East since about the 13th century. As David McDowall notes, the loss of Greece in 1828, political unrest in the Balkans, Russian expansion into eastern Anatolia, and a renewed Persian activism in the East, forced the Ottoman Empire to refocus its attention upon Kurdistan by the 1830s. This refocused attention (in particular the deployment of more than half of the total Ottoman army) did not sit well with local tribal chiefs who had become accustomed to nearly 400 years of local autonomy. Tensions had become so high that by 1850 a few Kurdish tribal rebellions had occurred in an attempt to expel Ottoman armies from Kurdish

¹⁶⁶ ibid., p. 2

communal lands. It was within this context that Sheikh Ubaydallah emerged as a significant Kurdish leader.¹⁶⁸ Though Sheikh Ubaydallah was a religious leader, he was able to successfully establish political influence in the areas under rule by other chieftains in the political vacuum that was left in the aftermath of the defeat of the Ottomans by Ibrahim Pasa in 1839.

Sheikh Ubaydallah formed an alliance with Bedir Khan Beg (a non-religious Kurdish local leader who was working to establish a federation of autonomous tribes in the early 1840s), and their working relationship was able (for the first time) to link both the administration of local governments and Islamic officials.¹⁶⁹ This powerful combination of religious and non-religious leadership inspired Bedir Khan Beg to lead his local armies into conflict with the Nestorian Christians in 1843 and 1846 in an attempt to secure further Kurdish autonomy from local Christian groups. However, these conflicts alarmed Ottoman authorities and resulted in huge sections of Anatolia being occupied by the more powerful Ottoman army by 1845.¹⁷⁰ The Ottoman administration made it clear that it would not tolerate internal dissension within its Empire, and would not allow Kurdish political autonomy to include

¹⁶⁷ D. McDowall, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁶⁹ M. van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and State: On the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan*, Utrecht: Published Ph.D. dissertation, Ryksuniversiteit, 1978, p. 225.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 227

military occupation of traditionally Christian lands. Though it is clear that Bedir Khan Beg's intentions were mostly of a local nature, by the 1860s and 1870s Sheikh Ubaydallah was making overt claims for the need of a fully sovereign independent Kurdistan. In July 1880, the Shiekh formally made his desire known for an independent state of Kurdistan in a letter to the British Vice-Consul.¹⁷¹ At this point, Ottoman control over what is now Eastern Turkey was interrupted by pockets of British troops moving into the region from Baghdad as part of a larger British offensive against the Ottoman Empire. The Sheikh's formal announcement began a period of forty years of 'on again-off again' negotiations between Kurdish leaders and the British Foreign Office relating to British support for an Independent Kurdistan. Sheikh Ubaydallah's elevation to this level of negotiation helped to solidify him as the most important of all Kurdish leaders in the region; he was the only one who aspired to a type of pan-Kurdishism.

At the same time as an emergent Kurdish nationalist leadership was being established in the collapsing Ottoman Empire, a number of moves on the part of the Empire itself assisted in securing a more political (and hence less local and religious) leadership among the Kurdish peoples. Sheikh Ubaydallah made pragmatic use of a sheikh's traditional function as provider to local villages and chieftains in times of need, and through strategic marriages, he gained the allegiance of some important local chiefs. The Sheikh married into the wealthiest of tribes, and shared this wealth

¹⁷¹ R. Olsen, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

with other tribes in times of need to create a massive network of followers. As Wadie Jwaideh describes, some of the most powerful tribal chiefs would address Sheikh Ubaydallah as "Your Highness".¹⁷²

This power base was further enhanced by the Ottoman Land Code of 1858. Feeling the pressure of British intentions in the regions, the Ottoman Administration decided in 1858 that the complete autonomy of Kurdish lands could spell political disaster. Until that time, all Kurdish lands were public lands held by each tribe. This allowed for communal use, and was a significant feature of the Kurdish nomadic lifestyle. In many cases, Kurdish lands were shared by several neighbouring tribes and local tribal aghas would often help each other in times of need. The Ottoman administration realized that roving British armies in this region could gain control of Kurdish tribes by simply taking their land. In a move to assure the political support of tribal aghas, the Ottoman Land Code ceded control of these lands directly to aghas and amirs in return for assurances of their support of Ottoman rule.¹⁷³ Though the hope of incorporation of the agha class into the Ottoman ruling elite was met in part by the Land Code, it also resulted in greatly strengthened and wealthy local leadership throughout Kurdish regions. With a well-connected and influential sheikh such as Sheikh Ubaydallah ruling over some

¹⁷² W. Jwaideh, The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Its Origins and Development, Ph.D. dissertation (unpublished), Syracuse University, 1960, p. 133.

of the most important local aghas, and with the sheikh's Kurdish nationalism aspirations developing, the Ottoman Administration handed Sheikh Ubaydallah a significant power base for his movement.¹⁷³

The effects of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 seriously eroded the relative status of Bedir Khan Beg, and this was followed by a further event that led Sheikh Ubaydallah toward a state-based form of Kurdish nationalism. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 had brought near chaos to the Kurdish regions of the Empire and consequently, popular dependence grew upon local aghas for food, security, and medical attention. While most Kurdish peoples were falling victim to this brutal war, the Treaty of Berlin was signed on July 13, 1878. In it, Article 61 stated that an independent Armenian state would be established inside Anatolia, and the security of this state would be guaranteed by Great Britain. Sheikh Ubaydallah's response to this was clear:

What is this I hear; that the Armenians are going to have an independent state in Van, and the Nestorians are going to hoist the British flag and declare themselves British subjects. I will never permit it, even if I have to arm the women.¹⁷⁴

It was in direct response to the threat posed by a possible Armenian state within the region of Kurdistan that Sheikh Ubaydallah formed the Kurdish League in 1878 (the first ever Kurdish alliance). He then rapidly began a campaign to shore up as much

¹⁷³ D. McDowall, op.cit., p. 19.

¹⁷⁴ R. Olsen, op.cit., p. 4.

support as he could for the League, including what some speculate was secret Ottoman support for the organization.¹⁷⁶ Even a brief local Kurdish rebellion in 1879 did not deter Ottoman support for Sheikh Ubaydallah. The Ottoman administration firmly believed that the rapid erosion of its authority could only be stopped if it forged alliances with traditional friends. Armenian/Turkish relations could not have been worse in the 1870s, and Russian and British promises of an Armenian homeland could only be viewed as a serious threat to both Ottoman and Kurdish control. Conversely, regardless of Sheikh Ubaydallah's aspirations for a sovereign Kurdistan, this might not have amounted to much more than the political autonomy already granted to Kurdish tribes throughout the duration of the Empire.

Active Kurdish armies, state-based nationalism, and the collapse of the Empire

So serious were Ottoman fears of foreign intentions that the Ottoman armies supplied arms and training for the newly established Kurdish League Militia in 1879. Kurdish armies had fought with the Ottomans against the Russians in 1877-78, and by the end of that conflict the Kurdish armies (still under the direct control of Ubaydallah) were perhaps the most experienced and well equipped of all Ottoman armies. In 1880, Ubaydallah (with approval from Istanbul) launched an invasion into Iran to increase his own Kurdish territory. Olsen claims that Ubaydallah had

¹⁷⁵ ibid., p. 5.

¹⁷⁶ ibid., p. 6.

intended to increase his power base to force the hand of the Ottoman government and consequently push them to finally establish a Kurdish state within the empire. However, The Kurdish League Militia was soundly defeated by Iranian forces, and upon return to Ottoman Kurdistan, Sheikh Ubaydallah was arrested by Ottoman authorities and taken to Istanbul. In Olsen's estimation, the Ottoman government felt compelled to act because of negative European reaction to the Kurdish invasion, and because the Ottomans also realized that support for Kurdish nationalism could easily get beyond their control.¹⁷⁷

The arrest of Ubaydallah led to an Ottoman deal with the Kurdish League in which it was agreed that he would be exiled to Hijaz (he died in Mecca in 1883), and that the Ottoman Empire would assure some form of independence for the Kurdish areas within the Empire.¹⁷⁸ At this point in 1881, the Kurdish struggle had become an international struggle, and the Ottoman Empire was the only power in the region truly interested in establishing a Kurdish state of any form. In Olsen's estimation, Russia did not want an independent Kurdistan for fear of losing the Kurdish territories it had gained in the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, and Great Britain did not want a situation in which Ubaydallah's Kurdistan could draw Iran closer to Russia, complicating Great Britain's policies in central and southwest Asia. However, it was clear that the Ottoman Empire viewed promises of a Kurdish state only as a means

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ ibid., p.7.

to help stifle the Armenian independence movement.¹⁷⁹ At the same time, Istanbul acquiesced to British and Russian requests to banish Ubaydallah from his homeland, knowing that other Kurdish leaders would take up his nationalist cause.

These Ottoman assumptions were well founded. In fact, the Ottoman-supported Kurdish League Militia already had a political branch of its own by 1878, and by 1880 the Militia was renamed the Hamidiye Light Cavalry Regiments. Its commander (Sultan Abdulhamid II), and ethnic Kurd, had a strong basis of tribal support from eastern Anatolia and set out to widen that basis of support in the absence of Ubaydallah. In fact, Abdulhamid II was able to do something Ubaydallah was never able to. By 1883 Abdulhamid had succeeded in securing limited Russian support for the Hamidiye Regiments by persuading Russian officials of the dangers of an independent Armenia in the region. He portrayed the Armenian independence movement as being supported by Britain in their (the British) attempt to counter Russian influence in the region.¹⁸⁰ Abdulhamid also succeeded in gaining the full political support of the governors of the Anatolian provinces (appointed by Istanbul), and in 1884 he appointed his own governors.

The Ottoman authorities had little choice but to accept Abdulamid's personally appointed governors, both because he was Sultan and because the Mamidiye was now the most powerful military in the region - being supplied by

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 7-12.

¹⁸⁰ W. Jwaideh, *op.cit.*, p. 242.

both the Russians and the Ottomans. The Ottoman administration felt as though it was rapidly losing control in the region, and its response to it was unclear. It accepted an Armenian delegation of nationalists to Istanbul, and took great pains to pay attention to Armenian demands for independence from 1885-1890.¹⁸¹ Whatever the Ottoman intentions were at the time, one thing was clear: Abdulhamid was able to effectively establish full political and military control over the vast majority of all Kurdish tribes in Anatolia, and was able to play off the great powers against each other in an effort to secure the closest thing the Kurds have ever seen to full state autonomy by 1890.

Through the late 1880s and early 1890s, Abdulhamid and the Hamidiye vastly expanded their political and military network. Through a marriage to the sister of Abdulhamid, Müsir Zeki Pasa was brought into the military leadership of the Hamidiye. Zeki Pasa was already the commander of several local northern Kurdish tribal armies, and he was given command of the entire Hamidiye in 1891.¹⁸² Greatly expanded by the inclusion of the northern Kurdish tribal armies, the Hamidiye became the institutional basis of a quasi-state that engaged in direct taxation, provided military training and other educational facilities, and ensured coordination of tribal administrative practices. Zeki Pasa also persuaded

¹⁸¹ B. Kodaman, Abdülhamid Devri Eğitimi Sistemi, Ötüken Nesriyat, 1980, p. 428, translated with assistance.

¹⁸² R. Olsen, op.cit., p. 9.

Abdulhamid that 'foreign armies' should be removed from the region, and by 1893 the Hamidiye had established two military fronts (one between Erzurum and Van facing Russian troops, and the other in the Mardin-Urfa region facing the British). Based upon the average size of regiments (between 500 and 1200 soldiers), Olsen estimates the size of the Hamidiye to have been as much as 66,000 troops by 1893.¹⁸³

Having succeeded in keeping the British and Russian armies out of the Kurdish provinces by 1896, the Hamidiye turned its attention to local Armenians (at the same time as Ottoman armies were moving into Ottoman Armenia) and the result was one of the bloodiest conflicts of the 19th century. Thousands of Armenians (if not hundreds of thousands) were massacred by Kurdish regiments of the Hamidiye. The Ottoman armies used similar tactics, and by 1897 Armenian aspirations for an independent homeland had been thwarted – at a massive cost in human life. The Armenian campaign of 1896-97 did come at a serious political cost to Abdulhamid II and his quest for an independent Kurdish state. From the Ottoman perspective, the Hamidiye had assisted in putting down an Armenian challenge to Ottoman rule in the region. Several of the Hamidiye's most powerful generals still believed that Kurdish and Turkish interests were sufficiently common, and that Kurdish autonomy could best be secured within a larger Turkish state. This would become an extremely important factor in the Turkish Ottoman revolutions in the next ten years. A large number of Turks themselves had come to

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 10.

realize (Mustafa Kemal included) that the days of the Ottoman Empire were limited, and any division within the Kurdish national movement offered great opportunities to persuade some Kurds at least, that there was room for Kurdish tribes within a newly established Turkish state.

In the aftermath of the Armenian campaign, Abdulhamid II became more and more dependent upon the political support of the Cibran tribe. The very significant Hormek tribes (the largest of the Alevis Zaza-speaking Kurdish tribes), were increasingly under the military leadership of General Mahmud Evket Pasa (commander of the powerful 3rd Army), and he succeeded in renaming the 3rd Army's political wing the 'Young Turks' – a clear indication of their political leanings towards a modern Turkish state. The Hamidiye did fight brilliantly under the central command of the Ottoman army in its minor role in the Eastern Campaign of WW I, but the inter-tribal tensions within the Hamidiye continued to be very important right up to (and past) the establishment of Turkey in 1920.

After WW I, the tribal factions within the Hamidiye had consolidated around the Cibran, Hormek and Alevis groups.¹⁸⁴ This was further enhanced by the fact that Abdulhamid insisted that membership in the Hamidiye be enrolled from only Sunni tribes, greatly weakening the Alevis who tended to be mostly Shi'i Muslims. Even so, at the outbreak of anti-Ottoman rebellions in 1908 by Turks and Kurds alike, the Hamidiye had become a massive military force of its own with regiments

¹⁸⁴ B. Kodaman, *op.cit.*, pp. 113-119.

active in the Balkans, Syria, all of Anatolia, Armenia, and Northern Iran. In the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, Kurdish political organizations had been established in nearly every major city in the Ottoman Empire, including Istanbul.

The Collapse of an Empire

Namik Kemal, a prolific Ottoman Turkish writer whose writings had a major impact upon Mustafa Kemal, wrote in 1878:

While we must try to annihilate all languages in our country, except Turkish, shall we give Albanians, Lazes and Kurds a spiritual weapon by adopting their own characters? If we set up regular schools... and carry out the programmes which are now not fulfilled, the Laz and Albanian languages will utterly be forgotten in twenty years. ¹⁸⁵

In a surprising move in 1996, the Military History Department of the Turkish General Staff (ATASE - Askerî Tarih ve Statejik Etut Baskanligi)¹⁸⁶ released 67 documents from Mustafa Kemal's personal archive, including photocopies of his hand-written notes and speeches from the formative period of his ascent to the leadership of the CUP (and subsequently leader of the state of Turkey). Though it was clear that Atatürk was a pragmatic political leader who was interested in

¹⁸⁵ Quoted by Masami Ari, Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era, Leiden: Leiden Publishers, 1992, p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ Translation provided by A. Mango, "Atatürk and the Kurds," Middle Eastern Studies, 35, Fall, 1999, p. 5.

brokering the interests of the various national and regional groups needed to establish a modern secular Turkish state, these documents confirm his correspondence with Kurdish leaders from the time he spent in Anatolia as a commander in the Ottoman Army during WW I, until and throughout the period of Turkish state formation, and until his death. In his public speeches, in his private notes, and through his telegrams Atatürk reveals a conciliatory tone with Kurdish leaders (and the Kurdish people generally). More specifically, Kurdish claims of promises given by Atatürk for autonomous Kurdish local and tribal government are affirmed in these documents.

In May 1919 (less than a year before the First Turkish National Congress in Ankara in April 1920) Mustafa Kemal sent a telegram from Havza to four Kurdish tribal leaders indicating his intention to visit his Kurdish friends as soon as possible. A few days later Mustafa Kemal asked his General Staff in Istanbul to find out what British intentions were 'in the east', with specific reference to allegations that the Kurdish Club in Diyarbakir had become a general meeting place for Kurdish nationals and that the British Major E.M. Noel (acting on behalf of the British commissioner for the Persian Gulf, Colonel Arnold Wilson) was negotiating an independent Kurdistan with some Kurdish leaders there.¹⁸⁷ Just two years before this, in late October 1918 when Allied troops arrived in Istanbul, the British

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 5.

announced that Mehmet Serif Pasa (an Ottoman official of Kurdish origin who had spent the great war in exile in Paris) had agreed to become Amir of a possible independent Kurdistan.

It seemed by 1920 that these earlier British promises were being acted upon, and Mustafa Kemal began a campaign of his own to counteract any British plans to carve several states of the 'Turkish' sectors of the former Ottoman Empire. It was reported back to Mustafa Kemal that indeed some negotiations were under way at the Kurdish Club, but that Kurdish representation amounted to only a few local tribal leaders, most of whom had previously separate local agreements with the Ottoman Empire. In other words, the British negotiations involved but a small fraction of possible Kurdish leaders, and Mustafa Kemal was quick to find Kurdish allies of his own. On June 11, 1919 Mustafa Kemal sent a telegram to one of the most powerful Kurdish leaders in Diyarbakir, Kasim Cemilpasazade, that stated:

The plan to create an independent Kurdistan had been hatched by the British for the benefit of the Armenians. However, Kurds and Turks are true brothers and may not be separated. Our existence requires that Kurds, Turks, and all Muslim elements should work together to defend our independence and prevent the partition of the fatherland. I am in favour of granting all manner of rights and privileges in order to ensure the attachment and the prosperity and progress of our Kurdish brothers, on the condition that the Ottoman state is not split up.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ ATASE [Military History Department of Turkish General Staff], Extracts from the Atutürk's Private Archive IV, General Staff Press, 1996, p. 33, translated with assistance.

These Kurdish leaders responded by sending three Kurdish notables as delegates to Sivas to meet with the commander of the Ottoman 13th corps to discuss the requirements for an independent Kurdish state. Commander Ahmet Cevdet reported back to Mustafa Kemal on June 25th 1919, stating that the Kurds “....do not want Ottoman rule, and prefer British rule. Believing that [their area] would [then] develop and become prosperous like Egypt”.¹⁸⁹ Regardless, Mustafa Kemal instructed that the three Kurdish delegates should be elected to the Turkish national congress that was to meet in Erzurum and declare the constitution of an independent secular Turkish state. Mustafa Kemal also instructed that the Kurdish Club in Diyarbakir be shut down as it had become the center of Kurdish negotiations with the British.

The last remaining significant Ottoman army in Anatolia by mid-1919 was located at Erzurum and commanded by Mustafa Kemal's trusted general, Kazim Karabekir. General Karabekir was instructed to secure the area around Erzurum in preparation for the congress, to ensure that there would be no British, Kurdish or Armenian interference in the meeting to establish the new state. In a telegram sent to General Karabekir from Mustafa Kemal on June 16, 1919, he indicated his intention to “grasp the Kurds like true brothers” in order to unite the new nation

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 38.

with the collective goals of national rights and national defence.¹⁹⁰

Mustafa Kemal was true to his word. At the Turkish Congress on July 23, 1919 the first order of business was to elect Mustafa Kemal Atatürk father of the new state. The second order was the adoption of the National Pact (the charter of the Turkish national movement), and in it, a claim that the peoples and races of East Anatolia were true brothers and an inseparable part 'of the same race', the basis of the state of Turkey. Several Kurdish delegates were at the Congress and voted in favour of both its new leader and its national proclamation. Though the Erzurum Congress had all the makings of the birthday of a new nation, its authority was only valid within the province and it would be two congresses later (one in Sivas, and the final in Ankara) before Mustafa Kemal consolidated himself as the President of the Grand National Assembly (i.e. for all provinces, not just one), on April 24, 1920. Between the Erzurum and the Ankara congresses, Mustafa Kemal was busy gathering as much Kurdish support as he could for his ruling party, and the new secular state.¹⁹¹

Conclusion and analysis of the emergence of Kurdish nationalism

The above historical analysis of the emergence of Kurdish identity and nationalism during the Ottoman period is not without context. There are several

¹⁹⁰ ibid., p. 33.

¹⁹¹ A. Mango, op.cit., pp. 7-8.

crucial factors of note that distinguish the Kurdish case from other nationalisms, state and Empire-building projects, and religious movements during that era.

Though the vast majority of the Kurdish tribes were relatively isolated and enjoyed only a limited contact with Ottoman, Persian, and European powers at the time, this limited contact was extremely uneven. In particular, the amir and agha classes were not just the local leaders of the Kurdish tribes; they both defined and represented their respective local identities, and they more than any other Kurds monopolized almost all outside contact. The only exception to this were the large numbers of Kurdish soldiers enlisted into Ottoman armies, and even these men had a clear allegiance to their tribe first and Empire second. The early known written and oral Kurdish cultural lore is highly reflective of elite Kurdish images of Turks, and consequently reflective of their own self-identities that were always in reference to the Turks for Kurdish self-definition. To some extent, this reveals a relationship of Kurdish subordination, but at the same time, it reveals the extent to which local leadership would never succumb to a relationship of total subordination. "We will co-exist with the Turks" they said, " but only insofar as they do not erode the basis of Kurdish identity." This type of relationship was something that would become important to the Kurdish movement throughout the 20th century.

Early Kurdish tales are also indicative of the persistence of Kurdish identity over a very long period of time. Local elites successfully ruled isolated societies and languages and fostered a three to four hundred year image-building project as not

anything intrinsic, but rather: 'better warriors than the Turks'; 'more compassionate than the Turks'; 'responsible for the success of the Empire'; or 'espousing communal values that are superior to Turkish greed and barbarism.' When this Kurdish relationship with the Ottomans is taken in the context that it was a relationship that endured for more than four hundred years, it is not merely a situation – it is a system. It is in fact a highly fractured hierarchical system (in the sense that several tribal identities were all evolving in subordination in a unique way), but a system that defined the very way these disparate groups identified themselves. In other words, the evolution of Kurdish identity (identities) was one born not in an environment of unrestrained self-awareness, but in an environment of restrained self-difference.

Another major reconsideration of the Kurdish historical experience only becomes obvious with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the relative absence of a hegemonic order. With the possible exception of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that relied upon well-established existing national states in its federal arrangements, the Ottoman Empire was very unlike its contemporary rivals – especially the European nation-states and colonial powers. The Ottoman Empire was only highly centralized in administrative and military matters, but not in terms of ethnic and national identities. Internally, it was more of an alliance than a state. As such, political alliances and local political autonomies based around ethno-identities were allowed, and often encouraged. In the case of the Kurdish tribes, this autonomy

was extended to include their own military organizations.

Social hegemony for the Ottomans was based around the concept of Islamic unity; the Sultan had clear authority on administrative affairs, and the Caliphate had clear authority over social and religious matters. However, Islam is not a highly institutionalized religion, and more importantly for the Kurds, religious affiliation was only one of several inseparable parts of their tribal identity. This meant that when the Empire began to weaken under external and internal pressures, the various Kurdish tribes could merely turn to their own local aghas and amirs for both moral and national guidance. The Kurds had a multi-level social consciousness and self-definition (Ottoman, young Turk, Kurdish, tribal, Islamic, territorial, nomadic, linguistic, and familial). Empire, state, national, or tribal leaders could appeal to any one of (or any combination of) these affiliations in an effort to mobilize, or immobilize, Kurdish groups. In this sense, the eventual and rapid collapse of the Ottoman Empire cannot be solely understood in global and international terms. While it is true that the Empire came under serious external pressures from other states in the late 19th century, this alone did not define or dictate the collective actions of the Ottoman Administration. Ottoman society was internally complex, and while the Kurdish tribes were undoubtedly a significant factor in its strength for a period of four hundred years, they were also a significant factor in its weakness by the late 19th century. This dialectic was intrinsic to the Empire for its duration. However, it was the internal shift in its hegemonic order that eventually led to the Empire's

fractionalization in the early 20th century. As we shall see, it was a second reorganization of the internal hegemonic order that resulted in a reconstituted Turkish state by 1920.

Lastly, the eventual and uncoordinated emergence of several (often competing) Kurdish national groups is hardly surprising when taken in the context of their social history. The vast differences within the Kurdish groups can be partially explained by their regional and nomadic cultural traditions. This was fostered and reinforced by the Ottoman preference to deal with each tribe and tribal leadership separately. The granting of local autonomy helped to ensure limited local identities, and few tribes were able to expand beyond a limited area. However the language, culture and shared historical experiences of all of the various tribes dealing with the Ottomans established the Kurds as (somewhat) unique. They were united in culture and language, yet divided by region and their treatment by the Empire. This was further reinforced by the system of competition between rival empires in the region and their various quests to seek military and political support from the various Kurdish tribes on an individual basis. When this practice continued for more than half a millennium, the social implications for the Kurds have been profound. However, from the early poems and epic tales of various dialects of Kurdish to the calls for an independent Kurdistan in 1880, one thing is clear: all Kurdish groups have been united not simply as a group of similar languages and dialects, nor simply as cultural groups with shared values and

history, but, as a singular group who have collectively defied the wishes of various states and empires by their very persistence of self-identification as Kurds in the face of social domination. In this sense, it has been cultural and social hegemony imposed upon Kurds that has defined their image of self.

CHAPTER SIX: KURDISH ETHNONATIONALISM AND THE TURKISH STATE

A new state, and the transition toward a policy of uni-nationalism

This chapter will examine two significant periods of Turkish history in regard to the Kurdish people. Firstly, the early period of the Turkish state during the 1920s will be examined as this was an era in which there was a significant and rapid change of policy regarding Kurdish minorities. This period witnessed the first ever, and largest Kurdish national rebellion inside Turkey. As we have seen, Mustafa Kemal and the CUP had considered the Kurdish tribes to be brothers in a common cause in the events leading up to the Ankara Congress of April 1920, and this close working relationship included promises of local autonomy – the basis for Kurdish ethnonational survival for more than four hundred years. Those Kurdish leaders who were included in the state formation process were promised that modern Turkey would be a multinational state, and that the Kurdish peoples would be one of the two founding nations. However, in the chaos that ensued inside Turkey in the first ten years after the modern state was established, things changed dramatically. By the late 1920s it was clear that Turkey was to become (in theory at least) a nation-state, and that no tolerance was to be given to any national minorities – the Kurds in particular. Prior to then, there was a widespread Kurdish rebellion from about 1923 until the late 1920s, and its aftermath witnessed the wholesale state

repression of all Kurdish national movements inside Turkey up to (and including) the present.

The second goal of this chapter is to briefly examine the political movements of the Kurdish people inside Turkey from the period of the early 1930s until the modern phase of a Kurdish insurgency/civil war that began in about 1980. The post-1980s (or contemporary phase) will be dealt with in the last two chapters of the thesis. Within the fifty-year period examined in the second part of this chapter, we can see roughly two important sub-phases. The first is the post-rebellion phase from about 1930 until the onset of the Cold War. This phase saw the rapid withdrawal of Kurdish political organizations from mainstream Turkish politics, and the onset of repressive state measures to deal with all Kurdish groups in a uniformly brutal manner. The Kurdish political and social movements that continued to be active in this phase were simply vilified as irrational enemies of a modern forward-looking state.

During the Cold War phase (the second post-rebellion phase), this same process was easily translated into the vilification of Kurdish insurgents as communist insurgents. The Turkish state began to exploit its larger international relationships (NATO in particular) as means for gaining the political and military support to quash all forms of Kurdish ethnonationalism inside Turkey and in the surrounding region. Throughout the Cold War, the Turkish military played up the Kurdish factor to such a degree that it managed to position itself as the single most

powerful political institution in Turkish politics. The Turkish military developed a massive security infrastructure (both military and quasi-military) and intervened in national politics via a military coup-d'état on three separate occasions. On all three occasions, military distrust of civilian management of the 'Kurdish Question' was a central factor. The political role played by the Turkish military practically assured the impossibility of a political solution to the Kurdish question during this era. As well, it forged a military/state campaign of Turkish national identity construction that steadfastly refused to entertain any notions of Turkish society as multinational. The Cold War phase is also significant in the sense that the Kurdish movements themselves become increasingly transnational, and the Turkish government exploited this fact to great advantage regionally and internationally.

The new state, and the revolutionary phase (1920-1930)

In 1999, reflecting upon the formative period of Turkey during its War of Independence, Andrew Mango wrote:

To sum up, during the years of the War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal recognized specifically the multiethnic character of the Muslim population of Turkey, while insisting on its fraternal unity. He also promised that local government would accommodate ethnic specificity. After 1923, any idea of the self-rule of individual Muslim ethnic communities dropped out of the Turkish political agenda. Mustafa Kemal devoted his energy to the consolidation of power and to his cultural revolution. He had little time for the Kurds.¹⁹²

¹⁹² A. Mango, op.cit., p. 23.

Though most Turkish historical texts of the past eighty years suggest that the Turkish War of Independence was a glorious national struggle against foreign and colonial powers inside what is now modern Turkey, recent non-Turkish scholarship suggests otherwise. In fact, the Kurdish resistance movements in the period from 1880 until 1920 against Russian and British troops in the region were perhaps the most significant military campaigns up to (and including) the Turkish War of Independence. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Turkish Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) supported, and in some cases led, Kurdish anti-British and anti-Russian military campaigns right up to the declaration of the the Turkish state in 1920.

In a 1984 publication, Dutch historian Erik Jan Zürcher demonstrated that the CUP had a secret underground organization called the Special Organization (Teskilat-I Mahsusa) through which Mustafa Kemal himself went to Anatolia in 1919 to begin his Turkish national resistance campaigns inside Kurdish regions with the full support of local Kurdish generals.¹⁹³ Mustafa Kemal appealed to a larger sense of collective insecurity among the Kurdish tribes in light of the fact that both Turkish and Kurdish militia had engaged in a second wave of huge massacres against Turkish Armenians in 1915-16. He insisted that international pressure from Greece, Britain, Russia, the Balkans, (and others) was now focused upon the near chaos

¹⁹³ E.J. Zürcher, The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984, pp. 75-90.

inside the crumbling empire. The emerging Atatürk convinced many Kurdish generals that there would be international reprisals for the massacres, and any foreign promises of an independent Kurdistan were merely ploys to keep the remains of the empire divided and weak. In short, Mustafa Kemal was able to use the powerful and organized Kurdish insurrections as a basis for the revolutionary Turkish national movement. In the meantime, the RAF (Royal Air Force) had begun a widespread bombing campaign throughout Anatolia in the absence of troops on the ground. By the end of WW I British Army troops had become widespread in territory extending throughout Anatolia, India, and Iraq – but spread very thinly.¹⁹⁴ This RAF campaign only helped Mustafa Kemal convince Kurdish leaders that the interests of the Kurdish and Turkish nationals were shared.

While the Turkish War of Independence was under way, post-WW I treaty negotiations were also under way in Europe. Britain had used a formal request to ‘all Kurdish peoples’ to send a representative to Paris in 1919. By this time, Kurdish political representation internationally had become seriously fractionalized. Two organizations in Britain and France were controlled by the Bedir Khan dynasty of tribes, and a third was controlled by Sheikh Ubaydullah who still favoured Kurdish autonomy within a Turkish state. There were also separate tribal delegations inside the United States making proposals to the King-Crane Commission (assisting in what eventually became Wilson’s Fourteen Points address to Congress in January

¹⁹⁴ J. Bulloch and H. Morris, No Friends But the Mountains: the Tragic History of the

1918). The US Kurdish delegations had continued to support the idea of an independent Kurdistan, an independent Armenia, and an independent Turkish state - all under a US mandate.¹⁹⁵

In late 1919, the British and French governments announced that Sharif Pasa (an Ottoman Kurd) would represent Kurdish interests in the Sèvres negotiations, and that Pasa would eventually become the leader of any future Kurdistan. This of course added to the complexity of the situation, as few Kurdish leaders accepted Pasa as their leader, and few negotiating teams at Sèvres even knew what the Kurds collectively wanted. However, the Sèvres negotiations did include the idea of an independent Kurdistan (even if in only a fraction of the territory they occupied), though it is not clear if any Kurdish delegations were present for these discussions. What is clear, however, is that Italy, Britain and France backed this plan, and that the Ottoman delegates signed it. (Mustafa Kemal was personally present for part of the prenegotiation process.)¹⁹⁶ Article 62 of the Treaty of Sèvres reads:

If, after one year has elapsed since the implementation of the present treaty, the Kurdish population of the areas designated in Article 62 calls on the council of the League of Nations and demonstrates that the majority of the population in these areas wishes to become independent of Turkey, and if the council then estimates that the population in question is capable of such independence and recommends that it be granted, then Turkey agrees, as of now, to comply with this recommendation and renounce all right and titles to

Kurds, London: Penguin Books, 1993, p. 87.

¹⁹⁵ ibid., p. 88.

¹⁹⁶ ibid., p. 90.

this area. The details of this renunciation will be the subject of a special convention between Turkey and the main allies.

If and when the said renunciation is made, no objection shall be raised by the main allied powers should the Kurds living in that part of Kurdistan at present be included in the Vilayet of Mosul seek to become citizens of the newly independent Kurdish state.¹⁹⁷

It was events outside the new state of Turkey that cemented the national territories set out at Sèvres (and later confirmed at the Treaty of Lausanne), and finally ended the prospect of an independent Kurdistan. Most of the territories specified in the Treaty of Sèvres for the Kurdish tribes were located in the British mandate of Iraq. However, as far back as 1919 Sheikh Mahmoud Berezendji had rallied Kurdish tribes there to oust British forces from the region. Berezendji's revolt was put down, but not before it had spread into parts of Iran and Turkey. After that significant event, the British eventually handed the territories of Kurdistan to Iraq (promising them to the failed Iraqi King Hussein).¹⁹⁸ Up until the British reversal of policy it had been clear to Kurdish tribes in the regions outside of the emerging Turkish state, that international support for an independent Kurdistan lay almost entirely with Great Britain. However, the Berezendji revolt had been taken by British officials as a betrayal, and as a result they abandoned any intention of establishing a Kurdish state and simply decided to include as much Kurdish territory as they controlled within the new Iraqi state. Inside Turkey, Atatürk knew full well that the end of British support for Kurdish tribes inside Iran and Iraq meant

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 90.

that the Turkish government was freer than ever to deal with its Kurdish minorities with little interference from Britain.

The period of 1920 to 1925 inside Turkey was one of clear political uncertainty for Turkish Kurds. On the one hand, Mustafa Kemal and the previous Ottoman sultans had promised some type of autonomous rule in the Kurdish provinces. On the other hand, international borders in the region had been set by the Treaty of Sèvres, and while the treaty did have provision for a Kurdish state, the territories specified were not within their Turkish homelands, and British support for such a state elsewhere was rapidly withering away. A final unpredictability lay in the internal turmoil inside Turkey and in the fact that the various Kurdish tribal militias remained intact, and well armed. Though hardly coordinated, a variety of Kurdish political organizations inside Turkey had begun to take matters into their own hands in preparation for an independent Kurdistan as promised by Wilson's Fourteen Points. In addition, there was the Kurdish delegation in Paris who had been promised a state, and by various factions inside Turkey who believed Ottoman and Kemalist promises for autonomy.

Upon hearing that preparations were underway for Kurdish tribal armies to defend a new state, Atatürk responded by saying "...that all of Kurdistan had promised to support him and, furthermore, that the Ferid [Sharif] Pasa government would not be able to fulfill the Sèvres Treaty or the Wilson Principle for

¹⁹⁸ M. van Bruinessen, "Kurdish society, ethnicity, nationalism and ethnic problems,"

Kurdistan.”¹⁹⁹ Atatürk’s response caused an immediate division among Kurds inside Turkey -- some believing in the Kemalist principles of a centralized state, others now seeing the need to break away from the new state. In particular, the Young Turk movement (formerly highly Kemalist) began to coordinate activities throughout the Kurdish regions. By August of 1920, loosely organized Kurdish militia groups of over 100,000 soldiers began to attack Turkish ammunition shipments and police stations.²⁰⁰ The Kemalist regime in Istanbul responded by appointing Kurdish tribal chiefs Alisan Beg to be the governor of Refahiye, and Haydar Beg the governor of Umraniye, claiming to be fulfilling their promises of autonomous rule in the region. Not long after, both governors began to use their new positions to rally other tribes to the Kurdish national cause, though actual fighting in the region was not yet widespread.

Open rebellion and the start of Kemalist repression

By early 1921 events in Anatolia had degenerated into a series of open rebellions starting with the successes of tribes in the Dersim and Ümraniye regions in March. In both cases, these local rebellions were inspired by local chiefs upset at the lack of response by the Turkish government in implementing Article 62 of the Treaty of Sèvres. Initially successful, the Ümraniye rebellion resulted in a demand

in P. Kreyenbroek and S. Sperl , op.cit., p. 52.

¹⁹⁹ As quoted in Olsen, op.cit., p. 29.

being sent to Ankara by Kurdish tribal leaders requesting that Article 62 be acted upon immediately, and that a provisional government be set up. There was no response from Ankara, and later that month a second rebellion organized by members of the Ciras tribe broke out at Koçgiri. While the Turkish government finally sent a team to negotiate with the tribes at Ümraniye in mid-March, the Turks began to reinforce their troops in the region. Turkey also declared martial law throughout all Kurdish regions in March 1920, a state of affairs that has remained almost unbroken to this day. As a result of the increased Turkish military presence and the state of martial law, the Koçgiri rebellion that ensued became the first major battle in a series of Kurdish rebellions that was to last for the next six years.

British intelligence reports indicate that as a direct response to the Koçgiri Rebellion, the Society for Kurdish Freedom (Ciwata Azadi Kurd), or Azadi for short, was established as early as 1921.²⁰¹ The Azadi was officially proclaimed in 1923, and became the political wing of largely Zaza-speaking (sometimes also called Dimili) tribes who became the vanguard of the Kurdish national movement throughout the Sheikh Said rebellions of the 1920s. The Azadi organization grew out of five British Intelligence officers of Kurdish origin who successfully linked twenty-three tribal chiefs, a secret agent network (that operated double agents in the British Army, Turkish Army and government), and the various Kurdish political organizations in

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁰¹ M. van Bruinessen, *op.cit.*, p. 373.

Istanbul, Diyarbakir, and Erzurum.²⁰² Though dominated by Zaza-speaking Alevis tribes, the Azadi was able to garner support from other notable Kurdish ethnic tribes and sub-groups. The result of this nationalist and intelligence organization was that when the second wave of anti-Kemalist rebellions broke out in 1925, a Kurdish infrastructure ensured that the rebellions would be highly coordinated, and not simply a series of sporadic tribal uprisings.

Sheikh Said was a Shi'i Alevi Zaza speaking Kurdish elder who gained enormous respect among Shi'i Kurds by virtue of his position as a Sheikh, and of his advanced age. He began to travel through Kurdish regions in 1925 speaking to all Kurdish tribes (Shi'is, Sunni, Alevis, Cibran, and Hormek) about the great betrayal by Mustafa Kemal and the Turks. Throughout January and February 1925 the Sheikh continued his speaking tour, and at the same time, selected local leaders to be part of his anti-Kemalist movement. On January 12, 1925 Sheikh Said was received at Darahini as a messiah and was bestowed the title emir-al-mujahidin (commander of the faithful fighters for holy war). One month later the Sheikh arrived at Elazig with about one hundred men and met a force of Turkish Kemalists. The Sheikh Said Rebellion had begun. Though the Sheikh Said Rebellion was primarily a rebellion of Shi'i Zaza tribes, it did see some large participation by other Kurmanji speaking Kurds.²⁰³ The Azadi remained the central military structure throughout the organization, and its leadership consisted mostly of former Turkish Army officers.

²⁰² Olsen, op. cit., p. 42.

The Azadi also had a political wing that was mostly composed of tribal aghas and sheikhs.

By mid-1925 the Sheikh Said Rebellion had exploded into a widespread conflict. Olsen estimates the total Kurdish forces to be around 15,000 troops, and he cites British Intelligence reports that the size of Turkish Army detached to the field was around 53,000 troops.²⁰⁴ Initially, the Turkish responses to the rebellion included an attempt at finding a political solution, but almost all Kurdish political representation inside Turkey at that time was of non-Alevis Kurds. Since Ubaydallah's policy of non-enrollment of Shi'i Muslims into the Kurdish Militias during WW I, and because the majority of the Kurdish political representation had evolved as branches of those organizations, the Kemalist government was unable to negotiate with anyone who had any control over the erupting rebellion. By late 1925 Turkish troops had become heavily engaged in repressing the rebellions, and given the difficulties of military operations in the terrain north and northeast of Diyarbakir, their tactics became increasingly brutal throughout the duration of the conflict.

From late 1925 until late 1927, Turkish military policy had become a classic 'slash and burn' campaign. Indiscriminately, all villages were to be burned, all livestock to be killed or sold, all Kurdish men to be imprisoned or killed, and all other persons to be moved out of the area. However, the Kurdish rebels proved to

²⁰³ R. Olsen, op.cit., p. 95.

be very difficult to find, as were the nomadic tribes that supported them. Though there had been increasing numbers of Kurds moving out of their traditional territories and lifestyles and into the growing Turkish and Kurdish cities since the late 19th century, this did not extend to the more traditional Alevi tribes. Not only was the Turkish military now engaged in an early style of guerrilla warfare in a harsh environment, these Kurdish insurgents were supported by a traditionally mobile and elusive population. The sheer stubbornness of the campaign resulted in a rapid shift of national policy regarding 'ethnic' minorities inside the new state of Turkey – the legacy of which was to last for the next eighty years.

The emergence of the Kemalist Turkish State

In some sense, the Kurdish uprisings of 1925 inside Turkey were the direct result of policies adopted by the Kemalist regime that were directed at destroying the traditional Islamic heritage of the former Ottoman administration (both Turkish and Kurdish). As David McDowall notes, the Kemalist regime had abolished the Sultanate in 1922, followed by the outlawing of the Caliphate in 1924.²⁰⁵ Though not directed specifically at the Kurdish tribes, these policies (if implemented fully in the more traditional Kurdish regions) would have effectively shattered the basis of all Kurdish traditional culture. In this regard, it is hardly surprising that the traditionally isolationist, and highly conservative, Alevi tribes became the

²⁰⁴ ibid., pp. 103-104.

vanguard of the Kurdish revolutionary movement just one year after the abolition of the Caliphate. Though the Sheikh Said Rebellion was deemed to be an isolated conflict that Turkish officials considered to have been won by 1927, a more accurate characterization might be that the Sheikh Said Rebellion marked the start of a protracted social conflict that still continues. As McDowall notes:

The government's response to these revolts was to execute the leaders, and to raze offending villages, deporting their inhabitants out of the area. Such was the stringency of the government's policy that hundreds of thousands of Kurds perished in these pacifications.... Kurdish parts of Turkey have remained under military or semi-military control almost continuously since.²⁰⁶

The Sheikh Said Rebellions had a number of extremely profound implications for both the Turkish national consciousness and the various Kurdish groups themselves. Atatürk had emerged as a Turkish nationalist leader in an environment of great political and social chaos. For the most part, his early politics displayed a pragmatic ability to play into contending social debates in a measured way. The CUP was premised upon the need to maintain the social diversity of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, to do away with what was perceived to be the decaying relics of its backwards past, to preserve a national homeland for the Turkish people, and bring the Turks into the 20th century. As such, early Kemalist politics were remarkably open to multinational diversity, but the preference was to allow this only within a modern, secular state. To some extent the objectives of the

²⁰⁵ D. McDowall, op.cit., p. 18.

CUP were merely a reaction to the problems faced by the Ottoman Empire in its last years. Islamic civil law and Ottoman bureaucracy were deemed to be incompatible and inefficient. Moreover, the European model of a state based upon a secular constitution was deemed by Mustafa Kemal to be the political system that was required to advance his goals of modernization, economic development, and internal political stability.

To Atatürk (and perhaps more significantly, to his harder line pro-western/modernization supporters), the Sheikh Said Rebellions revealed several crucial weaknesses in the policies of the early Turkish administration. Multinational diversity was partly responsible for the rapid demise of the Empire, and the continued and widening fractionalization among the Turkish Kurds made the prospects for internal accommodation almost impossible.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, the Sheikh Said rebellion revealed that some Kurdish tribes at least, would not stand for any policies that would destroy their traditional cultures. For Atatürk, the problem had no easy solutions. The territorial integrity of the Turkish state was paramount. Under no circumstances would the Kemalists allow for any partitioning of Turkey, and under no circumstances would the Kemalists allow for tribal governments based upon Islamic leadership.²⁰⁸ At least some of the Kurdish tribes (mostly Sunni)

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁰⁷ H. Bozarslan, "Political Aspects of the Kurdish Problem," in P. Kreyenbroek and S. Sperl, *op.cit.*, p. 103.

supported the concept of a secular constitutional state. From the late 1920s onwards, the central Turkish government had embarked upon a project of single national identity construction (now referred to as 'official state identity'). This included the process already under way during the rebellions of mass relocation of Kurds away from their traditional homelands, outlawing of the Kurdish languages and forced language retraining, outlawing of religious officials holding political offices, and promoting development projects in Kurdish tribal areas.

Turkish national policy had changed so dramatically in the aftermath of the rebellions that one of Atatürk's closest political supporters, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü stated in 1930: "Only the Turkish nation is entitled to claim ethnic and national rights in this country. No other element has any such right."²⁰⁹ Atatürk had within his inner circle an array of political and national persuasions, but by the late 1930s the hard-line Turkish nationalists could point toward the Kurdish uprisings in their quest to gain as much support as possible for a highly centralized Turkish nation-state. Perhaps the most ardent of these Turkish nationalists was Mahmut Esat Bozhurt, who insisted that names of all Kurdish delegates who attended the formative National Congresses be deleted from the historical record. Mahmut Esat Bozhurt also insisted that all Kurds be outlawed from participation of national and local politics. In the early 1920s Bozhurt was considered a marginal player in the national Kemalist leadership, but his pro-Turkish, pro-statist, and anti-

²⁰⁸ E. O'Ballance, The Kurdish Revolt 1961-70, London: Faber and Faber, p. 27.

Kurdish rhetoric could not be ignored after the uprisings. By 1930 Bozhurt had risen to the powerful position of Minister of Justice; in September 1930, in a speech outlining the legal status of Turkish citizenship, he stated:

We live in a country called Turkey, the freest country in the world.... I believe that the Turks must be the only lord, the only master of this country. Those who are not of pure Turkish stock can have only one right in this country, the right to be servants and slaves.²¹⁰

While the transition to a repressive Turkish order was underway inside Turkey by 1930, a process had also begun that was to change the face of Kurdish ethnonationalism forever. Firstly, the Sheikh Said Rebellions had split the Kurdish national movements along religious lines. For the most part, tribes of the Sunni Muslim tradition were not included, and at least initially, their hopes still rested in the promise of Kurdish political autonomy set out by Mustafa Kemal in 1920. These Kurmanji-speaking tribes were also far less traditional in their lifestyle, and large numbers of Kurmanji-speaking Kurds had moved into the Turkish cultural mainstream, particularly in the cities of Ankara and Istanbul. However, the backlash against Kurds by the Kemalist nationalists was non-discriminating. The forced relocation of hundreds of thousands of Kurds (both Shi'i and Sunni), combined with the outlawing of all Kurdish languages, did result in some partial assimilation. However, most of these relocated Kurds retained their Kurdish culture

²⁰⁹ N. Entessar, Kurdish Ethnonationalism, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, p. 81.

²¹⁰ Quoted in N. Kendal, "Kurdistan in Turkey," in G. Chaliand, People Without a Country, London: Zed Press, 1980, p.65.

(in a suppressed way); this resulted in an emergent multi-cultural class of Turkish citizen (outwardly Turkish, inwardly Kurdish). This process was most pronounced in the Kurmanji-speaking tribes, as the language had already been greatly influenced by Turkish and they belonged to Turkey's Sunni majority.

While Sunni Kurmanji-speaking Kurdish tribes were (at least partially) voluntarily modernizing and urbanizing, the same is not true for the Alevis who were forcibly relocated throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Many found their way into the nearest major urban centers of Sivas and Diyarbakir, and others became intermixed with other Kurds in the ghettos of Ankara and Istanbul. The emerging Kemalist state's unicultural policies also succeeded in pushing many of the most traditional of the remaining nomadic Kurdish tribes out of Turkey altogether. Kurmanji-speaking tribes moved into nearby Syria (also Kurmanji speaking) and Zaza and other Kurmanji-speaking traditional tribes moved into Iran and Iraq.

The drastic measures taken against all forms of Kurdish expression by 1930 (including death to any member of a Kurdish political organization) succeeded in pushing underground all Kurdish political organizations inside Turkey, and pushing into neighbouring states many tribal leaders who represented tribes that had been traditionally located inside Turkey.²¹¹ Though similar repressive tactics were used by Iran and Iraq, the transmigration of many of these groups assured the

²¹¹ See D. Adamson, The Kurdish War, London: Allen and Unwin, 1964, pp. 13-24.

maintenance of their traditional ways, and made these groups extremely elusive to all states in the region. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that as far back as 1932 there had been coordinated state efforts by Turkey, Iran and Iraq to deal with all Kurdish insurgents in the region as singular problem challenging the territorial integrity of all three states. Likewise, there is also plenty of evidence to display the extent to which each of these states has exploited the Kurdish groups in neighbouring states for use in bilateral state relations.²¹²

The Kemalist objective of institutionalizing a singular Turkish national identity (the term 'Mountain Turks' was officially given to all Kurds by Mustafa Kemal in 1930),²¹³ had profound consequences for all non-traditional Kurds as well. From the 1930s onward, the Turkish state regarded the persistence of Kurdish minorities as a problem of underdevelopment. By painting all Kurds with a single brush, it simply 'othered' those urbanized Kurds of a dual Kurdish/Turkish identity as underdeveloped. It was easy for the Turkish government to point to the continued Kurdish uprisings (at least 1,200 separate local Kurdish uprisings inside Turkey since 1930, with peak periods between 1925-30, 1942-46, 1950-55, 1961-70, 1878-84, 1990-present),²¹⁴ considering that most of these tribal uprisings had occurred in the most underdeveloped parts of the Turkish state. It was not until the

²¹² See for example, H. Bozarslan, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-106.

²¹³ N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, p. 81

late 1960s and early 1970s that the political struggle for the Kurdish cause was taken into mainstream urban Turkey (where the vast majority of Turkish-Kurds now reside). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s many of these separate, and often isolated, events were not representative of the lifestyle nor the politics of most Turkish Kurds. Nevertheless, all Kurds were uniformly 'othered' as non-Turkish. Certainly in the pre-Cold War phase, that implied that they were all backwards, and all suspect as enemies of the state; they were all denied full citizenship rights unless they could successfully repress their Kurdishness to a point where it was invisible to the dominant Turkish social and political order.

The Cold War, NATO and the Repressive State

From November 1937 until October 1938 the last major regional Kurdish uprising occurred in and around the city of Dersim. In it, the Turkish forces made "massive use of poison gas"²¹⁵ against the Kurdish population, massacred entire villages, and killed all Kurdish prisoners (including Sheikh Reza, his two sons and other tribal leaders). So apocalyptic were the results of the Dersim slaughters, that the Turkish government sought to erase the memory of this episode by banishing any published reports of events there, arresting any historians who included the episode in their texts, and even changing the name of Desim to Tunceli on all

²¹⁴ J. Bulloch and H. Morris, op.cit., pp. 166-179.

²¹⁵ N. Kendal, op. cit., 67.

maps.²¹⁶ Through the 1940s the Turkish military continued to play a huge role in domestic politics inside Turkey, working closely with Atatürk's Republican People's Party (RPP). In the aftermath of WW II, it was clear that Turkey was to play a significant role as a western ally. Winston Churchill insisted that Turkey would be the necessary 'western' link to any future allied security concerns in the Middle East, and to possible Soviet intentions in the region after the war. However, the RPP's monopoly on power and the continued internal repression of the Kurdish minorities resulted in nearly half of the state being under continuous martial law, and this did not sit well with most western European governments and the United States.

Atatürk's successor, Ismet Inönü promised democratic elections in Turkey, and by 1950 the legalization of alternative political parties was allowed. Turkey's first multiparty parliamentary elections were held in 1950; the ruling RPP was defeated by the newly established Democratic Party (DP). The DP was an assortment of groups inside Turkey who had become alienated by the authoritarian tactics of the ruling RPP over the years. Most Kurds who voted in the election of 1950 voted for the DP, and a number of Kurds were elected to the Turkish National Assembly.²¹⁷ The DP also allowed exiled aghas and sheikhs to return to Turkey, and in return, these traditional Kurdish leaders offered huge blocs of voters to the DP in exchange. In short, the DP was a diverse collection of groups from across

²¹⁶ N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

Turkish society and the sudden political openness translated into a freer communication between political groups than had ever existed before. While the DP was able to tap into alienated Kurdish voters, many politically active Kurdish-Turkish citizens were also welcomed into (or gravitated towards) some of Turkey's more hard-line leftist political organizations. It was during the 1950s that the close links between Kurdish nationals and Turkish leftist parties solidified.²¹⁸

While the Turkish political landscape was more open during the 1950s, the crucial role of the military remained intact. After the Berlin Blockade and the Korean Conflict, NATO policy makers were extremely concerned both about the leftist political parties inside member states, and 'Soviet expansionism'. Turkey and Greece were essential components of NATO's southern flank, and yet the military infrastructures of both of these states lagged far behind that of the United States, and North European NATO members. For its part, the Turkish Army was a huge army in terms of manpower, but nearly half of the 400,000 strong force was deployed in the eight provinces still under martial law – and the Turkish Army was poorly equipped.²¹⁹ With US and NATO support, the Turkish military began a massive modernization program throughout the 1950s. As well, the THK (Türk Hava Kuvvetleri, or Turkish Air Force) used US MAP (Military Assistance Program) money and surplus NATO equipment to build an airforce that would eventually

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 87.

²¹⁸ H. Bozarslan, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

become the 2nd largest NATO airforce, after only the USAF.²²⁰ Ostensibly this US and NATO support was to be used for NATO purposes only, but member countries would learn by 1960 that this was not entirely the case.

On May 27, 1960 the Turkish military staged a coup and the DP Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was executed the following year.²²¹ Through the 1950s a number of prominent Kurdish families had amassed huge fortunes in what became know as Doguculuk, or 'Eastism', by exploiting mining, agricultural, and commercial development in the traditionally Kurdish areas of Turkey. The new military regime ordered the arrest of fifty of the wealthiest Kurdish families accusing them of supporting Marxist anti-Turkish organizations. As a result, most of these powerful and influential Kurdish families (women and children included) were secretly executed in 1961, and their property was taken over by the Turkish state and sold.²²² Though the later years of the Menderes administration had seen an increase in Kurdish repression, the Committee of the National Front (the name given to the ruling junta) undertook a new campaign of repression that included the forced removal of tens of thousands of Kurdish children from their families and their relocation into Turkish-speaking boarding schools outside of Anatolia. As well, an official program was begun that Turkified of the names of all Kurdish

²¹⁹ J. Bulloch and H. Morris, *op.cit.*, p. 146.

²²⁰ "Modernizing the THK," *Air Forces Monthly*, 47:5, (November 1994), pp. 299-309.

²²¹ N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

villages. Though the junta did take some measures to purge the Turkish military of those officers accused of brutal treatment of Kurdish minorities and did seek to put in place measures for greater political freedom inside mainstream Turkey during the 'intervention', the two years of military rule were brutal for Turkey's Kurdish minorities.

Though the post-coup era of politics inside Turkey in the early 1960s allowed for greater legal political freedoms, most Kurds were extremely skeptical. In fact, open rebellions continued in Alevi tribal regions through the 1960s. In mainstream Turkish society, 'mainstream' Kurds (i.e. those who were fluent in Turkish, often did not even speak any dialect of Kurdish, lived in the larger urban centres, and were generally well-educated) had become alienated entirely from most of Turkey's major political parties. It was during the freer political climate of the 1960s and 1970s that the Turkish leftist parties began to champion the Kurdish questions as a central policy issue.

In particular the New Turkey Party (that briefly formed part of a coalition government in 1962), and later the Workers' Party of Turkey (WPT) pushed the Kurdish issue to the center of their policy agenda. Though marginal in terms of mainstream Turkish politics, the WPT's Marxist-Leninist orientation was very attractive to most mainstream Turkish Kurds.²²³ At its Fourth Congress in November

²²³ N. Kendal, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

1971 the WPT passed the first party resolution in modern Turkish history that mentioned the Kurdish people by name. The resolution read in part

There is a Kurdish people in the East of Turkey....the fascist authorities representing the ruling classes have subjected the Kurdish people to a policy of assimilation and intimidation which has often become a bloody repression.²²³

In the 1965 election the WPT won seats in the Turkish National Assembly for the first time. A Kurdish faction emerged out of the WPT in 1969, named the Revolutionary Cultural Society of the East (DDKO). In what Martin van Bruinessen and Nadar Entessar have called the 'left wing of Kurdish nationalism', the WPT and DDKO set out to link themselves to other Kurdish organizations in the region. In particular, the DDKO officially proclaimed itself to be the sister organization of the Mullah Mustafa's KDP (Kurdish Democratic Party) inside Iraq. The emerging Kurdish left within the mainstream Kurds of Turkey became one of the most important concerns for Turkey's internal intelligence service, as well as the Turkish military. In fact, Entessar suggests that it was the Turkish Intelligence (MIT) that arranged for the double assassinations of rival KDP leaders inside Iraq in 1971.²²⁵ At that time (March 1971) Turkey's Chief of Defence Staff threatened that the THK would begin a campaign to indiscriminately bomb all Kurdish villages within 100 kilometers of the Iraqi border if any evidence could be found that Turkish Kurds

²²³ H. Barkey and G. Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities," *Middle East Journal*, 51:1 (Winter), 1997, p. 65.

²²⁴ As quoted in N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

were supporting a KDP insurrection underway in northern Iraq at that time.²²⁵ Later that month, the military staged a second coup and installed their own government headed by Nihat Erim. The military claimed that the civilian government had allowed communist infiltration into Turkey's political parties, and had failed to manage the 'minorities question' effectively. The WPT and DDKO were outlawed immediately, and nearly two thirds of Turkey's massive army was deployed to the east to begin a new campaign of attacks on Kurdish villages and the deportation of residents.

The coup of 1971 and the military regime that replaced the elected government held power until the elections of 1974 and the successful return of the RPP under Bulent Ecevit. Ecevit had promised to deal with the eastern problem, but it was clear by 1974 that there were serious limits imposed upon any elected Turkish government by the ever-present military. In any case, the coup of 1971-74 had so seriously fractured all Kurdish political parties (or parties that dared to address Kurdish issues) that almost all Kurdish political movements remained firmly underground through the 1970s. A reactivated DDKO appeared, under the new title Revolutionary-Democratic Cultural Associations (DDKD), as well as the Road to Freedom Group, but these remained highly marginalized and highly fractionalized.

²²⁵ N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

²²⁶ H. Barkey and G. Fuller, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

The fractionalized and marginalized state of Kurdish political organizations inside Turkey through the 1970s also saw the transition toward university movements as the basis for Kurdish political activism. In fact, university campuses had long been ripe for political activism inside Turkey, but the banishment of legal Marxist-Leninist and Kurdish political parties during the 1971-74 coup assured the campus movements a prominent role in the Kurdish movement. In 1974 a small group of students called the Ankara Democratic Patriotic Association of Higher Education was formed to protect Kurdish language and cultural rights on the campus of the University of Ankara. The group later changed its name to the Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK), and it elected Abdullah Ocalan (a Kurdish student at the University) its leader.²²⁷ The PKK differed from all other Kurdish or mainstream political parties inside Turkey up until that time by its position that the only solution for Turkey's Kurds was complete independence from the Turkish state. Though initially a campus organization, the PKK's activities rapidly began to expand.

Other underground Kurdish parties inside Turkey in the mid-late 1970s were regionally based. A second branch of the Iraqi KDP emerged in the province of Mardin (near Iraq and Syria) that called itself the National Liberation of Kurdistan (KUK). Also in that region was the SPTK (Theoretical United Democratic Front). Both of these parties had a Marxist-Leninist orientation. However, the presence of

²²⁷ N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, p. 94.

many mainstream Kurds on the campuses of universities in Ankara and Istanbul assured the PKK's immediate dominance as the largest of the leftist political organizations by the late 1970s. By 1977 the PKK's main operations moved to Diyarbakir, and it published (clandestinely) *Kurdistan Devriminin Yolu*, (The Path of the Kurdish Revolution).²²⁸ In it, the PKK advocated a two-pronged approach to national independence. The first was the need to politicize Kurds themselves to the cultural and political repression they faced by all states in the Middle East. The second prong was the need for armed struggle as the only means by which this could be accomplished. The stage was set for the most repressive of all regimes for the Kurdish people of Turkey: the coup of 1980 and the era of hegemony.

Summary

This period of Kurdish ethnonationalism inside Turkey can be summed up in a number of ways. At the level of state management of ethnic minorities, the Turkish state made a rapid transition to a singular Turkish national identity, and abandoned any pre-state and early-state notions of a multiethnic society.²²⁹ Initially this resulted in widespread rebellion in the Kurdish regions, and in part, these rebellions were spurred by the emergent and militant form of Kurdish ethnonationalism that

²²⁸ J. Bulloch and H. Morris, op.cit., pp. 183-184.

flourished in the chaos of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. So powerful had the Kurdish tribes become, that the Turkish nationalist movement depended upon the most significant Kurdish political movements to force out 'foreign' elements in the crumbling empire and forge a new Turkish state.

The rapid development of a coercive Turkish state was at least partly as a result of the persistent Kurdish nationalist movements within. This caused an immediate split between traditional Kurdish national movements and mainstream Kurdish national movements that has existed inside Turkey ever since. The traditional movements have continued to use violent tactics to push their cause forward, and the mainstream movement has (by national association) been severely repressed as a result. The advent of Turkey's emergence as alliance player during the Cold War only assisted in supporting a military that essentially controlled and monitored all matters of national politics inside Turkey. All Kurds were 'othered' as enemies of the state, and in an environment of anti-communist Cold War politics, all Kurds were easily labelled communist insurgents.²³⁰

The 'on again-off again' openness of Turkey's political landscape created an environment of distrust among Turkey's Kurdish national movements that resulted (at least in part) in the pushing of its Kurdish political movements both

²³⁰ For a detailed description of this process, see M. Yegen, "The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity," *Middle East Studies*, 32:2 (April) 1996, pp. 216-229.

underground on the inside, and outside of Turkey's national borders altogether. The Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq and Syria became relative safe havens for Turkish-Kurdish political activity, and revealed the extent to which there are limits for the Turkish state's ability to deal with what is essentially a non-state national movement. As well, the de-territorialization of Kurdish national movements within Turkey had a profound impact upon the division of Kurdish society into its traditional and mainstream elements. As we shall see, technological advances and a further de-territorialization of the movement in its contemporary phase has changed the nature and scope of ethnonationalisms in truly unprecedented ways.

²³⁰ A. Kadioglu, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity," *Middle East Studies*, 32:2 (April) 1996, p. 188.

Section Three: Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE HEGEMONIC CONSENSUS

Framework for analysis

Q: How has the Kurdish movement changed since your time in the East as a young officer in the early 1980s?

R: You should understand that there are only two kinds of Kurd in Turkey today: terrorists and possible terrorists. When I was sent to the Çukurca district in 1981, we did not have anyone watching over our shoulders all of the time. There was a job to be done, and we did it. Yes, terrible things were done by our soldiers, but these people could not be trusted and they had to be dealt with. If not, they would turn on you and you could be dead the very next day. But today, this war is being fought in our biggest cities and nobody is safe anymore. And, everyone is watching, telling us that these people have rights. These human rights associations and governments we thought were our friends are protecting the terrorists, not the Turkish people. So we have to be careful and remind them that these terrorists have no rights, they are killers, and bandits, and drug smugglers. It is a terrible situation, and I do not blame our government for not telling everyone what is going on in the East. These foreigners simply cannot understand.²³¹

The objective of Chapters Seven and Eight is to build upon the historical development of the Kurdish national movement in Turkey through a dialectic that serves to examine the interrelationship between the state and the social ethnonational forces that have structured this conflict. The development of a

²³¹ Interview on e-mail (response received on July 12, 1998). This colonel (retired) did not want his full name mentioned, but agreed to allow his first name (Mehmet) to be used. He spent over twenty years in the Turkish Army, and was stationed in the Kurdish conflict zones at four different times throughout his career. He is presently an advisor on Kurdish affairs in the Ministry of the Interior in Turkey.

hegemonic consensus that includes both the apparatus of the Turkish state and the dominance of the Turkish national identity within Turkish society has been both conditioned by, and is a condition upon, the Kurdish national minorities of Turkey and the region. That is to say, the scope and degree of coercive dominance employed by the Turkish state is both a response to the actions and demands of Kurdish nationals, and at the same time, is often the driving factor behind the type and tactics of Kurdish nationalists themselves. However, one cannot deny the obvious imbalance in this social order – the Turkish state and society constitute a clear hegemonic order in which Kurdish minorities are conditioned. These two chapters will develop a structural notion of this hegemonic relationship to serve as a basis from which a clear link between the Turkish state in relation to its internal social order, and the structure of the Turkish state as a regional and international actor can be viewed. The two are linked, and the structuralism of Turkey's relations as an international actor is conditioned by, and a product of, its internal and transnational social order. A neogramscian theoretical construct of global relations is one that is not merely built upon and with state actors; it is one that seeks to structurally integrate global state relations into their respective social contexts.

This chapter will focus upon the internal social order of Turkey (hegemony), and the following chapter will examine the Kurdish response to that order (counter-hegemony). This is being done in order to better understand the complex links between the state as an agent in social conflicts and those social forces that reside

under such state and social hegemony. The Kurdish ethnonational movement inside Turkey is one in which a national consciousness had evolved prior to the formation of the modern Turkish state in a political arrangement that was institutionally repressive, but nationally pluralist. Thus, the Kurdish case allows us to see the extent to which the Turkish state had become dependent upon its 'Kurdish question' as a basis for Turkish national cohesion. To some extent, this is part of the processes of state formation. Moreover, the Kurdish ethnonational movement is transnational (or even a-national) because of its unique territorial, regional, and identity components, and as such, we can view a process here in which the dominant Turkish hegemonic consensus has been forging a counter-hegemonic response that is increasingly forcing the Kurdish national movements to respond in statist terms.

The forced relocation and transmigration of disparate Kurdish groups has created an ethnic and tribal 'melting pot' of peoples united by their various repressions. Historically, many of these Kurdish groups were merely interested in relative autonomy to deal with local affairs, and this did not conflict with a higher allegiance to a supranational or multinational state or empire. However, the collective repressions that they face by all states in the region has left them little choice but to seek a statist national solution to their continued subordination. This political choice was not endemic to the Kurds themselves; it has been conditioned into them by the dominant social forces. Along with a statist form of nationalism came the related notions of modernization and economic development that tie the

objective of national self-determination to 'the good life'. These ideas too were not endemic to traditional Kurdish identities and culture; rather many Kurds absorbed them because of both the example set by the hegemonic order, and their forced assimilation into that dominant social order. What will be discussed in this chapter is a two-pronged strategy used by the Turkish state in this contemporary phase of the hegemonic order imposed upon its Kurdish peoples. The first prong has been the continuation and expansion of a military-style campaign against insurgent Kurdish separatists. This ties historically into a similar process used throughout the historical period that began with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as discussed in Chapters Five and Six. However, the consequences of the post-1980 military campaign have witnessed an acceleration of the urbanization of relocated rural Kurds into the mainstream, and an expansion of the guerrilla-style military conflict into Iran and Syria. The second prong of the post-1980 hegemonic consensus has been a brutal regime of terror imposed upon all of Turkey's Kurdish peoples that have succeeded in creating a unified 'other' regardless of political persuasion. Turkey's quite dirty war is increasingly being fought on the streets of its major cities, and every act of terror inflicted by militant Kurdish groups is being surpassed by Turkish state-sponsored acts of terror by a state apparatus that is truly massive in its scope and capabilities.

The Post-1980 hegemonic social order in Turkey

Though the military coup in Turkey in 1980 was not unusual in the sense that it was the third military coup since the formation of the Turkish state in 1920, it did signify the extent to which the military continued to play a predominant role in Turkish politics – regardless of the fact that Turkey’s political and economic development has been progressing more and more toward a Western European orientation. Though the coup was not predicated entirely upon the Kurdish question, the emergence of the PKK as the largest and most effective organized Kurdish political movement inside Turkey did play a role in the military’s unease with Turkey’s domestic situation. The PKK, from its inauspicious origins as a student movement had changed dramatically by 1980. As a student movement, the early PKK had tapped into the support of Turkey’s mainstream Kurds, and at least initially, its objectives were less than radical. Within the mainstream Kurdish community the abortive attempts to insert the Kurdish issue into programs of parties with greater mass appeal, combined with the repressive tactics of the Turkish military and intelligence organizations, had left the Kurdish 20-30% of Turkey no viable political options; they were politically an underground community.²³² It was this mainstream Kurdish community that initially supported the PKK while they were an urban, university-based Kurdish rights movement. However the decision to move the PKK’s center of operations to Diyarbakir in 1977, the publication of

²³² N. Entessar, op.cit., p. 95.

Kurdistan Devriminin Yolu [The Path of the Kurdish Revolution] that same year, and its links to existing Kurdish nationalist parties (KUK and the Iraqi KDP) who were already engaged in open fighting with Turkish and other Kurdish rebel forces, succeeded in making the PKK a crucial link between Turkey's mainstream and militant regional Kurdish groups. In this sense, the PKK was a consensus-building party - effectively bringing together previously unconnected interests. Its introduction of the simultaneous tactics of consciousness-building and legitimizing violence as the only effective method for achieving Kurdish self-determination was also a new combination.

For the mainstream Kurds at least, the persistence of violence in the comparatively underdeveloped regions of the East was mostly a by-product of that underdevelopment. In this regard, they had bought into the Kemalist notion of the need for a modern and developed state. However, with disparate identities and a state-imposed ban on all Kurdish languages, expressions of culture, names, and publications, the raising of identity consciousness became a first step in the development of an effective counter-hegemonic movement that tied all Kurds together. It is true that many mainstream Kurds rejected (and continue to reject) the tactics of violence employed by the PKK, but it is the violent responses to those tactics from the Turkish state that spark a uniformed awareness of 'Kurdishness' on

behalf of all Kurds inside and outside of Turkey. It was for this reason, that the PKK rapidly became the central concern for Turkey's military junta in 1980.²³³

Prior to the coup in 1980, a Kurdish separatist (Mahdi Zana) had been elected the mayor of Diyarbakir. This socialist leader openly encouraged expressions of Kurdishness, and by this time the PKK was well established in the region. For a brief time, Mahdi Zana's administration succeeded in providing a spell of liberalism within the most Kurdish parts of the Turkish state.²³⁴ Along the Syrian, Iraqi, and Iranian borders Kurds freely crossed into neighboring states and the ties between Turkey's Kurdish political parties (the PKK in particular), and the parties and Kurdish people of the region were beginning to solidify. Bulloch and Morris argue that it was this situation that inspired the military to act in 1980, especially in light of the fact that elected officials were getting nowhere in Ankara in their attempts to form a stable government.²³⁵ The Army was swift to move into Diyarbakir on a much grander scale than they had been, and the nation-wide declaration of martial law (rather than just martial law in the East) succeeded in swiftly establishing peace and order throughout Turkey.

For the Turkish Army, one of the first orders of business was to contain the emerging Kurdish national movement within the state of Turkey. The success of the PKK in establishing a link between Turkey's generally passive mainstream Kurds

²³³ *ibid.*, p. 95.

²³⁴ J. Bulloch and H. Morris, *op.cit.*, pp. 181-182.

and the generally militant rural Alevis tribes, and their collective links to Kurds in bordering states, created an intolerable situation for the military government. For the first time, the Ministry of the Interior with its *korucu* (village guards), the *özel tim* (special teams), and the *Gendarmerie* (national interior police force) worked closely with Army units to completely shut down all access into and out of Iran, Iraq, and Syria.²³⁶ This containment strategy had some profound implications that essentially internationalized the conflict, and changed the domestic face on the movement as well.

The sealing off of the previously porous borders did initially result in a reduction of Kurdish-sponsored acts of violence inside Turkey in the months immediately after the coup. The policy was accompanied by a massive crackdown on all 'undesirables' in Turkey — especially Kurdish political leaders, left-wing radicals, trade unionists, Marxist-Leninist political organizations, intellectuals, and student movements. University campuses were considered hotbeds of political radicalism, and most campuses in Turkey were simply occupied by soldiers through the duration of the military intervention. One of the first prominent Kurdish leaders arrested was PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. However, in the confusion of the masses of people arrested or detained (perhaps as many as 200,000), several

²³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 181-183.

²³⁶ S. C. Pelletiere, *The Kurds: An Unstable Element in the Gulf*, Boulder: Westview, 1984, pp. 183-184.

thousand of the most important undesirables managed to get away.²³⁷ With assistance from detained Iraqi KDP members, Oçalan and his closest colleagues managed to escape to Syria.

With Oçalan's presence and a massive influx of Turkish and Iraqi Kurdish refugees, an unintended consequence of the coup of 1980 was the establishment of Kurdish political and military organizations inside Syria. Though the Turkish military had closed all 'official' border-crossing points (mostly roads), traditional Kurdish tribes found it rather easy to cross into neighbouring states through mountain passes, well-traveled footpaths, or merely under the cover of darkness. As discussed in Chapter Four, Syria had for nearly a thousand years been a relative safe haven for Kurds, and one of the centres of Kurdish political and cultural expression. As Bulloch and Morris suggest, the Syrian intelligence services were keeping a watchful eye on the Kurdish activities in the border regions near Turkey, but openly allowed and encouraged these activities.²³⁸ As far as Syria was concerned, Turkey's NATO membership and generally pro-western policies combined with the close relationship between the United States and Israel needed to be countered in the larger context of Middle Eastern geopolitics. By the outbreak of the Iran/Iraq War in 1980, Syria was backing the Iranian cause, and Syria further encouraged Iraqi and refugee Iranian Kurds to join the movement in this remote part of Syria along the Turkish border. With military equipment supplied by the

²³⁷ N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, p. 93.

Soviet Union, and China (as well as France, South Africa, Germany, and others from underground weapons markets), Syria began to assist in the training of Kurdish rebels in the techniques of guerrilla warfare. In part, Turkey's internal crackdown on Kurdish political activity resulted in the partial internationalization of the conflict complete with Turkish/Kurdish speaking military and political leadership operating inside Syria.

A second significant consequence of the internal crackdown in Turkey in the 1980s relates to another of Turkey's neighbors, Iraq. There was a brief period between the coup in Turkey and the outbreak of the Iraq/Iraq War when the border controls were tightened, and in the aftermath of Turkey's coup a large number of Kurdish insurgents escaped to the Iraqi side of the Turkish/Iraqi border. In part this was facilitated by the links between PKK activities in Diyarbakir and the KDP, who at that time controlled access to the fairly open border between the two states. Though highway access was controlled by customs officials from both states, all other border crossings were unmonitored. Though never officially proclaimed by either state, the new military government in Turkey entered into a secret agreement with the Iraqi government in late 1980.²³⁹ The first part of the agreement allowed the Turkish Army and internal security forces the right to pursue Kurdish rebels across the border, rather than break off an engagement at the border as had been the case

²³⁸ J. Bulloch and H. Morris, *op.cit.*, p. 183.

²³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 185.

for several years.²⁴⁰ Perhaps of even greater significance was the fact that the Turkish government negotiated a free-hand in anti-Kurdish military activities throughout Northern Iraq in return for Turkish military assistance should Iran ever threaten the crucial oil-pipeline traveling from Kirkuk into Turkey and on to the Mediterranean. By 1983, British military intelligence reports were indicating that this agreement had gone far beyond mere ground activity, and that the THK (Turkish Air Force) was regularly bombing Kurdish strongholds on the Iraqi side of the border. Moreover, Turkish troops were not merely chasing fleeing rebels into Iraq; they were heavily engaged in a permanent campaign against Kurdish rebels (both PKK and KDP) by 1983. Within a period of three years, Turkey's Kurdish question had evolved into an international conflict that involved at least two states and several rebel groups, and this escalation was to expand throughout the 1980s.

A military and quasi-military apparatus changes its orientation

Though the Turkish military has enjoyed a privileged status within Turkish society since the modern state was formed, dramatic changes since the coup of 1980 indicate the extent to which the Kurdish War has evolved to become Turkey's paramount state security concern. With mandatory military service for all Turkish men over the age of eighteen a consistent policy since the 1920, manpower resources

²⁴⁰ ibid., p. 186.

have increased at roughly the same rate as the state's population.²⁴¹ However, a closer examination of the internal organization of its military, and a brief overview of reports of major events 'in the field' by outside agencies, reveal the extent to which this massive military has been engaged in its Kurdish war both inside and outside its national borders.

Prior to 1980 small-scale guerrilla uprisings in the rural Kurdish periphery were met with deployments of lightly and moderately armed Army units. Though the Turkish government has always been extremely reluctant to release precise numbers of deployments to its Kurdish provinces, a reasonable estimate of pre-1980 deployments would be roughly about 20% of its army of 180,000 soldiers (or about 35,000-40,000 soldiers) at any given time.²⁴² Starting in 1980, those numbers were dramatically increased to about 50% of its army strength (about 90,000 soldiers) with heavy concentrations in and around the city of Diyarbakir and along the border regions with Iraq and Syria. Military reservists were called up during the coup period of 1980-84 and the duration of mandatory military service was increased, and the total manpower of the Turkish Army had increased to about 240,000 soldiers by the end of military rule. Estimates for numbers of soldiers deployed to the Eastern provinces was further increased to 60% of the total manpower, and so by the mid

²⁴¹ Based upon a survey of *The Military Balance*, issues, 1951-52, 1961-62, 1971-82, and 1981-82. London: The International Institute of Strategic Studies.

²⁴² *Strategic Survey: 1975-76*, London: The International Institute of Strategic Studies, p. 87. Also, S.C. Pelletiere, *op.cit.*, p. 27-28.

1980s Turkish Army deployment to Kurdish zones was at about 160,000 soldiers.²⁴³ If anything, those numbers have increased through the 1990s, though the Turkish state claims that high deployment levels in the region are only a result of security concerns posed by Iran, Iraq, Syria and the volatile political situation in the nearby former Soviet republics.

Numbers of troops, however, tell only a small part of the story. As the Kurdish conflict became increasingly internationalized by the establishment of PKK bases inside Iraq and Syria (and to a lesser extent in Iran, and in briefly Lebanon in the mid 1980s), Turkey has used higher technology aircraft and weapons to deal with the situation. As discussed briefly in Chapter Six, the THK was a small air force and most of its most potent equipment was supplied through NATO and bilateral US aid. By 1980 the THK could boast a sizable number of fairly modern aircraft, but nearly all were obtained through aid programs and were therefore designed to fit into Turkey's air-defence role in NATO's Southern Flank. Its more than 200 F-4E and G model Phantoms, about 150 F-5E Freedom Fighters, and 250 F-104G Starfighters were principally fighter aircraft, not ground attack aircraft.²⁴⁴ However, starting with the transfer of 50 former Canadian Forces CF-104s outfitted

²⁴³ P. Rollino and R. Sacchetti, "Modernizing the THK," *Air International*, 47:5 (November), 1994, p. 301.

²⁴⁴ See Appendix B. All of these numbers have been taken from a dataset created from British Air Ministry (Royal Air Force - RAF) reports published in *Air Forces' Monthly* and *Air International* from the period between January 1990, and January 1997.

for the ground attack role, and a further transfer of over 100 former Dutch NF-5s, and through a very expensive upgrade program of former German Luftwaffe F-4Gs provided by Israel's LAI industries, the THK has developed one of the largest ground attack air forces in the world. Starting in 1986 (just two weeks after their delivery) former Canadian Forces CF-104s began attacking Kurdish villages near the Iraqi border.²⁴⁵ The military buildup of the THK also included the retrofitting of more than 200 former US Army HU-1 utility helicopters to an attack capability starting in 1988. At a huge cost to the Turkish government (roughly 80% of the total state budget), the buildup has skyrocketed through the 1990s, and in terms of air assets alone the list of acquisitions is staggering. In the past fifteen years alone (since 1985) the list includes: 180 F-4G Phantoms retrofitted to attack capability, 100 added CF and F-104s (to the over 240 already in service) retrofitted to attack capability, 160 F-5s upgraded to ground attack, 250 (planned) S-70 Blackhawk helicopters 110 of which have been fitted for night attack operations, 260 F-16s manufactured in Turkey all of which are ground attack capable, 40 AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters (out of a planned total of 250+), up to 50 Russian Mi-17 assault helicopters (along with other Russian helicopters reported to have been delivered to the secretive

²⁴⁵ P. Rollino and R. Sacchetti, "Modernizing the THK," *Air International*, 47:5, November 1994, p. 301. In this overview of the THK, Rollino and Sacchetti claim, "Thanks to the arrival of the CF-18 [in Canadian service], the aforementioned CF-104 reached Diyarbakir and it must be said that these aircraft are still greatly appreciated for their avionics, and particularly their weapons delivery systems. The CF-104s, together with F-4s and F-5s, are frequently called upon to attack Kurdish PKK bases." p. 301.

Gendarmerie such as Mi-24 attack helicopters), various transport aircraft, an ambitious AWACS (airborn warning and command station radar aircraft) program, three attempts (aborted for financial reasons) to buy surplus US A-10 tank busting aircraft, two aborted attempts to purchase US air-refueling tankers, and a massive program now underway to purchase up to 300 new attack helicopters. The Turkish government denies that its massive buildup has anything to do with the Kurdish situation, but virtually all major weapons acquisition programs since 1985 have been for army operations, or in the case of aircraft, have been ground-attack capable. So enormous have the costs been, that enlisted soldiers have embarked upon door-to-door fundraising campaigns appealing to Turkish citizens for donations in gold.²⁴⁶

The increased military campaigns have also witnessed a huge increase in the size and complexity of Turkey's quasi-military and para-military apparatus. Though numbers are almost impossible to verify, the sheer number of policing and para-military agencies alone indicates the extent of the system. Each of the ten provinces under martial law has internal police forces of considerable scope. The Internal Security Police in the city of Diyarbakir (a city of about a half million residents) numbers around 20,000 officers. Each village in the East has its own village guards (*korucu*), and the collective scope of these agencies could number as many as 100,000.²⁴⁷ As well, the para-military border guards of Turkey who are

²⁴⁶ In conversation with E.F. Keyman and A. Cirakman, June 5, 1997.

responsible for all border crossings and monitoring of unmarked borders, includes a small reconnaissance air force of its own, as well as crack armoured response units. By far the most significant of the quasi-military agencies inside Turkey is the much feared Gendarmerie. This highly secretive organization is under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior and it is an entire military unto itself complete with its own service branches. Working closely with the MIT (the National Intelligence Service) the Gendarmerie has a special intelligence section of its own, JITEM, which has been considered responsible for over 1,400 public assassinations of high profile Kurdish leaders and human rights activists from 1990-94.²⁴⁸ The Gendarmerie is not legally bound to any branch of the Turkish constitution, nor is it bound by any of Turkey's international treaty obligations. Thus, its air force has been free to acquire Russian built weapons and aircraft (generally not a standard practice for a pre-expansion NATO member), and has its own bases throughout the country.²⁴⁹ A reasonable estimate of the total of Turkey's para-military and covert agencies engaged in 'internal security concerns' could be as high as between 150,000 and

²⁴⁷ All of these estimates are from an interview with retired Colonel (Mehmet), advisor to the Ministry of the Interior. Interviewed via e-mail, July, 14 1998.

²⁴⁸ M. van Bruinessen, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

²⁴⁹ With over 100 combat helicopters, as well as fixed-winged aircraft, the air branch of the Gendarmerie alone has more combat-capable aircraft than some NATO air forces. See L. Basara and S. Guvenc, "Jandarma Hips," *Air Forces Monthly*, 110 (May), 1997, pp. 39-43.

200,000 personnel.²⁵⁰ When combined with the scope of the military deployments to the eastern regions of the country since 1980, the Kurdish factor clearly dictates state security policy. The sheer scope of numbers also goes a long way to discredit official Turkish claims that total PKK armed militia membership inside the state has never exceeded more than 7,000 soldiers.

The Kurdish War in post-coup Turkey

When the military turned the Turkish government back over to civilian rule in 1983, the Kurdish conflict was into a new, widened phase. Inside Turkey, the PKK strategy had evolved into a policy of terror tactics within the larger Turkish cities, combined with a military campaign that used PKK cells in the remote parts of the state and border raids from the relative safety of Iraq and Syria. The slow increase in the use of terrorist tactics succeeded in persuading the Turkish mainstream of the seriousness of its Kurdish problem, and the continued military-type campaigns succeeded in ensuring that the Turkish military played a predominant role in national politics.

By 1983 the Iran/Iraq War had evolved into a major international conflict and the preoccupation of both the Iraqi and Iranian governments with the conflict had a dramatic impact upon KPP activities, especially inside Iraq. Kurdish political organizations in both Iran and Iraq were openly encouraged by each of these two

²⁵⁰ Colonel (Mehmet), July 14, 1998.

governments to enter into a series of unstable alliances that effectively brought about brutal infighting amongst a number of Kurdish militias. The Iranian government armed Shi'ite Kurdish tribes in Iraq in return for assurances that they would attack Iraqi government forces; Iraq did the same with Sunni Muslim Kurds in Iran; the KDP and the PUK in Iraq were both armed by Iran and Syria (and in the case of PUK, the CIA);²⁵¹ and Turkey continued its regular unofficial 'invasions' into the border regions of Iraq.²⁵² This situation continued until 1988, and in the vacuum of clear state authority, PKK enclaves inside Iraq became firmly established by the late 1980s. So brutal had the fighting become by the respective governments against their own Kurdish populations, that Iraq used poison gas against Kurdish tribes at Halabja in 1988 killing thousands of Kurdish civilians.

Though the Halabja gassing of Kurdish civilians did focus international attention on the Kurdish infighting during the Iran/Iraq War, there is another part of that brutal event that pertains to Turkey's increased Kurdish campaign throughout the 1990s. The Kurdish uprisings in Northern Iraq during the latter stages of the Iran/Iraq War resulted in near-total chaos throughout the Northern section of both Iran and Iraq. In fact, the KDP offensive at Halabja was directed by the Iranian Army, and when a counter-offensive was undertaken by the Iraqi Army the KDP's Iranian support of troops and supplies was abandoned. With the poison

²⁵¹ See H. Davies, "Iraqis who aided CIA 'trapped like rats,'" The Daily Telegraph, September 10, 1996, p. A12.

gas attacks, the KDP felt as if they been used by their Shi'ite Iranian brothers, and subsequent to that event, the KDP sought an even closer relationship with the Kurdish PKK operating in nearby northern Iraq. Immediately prior to the use of poison gas by the Iraqis, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein appointed his cousin Ali-Hassan al-Majid the governor of northern Iraq and gave him absolute powers to reestablish Iraqi control throughout the region. It was Majid who gave final approval to the Iraqi Army to use gas weapons on the Kurds, but the gas attacks were merely part of a larger strategy that included a system of revenge killings, ordering the public execution of young Kurds every time an Iraqi soldier was killed by Kurdish forces, the deportation of all civilians from all areas only partly under government control, the forced relocation of more than 500,000 Iraqi Kurdish citizens to the southern provinces of the state, and the razing of all villages within the forbidden zone. In a memo sent out by Majid on July 14, 1987, soldiers were instructed that "It is the duty of military forces to kill any human being or animal that exists in these areas, which are considered totally forbidden."²⁵³

Though it has never been established if the Iraqi policy of forced relocations and village destruction was coordinated with the policies of the Turkish government, from about mid-1988 Turkey began a similar campaign. Initially the forced relocation policy was conducted on a small scale, but by the early 1990s it had accelerated to a mass exodus. Bob Hepburn, Middle East Bureau Chief for The

²⁵² W. Cox, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

Toronto Star reported that between 1992 and 1994 alone, over 1,850 villages had been forcibly evacuated and later burned to the ground. In that two-year period alone, a minimum of two million Turkish Kurds were taken from their villages, many ending up in huge urban ghettos outside of Ankara and Istanbul.²⁵⁴ Many others fled to Northern Europe to join a growing refugee diaspora whose total population will surpass that of the Kurdish population of Iraq in the next five years. Hepburn also reported that by 1992, Turkey's troop concentration in the Kurdish provinces had increased to over 300,000 (not including the nearly 200,000 police and paramilitary forces in the region).²⁵⁵ In the period between 1988 and 1996 Turkey's Kurdish war had reached enormous proportions. By 1996 over 4,000 villages were evacuated and more than 1.5 million homes burned,²⁵⁶ more than 4 million Kurdish people forced to relocate (not including the large number of Iraqi Kurds who moved into the region in the Kurdish uprising in Iraq after the Gulf War), at least 30,000 soldiers killed,²⁵⁷ the deployment of approximately 500,000 Turkish military and

²⁵³ J. Bulloch and H. Morris, op.cit., p. 159.

²⁵⁴ B. Hepburn, "Turkey presses its 'hidden war'," The Toronto Star, December 4, 1995, pp. D-6 D-7.

²⁵⁵ ibid., p. D-6.

²⁵⁶ M. Gunter, The Kurds and the Future of Turkey, New York: St Martin's Press, 1997.

²⁵⁷ A. Mango, op.cit., p. 1. These numbers are highly speculative, and probably rather conservative. Mango gives official numbers provided by the Turkish government, and in other sources, such as Bozarslan, op.cit., p. 16; he claims more than 8,000 PKK fighters alone inside Turkey were killed in 1991 and 1992. If Bozarslan's

paramilitary troops operating in three sovereign states, and a guerrilla-style urban terrorist conflict on the streets of Turkey's major urban centres in which the PKK had launched nearly 19,000 armed attacks between 1984 and 1999.²⁵⁸

The intensified Kurdish War and attempts at political openness

While the war inside Turkey has vastly expanded since the return to civilian rule, there have been attempts to seek political solutions to the problem. This has been difficult, if not impossible, given the PKK strategy of the use of terror tactics in the streets of Turkey, and the total distrust with which both regional and mainstream Kurds regard the political process in Turkey. Moreover, the military junta outlawed the Kurdish language entirely when it passed Articles 26, 28 and 89 of the new constitution in 1982. According to these articles anyone using Kurdish "in the expression and dissemination of thought" was liable to arrest. The law further stipulated that "any written or printed documents, photograph records, magnetic or video tapes, and other media instruments" of Kurdish language or culture were strictly prohibited.²⁵⁹ This law remained in place until 1990, and in some eastern provinces local village guards still prosecute violators.

numbers are correct, then the combined Turkish and PKK numbers of killed (inside Turkey only) would probably be somewhere in the area of 60-100,000 since 1980.

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁵⁹ N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

In the November 1993 elections Turku^t Özal's Motherland Party won and formed the new government. However, the leader of the 1980 military junta, General Evren, remained the country's president and remained firmly in charge of the anti-Kurdish military campaigns. The Özal government was determined to deal with the Kurdish problem by a return to the Kemalist statist principles of previous Turkish governments, stressing the need for economic development in the East as well as for territorial unity. With the military fully engaged in its own strategy, the Özal government began a huge economic development program throughout the east that included the massive Atatürk Dam project designed to irrigate huge tracts of agricultural land and to provide hydroelectric power. Ankara also instituted large and expensive programs of infrastructure building throughout Eastern Turkey, that included three oil-pipeline projects, communications facilities, road networks, and educational facilities.²⁶⁰

However, the Motherland Party made no effort to include any sort of Kurdish political representation within either its own party, or national politics generally, and the modernization programs only further heightened Kurdish fears that Turkish state policies were designed to merely 'Turkify' traditionally Kurdish regions. When this was combined to the fact that the Özal government refused to retract the anti-Kurdish language laws imposed by the military junta in 1982,

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 98.

Ankara failed to gain any serious political support from either mainstream or rural Kurdish communities.

Throughout the later 1980s PKK activities continued to increase both within Turkey and inside neighbouring states, and by 1990 the Özal government had accused no less than Syria, Iran, Iraq, Greece, Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and Lebanon of supporting and harboring PKK activities against the Turkish state. The accusations ranged from the obvious PKK bases operating inside Iraq and Syria, to published 'confessions' of a sixteen year old female PKK activist (Emine Gerger) who claimed that the Soviet Union had masterminded a plan to send PKK assassins disguised as Bulgarian Turkish refugees into Turkey to set up training camps. The Özal government also claimed that Greek General Mafafias had set up PKK training bases on the Greek island of Lavrion and also inside Syria.²⁶¹ Suffice it to say, that all of the allegations (true or not) won the Özal government little favour amongst Kurdish-Turkish citizens.

By 1990 it was clear that pressure from European states and from Turkey's own citizens to open its political process up was beginning to have an effect. In April 1990, President Özal (who had replaced General Evren as President in 1989), called a meeting of Turkey's main political parties (the Social Democratic Populist Party, the True Path Party, and the Motherland Party), to discuss methods by which Kurdish representation could be established nationally. The result was the demand

²⁶¹ N. Entessar, *op.cit.*, p. 100.

by the Social Democratic Party that the Kurdish language laws be repealed, which caused a negative reaction from the other two main parties. However, the daring move by the Social Democratic Party won it great favour amongst mainstream Turkish Kurds who were desperate for some type of political representation other than the PKK.²⁶² The national debate that ensued over Turkey's language laws, for the first time since 1925, brought the Kurdish question back to the centre stage of Turkey's national political agenda. In the elections of 1991 it was clear that Kurdish issues were central to the election campaigns of all three main parties, and the result was that openly Kurdish members of Turkey's parliament were elected for the first time in the country's history.

From 1990 until 1994 a number of parties in Turkey successfully elected Kurdish members. The HEP (People's Labour Party), the DEP (Democratic Party), and the HADEP (People's Democratic Party) all had Kurdish members. In fact, the HEP eventually became the DEP, and the DEP was part of a coalition that became the HADEP. The HEP was specifically a Kurdish political party, and in the elections of 1991 it sent sixteen members to the national parliament. As Martin van Bruinessen argues, the DEP and HEP were careful to refrain from openly criticizing the PKK, but they were equally careful not to portray themselves as too closely allied with the PKK as well.²⁶³ In this way, they succeeded in providing a political alternative for

²⁶² A. Aydinashas, "The Malaise of Turkish Democracy," Middle East Report, Winter, 1998, p. 35.

those Turkish Kurds who were uncomfortable with the PKK's violent tactics, and yet were equally uncomfortable with Turkey's major political parties. The period of post-1990 political openness inside Turkey initially showed promise for a national political debate that could search for a political solution to the Kurdish question.

However, unlike the enthusiasm with which Kurdish tribal leaders embraced the emerging Turkish state in 1920, there was only guarded optimism amongst the newly elected Kurdish leadership in 1991. The post-1980 national politics inside Turkey revealed a widening gap between two sides of the Turkish state. On the one hand, there was an emerging national openness and willingness to debate the Kurdish question at the national level. Turkey was under the watchful eye of the European community, and the EU had made possible Turkish membership conditional upon its internal human rights record, and its adherence to the ideas of liberal democracy. Though most of Turkey's mainstream political parties still adhered to a Kemalist notion of a singular Turkish national identity and a modern secular nation-state, the DEP, HEP and HADEP had opened some political space for Kurdish representation. Even the highly Kemalist Özal government that had witnessed the transition from military to civilian rule had pushed to the limits (within its own party) the need to open Turkish society and embrace its Kurdish citizens as brothers in the Turkish nation. It was, after all, Özal who finally repealed

²⁶³ M. van Bruinessen, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

the repressive Kurdish language laws in 1991 against the wishes of the more right-wing factions from within his own party.

The trepidation with which Turkey's mainstream Kurds approached their new found political openness was well-founded. While civil society in Turkey was more open than it had been, there was still widespread resentment by most Turkish nationals of the problems faced by the state in regard to Kurdish insurgency (and in particular PKK separatists). Since the 1920s at least, a large part of Turkey's national identity had been built upon the mythology of the Turkish people's need to fight foreigners in order to find a space for themselves. The Turkish government depended upon its enemies to legitimize its highly centralized and authoritarian administration, and since 1980 the primary security threat to the Turkish people came from Kurdish insurgents. Perhaps most significant was the fact that the regular military interventions into Turkey's political arena had established a precedent in which those elected officials who do not adhere to the strongest anti-Kurdish posturing will not be allowed to continue to rule.²⁶⁴ The structural autonomy of Turkey's massive military (i.e. the lack of functional subservience to elected politicians), has led to a split in the state's responsibilities. In issues of national security, the military has absolute control, and the sheer size and persistence of the mass of military and quasi-military apparatuses was, by 1990,

²⁶⁴ H. Bozarslan, "Turkey's Elections and the Kurds," Middle East Report, April-June, 1996, p. 16. Bozarslan goes so far as to suggest that Turkish generals have ruled Turkey, either directly or indirectly, since the 1980 putsch.

larger than it had ever been in Turkish history. So massive and all-encompassing had Turkey's defence and security network become by 1990, that regionally autonomous police and security forces had become law-makers and law-enforcers onto themselves as a means by which they could act without interference by state agencies that were ultimately responsible to elected officials.²⁶⁵ The massacre of Turkey's elected and locally respected Kurdish political leadership in the 1990s erased any feelings of good-will and optimism that might have existed during the initial enthusiasm of the new-found political freedom of the early 1990s.

Death Squads, and the tactics of 'divide and conquer': 1990-94

The 1990-1994 era of political openness that included the legalization of the Kurdish political parties in Turkey, was paralleled by what was one of the most disturbing examples of state repression of the 20th century. Kurdish political representation was first seen in the HEP (People's Labor Party) from 1990. The HEP itself was formed out of the larger SHP (Social Democrat Populist Party), some of whose members had attended a pan-Kurdish conference in Paris in 1989. As a result, these SHP members were considered to be 'separatists' by the Turkish government, and they were expelled from the party. In 1990, these professional Kurdish politicians (most of whom were lawyers) joined with other human rights activists and lawyers to form HEP. In the October 1991 elections, HEP won 16 seats

²⁶⁵ ibid., p. 19.

in the national parliament and proved to be somewhat of a concern for the national government. All had been elected with overwhelming popular support, and were willing to work within the legal framework of the Turkish constitution towards their Kurdish cause. However, the ruling SHP had always insisted that Kurdish representation would be most effective from within the mainstream political parties of Turkey, although it was the SHP who expelled these members prior to forming the government.

Just prior to the elections, in July 1991 a human rights lawyer named Vedat Aydın (HEP's provincial chairperson in Diyarbakir) was taken from his home by people who he thought were police. His brutally beaten body was found a few days later outside the city. Though police denied ever having arrested Aydın, several witnesses (including two journalists who were outside his home at the time of his arrest) saw four marked police cars leave his home, and saw Aydın get into one of the cars. Local reaction to the killing of Aydın turned his funeral into a mass demonstration in support of the HEP in which 'security persons of an unknown service' fired machine guns into the crowd non-stop for a period of nearly one hour. The crowds dispersed, and no reports were ever given as to how many Kurdish protesters were killed.²⁶⁶ The Turkish government simply denied the event ever happened regardless of the fact that it was televised locally. In what van Bruinessen describes as a 'bloodbath', the event marked that start of a mass campaign of public

²⁶⁶ M. van Bruinessen, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

assassinations, the scope of which will probably never been known. As Table 7.0 indicates, Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch have proof of a minimum of over 1,400 public killings in the period that coincided exactly with the period of legalized Kurdish political representation in Turkey.

From 1991 onwards, the killing increased at a dramatic rate. As van Bruinessen reports, "...nine journalists and four distributors of pro-Kurdish publications were assassinated in 1992 alone."²⁶⁷ Though official denials of responsibility come from every facet of the Turkish state, a parliamentary investigation into the killings (that was subsequently ordered destroyed by the government in 1994 as 'too embarrassing') did implicate JITEM (the intelligence wing of the Gendarmerie). A profile of those killed reveals that nobody was too powerful or prominent to avoid execution; the list includes one member of the national parliament, Metin Göktepe, a nationally known journalist who was killed in Ankara while being interrogated for covering a Kurdish funeral, and Mehmet Sincar who was heading a parliamentary fact-finding mission to investigate the killing of 53 leaders of the HEP and DEP political parties. Sincar was traveling with a police escort near the city of Batman, when his own security backed away and allowed an assassination team to move in and kill him. Also killed in the attack was another elected DEP member Metin Özdemir. Sincar was denied an official state funeral, and his body was not released to his family. By the peak year of killings (1993, with

²⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 21.

Table 7.0

murders by unknown persons ²⁶⁸ in Turkey 1991-1995	
Year	Persons Killed
1991	31
1992	360
1993	510
1994	423
1995	99
Total	1,423 ²⁶⁹

Breakdown (all estimated)

Elected Kurdish leaders assassinated by unknown actors 1990-94: (64)
 Other Kurdish local leaders and elders killed: (212)
 Number of journalists killed 1990-94: (97)
 Number of human rights activists killed 1990-94: (114)
 Number of academic researchers killed 1990-94: (51)
 Number of persons missing – death cannot be confirmed (4,350)
 Persons arrested and convicted of killings 1990-94: (0)

510 known assassinations), the list included foreign journalists and seven European graduate students engaged in field research on the Kurdish question.

It was, however, not until a number of secular non-Kurdish journalists and politicians were assassinated in 1993 that a full parliamentary inquiry into the rash

²⁶⁸ The term "murder by unknown persons" is the term used by the Human Rights Association (IHD) of Turkey and they specify further that this refers to "death-squad style political assassinations." "Human Rights Violations", with statistics provided by IHD, Helsinki Watch, January 1994, January 1995.

of killings was begun. Even though DEP had already begun their own investigation (the investigation that ended with that the killings of Özdemir and Sincar), and had interviewed hundreds of witnesses, the five main political parties in the Turkish Parliament decided to exclude DEP members from the investigating team. As it turned out, a process was already under way in 1993 that would eventually result in the arrest of most of DEP's elected members to the Turkish Parliament. Though the final draft of the commission's findings was never tabled in Parliament and the report was later ordered destroyed, a draft of the report was published in 1995 by a small underground newspaper published by the Birlik Sosyalist Partisi.²⁷⁰ Not only was the draft report highly critical of JITEM, it revealed a great deal about the process of brutality in Turkey, many tactics of which Kurdish groups had been claiming were in use for some time.

Though the commission's report confirmed the number of murders already reported by Turkish and international human rights agencies, it too could only confirm 'known' deaths and could not account for the thousands of missing persons who were presumed killed by Turkish security forces. Moreover, the unreleased report included two extremely significant points. The first was the use of Kurds themselves as political assassins. The second was the conclusion that this regime of

²⁶⁹ Figures for 1991 and 1992 provided by the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, as cited in M. van Bruinessen, "Turkey's Death Squads," Middle East Report, April-June 1996, pp. 20-23.

terror and brutality was often so well established locally that the central state gave no permission for, and was unaware of, the tactics used by its own internal security forces. Each local branch of the internal security force was simply engaged in its own autonomous program, and in many cases the local program included torture, assassinations, cruelty to locals, forced relocations, or the destruction of entire communities.

The report began by pointing out that the rash of killings was actually detrimental to the cause of finding a political solution to the Kurdish question, as these killings had succeeded in helping the PKK in its public relations campaign of portraying the Turkish state as a brutal regime. Moreover, the fact that a number of murder victims and suspected killers had already been reported in the Turkish press, and the lack of investigations into these killings confirmed the impression that the state was directly involved in the killings.²⁷¹ In several cases, photos and video shot by journalists show these murders being committed by village guards (*korucu*), and the fact that they were never charged or investigated left the impression that they were allowed to kill with impunity. The fact that non-Kurd, and in a few cases, foreign activists and researchers were killed made the PKK's case of state-sponsored brutality all the more credible.

²⁷⁰ T.B.M.M., faiili meçhul cinayetler arastrima komisyonu raporu (taslak), [draft report of the parliamentary commission to investigate the killings by unknown actors], translated with assistance, Istanbul, Birlik Sosyalist Partisi, July 1995.

²⁷¹ T.B.M.M., op.cit., p. 12.

The T.B.M.M. report went into great detail about the use of 'confessant' (*itirafçı*) killers. In many cases, imprisoned Kurdish or leftist activists who had made a full confession entered into a deal with local authorities in order to reduce their sentences. This tactic was used to identify other PKK or Kurdish activists who were targeted for assassination. Martin van Bruinessen reported on one particularly disturbing case in 1996:

One of the "confessants", Alaattin Kanat, who is mentioned by name in the commission's report, appears to have carried out several assassinations while officially in prison. The report mentions that during the 22 months he spent in jail, Kanat was allowed to leave prison no less than 11 times, "in order to assist the police." The respected daily *Cumhuriyet* reported assassinations allegedly carried out by him during such brief "vacations." Nonetheless, his death sentence was thus commuted to life imprisonment, and subsequently reduced to only a few years.

In an interview, Mustafa Pamuk, one of the lawyers who represented some of the 14 Kurdish HEP members of parliament arrested on conspiracy charges in 1994, elaborated upon the tactics employed by the JITEM in their use of confessants.²⁷² Pamuk claimed that local police would arrest suspected PKK members and turn them over to JITEM officials. He said that the local police would specifically target the much feared young Alevi Shi'i PKK members active in the urban communities and often linked to local gangs of organized crime. These younger PKK members would use fear and intimidation tactics on the local Kurdish community, and at times, would be the local strong-men used to pressure locally elected officials

²⁷² M. Pamuk, e-mail interview, August 2, 1998.

(usually HEP, DEP, or later HADEP party members), reminding them that the PKK was not averse to disciplining other Kurds who did not adhere to the separatist cause.

As a human rights lawyer, Pamuk spoke with several of these arrested members, and claimed that once turned over to JITEM a process was begun whereby they were often severely tortured and beaten before being charged. Once charged and tried, most were given death sentences. It was at this point that JITEM would attempt to extract a confession from these prisoners, and often would attempt to strike a deal in return for the prisoner's life. Though few prisoners on death row in Turkey are actually executed, many (and in the case of convicted PKK members, most) are killed in prison.²⁷³ As the T.B.M.M. report confirmed, these 'confessants' would then be released into the Kurdish community to perform an execution. The preferred method of killing was to execute high profile Kurdish individuals in public - usually during the day. The killers rarely made any attempt to disguise themselves, a method Pamuk claimed was designed to instill absolute fear in the local Kurdish communities. "They did not know who they could trust - and the

²⁷³ I communicated several times with Mustafa Pamuk between July 1995 and December 1997. Pamuk was a Turkish human rights lawyer and member of several human rights groups inside Turkey. As an advocate for Kurdish human rights, he e-mailed me regularly informing me on current events in Eastern Turkey. In a massive sweep of Kurdish political organizations, leftist political groups, and human rights groups (among others) in the six weeks prior to Ocalan's arrest in Kenya in February 1999, Pamuk was himself arrested - though never tried. In the last week of January 1999 (just three weeks before the arrest of the PKK leader), Pamuk was shot while still in prison in Sivas (he had still not been charged for any offence).

ones that they could trust the least were the most militant members of their own community.”²⁷⁴ Furthermore, many assassins were moved into the large Kurdish communities in Ankara and Istanbul where a historical distrust between Sunni and Shi’i Kurds continues to be a serious problem. The Alevis Kurds are generally feared by other Kurdish communities, and the use of Alevis Kurdish assassins only furthered this internal division.

Tying the post-hegemonic consensus together

At the level of political representation, the culmination of Turkey’s reign of terror came with the arrest of Kurdish members of parliament in March 1994. At roughly the same time (from around July 1994 to January 1995), the war in Turkish Kurdistan had erupted into a very widespread conflict. Unal Erkan, the emergency law governor of the ten provinces under martial law (who was appointed by the military Chiefs of Staff in 1987), had dramatically accelerated the military campaign against the PKK. Even the Çillar government was unable to stop Erkan’s brutal new campaign, and in December 1994 Prime Minister Çillar reluctantly announced a new policy that targeted over 12,000 villages in eastern Turkey as potential sites for guerrilla activity. It was clear that these villages would be the next phase of Erkan’s slash and burn program, and with the forced relocation of a further 1.5 million Kurds, the Çillar government realized that demographic pressures in the

²⁷⁴ M. Pamuk, e-mail interview, November, 15, 1997.

comparatively developed western parts of Turkey had reached their limits.²⁷⁵ Çillar was caught between a rock and a hard place: on the one hand, her government was in no position to limit the activities of Erkan and the military campaign in the east; on the other hand she was under great pressure from Western European governments and human rights agencies to halt Turkey's brutal treatment of its own Kurdish citizens. The end result was a political compromise in which there would be a parliamentary investigation into the high-profile political assassinations of Kurdish political leaders, the Turkish government would arrest and try 163 village guards suspected of murder and torture, the Turkish government would also try a number of PKK members accused of killing 'Kemalist' school teachers in the east, but the government would also succumb to Erkan's request that Kurdish members of parliament be arrested and tried for treason.²⁷⁶ Erkan (and the military Chiefs of Staff) would push for the death penalty for the members of parliament.

In March 1994, a vote in the national parliament was passed in which the fourteen DEP members lost their seats and their parliamentary legal immunity. Six DEP members fled to Western Europe, and eight were arrested on charges of treason. They were subsequently charged with working to further the interests of the outlawed PKK and during the trial, Turkish prosecutors asked for the death penalty.

²⁷⁵ B. Hepburn, *op.cit.*, p. D-7.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. D-6.

The trial of the DEP members of parliament caused a political sensation throughout Turkey. With financial support for the accused 'terrorists' from Amnesty International and further support from human rights groups inside Turkey, the trial pitted supporters of secular democratic rule against those who supported a strong military hand against all potential enemies of the Turkish majority. One of the lawyers for the DEP members (Hasip Kaplan) claimed that the outlawing of the DEP party and the arrest of its members reveals that real political control in Turkey is in the hands of its military leadership.²⁷⁷ Furthermore, Mustafa Pamuk claimed that there was no legal evidence against any of the Kurdish MPs and that the evidence introduced by state lawyers amounted to nothing more than mere innuendo. He further claimed that any person of Kurdish nationality could potentially be charged with treason because the argument of state lawyers was simply "guilty by ethnic association".²⁷⁸ Pamuk stated that all of the DEP members were extremely careful to distance themselves from PKK activities, and that his defence team had provided insurmountable evidence that included testimony and documentation proving that the Çillar government's decision to arrest the MPs and outlaw the party came directly from Turkey's military generals. That evidence was immediately ruled too sensitive to national security, and he and other lawyers were themselves charged with possession of sensitive state documents. The tactic, he

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. D-7.

²⁷⁸ M. Pamuk, E-mail description of the trial, October 3, 1997.

insisted, was a clear case of authoritarian military 'justice' than ran contrary to any notion of constitutional liberal democracy.

Summary and conclusions

The post-1980 hegemonic consensus in Turkey is a complex one. The military intervention from 1980-83 established the clear position of Turkey's military as the dominant political actor inside the state. In effect, there are two parallel hegemonic regimes at work in Turkey at any given time - a repressive military order, and a repressive social order. The military with its vast complex of apparatuses has a monopoly on the limits of civil and democratic rule, and it is the authoritarian nature of Turkey's military society that forges an official state identity. As a result, that order constructs all Kurds as a threat to the nation. The military defines Turkey's internal and external security concerns, and from the period of 1980 onwards, it was the Turkish military that succeeded in the further internationalizing what was already a transnational ethnic conflict. With a free hand at internal repression and the mistaken belief that national borders could be cemented shut, the military campaigns succeeded in pushing Turkey's Kurdish separatists into a larger pan-Kurdish national movement. The results of this effort split the Kurdish national movement into a dual campaign for survival that included internal terrorism organized by the PKK, and the peripheral (and often out-of-state) campaigns of militant guerrilla warfare. The inability to resolve this protracted

social conflict further reinforced the role of Turkey's military in the realm of democratic rule, and the military was able successfully to make the argument that a strong state was required to combat Turkey's internal and external enemies.

At the level of mainstream democratic politics, Turkey's political parties have struggled to accommodate its complex social character. With a historical distrust that finds its roots in the very emergence of the modern state of Turkey, national parties have been hard-pressed to establish any currency with its Kurdish minorities. At the centre of all mass political parties is an inherent distrust of Turkey's ethnic minorities, and the persistence of Kurdish separatism only furthers this impression. Clearly this level of mistrust is a requirement for any political party in Turkey to enjoy widespread political support. Distrust of Kurdish minorities is both a successful electoral strategy of Turkey's largest political parties, and a wider reflection of general attitudes among the Turkish majority. The Kemalist concepts of development and secular democracy are still deemed to be the most practical solutions to this problem. At the same time, the persistence of the Kurdish problem has created a situation whereby all political parties in Turkey are all too aware of the limits imposed upon them by the ever-present and all-powerful military. Every major political party in Turkey that has attempted to open the process up to include a national discussion of the minorities problem, has faced either the threat of, or the application of direct military intervention. Moreover, the most recent experiment

with political liberalization was met with the most brutal and flagrant disregard for basic human rights and democracy.

From the Kurdish perspective, the hegemonic order in Turkey is complete. That order extends far beyond the most basic form of brutal military repression into the mainstream of Turkey's liberal political debates. The 1990-94 experiment that resulted in the wholesale murder of every facet of Turkey's emerging secular Kurdish political leadership (local, regional and national), could be viewed as a classic case of a political booby-trap. For many Kurds, the encouragement of Turkey's political system for open Kurdish representation merely amounted to an 'outing' of moderate nationals as a ploy to make their execution easy and efficient. What is worse is the fact that even the most 'enlightened' of Turkey's democrats who were and are committed to a democratic political solution to the Kurdish question are hard-pressed to stop the repression. This is due largely to the fact that the repressive hegemonic order has widespread Turkish national support for its policies. It is, for the dominant national group in Turkey, a natural order - one that is necessary and acceptable. In the final analysis, this leaves only the PKK as a political organization that consistently claims to represent the Kurdish cause. Though many of Turkey's Kurds have been (and are) uncomfortable with the tactics and leadership of the PKK, the hegemonic orders in Turkey (both military and social) have left them no alternatives.

CHAPTER EIGHT: COUNTER-HEGEMONY

A counter-hegemonic consensus

Up till now violence, war pillage, murder and robbery etc., have been accepted as the driving force of history. Here we must limit ourselves to the chief points and take, therefore, only the most striking example – the destruction of an old civilization by a barbarous people and the resulting formation of an entirely new organization of society. (Rome and the barbarians; feudalism and Gaul; the Byzantine Empire and the Turks.)²⁷⁹

It would be false to suggest that the order of repression imposed upon the Kurdish peoples of Turkey is a complex and opaque set of socializations under which all accept the repression as a natural order. In the most brutal sense, tanks, guns, the razing of villages as well as the acts of terror used by Kurdish insurgents, are the most obvious reminders of a power struggle in which ethnic and national identity are the affiliations upon which all of this violence is legitimized. However, it is not merely the outward acts of repression (nor the weapons used) that constitute a national Turkish consciousness that sees its Kurdish war as a requirement for Turkish national survival. Likewise, it is not the vanguard militant PKK and its own campaign of terror that challenge the dominant Turkish social order; it is the very persistence of the 'Kurdishness' within 'Turkishness' for a period of at least one thousand years that is the social basis of this counter-hegemonic movement. In fact, one might argue that the historical socialization of both the Turks and the Kurds has been one in which they have been conditioned by each other (at least as much as

they have been conditioned by themselves), and it is this dialectic that frames their collective understanding of both 'self' and 'other'. In the words of Anthony Giddens, both have transformative capacity, which is the social basis of power.²⁸⁰ In this sense, the Kurds need a Turkish reference point to define themselves. The more the dominant Turkish regime subordinates its Kurdish minorities, the more it becomes obvious to Kurds just what Kurdishness is – and how important it is. While the Turkish state has many historical enemies from which it can support a sense of its own self-worth (the Greeks, Persian/Iranians, and Russians being the most obvious), none can instill a national sense of insecurity as well as the 'enemy from within'. It is at least in part the internal and transnational social relations that constitute both Turkish and Kurdish power, not merely the attributes of the state as observed by its external relations. For the Turkish military and its massive set of repressive apparatuses, nothing can come even close to the Kurdish question as its best *raison d'être*.

While the Kurdish ethnonational resistance has been consistent in its persistence since at least the formation of the Ottoman Empire, it has gone through a number of significant evolutionary changes. To be sure, there are pre-established theoretical models that can adequately explain the process of Kurdish subordination in relation to larger globalist processes. As Robert Cox argues, historical materialism

²⁷⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, The German Ideology, C.J. Arthur (ed.), New York: International Publishers, 1970, p. 79.

has added a vertical dimension to the horizontal dimension of the rivalry between states that dominates the global considerations of state action in the study of IR.²⁸¹ Through an examination of the dominance of the metropole over the hinterland, and centre over periphery, historical materialist understandings of global relations provide a refreshing perspective. Certainly an historical materialist framework could provide focus to the process of Turkish subordination of its Kurdish peripheries, but it may be unable to fully grasp the transformative nature of Kurdish ethnonationalism that has seen the urbanization of the movement and the development of a dual Turkish-Kurdish identity as a means for ethnonational survival.

As Robert Cox further suggests, the historical materialist framework has evolved through time and context, and the inclusion of Gramsci's understanding of hegemony has brought about a conception of structured relations of dominance/subordination upon which neogramscians have built a structured world view. It is a world view that is inseparable from the social structures that constitute states themselves. As Cox points out, Gramsci's notion of hegemony was developed for application at the national level, and it has been the neogramscian school of IR that has developed the concept to include social and transnational power relations

²⁸⁰ A. Giddens, The Nation-State and Violence, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, p. 7.

²⁸¹ R.W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," in R. Keohane (ed.), Neorealism and its Critics, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 216-17.

that define both state and trans-state systems at the international level.²⁸² As discussed in detail in Chapter Three, transformations in both national and international social relations in the past fifty years have made the complexities of agencies and identity construction infinitely more complex.

While the process of a constructed 'otherness' imposed upon Kurdish minorities inside and outside of Turkey has been historically consistent since the early written Kurdish texts (Chapter Five), the responses to that have evolved historically. As Chapters Five, Six and Seven illustrate, the Kurdish conception of the best form of political organizations to ensure their national well being has 'progressed' from a historically stable form of limited local autonomy (Chapter Five), to a state-based form of national consciousness that in part challenged the authority of the Ottoman Empire (Chapter Six), to a form of underground ethnonational agitation required to maintain Kurdish 'otherness' within the context of a multi-repressive (both military and social) regime (Chapter Seven). The responses to this limited agitation have been complex. As we saw in Chapter Seven, a two-pronged strategy by the Turkish state has witnessed a military campaign against the most militant of Kurdish groups, and in so doing has resulted in state policies that treat all Kurds as enemies – or potential enemies (a constructed singular 'other').

A second prong of the Turkish strategy has been the Kemalist idea of

²⁸² *ibid.*, p. 247.

modernization and development of Turkish society generally (and the Kurdish regions specifically), that has translated into massive campaigns of forced evacuation of Kurdish regions, the outlawing of written and external expressions of Kurdish culture, the education of Kurds in Turkish, and the banning or brutal intimidation of all types of Kurdish political organization. The collective result of these strategies had seen an internationalization of the military aspects of the conflict, the “mainstreaming” of a huge segment of Turkey’s Kurdish population, the development of a form of suppressed Kurdish identity, and growth of a large Kurdish diaspora population that seeks to support the national movement ‘back home’.

This chapter will seek to examine the current counter-hegemonic movement of Kurdish ethnonationalism. Specifically, it will examine the ways in which the types of repression have resulted in a new form of ethnonationalism that is built upon both the historical legacies of the Kurdish experiences, and that embraces the tools available to the Kurdish movement that are a product of ‘modern times’. At a social level, the demographic transformation of Kurdish communities that includes moving as many as ten million Kurdish people in the region (and as many as eight million inside Turkey alone) out of their traditional homelands, has resulted in a system of national networking that extends deep into the urban mainstream of Turkish society, into the neighbouring states of Iran, Iraq, and Syria, and into Russia and Europe. Rather than constituting a disparate set of isolated communities, the displaced Kurds have evolved into a melting pot of Kurdish identities that is

increasingly the vanguard of a consciousness-raising movement. Beyond merely exchanging stories of multiple repressions, these Kurdish communities find safety in numbers (and especially in Europe where more than 10% of all Kurds now reside), and they find the political freedom that allows for the support and coordination of the national movements in the homeland.

The advent of new communications technologies (especially satellite telephone and television communications, easy access to desktop publishing and photocopy reproduction, Fax machines, and the internet) has made the new Kurdish ethnonational movement ever-more elusive, ever-less territorially defined, and ever-more able to engage in the previously difficult tasks of consciousness-raising and political organization. The so-called tools of globalization have created an environment in which cyber-nationalism is the key defining feature of the modern Kurdish nationalist movement. For the purposes of this chapter, cyber-nationalism can be defined as transformation of national ideologies through increased communications to connect previously unconnected ethnonational groups who identify themselves as Kurds. As such, ethnonationalism is not merely the insertion of nationalist ideas into cyberspace, it is the web of communications (internet, publications, television and other mass media) and the process of how that communication transforms the social movement itself. As a phenomenon, cyber-nationalism relies upon pre-defined socially constructed national identities, and takes those identities beyond territorially-defined politics. For a social grouping like the Kurdish people who have historically been nomadic and only marginally

affected by those who have claimed the Kurdish people as sovereign citizens, cyber-nationalism has special significance. That significance comes from both the fact that the Kurdish identity has been historically conditioned as a-territorial, and also from the fact that the forced relocation of millions of Kurdish people has reinforced their ability to communicate with one another. At once, cyber-nationalism is both a tool for raising the level of social and ethnic consciousness of the Kurdish people, and it is a powerful weapon against those who attempt to assimilate the Kurds into other dominant social orders.

De-territorialization and cyber-nationalism

When the village guards came into our village, we expected that they would tell us that we had a few days to get ready to leave for good. We knew that other villages had been selected for destruction, so we just expected that this would happen to us too. But they never said much to us at all, they just started looking for TV radar dishes, and when they found them, they smashed them on the roads in front of the houses. Then a truck came by, and they piled cell-phones and computers and printers into the back of the truck. By the time they left, nobody had been arrested – nobody had been harmed. But many of us could no longer watch Med-TV or CNN, or even the Turkish national news – it was as though they just wanted us to not know what was going on in the outside world. ²⁸³

Ayşe Czihan's experience is hardly unique. For the Turkish state, the greatest threat posed by its Kurdish population is not necessarily the minority movement of PKK militants who use violence as a means toward their politics ends. Rather, it is the

²⁸³ Interview with Ayşe Czihan, a Turkish/Kurdish immigrant to Canada. She was referring to an incident in her village in April 1997. Telephone interview conducted on July 15th 1999.

increasing number of Kurds who have greater access than ever to communicate with one another, and as a result, greater access to a means of political and social organizing. In some sense, the traditional territorially-based uprisings of the past were easy for the Turkish state to identify and deal with. Armed insurgents could be met by the military apparatus of the state, and when they could be forced to stand and fight, they could be defeated by a more powerful, well-trained, and well-equipped army. More problematic for the Turkish state has been the development of PKK guerrilla cells and terrorist units that seek to blend into the geographical and social environment, and that will not stand to fight if they do not have to. The most elusive of all are the cyber-nationalists whose intentions are rarely (if ever) to engage the state in a violent confrontation. Their objectives are primarily social and political, and rarely geo-strategic and military.

The exploitation of mass communications by Kurdish nationals has provided a basis from which Kurds of every tribe, language group, religious affiliation, and state citizenship can connect with each other, and make themselves more fully aware of the multiple repressions faced by them – and the need to maintain their distinct identity. In a remarkably short period of time, cyber-nationals have effectively smashed the territorial and sovereign divisions that has marked their plight for the past one thousand years. While the military campaign against Turkish-Kurdish insurgency has been internationalized since about 1980, in a very short period of time Iranian, Iraqi, Syrian, Russian, German, Italian, Dutch, and other Kurds have presented as big a threat to the Turkish state as those Kurds who reside within its

territorial jurisdiction. Though it is true that not every Kurd in every village is connected to the web or watching television stations beamed in via satellite, the transformation of Turkish society and the resulting urbanization of the Kurds has meant greater and greater access to these tools of communication. In the absence of legal political representation and true freedom of cultural expression, the last ten years has witnessed an explosion of the use of new technologies as a means of creating and sustaining a 'virtual Kurdish community' inside Turkey that is well-connected to the outside world.

As Ayse Czihan stated in her interview, she came from one of the poorest regions in all of Turkey, and yet it was a region in which computers and satellite dishes were a priority. In her words:

When your culture depended upon these elaborate machines, you would find a way to get them. And if you couldn't afford a [satellite] dish yourself, then you did what you could to help someone else get one that we all could share.²⁸⁴

In the wake of outlawed Kurdish political representation, the means by which Kurdishness can be sustained and promoted is itself a method of nationalism. In fact, it is a method of Kurdish ethnonationalism that is not very different from a strategy employed by Kurdish tribes for the thousand year period before the emergence of the Turkish state in 1920.

²⁸⁴ ibid.

Legitimate representation, annihilation, and the PKK

As discussed in Chapter Seven, the 1990s were an especially difficult time for mainstream Kurds who had put some faith (cautious faith) in the legalization of Kurdish political parties inside Turkey. While it is true that the founders of DEP, HEP, and HADEP were realistic about the limits Kurdish representation could achieve in Turkey, the violent campaign against HEP members (and the arrest of legally elected members) was unexpected. To be sure, pressure upon these parties by the PKK, and the PKK's continued use of tactics of violence put the legalized Kurdish parties in a very precarious position. However, the legal Kurdish parties were not without support from many ethnically Turkish citizens and the network of support by journalists, human rights agencies, the Turkish left, as well as many committed constitutional secularists was at least as important to these parties as was their Kurdish support.

The parliamentary commission into the rash of political assassinations in the early 1990s revealed the extent to which there were strong possibilities for social and political alliances inside Turkey of groups that were seeking political (rather than military) solutions to the Kurdish question. The unreleased T.B.M.M. report that was highly critical of the activities of JITEM, the village guards, and the Turkish military as a whole, was as much a concern for those Turkish citizens who were committed to civilian rule, as it was a concern for those Kurds who were subjected to

the 'unofficial' repression.²⁸⁵ Though the parliamentary committee excluded participation of the Kurdish parties, this may at least partly be a result of the concern for perceived objectivity in their findings in the eyes of the Turkish majority. The committee had to contend with the fact that anything that was (at least in part) the work of Kurds was not likely to be regarded as objective in some circles.

As Martin van Bruinessen pointed out, the report was highly critical of JITEM, and much less so of MIT (the Ministry of the Interior). Nevertheless, it was a scathing report.²⁸⁶ The idea that the Turkish military was unable to control the actions of its own members in the field, and that the MIT was also unable to do the same, presented a serious threat to the idea of Turkey as a constitutional democracy. The fact that the report was never released or presented to Parliament exacerbated the concern. In any case, even the brutal events of 1990-1994 showed some promise for the prospects for political cooperation in regard to Kurdish issues. Throughout this period, a discourse on Kurdish issues was brought into the Turkish mainstream, and above all else, a commitment to the rule of law and the need for cooperation was deemed by most to be essential elements of any solution. There is no doubt that all Kurdish peoples were still regarded by many in Turkey as a singular 'other', but once political debates were being waged by elected political representatives (not bomb-tossing terrorists, or THK attack aircraft), the singular 'other' was breaking

²⁸⁵ T.B.M.M., *op.cit.*, pp. 120-125.

²⁸⁶ M. van Bruinessen, "Turkey's Death Squads," *op.cit.*, p. 22.

down into a more pluralist 'other' and this was far more representative of Turkey's Kurdish citizens than the stereotype of Kurds as terrorists – or potential terrorists.

The mainstreaming of the Kurdish question that arrived with the legalized Kurdish parties did much both to erode Kurdish support of the PKK, and to make Turkish citizens much more aware of the complex divisions within their Kurdish communities. The tragic collapse of space for social cooperation opened up in this period could possibly be explained by two different perspectives. Firstly, the erosion of both mainstream and rural Kurdish support for the PKK presented a serious threat to this militant arm of the Kurdish national movement. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the PKK stepped up its acts of terror during the early 1990s, and by the time of the arrest of elected Kurdish MPs, PKK targets were often other Kurds. From the PKK perspective, the legal and elected process of Kurdish representation was a softening of the cause that might lead to an unacceptable political solution to the problem. From 1978 onwards, Oçalan and the PKK would accept nothing short of complete Kurdish independence from the Turkish state as their ultimate goal. DEP, HEP, and HADEP not only eroded PKK support, but they moved some Kurdish support into a cause that seemed to favor some form of political cooperation within the existing Turkish state. The electoral successes of Kurdish members resulted in a hardening of the PKK's line, and if that meant attacks against fellow Kurds, so be it.

At the other end of this system were the agencies of the Turkish state whose very existence relied upon a continuation of Kurdish insurgency. As discussed, the

Turkish military and its various quasi-military agencies had cut out a special status for themselves in Turkish society as the protectors of the Turkish majority from the enemy within. It became increasingly difficult to suggest that the continued existence of the state was dependent upon the protection provided by the military when political and social cooperation were being practised in the Turkish parliament. Moreover, as increasing numbers of Turkish nationals were becoming convinced of the possibilities for a political solution to the Kurdish question, the special status of Turkey's military was put in doubt. Considering the external pressures exerted by European Community member states and international human rights agencies, the Turkish military was rapidly losing its legitimacy within Turkish society (and in the eyes of the international community). The one saving grace for the Turkish military throughout the early 1990s was the increased focus of the PKK and its new technique of targeting the Kurds themselves.²⁸⁷ In the end, Turkey's agencies of internal security took matters into their own hands (as the T.B.M.M. report confirms),²⁸⁸ and eventually they were able to convince the elected majority of the dangers of Kurdish insurgency. The end result was the systematic murder of Kurdish political leaders, national and international journalists, and human rights

²⁸⁷ Asli Aydintashas argues that a second 'saving grace' for the military leadership came with the rapid emergence of Islamic political parties immediately after the banning of Kurdish parties. She suggests that it was the military that effectively banned the Islamic parties by their suggestion that Turkey's greatest internal threats had ceased to be Kurdish insurgency by 1997, and that the new 'enemy from within' was Islamic fundamentalism. See, A. Aydintashas, "The Malaise of Turkish Democracy," *Middle East Report*, Winter, 1998, pp. 32-35.

activists, as well as the arrest of legally elected Kurdish members of parliament and the banning of legal Kurdish parties. The system of structured violence had won out against a window of opportunity for political cooperation.

In the end, the only option left for Turkey's Kurds was to support the PKK – or remain firmly underground in terms of any political affiliations. The militant extremes in the Kurdish conflict had both got their wish. From 1996 onwards, the Turkish military once again regained its monopoly over all internal and external matters of national security and it would continue to press the Kurdish conflict in both realms. As has been stated already, since the late 1990s the Turkish military has maintained a permanent presence in Northern Iraq, it continues to fight in the Turkish and Syrian periphery, its agencies continue with mass Kurdish relocation projects, and internal security continues to fight PKK and other Kurdish militants on the streets of Turkey's major cities. With regularity, the Turkish state claims that it has 'broken the back' of the resistance movement, and with regularity it reemphasizes a new campaign against some renewed form of resistance.

For the PKK, the global reaction of Kurdish communities to the arrest of its leader in 1999 only served to reinforce the fact that it alone is deemed the only true legitimate political representative of Turkey's repressed Kurdish minorities. Just five years ago the future of the PKK was uncertain, and yet with the complete decimation of legal Kurdish political representation inside Turkey the PKK has

²⁸⁸ T.B.M.M., *op.cit.*, p. 79.

found renewed (and increasingly international) support. Its international support is partly due to the internationalization of this conflict, and the responsibility for that lies primarily with the repressive tactics employed by the dominant Turkish social order. However, as has been the case in the past, being the only active political organization representing Kurdish interests in Turkey does not necessarily mean that its support is unqualified.²⁸⁹ As many of the pro-Oçalan supporters outside of Turkey were quick to point out in 1999, reaction against what they consider to be the illegal arrest by a state that may use the death penalty does not mean full support of the tactics employed by the PKK. Interestingly, many Kurds inside and outside of Turkey have sought underground and virtual expressions of cultural promotion and political discourse as an alternative form of national expression.

Kurds in the cities, and social cohesion

As Maria O'Shea pointed out in 1997, nearly all academic research on the Kurds has tended to focus on these people as nomads and peasants. She further suggests that

The dominance of the rural idyll, a collective mythological memory of Kurdistan as an overwhelmingly agrarian society in the collective consciousness, means that there has been little challenge from within Kurdish academic circles to the neglect of urban studies.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ "Rebel leader's lawyers appeal to prosecutors," The Kingston Whig Standard, November 27, 1999, p. 22.

²⁹⁰ M. O'Shea, "Kurds in Cities," Namah, (Badlisy Center for Kurdish Studies), 1-2, Spring-Summer, 1997, p. 13.

However, at a recent conference on Kurds and urban environments, Martin van Bruinessen noted that a case can be made that Kurdish culture is actually largely urban. He noted that most Kurdish language development, education, literature and other forms of cultural expression have developed in urban settings.²⁹¹ In recent years this trend has continued, and as urban environments present unlimited opportunities for increased cooperation and intercommunication they have rapidly become the centres for Kurdish political organization. As discussed, Diyarbakir is the largest entirely Kurdish city within the traditionally Kurdish areas of Turkey, and as far back as 1915 it was the centre for political discussion with Ottoman and Turkish officials. It was no coincidence that Oçalan moved the PKK's central activities to this important centre for Kurdish politics in 1978.

As the Netherlands Kurdistan Society reported in 1996, the forced removal of Kurds from their traditional lands throughout the 1990s was remarkable. In 1993 the Minister of the Interior confirmed the evacuation of 874 villages in Eastern Turkey, and in September 1994 the government confirmed the evacuation of 126,454 persons in just one of eight evacuation regions in only an eight month period.²⁹² Many of these displaced persons moved into larger urban environments inside

²⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 13. O'Shea provides an overview of van Bruinessen's address to the conference, held in Sèvres, France in September 1996.

²⁹² *Middle East Report*, April-June 1996, p. 8. The numbers published in the report were taken from the Netherlands Kurdistan Society Report, *Forced Evictions and*

Turkey, and many of them eventually went to Europe and Russia. In other cases, there was a voluntary movement of Kurdish-Turkish citizens to the more industrialized regions in Turkey as Turkey has been experiencing a steady increase in urbanization throughout the 20th century. Though precise numbers are difficult to determine, there is no doubt that the majority of Turkey's Kurdish minorities are now located in urban settings. This has had a profound effect upon Kurdish political organizations, and since 1990 has resulted in massive underground Kurdish communities throughout the state. In most instances, the large urban Kurdish ghettos are clearly visible and impoverished, although in other cases Kurds have blended into the Turkish mainstream almost unnoticed. As well, access to higher education has provided a sizable well-educated class of Turkish-Kurd, many of whom have accumulated reasonable wealth and prosperity. In short, while Turkey's Kurdish minorities remain typified as primarily nomadic agrarian peasants, demographic shifts prompted by economic development combined with a state-based policy of forced migration and urbanization have resulted in at least some Kurdish representation in virtually every economic and social class in contemporary Turkish society.

The well-educated and prosperous mainstream Kurds inside Turkey have been extremely reluctant to support militant separatist Kurdish political organizations such as the PKK. It was this class of mainstream Turkish-Kurd that

Villages in Dersim (Tunceli) and the Western Part of Bingöl, Turkish Kurdistan, September-November, 1994, Amsterdam, 1995.

vested so much optimism in the legal Kurdish political parties of the early 1990s. The betrayal of this powerful social class of Kurdish minority by the Turkish state through the events of the early 1990s has left many of them searching for other forms of political and cultural expression. Though still a minority within the Kurdish community, these so-called Kurdish Yuppies have set trends in terms of exploiting new freedoms afforded by telecommunications advances in establishing a 'virtual' underground Kurdish society inside Turkey.²⁹³ Furthermore, as their kin in Western Europe and North America also establish themselves economically and politically, the Kurdish Yuppies of Turkey have found important new political allies.

The Kurdish urban cultural movement inside Turkey has become representative of the Kurdish political struggle generally. At the level of militancy, the PKK has found fertile ground in the growing Kurdish ghettos from which it can take its guerrilla tactics into the very centres of cosmopolitan Turkey. Of the 19,000 acts of violence by the PKK reported by Andrew Mango from 1980 until 1999, a large and increasing number has been committed in Turkey's largest urban centres.²⁹⁴ Impoverished and under the constant eye of Turkish security forces, these massive ghettos have been the scene of increasing unrest in the past ten years. Often intermixed with Gypsy and Armenian ghettos, the youth gangs from Kurdish ghettos often engage in inter-ethnic conflicts with other minority groups. For the

²⁹³ Although the term 'Yuppie' is hardly an academic term, I use it in the same sense as the Middle East Report to refer to younger, well-educated, urban professionals. See "Yuppies, Daisies and Godfathers," Middle East Report, April-June, 1996, pp. 3-7.

Turkish mainstream, they represent a new proximity for the Kurdish question. Gone are the days of the 'war in the east' on battlefields at great distances, fought by soldiers who traveled great distances to protect the relative safety of the predominantly Turkish cosmopolitan core. These often violent ghettos on the outskirts of Turkey's major cities serve as a constant reminder that the Kurdish problem is never too far away.

Within these communities, Kurds find safety in numbers. As Martin van Bruinessen suggested in 1997, it is this environment that has been the centre of Kurdish political and cultural activity throughout their history. Moreover, the ghettos are connected to Turkey's mainstream Kurdish communities.

The new instruments of political organization

In mid-1988 Med-TV began broadcasting from its stations in northern Europe. The station was dubbed the 'National Kurdish Television Network', and initially only provided a few hours of broadcasting per day. Med-TV aired documentaries on Kurdish culture, provided limited Kurdish language programming, and did interviews with Kurdish political and cultural figures; within a year it began its own news service.²⁹⁵ In its first two years of operation, Med-TV attempted to broadcast on regular radio and television band waves into Turkey, but with insufficiently powerful television transmitters available to them in

²⁹⁴ A. Mango, op.cit., p. 1.

the region (some fairly powerful signals were available in Greece and Bulgaria, but they only covered a fraction of Turkey), they were easily subjected to Turkish jamming and interference. From 1990 onward, Med-TV was able to pay for satellite transmissions and from that point onwards the television station has been available to anyone in Turkey (and Iran, Iraq and Syria) with a radar receiving dish. Since that time, Med-TV has been public enemy number one for the Turkish government.²⁹⁶

With an extensive financial support system from the Kurdish diaspora in Europe and North America, the quality of Med-TV's programming and news reports has steadily improved since it first went on the air. In particular, with a complete media ban on all of the Eastern Provinces in Turkey under martial law since 1980, Med-TV has made use of personal videos smuggled out of the region by Kurdish Turkish citizens, as well as video shot and smuggled out by human rights agencies. Med-TV has also broadcast promotional videos for the PKK, and videos shot by PKK members engaged in firefights with Turkish forces. Often relying on the most sensational video it can find, Med-TV has become a powerful and graphic instrument for support of the Kurdish cause, both throughout Europe, and inside Turkey.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ TV5/Eurovision, "Europe Reports," aired March 12, 1997.

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*, March 12, 1997.

²⁹⁷ BBC World Reports, "Kurdistan's National News Network," aired December 10, 1998.

In Europe proper, Med-TV has been available to all television viewers through local broadcasting services (i.e. you do not need a radar dish to receive it), and in Turkey the satellite transmissions have replaced any need for the station to find local or regional transmitting stations. For the most part, the only way of receiving any television signals in the most remote parts of Eastern Turkey is either through local broadcasters or via satellite. However, ownership of radar dishes in most parts of Eastern Turkey is illegal without a special permit. In recent times the development of less costly and ever-smaller receiving dishes has made this technology much more easily available – and the dishes are much easier to hide.²⁹⁸ Even more recently, the ability to transfer video images and pre-recorded programming on the internet has provided yet another even more elusive means by which Med-TV broadcasting can easily be imported into Turkey. The prospect of internet video transfer has particular opportunities for Kurds in Turkey's largest urban centres of Istanbul and Ankara where most do not rely on radar dishes for television signals.

The reaction to the advent of Med-TV by the Turkish government is perhaps one of the best measures of the station's political significance to the Kurdish national movement. Since the station first aired in 1990, the Turkish government has sought to have the station shut down. Med-TV has been forced to move its operations no less than eight times since 1990, and with each new centre of operations has come a

²⁹⁸ T. Arbuckle, "Stalemate in the Mountains," Jane's International Defence Review, 30, January 1997, pp. 48-52.

Turkish campaign to have the station shut down.²⁹⁹ Initially the station operated out of Amsterdam. However, concerns for the safety and security of the station (as well as the costs involved) compelled the Dutch government to revoke the station's broadcasting license in 1991. As a result, Med-TV's operations were moved to Germany. Throughout 1992 and 1993 the station moved throughout Germany as the German government denied requests by Turkey to shut it down. Turkey was claiming that Med-TV was part of an international terrorist organization (the PKK), and that under international law Germany had an obligation to arrest its employees. On four separate occasions in that two-year period, the Med-TV offices were fire-bombed. Several European news services claimed that these attacks were carried out by Turkish intelligence agents.³⁰⁰ Turkey denied the charges and claimed that the attacks were most likely the result of infighting amongst rival Kurdish and Turkish gangs operating organized crime rings inside Germany.

In 1994 Med-TV moved its operations to Paris, but after only eight months, the French government (at the request of Turkey) ordered the operation shut down. France refused to arrest Med-TV employees, and negotiated with both the Dutch and Belgium governments who indicated a willingness to have Med-TV move to either Brussels or back to Amsterdam. In early 1995, Med-TV moved to Brussels;

²⁹⁹ BBC World Report, "Kurdistan's National News Network," op.cit.

³⁰⁰ ibid.

almost immediately the television station was attacked by 'unknown assailants.'³⁰¹ For the next two years Med-TV would be subjected to an array of attacks including three drive-by machine-gun shootings that killed two of its employees, two minor bombings, and six fire-bombings. In November 1997, a massive bombing of the station destroyed the entire building and killed a further seven. The government of Belgium immediately protested the bombing claiming that it was the work of Turkish intelligence officers.³⁰² Turkey never officially denied responsibility for the bombing, and did indicate that both Turkey and the United States recognize the PKK as an international terrorist organization. (The Clinton Administration added the PKK to its list of international terrorist organizations at the request of Turkey in 1996.³⁰³) Ankara further stated that Med-TV was clearly affiliated with the PKK, and as such, it was hardly surprising that the attack took place. Med-TV was back in operation just three weeks after the bombing, this time in Amsterdam under heavy security.

The saga of Med-TV and the reaction to it by the Turkish government suggests the extent to which it is at the cutting-edge of new technologies that are now a part of the Kurdish nationalist movement. The station's ability to broadcast into Turkey and throughout Europe reveals the extent to which this movement has

³⁰¹ TV5, Euro-Reports, "Med-TV bombed by Turkish Agents," aired, February 11, 1995.

³⁰² EUROVISION-shortwave report, "Brussels/ Ankara argue over Kurdish Station," broadcast November 10, 1997.

been internationalized, and de-territorialized. Med-TV knows no national borders, and as long as it can continue to broadcast, there is little (save bombings) that the Turkish government can do about it. To some extent, the large and increasing Kurdish population in Europe will only serve to strengthen instruments of national consciousness-raising such as Med-TV, and television alone is not the only such non-territorial tool available to the movement. Perhaps most significantly, the story of Med-TV reveals the extent to which Turkey's Kurdish problem has become Europe's Kurdish problem. The massive influx of Kurdish refugees and foreign guest workers into Europe since 1980 has been concern enough for European governments. However, the transition to the possibility of Turkish state-sponsored anti-Kurdish bombings on the streets of major European cities brings the gravity of the situation to a whole new level. For Turkey, the very presence of Kurdish communities in Europe (communities that have been established mostly as a result of Turkey's brutal treatment of the Kurds) represents a possible security threat to the Turkish state. To a large extent, the Med-TV saga is just the tip of the iceberg. With nearly three million Kurds now spread throughout Europe, Med-TV is merely just the most visible symbol within all kinds of political and social organization by Kurdish communities in Europe.

A cursory monitoring of web-site activities over a three year period reveals the extent to which this new technology is being used as an instrument in the

³⁰³ ibid.

increasingly de-territorialized and internationalized Kurdish movement. In particular, the global reaction to the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan in Kenya on February 15, 1999 shows how the web has rapidly become key to connecting the widely scattered Kurdish communities, and has made coordinated responses to events possible. Within a matter of days, a series of protests erupted throughout (primarily) Europe and North America. In what some journalists claimed was a puzzling series of spontaneous demonstrations,³⁰⁴ a closer examination of web-site activities on the days immediately after the arrest would suggest otherwise. Between July 1996, and October 1998 there were an average of between 30 and 57 web-sites available internationally through the keyword search 'Kurd'. The lowest period was the earliest, in July 1996 when there were 30 web-sites available - all but 7 with European exchanges. Of the 30, 7 were merely information web-sites provided by news agencies and publications, and about 15 were sites established by Kurdish political organizations and political parties. Of the 15 'official' web-sites established by known Kurdish organizations, many were intermittent in their availability.³⁰⁵ In particular, two web-sites claimed to have an official affiliation with the PKK, and from July 1996 until October 1998 these sites changed their address or exchanges no less than 22 times. However, a monthly search during this three year period revealed a slow and steady increase in the number of web-sites available,

³⁰⁴ C. Fidelman, "Officer injured in Montreal Protest," The Kingston Whig Standard, February 20, 1999, p. 13.

and perhaps more importantly, a large increase in the amount of information provided by most sites.

The detainment of Oçalan in the Rome airport in November of 1998, was accompanied by a huge increase in Kurdish web-site activity - especially in Europe. Within a month (by December 1998), the number of Kurdish websites available by keyword search had doubled from 57 to 119. Many of these sites were local, making information available for the various Kurdish communities in the larger European urban centres. Some of the largest cities in Europe (Berlin, Paris, Rome, Amsterdam, Essen, Munich, Hamburg and others) had multiple sites. In Rome in November, two sites were temporarily available promoting a pro-Oçalan rally outside of the Celio military hospital, and another was briefly available promoting a protest outside the Western European Union Conference meeting being held in the city at that time. While Oçalan was in Rome, several other organizing sites were established in nearby locations (Greece in particular), and it was obvious from both the existing sites and the temporary sites that they were the primary organizing vehicle for the protests. Oçalan's stay in Rome, and the cyber-reaction to it, set a precedent for diaspora Kurdish political organization that was to reach its crescendo in 1999.

³⁰⁵ All from web-search of 'keyword' Kurd(s). Only sites dedicated entirely to the Kurds have been included.

Table 8.0

Keyword 'Kurd' website search July 1996 to March 1999 ³⁰⁶				
Date	Total	News/Info	Polit. Orgs.	Other
July 1996	30	7	15	8
July 1997	39	9	21	9
July 1998	50	11	30	9
Aug. 1998	55	15	31	9
Sept. 1998	57	15	33	9
Oct. 1998	57	15	33	9
Nov. 1998	119	21	85	13
Dec. 1998	140	25	100	15
Jan. 1999	151	28	108	15
Feb. 1999	213	35	162	16
Mar. 1999	349	56	272	21

Though it is almost impossible to determine exactly who was accessing these sites, one website manager in the Netherlands indicated that of the nearly 1,100 hits to his site in June of 1999, about 30-40% were hits from addresses with Turkish exchanges (.tr). He further speculated that since his site was merely an information site as opposed to a site for political organization, that many European sites were

³⁰⁶ All taken from from keyword searches of the internet using the keyword "Kurds". The keyword does provide many more references than just websites, so this list was narrowed down to include only websites dedicated to Kurdish issues specifically. 'News and Information' websites are generally provided by national and international broadcasting services, and in some cases, large publications, magazines, newspapers etc. 'Political organizations' refers to political parties and their affiliated online publications, national and local Kurdish community groups

being accessed by Kurds in Europe, and the information was being forwarded back to Turkey as attachments to personal e-mails.³⁰⁷

The period immediately after the arrest of Oçalan saw a further dramatic increase in Kurdish websites online. By March 1999 the number had reached 349 by keyword search, and the total was less European-based than it had been. Of the total, about 60 were based in Canada and the United States though many of these were provided by North American news agencies (*CNN.COM*, *CBS.COM*, *NBC.COM*, *CBC.NEWSWORLD*, etc.). Of the total number of sites, more than 100 were dedicated to following the events surrounding Oçalan's arrest, and many were providing times and dates for protests throughout Europe and North America. Though there were obviously other forms of protest organization at work during this period, the internet had clearly become a major tool for the organization of more than 60 well-timed and coordinated protests within a matter of days.

A full content analysis of each site would be required to determine exactly how effective they were as the basis for this political organization. However, in the week of the most intense protest activity (the week following the arrest February 15-22) there were no less than 175 postings for rallies in 35 major cities ranging throughout Europe, and in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand,

online, and activist organizations. 'Other' websites include geographical/map sites, research sites, listings of political representations in Europe, etc.

³⁰⁷ Ernst Bauer, interviewed via e-mail, August 10, 1999. Mr. Bauer stressed that personal 'hit' information on his file-server is confidential, but was willing to give

Japan, throughout the Middle East, and parts of Africa and Asia. As many of the Kurdish communities are small and isolated (except in the largest European cities), website information travels quickly through the communities. An overview of just websites also does not reveal the number of list-serves and mail-lists that could further provide updates on events and greatly assist in political organization. Though it might be easy to overestimate the effect of cyber-space on the Kurdish national movement, one cannot deny the speed with which a global reaction to the arrest of Oçalan occurred. An unnamed agent with the Canadian intelligence service (CSIS) indicated how their agency was 'stunned' by the cohesiveness and coordination of the Kurdish communities in Canada.³⁰⁸ He indicated just how far behind the agency was in its understanding of cyber-coordination, having never suspected that a migrant community could be so well-orchestrated nationally (in Canada) in its reaction to a single event. By comparison to Europe, the Canadian Kurdish community is small and spread thinly throughout the country. Clearly, the internet has become a powerful tool for the coordination of a transnational 'national' movement.

nationality exchange information. His server 'Kurdrigh' provides information on investigations into human rights abuses of Turkish Kurds.

³⁰⁸ After participating in a panel discussion on the events after the arrest of Oçalan in December 1999 at the Royal Military College of Canada, I was approached by two CSIS agents inquiring into my knowledge of cyber-organization of the Kurdish community in Canada. Neither agent divulged his name.

Summary and Conclusions

Perhaps one of the most common clichés that can be found in discourse about the Kurdish peoples is the statement the Kurds – the largest group of people on earth without their own country. The assumption is, of course, that all nation-groups should have a state of their own. In reality there are several nation-groups of substantial size and cohesion who have found other forms of political arrangement, and of the world's ever increasing number of state units, only a minority constitute true nation-states.³⁰⁹ At the same time, conflicts over territorial jurisdiction that are legitimized by a perceived need for nation-groups to control their own territorial sovereignty are numerous, and some would argue, proliferating. There is no doubt that the Kurdish conflict is an ethnonational conflict. However, for reasons largely having to do with the historical circumstances that have brought the Kurdish people to the present, the territorial jurisdictions under which they reside are numerous. For scholarship in political science devoted to understanding the political and social basis of this conflict, these international borders present theoretical and methodological impediments that are most often resolved by a series of choices. Either the Kurds are studied as part of IR as non-state actors, or they are studied as part of Comparative Politics as a trans-state social grouping.

³⁰⁹ G. Nielsson, "States and Nation-Groups: A Global Taxonomy," in E. Tiryakian and R. Rogowski (eds.), New Nationalisms of the Developed West, Boston: Allen, 1985, p. 27-54.

As a nation-group without a state, the Kurds constitute what the field of IR would simply label a non-state actor. Aside from the pejorative implications of such a term, the relegation of the Kurdish peoples to the status of non-state actor has its own implications. Perhaps the most significant implication is that this nation-group (which is defined by its very self-identity, Chapter Three) somehow operates separately from existing states – or at very least, outside of the dominant national order that gives the Turkish state its *raison d'être*. In the case of the Kurds in Turkey, nothing could be further from the truth. As we have seen in Chapters Four and Five, the Kurds were an integral part of both the Ottoman Empire and the modern state of Turkey. In fact, the key transition period at the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the state formation process of the modern state pivots around the Kurdish tribes. The Kurds are a part of the social conditioning that led to the emergence of the Turkish state, and they have played a huge part in the evolution that state took throughout the 20th century. In this sense, they are not merely non-state actors. Rather, Kurds are key social actors that conditioned and partly molded the significant state formation process, and continue to condition Turkish state behaviour in both its domestic and international roles. Without its Kurdish considerations, the Turkish state would not have emerged in the way that it did, and it surely would have evolved very differently without them.

The second research choice that is available to examine the Kurdish peoples, would be to do so through the theoretical lenses provided in the related field of Comparative Politics. Like IR, Comparative Politics has many theoretical choices,

each with its own set of basic assumptions, ideological and normative preferences, and resulting research programs. As stated in Chapters Two and Three, the works of scholarship like that of Anthony Giddens, Michael Mann, Fuat Keyman, and crossover scholars (such as the neogramscians like Robert Cox, Steven Gill, and Craig Murphy found in IPE literature that connect the structuralism of neomarxism and to globalist considerations) provide an important emphasis upon the links of state to society. It is because of the emphasis on those links (state and society), that this thesis built a theoretical model that sought to examine the social construction of 'us' in relation to the dominant 'other'. It that bridge that this thesis has attempted to cross.

Through an historical examination of the evolution of links between social group identity of the Kurdish minorities to the Turkish majorities in the territorial regions that have become modern Turkey, this work has sought to connect what IR would consider a non-state social grouping into a framework that suggests that the Kurds are part of the social fabric that is Turkey (and to a lesser extent Iran, Iraq, Syria and those other states with large Kurdish communities). Against the powerful dominant national social forces have been the Kurds themselves, who have sought to protect their self-identity in the midst of four principal states whose policies have been directed specifically against them. The result has been a Kurdish strategy of survival and kinship that has (at least partially) resulted in the internationalization of this conflict. Borders are meaningless to a social constituency that defines itself by its ethnic and kinship identity. In part, Kurdish culture and their shared history has

been one of a cultural development in a borderless world. Borders become even more meaningless to a people who are systematically subjugated to a multi-state policy of mass relocation and forced assimilation.

Beyond merely suggesting that there are states, and that there are social groupings that reside within and amongst state units, this discourse has sought to provide the story of the emergence and development of Kurdish ethnonationalism as a structural relationship. Explicitly normative in its orientation, the story that has been told here is one that has given primacy to those events that have been deemed important to the Kurds themselves. As the ancient proverb goes, "Until animals have historians of their own, hunting stories will almost always come out on the side of the hunter." Developing their national identity as a people marginal to the central concerns of those who have claimed Kurdish homelands as their sovereign territory, Kurdish history is most often told from the perspective of their political masters. This has been further complicated by the fact that written Kurdish did not emerge formally until the late 19th century. Thus, this thesis has selected some significant historical markers (such as what is known about the early development of the Kurdish language and culture, what is known about the formative period of Kurdish nationalism, and their experiences under 'primarily' the rule of the Turkish state) as a basis to suggest that Kurdish identity has evolved within a structured relationship of subordination. It has been that construction of the identity of 'other' in relation to the dominant 'us' that has, it was argued, molded the type and style of Kurdish nationalism in the 20th century.

From there, this thesis moved into the contemporary period of Kurdish nationalism and presented it as a dialectic between hegemony and counter-hegemony. This was done to try and reconnect how the two socialize each other. In this sense, modern Turkish politics is a power expression of its internal and its transnational social relations. The same is true for the Kurds, and as a subordinated social group, the repression imposed upon them by the Turkish state has molded both their conception of 'self', and the political strategies employed in a quest for ethnonational survival. Through this dialectical lens, the delineation between the realms of international politics and domestic politics is meaningless. Though even the most statist of positivist realists in IR would admit that domestic politics counts, primacy is given to the state-as-actor in its international conduct, and the domestic consideration is relegated to the realm of 'low politics'. It has been argued here, that such a delineation is a theoretical hindrance to seeing the structured social basis of state behaviour.

To a large extent, this thesis has been an exercise in counter-thought. The historical sociological method that was used in Chapters Four, Five and Six, deliberately portrayed Kurdish history with Kurdish identity at the centre of the story. As Carr suggests in his classic What is History?, history is most often the version of events told by history's winners - not its losers. The fact that the Kurdish identity evolved under Ottoman and Turkish rule, and the fact that a formal written version of the language was not formalized until the late 19th century, put the Kurdish version of their story at a comparative disadvantage. The Kurds are most

often described by others, and that description is always embedded with the normative preferences of the winners. They select those facts and events that are deemed important to the winner's version of history. That is not to say that a historical sociology of Kurdish history that is Kurdish-centric is not embedded with preferences of its own, but it does provide an alternative 'marginal voice' that needs to be heard. History is, of course, not something that is invented, but it is also never to be considered something that is purely objective either. This thesis has suggested that social context is required for any claim of truth to have meaning, and the claims of social subordination by most Kurdish groups only have meaning if their version of their own evolution is taken into consideration.

Upon the socially-centred agency of Kurdish self-identity, this thesis presented research to support the claim that Kurdish ethnonationalism inside Turkish society has been one of a dialectic between Turkey's dominant Turkish national order, and its subordinated Kurdish minorities. The dialectic was built upon historical sociology with the intention of displaying how 'domestic' social relations are internationalized. Not only has the Kurdish question been the single greatest factor leading to the emergence of the Turkish state as a quasi-military and authoritarian regime, it has been those social and military attributes of the Turkish state that have resulted in its activism as a regional and international actor. To be sure, Turkey's foreign policies are complex and varied, but its relationship with its closest and most important sovereign neighbours (namely Iran, Iraq, and Syria) have been almost exclusively defined by Kurdish ethnonational considerations. Not only

is the Kurdish war a war that knows no borders inside the territorial sovereignty of Turkey, it is a war that respects no international borders either. The so-called 'fronts' in the Kurdish struggle exist in the classrooms of Turkish universities, in the ghettos of Turkish cities, in the enclaves of separatism in the Turkish countryside, in the mountains of Turkey, Iran and Syria, in the deserts of Syria, in the millions of displaced Kurdish refugees throughout Russia, Europe and North America, and in recent years, on the airwaves of radio and television, the internet, and whatever other means of communication that can be used to connect those who identify themselves as Kurds.

As the theoretical proposals of Chapter Three suggested, identity is an agency in global politics. It is an agency that often moves people to act politically in certain ways. In the case of the Kurdish people, it was an agency that conditioned the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, it was an agency that played a key role in the state formation process of modern Turkey, and it has been an agency that has been central to the conditions of contemporary Turkey as an actor in both domestic and international politics. As such, ethnonational agency is both a non-state and state actor at the same time. It is non-state in the sense that Kurdish groups often act contrary to the those states who claim them as sovereign citizens. They are non-state actors in the sense that they do not have the key ingredients of population, territory, and political sovereignty. However, ethnonational agency is a state actor in the key sense that these social forces are not divorced from existing states. Rather, they are a key component of the social composition that defines states.

Assigning primacy to ethnonational identity as the basis for a theoretical understanding of global politics (building from the bottom up), reveals a world view that is almost impossible to see through the lens of theories that are built from the top down (statist). It allows for the connection of what might otherwise be viewed as a disparate and disconnected set of 'domestic considerations'. Though it may seem obvious that the respective Kurdish questions of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria are in fact the same Kurdish question, this does not do justice to the processes that transcend national borders and affect all of these states and societies. The problem of Turkey's inability to deal politically with its Kurdish minorities becomes a problem for many. As millions of displaced Kurds find some peace and prosperity in every major European city, Turkey's Kurdish question becomes Europe's Kurdish question. As Kurdish political infighting and the continued repression of the Kurdish minorities in Iraq leads to further dislocations, Iraq's Kurdish problem becomes Turkey's Kurdish problem, and on and on. More importantly for this project whose focus was the largest of all Kurdish minorities (the Turkish case), the specificity of its focus allowed us to see how this crucial ethnonational agency is one that is an international consideration. From the bottom up, we see that international politics is not just about states, it is about peoples. As this thesis has displayed in the case of the Kurds, these people were not only central to the very definition of Turkey as an emergent state in the global community, they have shaped and redefined the Turkish state throughout its history. As a social and

national agency, the Kurdish people constitute both a domestic and an international actor in their own right.

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Colonel (Mehmet). Interviewed on e-mail, July 14, 1998.

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APPENDIX A: TURKISH MILITARY ACQUISITIONS/MAJOR MILITARY
EVENTS DATASET 1993-97

Turkish State Military acquisitions/operations dataset 1993-1997 as cited by
British Air Ministry Reports published in *Air Forces' Monthly* and *Air
International*

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 62, May 1993, "Accident Reports:" Jan. 7, Armenian AF
Mi-8 (shot down by Azeri/Kurd forces), Jan 29, Armenian AF Helicopter (Shot
down -- details unknown), Mar 2, Turkish Mil (aircraft unknown, but acquired
from Russia -- crashed in Eastern Turkey), Mar 15, Turkish AF RF-5 (from the
Netherlands - built in Canada) crashed while landing at Diyarbakir, pp. 59-60.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 63, October 1993, "News Brief", p. 3.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 64, July 1993, "News: Iranian raid on Iraq," p. 4,
"News: Turkey orders PBN MSSA (from the US)," p. 6.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol 68, November 1993, "Accident Reports:" Iraqi AF (2x
unidentified helicopters), shot down by opposition forces (Kurd) in Ramadiyeh
Province Iran, Turkish AF RF-5 (from the Netherlands) crashed shortly after
take-off near Antalya, pp. 58-59.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 70, January 1994, "News: Turkish A-10 deal being
finalised," (US supplied), p. 4.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 71, February 1994, "News Brief -- U.S. transfers T-38s to
Turkish AF," p. 5.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 72, March 1994, "News: Experimental F-104 scheme," p.
9, and, "Lockheed F-104 Starfighter: A legend in decline," by Lindsay Peacock,
pp. 30-34. Peacock reports for the first time that THK has been using CF-104s
provided by Canada under a 1986 NATO agreement to attack and destroy
Kurdish villages. The article includes photos of CF-104 (cdn. c/n 638) engaged
in napalming of villages. Peacock reports that Canadian provided aircraft
(including former Royal Netherlands AF NF-5's built by Canadair in Montreal)
now constitute 80% of Turkey's air resources (as of 1993) used in village
destruction campaigns. Though denied by Bristol Aerospace in Winnipeg and
NDHQ in Ottawa, upgrading and servicing of Turkish aircraft at Diyarbakir was
being conducted by Bristol employees and costs for upgrades were billed to the
Canadian Government. Germany and the Netherlands call for a NATO inquiry

- no inquiry is established. Though unconfirmed, unnamed CF transport pilots (CC-130E) state that surplus ground attack weapons were flown by 426 (T)transport squadron from Winnipeg, Trenton, Shearwater, Dublin (Ireland), Aviano (Italy), Ankara from 1986 to 1993.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 73, April 1994, "News Brief – Turkey orders Russian assault and utility helicopters," p. 3.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 74, May 1994, "News; Turkey abandons A-10 acquisitions," (US supplied) p. 10.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 75, June 1994, "News: THK RF-4E embargo -- Germany halts all arms shipments to Turkey in response to information verifying that Turkey used NATO (Canadian & German) supplied arms against the Kurds," p. 5, "News; First TAI F-16 for Egypt," (Turkey to build US designed fighters/attack aircraft for Egypt) , 7, "News; Turkish Hips," (Russian built helicopters - not destined for the Army, but for 'special anti-terrorist JITEM forces), p. 10.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 77, August 1994, "News: Turkish Tankers," (US supplied, outfitted in Israel), p. 8.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 79, October 1994, "News: Turkey to buy USN SH-2Fs," (US supplied), p. 6.

Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 80, November 1994, "Across the Aegean," by Paul Jackson, pp. 23-27, "Accident Reports: Sept. 13 Turkish AF (F-4 supplied from Germany crashes in Afyan province), Sept. 14 Turkish Army (Unidentified helicopter crash in Eastern Turkey killing an Army colonel and two lieutenants - - talks with PKK leaders may have been in progress)," p. 59.

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Air Forces Monthly, Vol. 112, July 1997, "News: Turkey's Hammer," up to 50,000 Turkish troops supported by THK (Air Force) F-16s, F-4s, and hundreds of helicopters move into Iraq to seek out PKK members. Officially Turkey reports 1,817 PKK members have been killed to date, p. 2. Also, "Turkish Navy Selects CN-235" (Spanish designed transport plane – to be built in Turkey), p. 8. "Accident Reports:" May 19, 1997: "During extensive air operations against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) camps in northern Iraq involving Turkish AF f-4 and F-16 fighters plus Army Super Cobras (attack helicopters), one of the AH-1Ws crashed, killing both crew," p. 77.

Air International, Vol. 44, No. 2, February 1993, "Military Affairs: Turkey – planned increase in numbers of assault and utility helicopters. Also plans to licence build U.S. designed helicopters soon," p. 59.

Air International, Vol. 44, No. 3, March 1993, "Military Affairs: Iraq – tensions ease after U.S. airstrikes in Feb. following Iraqi AF violations of Kurdish protected zone," p. 115.

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Air International, Vol. 46, No. 1, July 1994, "Military Affairs: Turkey – F-16s gain night attack capability," pp. 3-4.

Air International, Vol. 46, No. 4, April 1994, "Military Affairs: Turkey – Turkey buys Russian utility and assault helicopters," p. 172.

Air International, Vol. 46, No. 5, May 1994, "Military Affairs: Turkey – acquisition of A-10 attack aircraft from the U.S. abandoned," p. 236. "Military Affairs: Iraq – U.S. downs two of its own helicopters in Kurdish protected area. Killed on the helicopters were 15 American and UN military personnel, three Turkish officers, five Iraqi Kurds, one French and two British officers. No-one can determine what the Iraqi Kurds were doing in the aircraft, but they are

suspected to have been part of a CIA run military base in PUK territory aimed at training insurgent teams to kill the Iraqi President. PKK website in Bonn Germany claims (on May 15-16th) that Kurdish rebels infiltrated AWACS communications (airborn air-control radar aircraft) and vectored US fighters and instructed them to shoot the helicopters down. Website vanished within 24hrs., and the US never comments on the report. Also U.S. interceptors were on patrol out of Incirlik Turkey," pp. 235-236.

Air International, Vol. 47, No. 5, November 1994, "Modernizing the THK," pp. 299-308.

Air International, Vol. 48, No. 2, August 1995, "Military Affairs: Turkey – further purchase of attack helicopters," p. 68.

Air International, Vol. 48, No. 6, June 1995, "Trackers at Topel – Turkish Naval Aviation," by René van Woezik, pp. 363-365.

Air International, Vol. 48, No. 6, June 1995, "Turk Kara Kuvvetleri – Turkish Army Aviation," by René van Woezik, pp. 366-369.

Air International, Vol. 49, No. 2, August 1995, "Military Affairs: Turkey," p. 68.

Air International, Vol. 49, No. 4, October 1995, "Military Affairs: Turkey – Israel's IAI to upgrade Turkey's F-4Es," p. 195.

Air International, Vol. 49, No. 5, November 1995, "Worldwide Army Aviation Census," pp. 309-313.

Air International, Vol. 52, No. 5, May 1997, "Military Affairs: Turkey," p. 261. "Turkey Gold: 50th Anniversary of DC-3 and C-47 Operations in Turkey," pp. 283-288.

Air International, Vol. 53, No. 3, September 1997, "Military Affairs: Turkey – Turkey expresses interest in purchasing CH-53 helicopters from the US for its special forces, – Turkish Air Forces announces its intention to produce its 3rd batch of F-16 fighters (total number supplied to be 176)," p. 134.

Also: Air crash reports from May 1993 indicate a helicopter crash 'under extremely mysterious circumstances' inside Turkish Kurdistan. A Bell UH-1 crashed killing all on board. The aircraft was believed to be transporting 'up to \$20million US dollars in illegal drugs', and killed in the aircraft were an American pilot in uniform, a Turkish JITEM member, and two PKK soldiers. The aircraft did not have a registration number, but human rights lawyers in

Turkey suspect that the JITEM and US members were being paid-off to assist in drug smuggling activities used to raise funds for PKK operations. No official reports of the event could be found, and all involved (the US Army, Ministry of the Interior of Turkey, and the PKK) deny that such a crash took place. However, the allegations do support prior suspicions of active drug smuggling by all several groups and individuals in the region.

APPENDIX B: NOTES ON LANGUAGE AND TRANSLITERATIONS

Any research on the Kurdish people is fraught with problems of spelling names and places, or in some cases, the use of words which do not transliterate well into English. I have followed a model here set out by Robert Olson in The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheik Said Rebellion, 1880-1925. Olson's research provided the best model as he used British Air Ministry records as the basis for establishing events, dates, names and places in his study time-period. In most cases, names and places were already transliterated into English by the Air Ministry. My chronology of current events is a compilation of sources, the most accurate being from 'Update' notes in military journals. They too, have already been translated into English.

The complexity of the transliteration problems encountered in this thesis are summed up in the following manner:

i) The time-period studied transcends the use of several different basic transliteration codes. In particular, the Turkish Language Law of 1928 mandated Latin characters for the Turkish alphabet. Spellings before 1928 have been transliterated as they appeared in documents and texts at the time they were written. Spellings after that time "do not conform to Turkish orthography if the meaning of the word, place, or name would be better understood or more in uniformity with Arab, Farsi, Kurdish (three written versions), or Ottoman if rendered differently or, as in the appendixes, given as written in the documents".¹

ii) Some works cited have been multi-transliterated, effectively

¹ Olson, Robert (1989), The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1995, xiii.

limiting their content. Given the increasing amount of research on the Kurds by diaspora members (especially in The Netherlands and Germany), some work has been transliterated from Kurdish, to Farsi, to German, and then into English. If this has occurred, it is noted in this thesis.

iii) Three principal dialects of Kurdish exist in written form, though several others (notably Zaza) are now emerging. As a result, histories within Kurdish itself can vary. An attempt has been made to rectify this problem by verifying accounts through official documents, though these documents themselves are subject to bias (especially state documents of Turkey, Iran and Iraq).

iv) The transliteration of Arabic has followed the Library of Congress system, though this has changed through time. Moreover, 'official' documents from post-Shah Iran have refused to adhere to the Library of Congress system when names and places are translated into English. In cases such as these, I have used the spellings found in English texts.

v) Written, verbal, and e-mail correspondence for this thesis has been conducted in English. Given that the majority of those interviewed use English as their second language, there has been a possibility of misunderstandings. If it was sensed that a misunderstanding had occurred, questions were rephrased and re-asked.

I have used a number of people to verify or translate material originally published in Turkish. As the bulk of the research in this thesis covers the Kurds inside Turkey, their assistance has been invaluable. I have also been assisted by two individuals of Kurdish-Turkish origin who have asked not to be named in this thesis. Their language skills cover two of the principal Kurdish languages (Kurmanji or Kirmanji, and Kurdi), and they have done their best with Sorani. All of those involved adhered to modern Turkish or Kurdish transliterations. Significantly, and again in keeping with the model set out by Robert Olson, some of

the basic pronunciations are:

- i) The Turkish letters *ö* and *ü* are identical in pronunciation to their counterparts in German.
- ii) The Turkish *i* is pronounced like "sit" in English. ²
- iii) There is an un-dotted *i* in Turkish which is pronounced like the *u* in "gum" in English. ³
- iv) The *ç* in Turkish is pronounced like the *ch* in "channel" in English. ⁴
- v) The *s* in Turkish is pronounced like the *sh* in "shall" in English. ⁵
- vi) In Turkish, Ottoman, Arabic and Farsi, the letters *d* and *b* are pronounced as *t* and *p* respectively – only when at the end of words.
- vii) The *c* in Turkish is pronounced like the *j* in "jail" in English.
- viii) There is a *g* in Turkish that does not correspond well into English translations. Olson suggests that the *g* "... has the effect of lengthening the proceeding vowel and sometimes obviates the need to pronounce the following consonants...". ⁶ However, this is just a generalization and often the *g* indicates the pronunciation of both a *g* sound in English, flowing into an *h* sound (as in "hat") This does not really have an English equivalent. So, to use Olson's example, the Turkish word *aga* (large landowner) could only be spelled phonetically in English as 'aagh'. ⁷

² R. Olson, op.cit., xiii

³ ibid., xiii

⁴ ibid., xiii

⁵ ibid., xiii

⁶ ibid., xiii

⁷ As verified by Cem Deveci

It should also be noted, that several publications come with their own translations, and they most often give the term in original language followed by the English translation in brackets. I have used the same system here, and have relied on their translations.

Lastly, there are a few instances whereby the same author's name appears spelled differently in publications that have used different transliteration methods. In cases such as this, I use the spelling as it appears in the published material to which I refer, followed by the alternate spelling in brackets. So for example, when referring to the article in The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview, you will see Fershtech (Farideh) Koochi-Kamali, but when making reference to his work in Hamah, you will see Farideh (Fershtech) Koochi-Kamali.