

**Racialization in Turkey and the exclusion of Kurdish identity**

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**Introduction:**

The racialization of Kurdish identity is an enduring social feature as there continues to be anti-Kurdish discourse across the Middle East. Turkey's treatment of its Kurdish citizens has been under much speculation since the 1920's as its popular discourse presents Turks as superior and anyone non-Turkish inferior, exposing its members to racial ideology. The Kurds have become a racialized group as republican modernisers defined Kurdish characteristics as inferior to 'white Turks' (Ergin, 2014). Therefore the Kurdish question in Turkey is an important one. The original treatment of the Kurds was that of assimilation techniques, previously presented as 'mountain Turks' from nationalist discourse. Turkey's attempts to make Kurds Turkish involved the denial of Kurdish language, the dismissal of Kurdish names, and the rejection of cultural expressions of Kurdish identity. Nevertheless these vigorous attempts of assimilation have been challenged. Thus this paper makes two indispensable claims. Firstly, Turkey's 'assimilative' techniques are problematic. Assimilation can be defined as "integrating (people, ideas or culture) into a wider society" (Oxford University Press, 2015). However, Herper (2007) states that Turkey's practices of assimilation are forced as they have served to institutionally marginalise Kurdish ethnicity and culture by favouring Turkish identity as the norm. To go beyond this the Kurdish identity has been excluded not assimilated. The second claim is that the processes of globalisation and nationalism, such as, the rise of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), pressures from the European Union, Human Rights organisations and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have exposed Kurds to their previous years of oppression meaning that the fight for self-determination will continue until they are accepted as an independent ethnic group by the Turkish state.

To highlight these claims this paper will address four dimensions. Firstly, the construction of race and racism in Turkey from the 1920's will be explored when the first president of the republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was in power, to allow greater understanding towards the racialization in Turkey today and the lasting exclusionary effects this had on Kurdish identity. Secondly, state violence and conflict in Turkey will be addressed to emphasise how the denial of Kurdish culture admitted by the Turkish republic has created an ongoing Turkish-Kurdish conflict; moreover, it has recognised Kurds as separate from Turkish ethnicity and is sparking intervention from global organisations and human rights groups in favour of Kurdish autonomy. Thirdly, the treatment of Kurdish women will be discussed to expose the exclusion of Kurdish women compared to Turkish women and underline the implications of the racialization of Kurdish identity. Finally, the current position of nationalism and racialization in Turkey today will be examined to indicate the changes of the treatment of Kurds and the future prospects of self-determination and independence. To conclude, the four dimensions will be reflected on to argue that the Kurdish identity has been excluded rather than assimilated, however, positive globalising effects are giving rise to Kurdish people as an independent ethnic group and encouraging Kurds to internalise racial discourse and express their own identity.

**The construction of race and racism in Turkey:**

During the 1920's to 1930's Turkey was influenced by Western and European scientific racism. Mustafa Kemal wanted to achieve Western and European standards and throughout his time pushed Turkey's determination towards nation building and gave rise to scientific discourse

for the purposes of state building and as a response to radical westernisation (Essenstat, 2005). However, the use of scientific discourse in Turkey provided a shift from previous exclusionary techniques that have been present throughout history, including, race hierarchies of inferiority and superiority, inegalitarian forms of racial categorisation and Nazi ideology and alternatively stressed 'inclusionary' methods (Law, 2012). Although these adopted methods were not designed to exclude its members and were initially used as inclusionary discourse, consequently they became tools of destructive assimilationist methods (Essenstat, 2005).

*"Both nationalism and racial theory take as their starting point the existence of distinct "peoples" with a common history and, presumably, a common destiny. Fully integrated- and thus popular relationship between state and society and racial theory representing the Enlightenment's efforts to create rational systematic categories to describe the world and the people in it" (Essenstat, 2005, p. 240).*

In 1923 the formation of a new nation state began. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries created pressures towards the republic of Turkey to introduce a new ideology and create a national identity (Maksubyen, 2005). As highlighted by Essenstat these pressures towards a united single nation of a common destiny explicitly indicate developed racial discourse amongst the scientific elite. For example, the pressures presented by Mustafa Kemal to make Turkey European by breaking from its Ottoman and Islamic past and signalling establishments with western institutions and a military based secularised modernising ideology (Gokay, 2014). Therefore the extent to how 'inclusive' Turkey is towards its citizens can be questioned as contradictions lie within its racial discourse.

Despite the official discourse of Turkish nationalism that emphasises an inclusive perception of national affiliation under the power and control of Kemalism, the evidence suggests that narrow implications of criteria apply as those who are not 'pure' Turkish have been excluded not included (Maksubyen, 2005). To support this, Dismorr (2008) claims "the Turks only friend is another Turk" is often quoted in Turkey which highlights the deep ongoing uncertainty and distrust towards other ethnic groups and foreigners amongst the Turkish population. Additionally, this highlights xenophobia is present in Turkey. However, to further understand why some Turkish people have adopted this elitist thinking it is important to note that when Turkey embraced aspects of westernised and European methods of racialization to strengthen Turkish nationalist discourse and reinforce state legitimacy, it effectively provided an identification of Turkish elitism; making certain members feel superior over their own people and remain 'enlightened natives' (Gokay, 2014).

This can be supported by Essenstat's (2005) examination of racialization and the construction of 'race' in Turkey as race discourse proposed amongst the political elites has been described as being 'messy' political ideology as adopting race thinking divides people into scientifically observable and biological 'types', rather than being inclusive for its people. For example, the Kemalist conceptions towards nationalism and national identity developed a construction of the 'Turkish race' that commanded ownership of the nation and national identity, in effect becoming exclusionary discourse (Law, 2014). To exemplify the impact of the construction 'Turkish race', Justice Minister Mahmut Esat Bozkurt from 1924 to 1930 argued "the master of this country is the Turk. Those who are not genuine Turks can have only one right in the Turkish fatherland and that is to be a servant, to be a slave" (*Hakimiyet-i Milliye* [National Sovereignty Newspaper], 1930, quoted in Maksudyen, 2005, p.313). Thus, these forms of political rhetoric and race science discourse has guided racism and discrimination towards those not perceived as genuine Turks and in effect scientifically positioning the 'Turkish race' as differentiated from other groups, including, Jews, Kurds, Greeks, Armenians and other 'observable' groups (Law, 2014).

Furthermore, as a form of educational ideology children growing up in Turkey are taught to memorize the quote of Atatürk's '1927 address to the youth' which states "the noble Turkish blood in your veins" (Gokay, 2014). This constructs an understanding of 'pure Turkishness' which fails to be inclusive towards its non-Muslim, Kurdish and Syrian populations (Gokay,

2014). As has been previously explained, regarding aspects of Turkish history, it is clear that Turkey has a strong sense of national identity. Despite Turkey being at the centre of migration and trading due to the location and bridge between continents, resulting in large-scale population movements of citizens across different countries, Turkish nationalism rejects the idea of multiculturalism regardless of its diverse range of ethnic groups (ECRI, 1999). Moreover, Turkey remains to hold a strong and withstanding sense of indivisibility and integrity of the nation and towards the state.

Referring back to the construction of race and the influence of race science in Turkey, one of the explanations lies with the positioning of Turks within Western (white) civilisation, therefore, anyone not suited to this form of categorisation of racial purity was perceived to be inferior to the Turk and regarded as a 'mongrel' (Law, 2014). This can provide some explanation towards why certain 'races' living in Turkey are treated with hostility and racist abuse. However, what is questionable is the focus of assimilation in Turkey. A dominant argument in Turkey is that its nation is united as one, and anyone who tries to separate themselves from the 'Turkish race' can be faced with arrest, exclusion and even the death penalty (Dismorr, 2008). Therefore, although Turkey is known to have adopted forms of 'inclusionary' methods of racial discourse, in reality its people have been aggressively assimilated, but even more so, it has become a way of excluding certain groups; to emphasise this point state violence and racial conflict between Turkish and Kurdish nationalists will be discussed.

#### **State violence and racial conflict:**

The Kurds are Indo-European people that immigrated to the Middle East and have a geo-cultural religion referred to as Kurdistan. Although the Kurds are the fourth-largest ethnic group in the Middle East they still remain stateless regardless of the consistent fight for autonomy in Turkey and other neighbouring countries, including Iraq, Iran and Syria (BBC News, 2014). According to Neriah (2012) 55% of the world's Kurds live in Turkey with as many as 25 million Kurds and the Turkish-Kurdish conflicts are most frequent and disrupting in Turkey compared to other Middle Eastern countries. This Turkish-Kurdish conflict has caused an international division in Turkish society which arose from the Kurdish question during the republican period in response to aggressive assimilation towards Kurdish minorities, the dominance of Turkish culture and identity and the dismissal of Kurdish identity (Icduygu, 1999).

As a reaction to the denial of Kurdish culture and independence, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) have been resisting the state with armed forces since 1984 which remains to be a dominant issue of Turkish Kurd politics today (Ciment, 1996). This party is just one of the ways Kurds have been demanding their independence in Turkey, operating from a Marxist-Leninist stance in the fight for national self-determination. Despite previous attempts to revolt against Turkish nationalism, the PKK is significant in identifying the extreme conflicts between Turks and Kurds as there have been mass killings of up to 40,000 people resulting from the wars between the two opposing groups (Anderson, 2009). Due to the growth and popularity of the PKK and the continual destruction the conflicts have caused, many states and organisations have defined the PKK as a terrorist organisation, including the United States, United Nations, NATO, and the EU (Neriah, 2012). As a result, the PKK have posed many fears on the Turkish state as the sudden achievement and popularity in mobilising large numbers of Kurds to join the party in the 1980's and 1990's has identified the struggles the Turkish republican has faced in its denial of the Kurdish identity, language and culture; furthermore it highlights the limitations of discourses of ethnicity (Roy, 2011).

Human Rights Watch (2014) claim that the enduring hostility between the Turkish military and the PKK continue to provide further human rights issues in Turkey. Some documented instances involve the actions of the Turkish military forces towards Kurdish citizens perceived to be part of PKK membership, that include, the destroying of houses and equipment to prevent the victims from returning, resulting in approximately 300 Kurdish villages being destroyed and displacing over 378,000 people (Neriah, 2012). Additionally, new waves of political and racial violence have involved death squads against pro-Kurdish parties as those

that openly advocate Kurdish rights, self-determination and culture are threatening the “territorial integrity” of the Turkish nation; these death squads killing hundreds of Kurdish protesters are believed to be connected with Turkey’s internal security forces (Ciment, 1996). Due to the devastating suffering endured by both Kurds and Turks at the hands of the PKK and Turkish military responses these Turkish-Kurdish conflicts have now expanded to community-level tensions (Ergin, 2014). For example, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2010) note there have been a wide range of attacks directed at Kurds living in non-Kurdish populated cities in the West of Turkey and urge Turkish authorities to intensify their efforts when combating racial violence to protect its members from racial attacks. Therefore, clear violations of the Kurds human rights are being breached in the fight for redemption, separation and independence.

During the 1990’s globalising forces aggravated the clear social inequalities in Turkey (Yegan, 2006). The growing popularities of the PKK and Kurdish resistance provided Kurds with the opportunities to break from mainstream nationalism that had been denied for decades. Although the Turkish-Kurdish conflicts are extremely damaging there have been numerous improvements in relation to the Kurds being granted greater cultural rights (Dismorr, 2008). However, extreme Turkish nationalists are now claiming that ‘Kurds are of another, inferior and incurable descent’ and maintain a language of nationalism and denial of culture by stating ‘Kurds are the Turks that have forgotten their culture’, revealing the continuous attempts of assimilation and the harsh reality of exclusion (Yegan, 2006, p.136-137).

Although the continuous battle for equality, dignity and rights has resulted in some movements of positive change for the Kurds across the Middle East, the battle for self-determination is far from over. To illuminate this, a representative from Turkey called Aaron Baker at the ‘Great Lakes Invitational Conference Association’ (2014) was asked the vital question of *‘Kurdistan becoming an independent nation apart from existing states’*. In response Baker was adamant that an “independent Kurdistan will receive no support from Turkey, nor likely from other neighbouring states” (GLICA, 2014). Additionally he appeared to be hostile towards Kurdish people, especially in relation to the PKK as he claimed “the blood of over 40,000 civilians is on their hands”. This is a clear indication of the deep-rooted fear and anger the Turkish state has towards Kurdish ethno-nationalism, separatists and protestors which highlight the ongoing racial and political frustrations between Turks and Kurds; as Turkey retains control over aggressive assimilation of the Kurdish identity and is excluding members in its wake. The fight for independence will continue its long history as the influence of the early Turkish republican’s idealism of ‘pure’ Turkish citizens and the Kurdish fight for autonomy has resulted in a clash between Turkish and Kurdish nationalists that is still rife today. To further conceptualise the central argument of the exclusion of Kurdish identity, racism and gender will be explored in relation to the treatment of Kurdish women living in Turkey.

### **Growing up a Kurdish woman in Turkey:**

The marginalisation and estrangement of Kurdish women draws back to the impacts of the Kemalist secularising and modernising republican reforms. For example, Yüksel (2006) argues that this is due to two dimensions of Kemalist policies; (1) the dismantling of Kurdish identity and (2) the emancipation of ‘Turkish’ women (p.777). As a result of these dimensions Kurdish women have become doubly marginalised compared to Turkish women as their ethnic identity has been excluded and they are also extremely disadvantaged.

Dismorr (2008) claims women’s organisations in Turkey have expressed many stories of discrimination and violent experiences, some of which have resulted in deaths. Additionally, the Turkish government has attempted to intimidate and punish separatists by involving the use of rape as a weapon of control and authority using counter-insurgency measures on innocent Kurdish women (Hilton 2002, cited in Argue, 2007); Thus the hope in joining the EU is becoming increasingly desired amongst the Kurdish population as greater human rights protection would be implemented to protect Kurdish people and in particular the treatment of women (Dismorr, 2008).

In 1995 14 locations of rural poor areas in Kurdish regions were targeted by the Turkish state and established foundations called CATOM (Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri) that introduced support for literacy rates of women, seminars on children's healthcare and information on birth controls (Kandiyoti, 1997; Kaymakamliđi, 2014). However, CATOM was subjected to much criticism from Kurdish female journalists, including Roza Junin and Jin u Jiyam who argued the main purpose of the foundations was to maintain control over the Kurdish population and assimilate Kurdish women rather than help them (Kandiyoti, 1997). As in most cases Kurds view large families as the ideal there has been pressures from Turkish government to reduce large influxes of Kurdish people which exemplifies the oppression of women and Kurdish identity (Argue, 2007). As previously discussed, the extent to how 'assimilative' Turkish methods are in relation to the treatment of Kurdish people is questionable as pressures to reduce population size are methods of exclusion rather than assimilation.

Another factor in the exclusion of Kurdish identity, predominantly for working-class women is the access to education, particularly access to Turkish language. As Turkish-Kurdish intermarriage is less common than Kurdish-Kurdish marriage it has resulted in Kurdish women having less access to the Turkish language, affecting their position in Turkish society (Smits et al, 2003). Consequently there are widespread differences between Kurdish women and Turkish women, especially working class Kurdish women as Kurdish women with no access to education (which is predominantly Turkish unless private tuition of Kurdish education is affordable) are unable to learn Turkish (Smits et al, 2003). Henceforth, working-class women are excluded from opportunities in Turkey as the Kurdish language remains to be disregarded and expressions of identity forbidden. Furthermore, access to education and language deprivation is consequential of young girls and women, resulting in high rates of suicide due to continuous cultural and patriarchal oppression (Kurdish Human Rights Project, 2007). Additionally, the access to healthcare is also scarcely available for Kurdish women (Adlim, 2005). Adlim (2005) argues the predominant reason working-class Kurdish women have less access to healthcare is a consequence of lingual and cultural discrimination. This supports Smith's (2003) research on how language barriers have displaced Kurdish women from opportunities and stresses the importance of an indiscriminative implementation of human rights in Turkey's political, social and economic structures.

The damaging outcome of the violence between the Turkish military and the PKK have had the most impact on working-class Kurdish women, especially the internally displaced person (IDP). Not only have large numbers of women been forced from their homes but they are also subject to high levels of state violence, rape, domestic abuse and suicide rates (Kurdish Human Rights Project, 2007). Suicide rates amongst Kurdish women is exceptionally high compared to Turkish women and men and the multiple root causes include living in a patriarchal society and family pressures; such as honour killings, forced marriage and polygamy; state violence and conflict situations; domestic violence; lack of access to political processes; language barriers and lack of education; lack of access to health and psychological care; and economic problems (Kurdish Human Rights Project, 2007). Although all women in Turkey are viewed as second class citizens compared to men, Kurdish women are suffering more so as a consequence of racialization.

The position of Kurdish women is exceptionally vulnerable as women have extreme subordinate positions compared to men and Turkish citizens (Dismorr, 2008). Although, in recent years some effects of globalisation have brought about positive changes in Turkey, for example, the increase of NGO-ization of feminism to empower women and provide protection from oppression (Diner et al, 2010). These NGO projects have been particularly beneficial for Kurdish women as they empower them by providing knowledge of human rights, reproductive health, childcare support and aim to increase their participation within the market economy (Diner et al, 2010). Therefore, these projects have been successful in reinforcing the Kurdish identity by making women believe that they are not powerless and have the right to express their culture, politics and identity. While the fight for self-determination is far from over amongst the Kurdish community and especially for vulnerable women living in poverty, some of the

evidence presented suggests that the general well-being of Kurdish people is improving and will continue to improve. To elaborate this current position of nationalism and the racialization of the Kurdish identity will be explored in more detail to address the Kurdish question today.

### **Current position of nationalism and racialization in Turkey today:**

“The dividing line between Turks and Kurdish nationalists is a well-known division in Turkish society” (Dismorr, 2008, p.33). As previously stated, the assimilating efforts pushed by the elites to accentuate the empires ‘Turkishness’ has resulted in Kurdish people being treated as uncivilized ‘others’ (Yeğan, 2007). Ergin (2014) argues that “Kurdish identity is being exposed to racialization” (p.324). The processes of racialization draws attention to the ways groups are being defined as races and made meaningful in the context of unequal power relations with racial meanings (Garner, 2009). In the case of the Kurds they are often defined by their racial characteristics as inferior to ‘white Turks’ (Ergin, 2014). However, the processes of racialization can be contradictory as it is almost impossible to distinguish between Kurds and Turks on the basis of their physical characteristics. Therefore, other ways of identifying the ‘other’ take place, including forms of dress and accents (Sezign and wall, 2005, p.78 cited in Ergin, 2014). Despite the continuous language of hate directed towards Kurdish people, Turkish nationalism spawns from possibility that *Kurds could become Turkish* in the hope of making Kurdish people ‘future-Turks’ (Yeğan, 2007). Regardless of the vigorous attempts carried out by the Turkish state to assimilate the Kurds, the prominence the of Kurdish nationalism (PKK), the involvement of human rights organisations and the pressures of the EU to solve the Kurdish issue have resulted in an abandonment of the ‘future-Turk’ ideal in recent years (İçduygu et al, 2010; HRW.org, 2014; Yeğen, 2007).

Over the years Turkey has not granted Kurds the same cultural rights as other groups such as Jews and Christians, additionally, if Kurdish people express their identity they are “veiled attempts to break up the state” (The Jerusalem Report 8 May, 2000 cited in UNHCR, 2001). Moreover, Turkish authorities “continue to take harsh measures against those Kurds who are seen to advocate separatism” and “frequently crackdown on Kurdish activists” (Washington Report June, 2000 cited in UNHCR, 2001). Turkey has been described by Heper as adopting civic nationalism by which people can become a ‘real’ Turk by accepting the values, ideals and attitudes of ethnic Turks (Heper, 2007, p.184, cited in Tezcür, 2009). However, these nationalist ideals have resulted in coercive assimilationist practices, including the banishment of the Kurdish speaking language, discrimination of Kurdish workers, the refusal to allow Kurdish children to have Kurdish names and the widespread poverty amongst the Kurdish population (Bulut, 2013). To go beyond this, Bulut (2013) argues that the exclusions against the Kurdish peoples continue to date back to the formation of the Turkish republic, “whose fundamental ideology is based on the denial and annihilation of Kurds” rather than assimilative techniques.

The Turkish constitution states that it “does not recognise ethnic groups as national, racial or ethnic minorities” (Country Reports, 2004 cited in UNHCR, 2005). Therefore, the ability to express forms of identity and distinctiveness can leave Kurdish people being subject to arrest, torture and in some cases the death penalty has be executed to ‘separatists’ expressing their culture . Max Weber (1978) defines ethnicity as:

*“Human groups that entertain a belief in a common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonisation and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists”* (Cited in Law, 2010, p.63).

Thus to deny the Kurds of their ethnicity illuminates how their identity has been excluded under the law of the Turkish state. However, the denial of Kurdish people expressing ethnicity and popular anti-Kurdish discourse has self-constructed Kurds as a particular racial group; relating back to the cultural formations of inferiority (the Kurds) and superiority (the Turks) rather than making Kurdish people ‘future Turks’ it has resulted in a repression of Kurdish culture (Ergin, 2014).

Although there continues to be an ongoing rift between nationalist Turks and Kurds evidence suggests that there has been recent improvements in relation to the fundamental freedoms, greater tolerance of the Kurdish language and the expression of Kurdish culture in Turkey (UNHCR, 2005). One of the reasons Turkey has improved its treatment of the Kurdish people is due to its interests in joining the EU. The EU has put pressures on Turkey to improve their human rights conditions before they can be considered a candidate for EU membership (Ergil, 2000). If Turkey was to join the EU the prospects of Kurdish life would be greater and less impoverished (Dismorr, 2008) which indicates the clear suppression Kurds are still suffering whilst living in Turkey today, despite the gradual changes.

The continuous fight for autonomy and self-rule amongst the Kurdish populations against the 'homogenous Turkish nation' to separate themselves and express their cultural identity is still apparent today (Altunişk, 2005). The 70-year-long history of cultural suppression of the Kurdish identity has created serious tensions between Kurdish and Turkish nationalists. Only until 1991 the lifting of the ban to speak Kurdish has been implemented. However there still remains to be many restrictions on this law with limited broadcasting in the media, education of Kurdish language remains to be taught as an existence of the Turks, and displaying Kurdish identity can still result in imprisonment, continuing the power of Turkish nationalist indoctrination (Ciment, 1996). Additionally, the European Commission Against Racism (ECRI) claim that Kurds are continually "subject to prejudice and stereotyping" (ECRI, 2005 cited in UNHCR, 2005) and Human Rights Watch (2015) claim that the government are failing to uphold human rights and "great obstacles remain with securing justice for victims of abuses by police, military, and state officials". These interventions of human right organisations are exposing the realities of Kurdish exclusion at the hands of a nationalist state, what will be of the Kurdish identity 20 years from now is unknown. However, the positive impacts of globalising forces in making Kurdish people aware of their suppression continues to make the prospects of a Kurdish identity more apparent.

### **Conclusion:**

The dominance of nationalism and influence of Kemalist perceptions of 'pure Turkishness' has left both the Kurds and Turks in a contradictory position. The racial discourse of the 1920's has served to exclude the Kurdish population rather than normatively welcome them as having equal rights to their so called Turkish brothers and sisters. Additionally, the Kurdish conflict in opposition to aggressive assimilation has now brought attention to the ongoing suppression of Kurdish culture and the mistreatment of the Kurds as a population, therefore leaving Kurds with two options: (1) To allow assimilation to persist or (2) revolt against the cohesive methods and exclusion. However the continuing racial conflicts between the opposing Turks and Kurds are creating situations of deep-rooted hate, further isolating Kurds from opportunities, displacing families and resulting in extreme poverty and suicide rates. Although much has changed since the 1920's similar racial discourse still persists today as can be seen in the notions of inferior Kurds and superior Turks. Therefore, the "Kurdish identity is being exposed to racialization" (Ergin, 2014, p.324). By addressing the differences between Turkish and Kurdish women the racialization process is evident. Regardless of the Turkish states attempts of assimilation Kurdish women have fewer opportunities than Turkish women in all fields; what is more, they have little voice, thus highlighting the processes of racialization and hierarchy. Despite widespread devastation and damage caused by the Turkish-Kurdish conflict this historical event has been crucial in shaping the improvement and hope for Kurds to be accepted as an independent ethnic group in future years to come. As the PKK are now recognised by global organisations as terrorists much attention has been directed at Turkey and its treatment of Kurdish citizens. Additionally, there have been pressures from the EU and Human Rights Organisations to improve the standards and conditions of the Kurds and NGO-ization have enforced greater protection and rights to Kurds suffering from oppression. Thus what will be of the Kurds 20 years from now must be questioned. If things continue to improve Turkey may have little choice but to announce Kurdish as an independent ethnic group with the right of self-determination. Furthermore, the internalisation of racialization amongst the

Kurdish community will seek to expand thereby placing greater pressures on Turkish government to recognise them as a racial group separate from 'Turkishness', in an ideal situation, granting them the right to express themselves culturally and independently. "Once Kurds are seen *like* the other non-Muslims of the country, perceiving Kurds as the *other* of Turkish nationalism may not be too far away" (Yeğan, 2006, p.143). Turkey needs to recognise the voices of the Kurds to be an inclusive state. Moreover, with the interventions and pressures from global organisations it may not be long until the Kurds break from the homogenous Turkish nation; this is something to watch in years to come.



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