

**THE COMPARISON BETWEEN KOSOVO QUESTION AND
TURKEY'S SOUTHEASTERN QUESTION**

144741

A Master's Thesis

by

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Ankara
August 2004**

To My Family



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TURKEY'S SOUTHEASTERN QUESTION**

**The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University**

by

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of**

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

in

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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August 2004

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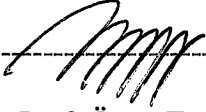
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ABSTRACT

THE COMPARISON BETWEEN KOSOVO QUESTION AND TURKEY'S SOUTHEASTERN QUESTION

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August 2004

NATO Operation against Serbs in 1999 caused anxiety among some politicians and academicians in Turkey. They thought that Kosovo would set a precedent for future interventions and Turkey would share same fate with Serbia. This thesis will analyze both Kosovo and Southeastern Questions and explain the futility of Turkey's fears. Each event has its own features and it should be evaluated within its own context. That's why; it is not accurate to establish links between Kosovo Question and Turkey's Southeastern Question. Kosovo Question is an ethnic-religious conflict between Serbs and Albanians, but Southeastern Question is mainly a security problem. The realities of Turkey and its socio-economic and political structure of Turkey are so different from former Yugoslavia. For that reason, Turkey should get rid of its inappropriate worries about the Southeastern Question that limit its maneuver ability in international arena.

Keywords: Kosovo Question, Southeastern Question, inter-ethnic conflict, PKK, Serbia.

ÖZET

KOSOVA SORUNU'YLA TÜRKİYE'NİN GÜNEYDOĞU SORUNU'NUN

KARŞILAŞTIRMASI

BAŞTÜRK, UĞUR

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Ağustos 2004

NATO'nun 1999 yılında Sırlara karşı operasyonu bazı politikacılar ve akademisyenler arasında endişelere sebep olmuştu. Kosova'nın ilerisi için bir örnek olabileceğini ve Türkiye'nde Sırbistan'la aynı ortak kaderi paylaşabileceğini düşünüyorlardı. Bu tez Kosova ve Güneydoğu Sorunu'nu analiz edecek ve Türkiye'nin korkularının yersiz olduğunu anlatacak. Her olayın kendine has özellikleri vardır ve kendi şartları içinde değerlendirilmelidir. Bu yüzden Kosova Sorunu'yla Güneydoğu Sorunu arasında bağlantı kurmak doğru değil. Kosova Sorunu, Sırlarla Arnavutlar arasındaki bir dini-etnik çatışmadır, fakat Güneydoğu Sorunu ise sosyo-ekonomik bir problemdir. Türkiye'nin gerçekleri ve sosyo-ekonomik ve politik yapısı Yugoslavya'dan çok farklı. Bu sebeple, Türkiye uluslararası arenada hareket kabiliyetini sınırlandıran endişelerinden kurtulmalı ve Güneydoğu Sorunu'nun esaslarını diğer devletlere de anlatmalı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kosova Sorunu, Güneydoğu Sorunu, Etnik Çatışma, PKK, Sırbistan

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UN	United Nations
LDA	Democratic League of Kosovo
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
CPY	Communist Party of Yugoslavia
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
PKK	Kurdish Workers' Party
KADEK	Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress
HADEP	People's Democracy Party
ERNK	Kurdistan National Liberation Front
ARGK	Kurdistan Popular Liberation Army
GAP	Southeastern Anatolian Project
DPT	State Planning Organization
KİT	State's Economic Enterprise
TOBB	Association of the Chambers of Commerce of Turkey
HEP	People's Labor Party
DEP	The Democracy Party
SHP	Social Democratic Populist Party
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION:

After the unsuccessful Rambouillet Talks and the subsequent international attempts, in February-March 1999, long-awaited NATO Bombing Operation against Serbian forces to stop human rights violations and ethnic cleansing against Kosovo Albanians and to provide the return of more than 850,000 displaced Kosovo Albanians began (Judah, 2000: 260). For the first time in its history, NATO conducted an operation without direct or even ambiguous UN Security Council jurisdiction. This was a drastic departure from one of the main principles of Westphalian system, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states¹.

Despite Serb claims that Kosovo was the internal affair of then Yugoslavia, acts of genocide and massive human rights violations against Kosovo Albanians justified the intervention to stop morally unacceptable situation². This new type of intervention caused tension among some countries, even in Turkey, because many feared that Kosovo would set a precedent for future interventions.

¹ Modern international relations theory has traditionally designated the peace of Westphalia in 1648 as the birth of the contemporary states-system, which has dominated world politics during the past few centuries.

² For more information about Humanitarian Intervention see Aristotle Tziampiris." Progress or Return? Collective Security, Humanitarian Intervention and the Kosovo Conflict" In *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*.2 (3): 95-114.

In an interview with the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the USA on CNN, interviewer established links between Kosovo question and Turkey's Southeastern/Kurdish question and asked him why NATO bombed Serbs but not the Turks. The interviewee answered the question with only one sentence, "They're different things." At that time, I decided to focus on these issues and explain why and whether these two matters are really different.

Turkey should get rid of needless fear that there is an inter-ethnic conflict in Turkey, which prevents Turkey from playing the more active role in international arena in support of Turkish interests in the Balkans, Caucasus or Middle East and explain to the world the real nature of the problem.

Kosovo represents one of the most difficult national issues of the Balkans. Even some observers call it as the Palestine of the Balkans (Mertus, 1999: 11). That's why, Kosovo question cannot be reduced to neither the policies of Milosevic nor the death of Tito. These may have only accelerated and deepened the problem. We have to examine all aspects of the Kosovo issue, in historical, socio-economic and political terms to grasp the essence of the problem. A deeper study needs to reveal its extreme complexity. Chapter II of the dissertation is dedicated to this issue.

The following chapter deals with Turkey's Southeastern Question. It follows the same procedure in working on the matter. In addition to security aspect of the problem, often-neglected social, economic, political dimensions that have carried different weight at different times are discussed in the Chapter III of the dissertation.

It is true that there is a conflict in Turkey like Kosovo, but in Turkey, this conflict occurred between PKK members and the state security forces, not between Kurdish and Turkish people. Public surveys, election results and the degree of social

relations in Turkey support this assumption. The problem is mainly socio-economic which contains social, economic, international and security dimensions.

On the other hand, in Kosovo, there is a civil war between Serbian and Albanian communities. Both Serbian and Albanian sides do not deny that there is an inter-ethnic strife in Kosovo.

Both events must be considered in association with their peculiarities that relate to their own historical, social, economic and political contexts. In this part, we can find an answer to why two different ethnic groups within a society fought each other in Kosovo, but not in Turkey and which characteristics of Turkey prevented such a conflict between Turks and Kurds. The understanding of these features would make it easier for future policies and implementations not only for Turkey but also for other countries, which contain different ethnic groups. These also establish the main dissimilarities between Southeastern and Kosovo question. These issues are discussed in Chapter IV.

Chapter V is reserved for my conclusions regarding all the issues and future proposals for peaceful solution to Southeastern and Kosovo Questions.

In this dissertation, the term Albanians refers to Albanians in Kosovo, thus distinguishing them from Albanians from Albania. In the same way, the term Kurds refer to Kurds in Turkey. Kurds in Iraq or in Syria, their relations with the other ethnic groups in those countries are not the subject of this study. The Kurdish Questions in Iraq or Syria and its comparison with other ethnic conflicts like in Kosovo might be another topic for the conduct of a future research.

CHAPTER II:

KOSOVO QUESTION:

Kosovo problem, especially after it turned into a military conflict in 1998, became an open regional and international issue. Kosovo represents one of the most difficult natural issues of the Balkans. This difficulty stems largely from the attribution of mythical values to Kosovo by both the Serbs and Albanians.

2.1 Origins of the Kosovo Question:

The debate between the Serbs and the Albanians begins with the question of “who came first, who are the native inhabitants of Kosovo”. The Serbs say that they arrived in Kosovo in the 6th and 7th centuries as part of Slavic migration in the Balkans and that the Albanians came later. They established the Nemanjic state there in the 12th century of which Kosovo became the center of this state. King Stephan (later named as St.Sava), Nemanjic’s brother, founded the Serbian Orthodox Church and built churches and monasteries in the region (Bogdanovic, 1995: 4). That’s why, the Serbs regularly use the term ”Metohija”, meaning church property, together with Kosovo to emphasize on the religious identity of Kosovo. Some Serbs even claim

that many people who think that they are Albanian today are in fact “Albanised Serbs (Mertus, 1999: 10).

Albanians, on the other hand, trace their roots in Kosovo to the Illyrians who settled the area around 1000 BC and accept Kosovo as the primitive homeland of the Albanians (Malcolm, 1998: 24). They regarded Kosovo as the symbol of Albanian nationalism. League of Prizren³, which is the milestone of the national awakening of Albanians, came about in Kosovo in 1878.

Both sides lay claim to the same territory with competing or opposing historical arguments. It is out of the scope of this dissertation to decide which side is right. Even the historians could not reach a conclusion. The essence of the problem is, however, that both sides regard Kosovo as the cradle of their national and cultural identity (Vickers, 1998: 2). The Albanian and Serbian myths about Kosovo make the problem more complex, and we cannot expect a radical change in the beliefs of the nations overnight.

It is difficult to understand the roots of Kosovo issue without mentioning to the Ottoman advance in the Balkans and the Battle of Kosovo. One of the most important developments of early Serbian history was the defeat of the Serbs in Kosovo on 28 June 1389. As a result of the Kosovo War, the medieval Serbian Empire crumbled, the road to the inside of the Balkans opened to the Turks and the Ottoman rule which would last until the 20th century started. This event caused deep changes in the political, social, economic and religious life in the Balkans, in general, and in Kosovo in particular. The defeat of the Serbs and the death of the Serbian King Lazar left a deep impact on Serbian nationalism.

³ The League of Prizren was founded primarily to organize political and military opposition to the dismemberment of Albanian-inhabited territory. The League united Albanian nationalists in their demands for administrative and cultural autonomy.

The conversion of Albanians to Islam in large numbers in the 16th and 17th century increased the diversity between the Albanians and Serbs. In addition to ethnic and cultural differences, this time, religion became an added factor that divided the Albanians and Serbs. Moreover, as a part of Muslim community, Albanians gradually became part of the ruling class, not only in Albanian-inhabited areas, but also in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. This consolidated Serbs' association Albanians with Turks (Uzgel, 1998: 206).

The decline of Ottoman power and the infiltration of nationalism into the Balkans changed the status quo, which had lasted more than four centuries in Kosovo. The Serbs were among the first to be influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution and nationalism. With the backing of the Russians, the Serbs gained an autonomous status in 1830. In response to Serb nationalism and Serb expansion at the expense of the Albanians, Albanian nationalism grew against the Serbs. The Albanians knew very well that they were not strong enough to encounter the expansionist plan of the Orthodox Christian peoples of the Balkans, the Serbs, Montenegrins, Bulgarians and Greeks. That's why; the Albanians saw the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire as a protection against the territorial appetite of the other Balkan nations, especially the Serbs and sided with the Ottomans (Juka, 1984: 8-10). This situation strengthened the Serbians' thought about the Albanians that for the Serbs, the Albanians were nothing but the Turks, enemy.

The defeat of the Ottoman armies against the Balkan coalition in the First Balkan War resulted in the occupation of Kosovo by the Serbs and the end of four-century Ottoman authority in the region. The Serbs saw this as a chance to create Greater Serbia and take revenge on the Albanians for their siding with the Ottomans. This led to the burning of Albanian villages and the exodus of large numbers of

Albanians from the region. More importantly, it formed mutual hatred between the Albanians and Serbs, which continued increasingly up to present.

After the Balkan Wars, the political map of the Balkans was reshaped. An independent Albania was created by the London Treaty of 1913, but Kosovo was allocated to Serbia. After the First World War, Serbian government tried to consolidate its control over Kosovo and started its colonization program, which aimed at changing the demographic structure of the region (Vickers, 1998: 105).

Along with the program of colonization, Albanians were also officially encouraged to emigrate to Albania and Turkey. In 1938, an agreement was signed between Yugoslavia and Turkey on the emigration of some 200,000 ethnic Albanians, Turks and Muslims from Kosovo and Macedonia to Turkey, which expressed her willingness to populate the sparsely inhabited areas of Anatolia where Greek deserted⁴. Though, the convention was never implemented officially because of the outbreak of the Second World War, thousands of Albanians still found ways of emigrating to Turkey and Albania in the face of mounting pressures by the Serbs.

In the Second World War, Axis forces, the Germans and Italians occupied Kosovo and Yugoslavia. The Albanians welcomed them and collaborated with them in order not to return to Serbian rule again. Kosovo was attached to Albania. These events changed the balance of power in the region in favor of the Albanians. It was now the Albanians' turn to control the region but it did not last long. With the end of the Second World War and the retreat of German forces, Tito's communist forces captured Kosovo and the region received some degree of autonomous under Serbian Republic (Judah, 2000: 31).

⁴ For more information about the Turkish-Yugoslavia Convention of 1938, see Robert Elsie, 1997. "*Kosovo in The Heart of The Powder Keg*". New York: Columbia University Press: 425-448.

This new situation dissatisfied the Albanians, which expected the unification of Kosovo with Albania. Kosovar Albanians responded to their new position in Socialist Yugoslavia with armed struggle within Kosovo against the new regime. This was the first uprising (named Kaçak) the Kosovars undertook within Socialist Yugoslavia, but it was not the last. In the 1960's, 1980's and 1990's, it continued with different forms. Each time Albanian uprisings were suppressed violently, because, Serbs always regarded the Albanians as traitors and distrustful element of the Yugoslav Federation. This sown the seeds of hatred between Albanians and Serbs.

The situation of Kosovo in the Socialist Yugoslavia should be examined within three periods: first, from 1945 to the resignation of Ranković, vice-president of Yugoslavia, second, from 1966 to the death of Tito and finally, post-Tito period up to now.

In the 1945-1948 period, Tito tried to gain the confidence of the Albanians by opening Albanian schools and by allowing the publication of Albanian newspapers in Albanian language. By doing this, Tito wanted to gain the support of Albania in the creation of his dream, The Balkan Federation consisting of Communist Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria (Vicker, 1998:146), but Tito's break with Stalin and Enver Hoxha's siding with Stalin halted the calm among the Albanians in Kosovo. The suppression and persecution policies carried out by Belgrade regime and especially by the Yugoslav Secret Police, until 1966.

After the removal of Ranković from power in 1966 by Tito as a result of power struggle in Yugoslavia, Yugoslav system evolved from strict centralism to federalism. For Kosovars, this event was a milestone in their campaign for the assertion of their national rights. They gained more autonomy and some cultural

rights but these improvements were far from satisfying the expectations of Albanians. The big demonstrations and student boycotts in Pristina in 1968 were the continual signs of discontent among the Albanians.

Even the 1974 Constitution, which gave Kosovo almost all authority that a republic could have expected, could not be solution to the Kosovo question. In Albanian view, the refusal to give them republican status in 1974 Constitution of Yugoslavia, despite their numerical superiority over other less numerous Slav nations of Yugoslavia such as Montenegrins and Macedonians, which had their own republic within the federation, showed that they remained to some extent second-class citizens in Yugoslavia (Vickers, 1998: 179). Nevertheless, it can be said that despite all problems, between the removal of Ranković and the death of Tito in 1980, the Albanians of Kosovo had better situation in terms of representation and cultural rights than they had in Yugoslavia since the end of Ottoman rule.

In 1980, as some writers said, Tito, the last Yugoslav and the only Yugoslav died. It was not surprising to many observers that the first events erupted in Kosovo in 1981 that started the demise of Yugoslavia. 1981 uprising, which began with economic demands merged into the general inter-ethnic conflict. It was not the first serious opposition in the century, but it was the first occurrence of massive and bloody confrontation between the Albanians and the security forces. For the first time, the Yugoslav army had been deployed. The revolts were suppressed by the Federal authorities, causing several deaths and injuries. The tension between both sides continued during the 1980s increasingly.

While all these were happening, Milosevic came to power in Serbia by using the Kosovo issue to exploit the national feelings among the Serbs and consolidate its power in Belgrade. In 1989, after repressing riots and strikes in Kosovo, the Serbian

National Assembly passed the constitutional amendment, which led to the loss of autonomy that was granted by 1974 Constitution (Elsie, 1997: 240).

During the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1990s, under the leadership of Rugova, the head of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDA), the Albanians followed a pacifist policy and refrained from violent actions and armed resistance with the Serbian security forces to get the support of the international community for the solution of Kosovo question peacefully, but the Albanians could not reach their aims. In Dayton Agreement of 1995⁵, Kosovo issue was neglected by the international community and was left to the hands of Milosevic. As a last resort, Albanians left the passive resistance that proved to be ineffective. Instead, they engaged in a fierce armed struggle against the Serbian forces in Kosovo. The struggle between the members of KLA⁶ and Serbian forces and Milosevic's brutal response created a humanitarian catastrophe for the Kosovar Albanians. Around 1500 houses burned down, about a thousand Albanians died, out of a population of over two million, 850,000 fled their homes and became refugee (U.S. Department of State, 1999: 3).

After unsuccessful diplomatic efforts by the Contact Group, Milosevic-Hoolbroke negotiations and Rambouillet Talks, NATO had to intervene in Kosovo. 77-day of NATO bombing provided the return of the Albanians back, the removal of the Serbian administration out of Kosovo and the deployment of an international security force. NATO's intervention stopped the Serb genocide and human rights violations in Kosovo, but Kosovo's final version is still undetermined. There is no

⁵ In 1995, an international conference was established to stop Bosnian War and solve the disputes among warring sides in Yugoslavia. Dayton Agreement was signed by Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian sides.

⁶ Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA or UCK in its Albanian acronym) is an Albanian guerrilla movement that fights for the freedom of Kosovo.

agreement among the international community regarding the issue. Though the Albanians have never been so close to independence as they are now.

2.2.Political Aspects of the Kosovo Question:

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the First World War, Kosovar Albanians were included by force and reluctantly within the borders of the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which is later called as Yugoslavia. During the inter-war period, from 1918 to 1940, Albanians lived under virtual Serbian domination without any specifically guaranteed minority rights. In the Second World War, with the occupation of Kosovo by Axis forces, the Albanians enjoyed the fulfillment of an age-old dream, unification with Albania and the liberation from Serbian oppression for a short time.

On the other hand, Tito's Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) tried to gain the support of Albanians by promising that Kosovo issue would be solved after the War depending on the political circumstances. This was far from Albanian's expectations. In Bujan Conference in 1943, Albanians stated that they would decide their future based on right to self-determination up to secession.

At the end of the Second World War, with the withdrawal of Axis forces, Kosovo became again part of Yugoslavia. Albanians' national aims were rejected by Tito. Under military administration, the National Council of Kosovo, which had been composed mostly of Serbian and Montenegrin communists, decided in 1945 that Kosovo should join Federal Serbia. This decision was accepted as the "free will" of Kosovar Albanians by Belgrade regime and later it served as a basis for the unification of Kosovo with the Yugoslav Federation (Pipa and Repishti, 1984: 209).

According to the 1946 Constitution of Socialist Yugoslavia, Kosovo was named Kosovo-Metohija and declared an autonomous region a status lower than what was recognized for Vojvodina, home to a sizeable Hungarian population. Local administrative units that had no independent decision-making authority were created in Kosovo. Its internal affairs were full under the control of the Republic of Serbia. The Constitutional law of 1953 radically changed the 1946 Constitution. Yugoslavia began to be ruled by strong centralist administration and the constitutional rights of Kosovo and Vojvodina were delegated to the Republic of Serbia (Mertus, 1999:289). Until the removal of Alexandar Ranković, a leader proponent of Serb-centralism, this centralist policy continued. The fall of Ranković in 1966 marked a decisive point in Yugoslavia, in general, and in Kosovo, in particular and initiated a period of liberalization.

In 1968, the first demonstrations of the Albanians after the Second World War erupted. The main claim of demonstrators had been for greater autonomy and the advancing of the status of Kosovo from autonomous province to republic. Constitutional amendments in 1968 and 1971 had granted Kosovo some republican prerogatives, but not republican status. Because, according to Yugoslav authorities, Yugoslavia was composed of six *nations*; Slovenes, Montenegrins, Croats, Serbs, Macedonians and Bosnians who were the last group to be given the status of a nation in 1961. All these six nations had republican status and the right for self-determination up to secession, a right that was recognized only for nations. Albanians in Kosovo and Hungarians in Vojvodina who had nation state elsewhere-Albania and Hungaria-were considered as *nationalities* but not nations. As a mere nationality, Kosovar Albanians did not have the right to have their own republic. The

heart of political tension in Kosovo that continued up to now rested in the denial of this republican status (Mertus, 1999: 20).

We cannot support such an argument that a nation cannot have two states. In the world, there are many nations who have more than one state such as Turks, Turkey and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and Germans, Germany and Austria. The real reason for such a division between nation and nationality was the fear of disintegration of Yugoslavia. The fear of unification of Kosovo with neighboring Albania and Vojvodina with Hungaria forced the Belgrade regime to create such an argument.

With the 1974 Constitution, the Albanians came close to their political aspirations. The constitutional and legal position of Kosovo was in many spheres similar (but not completely) to the position of the socialist republics. Kosovo was more than an autonomous province and less than a republic. It became a full constitutive element of the Federation with direct and equitable representation in all its party and state bodies. As one of Yugoslavia's eight federal units, Kosovo was represented in the Federal Chamber of the Yugoslav Assembly. The 1974 Constitution forbade the Republic of Serbia to intervene in provincial affairs of Kosovo against the will of Kosovar Albanians. This Constitution enabled Kosovo to emerge as an independent actor in the Yugoslav federation, no longer under direct Serbian domination.

For Albanians, 1974 Constitution was a step in the realization of their final aspiration, republican status, but it was still unsatisfactory. On the other hand, for Serbs, it was a defeat and the loss full control of Serbia over Kosovo. They began to wait for an opportunity to reverse the developments in favor of the Albanians.

Student demonstrations in 1981 were in many ways the product of dissatisfied political demands of the Albanians. Reaction of Belgrade regime was very brutal. Yugoslav army, special police units were deployed to put down the protests (Judah, 2000: 153). This did little to improve the situation and much to harm it. Moreover, the Serbian political and cultural leadership used the events as an excuse for the realization of the aims of the 1986 Memorandum which opened the so-called Serbian question and argued that under the Federation, the Serbian people had remained divided and called for the immediate reduction of Kosovo's autonomous status, something the Serbs perceived to be their major problem (Vickers, 1998: 222). These theses constituted the basis for the politics of Milosevic after 1987 although he never specifically referred to the memorandum on this respect.

In March 1989 the Provincial Parliament of Kosovo, which had been subjected to massive Serbian pressure, passed the constitutional amendment, which abolished the autonomy status of province. On 28 March 1989 the Serbian Assembly confirmed the new situation. With this change, the balance within Yugoslavia created by the Constitution of 1974 was broken. After that, Serbia achieved domination over the federation by having the four of eight votes, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo and Vojvodina. This increased the fear among non-Serbian peoples of Yugoslavia that their turn would be next and they could live no longer with Serbs anymore. So, we can say that the destruction of the provincial autonomy of Kosovo by Milosevic marked the beginning of the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Elsie, 1997: 102).

After Kosovo, Milosevic turned his attention to the protection of former Yugoslavia under Serb hegemony, but whenever he understood that it was

impossible, especially after his defeat in Slovenia in 1991 he focused his efforts on implementation of the dream of Greater Serbia,” All Serbs in One State”.

During the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Albanians, under Rugova’s leadership, pursued an unusual way. After proclaiming the sovereign Republic of Kosovo within Yugoslav Federation and its secession from Serbia, they embraced passive resistance, refused to recognize the legitimacy and legality of the Serbian state in Kosovo. They established their own parallel, underground institutions (Hasani, 1998: 130)

From 1990 to 1995 the relative peace was maintained, because it served the interests of both sides. The Serbs were busy with Bosnia and under international pressure. On the other hand, having no tanks and modern weapons to stand against the Serbian Army, passive resistance was the Albanians’ only alternative in order not to share the same fate as Bosnians had. This situation continued until Dayton Peace of 1995 where the Albanians had hoped, the Kosovo question would be resolved as part of a comprehensive peace settlement for former Yugoslavia, but events showed that it was sacrificed by Western powers to gain the support of Milosevic in the implementation of peace agreement for Bosnia. The lifting of UN’s sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro was not made conditional on a solution to the Kosovo question. There was not even any mention of Kosovo’s becoming independent (Vickers, 1998: 287).

Kosovar Albanians were surprised and bitterly disillusioned by the outcome of the Dayton Agreement. It became apparent to Albanians that as long as they continued their passive resistance, the international community would avoid suggesting any substantive changes. In 1996 a new rival to the authority of Rugova and his Gandi-like policies emerged into the political life of Kosovo.

It was KLA, which had started armed struggle against Serbian forces in Kosovo. With KLA, a new phase started. The conflict between the Albanians and Serb forces, human rights violations of security forces, expulsion of Albanians from Kosovo and violence against civilians forced the international community to do something⁷. A political solution could not be found between them. As a result of NATO's 77-day bombing, Milosevic capitulated. Serb forces left Kosovo and NATO took their place. The final status of Kosovo has not been decided upon politically, but what certain was that Serbian rule had gone. Kosovar Albanians were close to independence.

2.3.Socio-cultural Aspects of the Kosovo Question:

Kosovo question shows itself in the daily life in addition to political life. Tito's efforts in the replacement of nationalist ideology with "Brotherhood and Unity" could not produce satisfactory results in overcoming the ethnic and, to some extent, religious historically rooted tension between the Serbs and Albanians. Tito's personality cult, his unchallenged authority and dictatorship only postponed the Kosovo problem, but could not solve it.

An anti-Albanian attitude has always been a fundamental feature of nationalist ideology among the Serbs and this affected and directed federal government's policies towards the Albanians in Yugoslavia (Elsie, 1997: 222). Although Tito backed some measure of reform in Kosovo, he was opposed to granting the province republican status owing to balance of power within Yugoslavia.

As mentioned in the previous parts, although Kosovo was granted autonomous region status in 1946 until the fall of Ranković, it had not been put into practice. The

⁷ For more information about human rights violations in Kosovo, see: US Government Printing Office, 1999 "Erasing History: Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo".

Serbs were in privileged status in public and economic life of Kosovo. The Albanians were disproportionately represented in the administration, in the business and in the police. Although more than 90 percent Kosovo were Albanians, their representations in the administration and in the police were about 10-20. Serbian oppression, bureaucratic hostility and Albanian's second-class situation continued until the 1970s.

With the 1974 Constitution, radical changes in the socio-cultural life of Kosovar Albanians occurred. The Albanians began to take some socio-cultural rights such as education in their native language, their own university, newspaper and television in Albanian language. Albanian in addition to Serb language was accepted as a precondition for employment.

1974 Constitution changed the situation in Kosovo in favor of the Albanians. The Serbs began to lose their privileged status in public and economic life of Kosovo slowly. The proportional employment policy was put into practice. The Serbs interpreted this new condition as meaning that they began to lose their control over Kosovo and their privileged status over the rest of the population.

In the 1990s Albanian-Serb antagonism could be seen every part of public and economic life. Kosovo's Slav and Albanian communities were living in an apartheid situation, virtually without communication and in a state of open hostility. They boycotted each other's shops and bakeries and cut their sales. They even began to travel in different buses and walk in different side of the same street.

In the post-Tito period, Milosevic's policies against the Albanians and the destruction of the provincial autonomy of Kosovo deepened the historically rooted division between the Serbs and Albanians and became the starting point of the events that finished with NATO bombing. As a result of Serbianisation program of Belgrade

regime, the Albanians in the local administrative, public, judiciary, medical and education sector were dismissed and replaced by the Serbs. Although elementary schools continued to give instructions in Albanian, all secondary and university classes had to follow the Serbian language curriculum imposed by Belgrade regime. The Albanians resisted assimilation policies, boycotted the schools and established their own “parallel schools”. Albanian pupils were taught in private houses secretly (Elsie, 1997: 90-92).

The medical sector was not so much different. Albanian doctors had been fired. Albanian population began to largely avoid the Serbian-administered institutions after the Serbian takeover of medical care. The Albanians, as they did in education system, established their own parallel medical system as an alternative to Serbian one, but it was far away from responding to the needs of Albanian population. This led to the increase of diseases and infant mortality among them. Moreover, the majority of Kosovo’s children were not immunized against illnesses, because it was widely believed that Serbian vaccines would sterilize Albanian women to reduce the high Albanian birth rate (Vickers, 1998: 274).

In addition, the police repression and pressure against the Albanians made the life unbearable in Kosovo. Although some Albanians, especially young men left Kosovo as an escape from Belgrade’s brutal policies, Kosovar Albanians continued their resistance against all pressures and poor living conditions. Their closely-knit family structure combined with an unprecedented degree of national solidarity and the remittances of Albanians who emigrated to find work in the United States and Australia and especially in Western Europe enabled them to endure Serbian pressure.

I want to give here one each from both sides to show the point that the rift between the two ethnic communities had reached. In the spring of 1990 according to

Albanian sources, more than 7,000 Albanian schoolchildren were observed and analyzed in medical centers. The Albanians claimed that toxic gas was emitted via ventilation systems into schoolrooms where Albanian children were being taught. The Serbian authorities refused to investigate the alleged poisonings and many hospitals and clinics were guarded by armed police to prevent Albanians from bringing their children in for treatment. According to Serbian regime, children were suffering from mass hysteria, but it did not change Albanians' perception of the poisoning of schoolchildren as an act of Serbs to wipe out Albanians from Kosovo.

The Albanians' distrust and suspicion of Serbs was not respondless on Serbian side. Although rape conviction, an ordinary crime, could be seen in all former Yugoslavia and the rape proportion in Kosovo was lowest of all Yugoslavia, a rape of Serbian woman by an Albanian was usually seen as an act of primitive, poor developed Albanians against Serbian nation (Mertus, 1999: 9).

It was clear that this intolerance, distrust and neither war nor peace position between the Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo would cause a conflict sooner or later. This happened in the post-Dayton period with the rise of KLA. The Albanians had started armed resistance against Serbian persecution, oppression after leaving Rugova's dissatisfactory pacific resistance. Their armed resistance gave Milosevic a chance, which he expected, to increase the implementation of his Serbianization program.

In 1998, the conflict between KLA and the Serbian army and policy units turned into a civil war. As a result of Serbian army's genocidal acts, more than 850,000 Albanians were expelled from their homes and systematic mass killings happened. Despite international pressures, Milosevic resisted and continued his ethnic cleansing policy against the Albanians, but it resulted in NATO bombing and

the loss of Kosovo for the Serbs. After the bombing ended, Yugoslav army and paramilitary groups left Kosovo.

In the days that followed the end of NATO air campaign, returning Albanians, enraged by the deaths of friends and relatives and the destruction of their property by Serbs, this time they attacked ethnic Serbs in Kosovo. Terrified by a wave of attacks, more than half of the 200,000 ethnic Serbs who lived in Kosovo before NATO campaign fled. Today, almost five years later, Kosovo is under UN protectorate and despite all efforts of international organizations to achieve some measure of reconciliation between Albanian and Serb communities, Albanian-Serb antagonism are still alive. The memories of violence and killings suffered by Albanians are still fresh. In the near future, at least for this generation, the reconstruction of socio-cultural links between two communities appears a distant dream.

2.4.Economic Aspects of the Kosovo Question:

Lastly, I want to mention a little about the economic dimension of the Kosovo question. Although the economic backwardness of Kosovo was not the main driving force behind the Kosovo problem, it was one of the contents of the issue. We should not forget that the economic stabilization is a precondition to political stability. Student demonstrations in 1982 started with complaining about crowded dormitory conditions and the poor food at the refectory of Pristina University.

The gloomy economic situation of Kosovo led the Albanians in Kosovo to charge that they were the victims of economic exploitation by the Serbian regime, and this bred an atmosphere of anxiety and hopelessness among them. Independence was seen as an end to Serbian colonization and unfavorable economic conditions.

Kosovo has been the poorest and least developed area in former Yugoslavia. A cursory look at economic conditions of Kosovo in the immediate post Second World War would reveal that Kosovo, in addition to Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina, was within the underdeveloped regions of Yugoslavia. Since then, although the other underdeveloped regions made some progress, Kosovo's weak economic situation continued up to now (Ülger, 1998: 163). The striking fact is that the economic gap not only between underdeveloped and the developed regions of Yugoslavia -Croatia, Slovenia, Vojvodina- but also between Kosovo and the other underdeveloped regions were widened. In spite of the fact that Kosovo's high birth rate, its young population and shortage of suitable experts on industry, technology were the causes of Kosovo's backwardness, the main reason was the wrong policies of the Belgrade regime (Pipa and Repishti, 1984: 125).

From 1944 to 1957, Kosovo was excluded from investment funds of Federal Budget because of Belgrade's discriminatory policies against Kosovo. Only after 1957, Kosovo became a recipient of investment funds. It received aid in the form of credits that had to be paid back with interest. This policy of the Federation so burdened the economy of Kosovo that it could not recover from its negative impacts.

The industrial development policies of Yugoslavia for Kosovo based on capital-intensive industries, such as metallurgy, chemicals, energy, contributed to, rather than alleviate, the problem of unemployment in Kosovo. Capital-intensive industries of Kosovo, on the one hand, did not provide many job opportunities the Albanians needed, on the other hand, required large investments of funds. If the Federal funds had been invested in more labour-intensive sectors instead of low-labour, capital-intensive and higher technology sectors, they could have helped reduce the massive unemployment in Kosovo. Moreover, Kosovo was perceived by

other republics as raw material and energy supplier. Kosovo was selling its raw materials and energy cheaply while having to pay high prices for manufactured goods and this, in the long run, worsened the balance of payment of its economy (Üzgel, 1998: 213).

In 1990s, dissolution of Yugoslavia and UN economic sanctions against Yugoslavia, indirectly against Kosovo, accelerated the deterioration of the economic situation rapidly that had been worse for years. In addition, Milosevic's Serbianization program made life for Kosovar Albanians more difficult. Albanian specialists in the companies were replaced by the Serbs and the employees of the companies, majority of whom were Albanians, were fired. The Albanian civil servants in the administrative sector that one in every four employed Kosovar Albanians worked, were also replaced by the Serbs. Many people who lost their jobs also lost their homes. In Yugoslavia, it was usual for companies and administrative sector to provide accommodation for their employees in the form of apartments and houses. They were expelled from their homes and Serbian and Montenegrin families took their place (Vickers, 1998: 273-278).

Under these difficult economic conditions, the assistance provided by associations of émigré workers and international aid organizations, good deal of solidarity among relatives, neighbors played an important role and lessened the negative impacts of worsening economic situation of Kosovo.

Despite all its mistakes, we cannot put all the blame totally on the Serbian regime. Kosovo, with sufficiently fertile lands should produce enough food to feed its population, but the division of arable lands into small plots among family members as inheritance led inevitably to the plots where they became so awkward to

operate and so unproductive. So, it weakened agriculture directly and industry indirectly.

Another problem was the failure to adjust the education system to the requirements of the economy. The majority of young people chose to study humanities instead of technical branches, which Kosovo needed so much. Language barrier of the young generation, any of whom under the age of 20 could speak or understand Serbian, also contributed to the vast unemployment among Albanians. All these factors widened the gap in prosperity between Kosovo and the rest of Yugoslavia and intensified tension between the Serbs and Albanians that resulted in civil war.



CHAPTER III:

SOUTHEASTERN QUESTION:

After 15-year long struggle against the separatist terrorist organization PKK⁸ (Kurdish Workers' Party) that had cost over 30,000 lives since 1984, Turkey emerged from this conflict with a decisive military victory⁹. Turkish security forces were able to eliminate most of the PKK's armed combatants and capture Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, the head of the PKK. Prior to the defeat of PKK, most experts on Kurdish issue insisted that the Kurdish question in Turkey was an ethnic issue and that uncompromising stance of the Turkish government would result in a radicalization of the Kurdish population which would further fuel violence, resulting in a full-fledged civil war between Turkish and Kurdish communities of Turkey, and secession would become the only alternative.

This has not happened. The Southeast of Turkey is largely pacified. PKK's armed combatants have withdrawn across the Iraqi border. Abdullah Öcalan is in the island prison of İmralı. Emergency rule, which continued nearly one decade in 13

⁸ In the 8th Congress of the PKK held on April 4-14, 2002, the PKK was renamed as KADEK (Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress) in an effort to legalize its political struggle, and Abdullah Öcalan, imprisoned in İmralı Island in Marmara Sea, was elected as the chairman of KADEK (Özcan and Gün, 2002: 17).

⁹ According to official Turkish sources, almost 33,000 people have died, including 4,444 civilians, 5,040 members of the Turkish security forces, and 23,473 terrorists; and more than 11,000 people were injured between the years of 1987 and 2001 (Cemal, 2003: 550).

provinces in the East and Southeastern Turkey, has been lifted.¹⁰ Moreover, all these outcomes were achieved without any deal with PKK. The events have proved that the analyses based on the assessment that Southeastern Question is an inter-ethnic strife, is open to question. The Southeastern Question is related to regional problems of underdevelopment, not only economically but also in terms of the region's socio-cultural structure. If PKK results from the so-called state suppression and ethnic discrimination against the Kurds in Turkey, then we should not be seeing what we are witnessing in Turkey. The local habitants of the region sided with the Turkish state establishment against PKK. Turkey was able to solve the security dimension of the problem with the defeat of PKK, which has devastated Turkey's resources for a decade.

On the other hand, it would be difficult to suggest that Southeastern problem is only terror problem and that is solved with the defeat of PKK. Turkey has now to deal with economic and socio-cultural aspects of the issue for a long lasting solution.

For reaching this aim, we should first describe what the Kurdish issue is, what lies at the root of the problem. Despite all the efforts of PKK and the increasing numbers of soldiers being killed while serving in the army that could create a rift between Turks and Kurds, it is noteworthy that neither community feels any enmity towards the other and that they continue to live together in peace in various parts of Turkey as they have lived for hundred years.

In addition, the poor performance of pro-Kurdish party-People's Democracy Party (HADEP) in the national elections which makes policies on the basis of ethnic discrimination against the Kurds; the results of the reports on the issue such as Turk-Metal Union's Report; the high proportion of Kurds, nearly 60% of the Kurdish

¹⁰ These provinces are: Bingöl, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Hakkari, Mardin, Siirt, Tunceli, Van, Batman, Sırnak, Ağrı, Kars, Iğdır.

originated Turkish citizens, living outside Turkey's southeast region as integrated into the socio-economic structure of Turkey; the successful implementation of village guard system which mainly consists of Kurds living in the region against PKK, are all proof that there is not an inter-ethnic conflict or ethnic discrimination against the Kurds in Turkey. It would, therefore, be better to call it the Southeastern Question rather than the Kurdish Question.

The poverty, underdevelopment and social backwardness due to feudal structure of the Southeastern Anatolia has prevented the integration of the region with the rest of the country and this has caused the feelings of alienation for the people, especially the Kurds in the East and Southeastern Turkey. The region and the inhabitants could not benefit so much from the fruits of modernization and industrialization of Turkey. The incomplete transformation of the social and economic structures of the region and its inability to change simultaneously with the rest of the country made the East and Southeastern Anatolia vulnerable to external exploitation.

In sum, we can say that the Southeastern Question is not an ethnic issue. The essence of the issue is economic, that is, if the region's underdevelopment and feudal structure could be solved and the utilization of Kurds in Turkey by its neighbors for weakening Turkey could be prevented, the Southeastern Question would be solved. That's why; this subject should be examined within a broader perspective in the light of social, historical, economic and international dimensions that have carried different weight at different times.

3.1. Origins of the Southeastern Question:

The roots of the Southeastern Question can be traced back to the last days of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War (1914-1918) gave some European countries a chance to implement the last phase of the famous “Eastern Question”¹¹. With the Treaty of Sevres (August 10, 1920) signed by the victorious European powers and the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman Empire was to be confined only to central Anatolia and a Kurdish state would be created in the east of the Euphrates (Ataman, 2001: 36).

However, the Kurds did not pay attention to an independence Kurdish state. Despite the fact that the Treaty of Sevres offered them the prospect of establishing their own state and gaining self-rule, Kurdish tribes and notables sided with the new Turkish government created in Ankara in 1920. The Turks and Kurds as well as other non-Turkish Muslim groups collaborated against the Greeks, Armenians and European occupying forces. The Kurds fought during the independence war with their Turkish fellows and liberated the national homeland (misak-i milli)(Ergil, 2000: 124). The victory of the nationalist Ankara government against the invading forces made Sevres irrelevant. On July 24, 1923, Ankara signed the Treaty of Lausanne which superseded Sevres and legalized the victory won by the Turkish War of Independence (Robins, 1993: 659).

Lausanne is crucial with respect of Kurdish issue and for the newly created Turkish Republic. This treaty established the basis of the nation-building process of the new state. As the Ottoman Empire did, the new republic defined its minorities in religious terms and granted only its non-Muslim citizens, Jews and Christian

¹¹ For more information about the so-called Eastern Question, see. Stanford J. Shaw. 2002. *From Empire To Republic: The Turkish War of National Liberation, 1918-1923*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu. 15-20.

Armenians and Greeks minority status¹². Like other non-Turkish Muslim communities, the Kurds were the equal citizens of the Turkish Republic. We could not expect a different approach from the founders of the Turkish Republic, Atatürk and his associates who had experienced the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire as a result of the spread of nationalism among different ethnic groups of the Empire, because, the new state, comprised of a number of different ethnic groups, was inevitably the mirror of the Ottoman Empire (Criss, 1995: 25).

While the Ottoman Empire was retreating from the Balkans, large numbers of Muslims of various ethnic backgrounds fled to Anatolia. In addition, Russian advance and suppression in the Caucasus in the 1850s forced additional hundreds of thousands of people to migrate to Anatolia, too. As a result, when the Turkish Republic was created in 1923, a large proportion of its population consisted of recent immigrants of Slavic, Albanian, Circassian, Abkhaz and Chechen origin (Cornell, 2001: 32). For that reason, Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, did not emphasize ethnic Turkishness as the basis of his nation-building project. As expressed by the maxim that lies as the basis of Turkish Identity;” *Happy is whoever say I am a Turk*” not-Happy is whoever is a Turk-, whoever living within the boundaries of the republic was accepted as Turk and Turkish citizen. As written in the 1924 Constitution,” With regards to citizenship, everyone in Turkey (not Turkish people) is called a Turk without discrimination on the basis of religion or race.” (Watts, 1999:634).

This inclusive understanding of Turkish identity has laid the ground for the Turkish Republic modeled upon the nation-state of Western Europe, particularly

¹² In the Ottoman Empire, the millet system, where an individual's identity was determined by religious affiliation had been implemented. Its population was divided along religious line. All Muslims regardless of their ethnic were part of the ruling millet, Islam ummet.

France. Thus, the word Turk defined a new nation into which individuals or groups, irrespective of their ethnicity, would be able to integrate. The immigrants of Anatolia whatever their origins, was and indigenous population of Anatolia- Turkish, Kurdish, Laz or Arabic origin- all became Turks. Turk was described and accepted as upper identity above the ethnic ones.

In retrospect, when we compare Atatürk's nation-building project with the examples of Western Europe that had started two or three hundreds years previously, we can say that Turkey's nation-building process has been largely successful and still continues. The overwhelming majority of the people have a strong allegiance to Turkish identity. Immigrants of the Balkans and Caucasus rapidly embraced their new national identity and integrated with the Turkish people. Their unpleasant experiences in the Balkans and the Caucasus where their ethnic differences with ruling groups had brought them nothing but sorrow, accelerated this process (Cornell, 2001:33). A great number of Kurds, especially those who migrated to western Turkey integrated successfully into Turkish society and adopted the values and social organizations of the Turkish Republic, and they are today active in all spheres of social and political life of the Republic (Ergil, 2000:126).

The only group that has escaped from this nation-building process seems to have been the Eastern, and mainly Southeastern Anatolia and its residents. Their clan-based feudal social structure, the region's distance from the administrative center, its inaccessibility because of its topography, economic backwardness have hampered Ankara from fully carrying out its modernization policies and the region's integration with the rest of the country.

The Southeastern Anatolia isolated from the rest of the country by its remote location in the mountainous region, divided along tribal lines and economically

dependent on local landowners. It remained largely unaffected by the new regime's policies of integration and modernization and could not make use of the benefits of the industrialization of Turkey completely (Ergil, 2000:125).

Since the founding of the Turkish Republic, southeast and eastern Anatolia have been the soft-belly of the new state. The region's underdevelopment, tribal and feudal social structure and its resistance to modernization have been utilized by external actors for furthering their own regional and political objectives and by internal groups for continuation of their privileged status over the population of the region (Yeğen, 1996:221).

The main three rebellions-Sheik Said Rebellion in 1925 -Mount Ağrı Rebellion between 1936-1938 and Dersim Rebellion in 1937-in the first decade of the Republic were the results of the efforts of these internal and external groups. Despite some counterclaims that these rebellions were nationalistic in nature, in fact, they were tribal and religious. They did not appeal to the totality of the Kurds in the region. They were all regionally bound and there was not any attempt on the part of the Kurds elsewhere to join in, whereas some Kurdish tribes in the region even helped the Turkish security forces and contributed to the suppression of the rebellions (Barkey and Fuller, 1998:69).

The first and most striking rebellion in the region during the first years of the Republic was Sheik Said Rebellion. From 1923 to 1938, with reforms on the political, social and cultural aspects of the society and the state, nation-building and state-building projects put into practice. One of the reforms was the abolition of Caliphate in 1924. The opposition to the removal of Caliphate was the main driving force behind the rebellion. Said himself was a Naqshbandi Sheik who was upset by

the decision of the government. He used his power over the population who had strong religious belief to rebel against the secular state (Criss, 1995:22).

While analyzing this event, we have to also look at the regional balance of power. In those years, there was a Mousul Question between Turkey and Britain. British government's encouragement certainly played an active role in the rebellion in addition to the removal of the Caliphate. The Turkish Republic, in spite of its all difficulties, was able to overcome the first real threat that risked the foundation of the state, but this rebellion facilitated the resolution of the Mousul question in favor of Britain and prevented Turkey from accessing to the oil of the Mousul province (Ataman, 2001:37).

The Sheik Said Rebellion was followed by two other significant, though less threatening, revolts in 1930 and between 1936 and 1938. Kurdish notables, viewing the new republican regime as a threat to their privileges and de facto autonomy rebelled, and both rebellions were suppressed successfully by Turkish security forces. The government's response to these events only solved the security dimension of the issue, but they could not reach the roots of the problem and could not implement the policies that could change the social and economic structure of the East and Southeastern Anatolia that fed events.

From the 1930s to 1970s, the southeastern remained silent, but with the rapid modernization and economic development of the western Anatolia, the rift between the Southeastern Turkey and the latter deepened. During this period, some leftist extremist groups tried to exploit the region's backwardness and the discontent of its residents. One of them was PKK.

3.2.Security Dimension of the Southeastern Question:

PKK was formed by those who splintered from Turkish Marxist-Leninist youth in the mid-1970s in Turkey's capital city, Ankara, not in the rugged terrain of the southeastern Turkey. Its main aim was to make a communist revolution by guerilla warfare and establish a separate Marxist Kurdish state in the east and southeastern Turkey (Radu, 2001:48).

In the 1970s, PKK attacked some landlords and rightists in the Siverek region, but the military coup of 12 September 1980 largely rolled up the PKK terrorist organization. A small number of the members of the organization, including Abdullah Öcalan, the head of the PKK, were able to escape to Syria where they were sheltered, equipped and trained. As Öcalan himself admitted, Syrian support provided for the survival of the PKK in the post-Military coup period. Öcalan's acceptance by Syria marked only the beginning of the PKK's heavily reliance upon support from the foreign governments that utilized it for their own interests against Turkey (Özdağ, 1996:85).

Between 1980 and 1984, under the protection of Syria, Öcalan consolidated the party structure and strengthened his position within the PKK as the undisputed leader of the organization, often by brutal methods against dissenters. As of 1984, ERNK (Kurdistan National Liberation Front) was established as the military arm of PKK, and then ARGK (Kurdistan Popular Liberation Army), which was supposed to be the so-called Kurd's national army, was set up (Barkey and Fuller, 1998:22).

After that, PKK began its hit-and-run operations in Turkish territory, which resulted in the death of 30,000 people, the majority of whom were Kurds. The PKK's objective in murdering the residents of the region on whose behalf it claimed to be fighting, was to create a climate of insecurity for the population mostly living in the

rural areas, reduce contact between the population and the government and undermine population's confidence towards Ankara and state's ability to provide security and enforce its authority (Kocher, 2002:8). Rather than targeting well-armed elements of the state, PKK chose civilians including women, children, babies and public servants of the government such as schoolteachers, doctors as victim to spread its influence in the region. By doing this, PKK tried to prove to the people that it was strong, and that they should support and side with it. Moreover, by attacking village guards whom the state armed and employed against PKK attacks, it forced the people to make up its mind whether they were the side of the state or PKK.

During this period, from 1984 to 1990, PKK had no popular support in the region, but Turkish security forces failed to realize the magnitude of the PKK military threat and respond quickly. The Turkish government's not taking this threat seriously enough as seen in the then Prime Minister Turgut Ozal's evaluation of PKK as only a bunch of bandits, changed the balance of power in favor of PKK (Criss, 1995:20). By 1992, the number of PKK militants and sympathizers were reputed to be 10,000. There are some factors that explain the swelling numbers of PKK's ranks. One of the methods used by PKK to recruit manpower was kidnapping young men and women or threatening to kill boys or their families unless they joined the organization. Once they were recruited, their families automatically became the supporter and sympathizer of the PKK. Moreover, when young men who were killed in a clash with security forces, then, his family and tribe could be completely won by PKK.

The socio-economic problems of the region and region's rural-based demographic structure contributed to the rapid rise of the PKK. Its members were always exclusively from the lowest social classes, the uprooted, half-educated

villagers and small youths (Çelik, 1998:18-21) The uneducated and unemployed youth in the region became the breeding ground for PKK. The Southeastern Anatolia was ideally suited for hit-and-run operations. The rugged mountains, the general adverse weather conditions of the region and its closeness to borders facilitated the implementation of PKK's guerilla tactics, whereas these were hindrance for Turkish security forces.

The region was predominantly rural with low density: %62 of the inhabitants were living in villages and hamlets comprised of three to five houses sheltering 30 to 40 family members. This caused enormous difficulties of ensuring security in the mountainous and rural areas of the South-eastern Turkey (Kocher, 2002:14). The last but perhaps most important reason why PKK had become a major problem for Turkey in the 1990s, was the changing attitude of the region's people toward the state. As a result of PKK's strategy of targeting civilians, defenseless villages and hamlets who had ties and relations with the state, the people of the region had to take a neutral position, which meant indirect support to PKK, for their own security concerns.

After 1992, the Turkish government and Turkish army began to take the PKK threat seriously and responded to it with their all instruments. First, the army reorganized itself and completed the conversion of its regular groups into counter-terror units. Resources, proper equipment and training were provided for to fight terrorists, and effective counter-insurgency strategies were deployed. Heavy use of air power mostly helicopters hindered PKK movements within Turkish territory. Turkish army also launched massive cross-border operations in northern Iraq that devastated the rear and logistical bases of the PKK.

The most important development in the Turkish governments' fight against the terror organization was the winning of the people in the region. The army and police managed to ingratiate themselves with the population through infrastructure projects, health services and education programs. The successful implementation of village guard system was the result of cooperation between the government and local residents. The village guard system, which mainly consisted of local Kurds whose number reached 60,000-armed civilians in 1996, was introduced in 1985 to enable villages to defend themselves against attacks from PKK (Kirisci and Winrow, 1997:129).

With the increasing state's ability to provide security for the region's people, they left their neutral position and sided with the state. Furthermore, PKK's terrorist activities fundamentally altered the demographics of the region and caused vast internal migration towards safe towns and cities. Local residents had to evacuate their villages and hamlets. PKK atrocities against civilians and the deteriorating economic conditions were the two main reasons for the depopulation of the countryside and the concentration of the civilians in urban areas such as Diyarbakır, Van, İstanbul, İzmir where they can be effectively defended.

In addition, the impossibility of protecting each hamlet and village spreaded over the vast area compelled the security forces to move the people away from some hamlets and villages for their own security. These deserted villages were razed so that they could not be used as shelter by PKK militants. PKK lost its access to food and shelter because of rapid urbanization and migration in the region. All these meant for PKK the loss of intelligence, manpower and logistical resources needed for hit-and-run operations, which prepared the demise of the PKK, which was mainly a rural insurgency (Özcan, 1999:75).

Turkish military forces benefited from these developments and were able to change the balance in the region in their favor especially in the second half of the 1990s. At the same time, Turkish government intensified its efforts on political arena to cut off the support of several foreign countries, which used PKK as a foreign policy instrument against Turkey. Its assertive regional diplomacy backed by credible threat of force as well as its success in eliminating most of the PKK's armed combatants, led to the capture of Öcalan, the head of PKK and military victory of Turkey.

3.3. International Dimension of the Southeastern Question:

The capture of PKK leader and the rapid descent of PKK show that the widespread impression of the PKK as a gross roots movement with broad support is wrong and that PKK is not a popular uprising. Unquestionably, the most important factor in PKK's survival hitherto has been the support of several foreign countries (Cornell, 1999:38). Since its creation, PKK had come twice to the nearly end point before the capture of Öcalan in 1999.

First was in 1980. Öcalan and his followers had been able to escape from the hands of the military coup in 1980 to Syria with the help of Bulgarian secret service that gave a sudden blow to the all-illegal organizations. The relations between PKK and Syria started (Özdağ, 1996:94). Since then, Syria had been the most crucial and stable ally of the PKK. It provided training facilities in the Bekaa Valley of Syria-controlled northern Lebanon for PKK until the expulsion of Öcalan in 1998 from his long time sanctuary in that country.

Syria's reasons for using PKK against Turkey were manifold. The main reason was a border dispute over Hatay province, which chose joining to Turkey in 1939

after a one-year independence, with its own right. Syria still shows Hatay province within own borders in its maps. Furthermore, Turkey's GAP (Southeastern Anatolian Project) which was planned to improve the socio-economic conditions of the southeastern region by constructing dams on the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers and irrigating large farmlands of the region with water from these rivers, increased Syria's anxieties about its own access to water from the Euphrates. It is noteworthy that the escalation of PKK attacks corresponded to a time when the Birecik Dam on the Euphrates was about to be completed (Criss, 1995:29).

Second was in 1990s, the First Gulf War which removed the northern Iraq from Baghdad's jurisdiction caused a power vacuum in northern Iraq which coincided with the aims of the PKK. Northern Iraq became a hiding place for PKK from the pursuit of the Turkish security forces. It owed its existence to this event. PKK based its operations there and was able to threaten extensive areas of the southeastern Turkey during the 1990s.

Syria was not the only country using PKK. Iran allowed the PKK to use its territory to open new fronts along Turkey's eastern frontier. Armenia provided certain amount of assistance for PKK to threaten northeastern Turkey. Russia utilized the PKK terrorist organization to hinder possible Turkish support for Chechen guerillas. Lastly, Greece sheltered, trained and equipped the PKK for more than a decade. The capture of Öcalan in Kenya where he hid in Greek Embassy in Kenya, revealed Greek-PKK relations and Greece's traditional hostility toward Turkey (Kirisci and Winrow, 1997:167). In addition to these countries, some Western European countries, especially Germany, Scandinavia and the Benelux countries actively supported PKK and applied immense political pressure to Turkey. The propaganda and disinformation campaign of PKK in Europe and the exploitation of

Western sensitivities on human rights caused sometimes the deterioration of relations between Turkey and European countries. Even in 1992, the German government imposed an arms embargo on Turkey and until recent years, PKK was not included into the European Terrorist Organizations List by European Union¹³.

Despite all hostility of some of its neighbors, Turkey was able to first crush the insurgents and then cut off the PKK's foreign support. I think it will not be wrong to say that PKK, without external support, could not have become such a big threat for Turkey.

3.4.Socio-cultural Aspects of the Southeastern Question:

We have to also elaborate on the socio-cultural characteristic of the southeastern Turkey to grasp the essence of the issue. The Kurds are one of the 47 ethnic groups in Turkey, but they are not a homogeneous ethnic community either. There are important divisions among the Kurds with respect to their religion, language and ways of life. This makes it difficult the description of who are the Kurds. Language is one of the principal criteria used in the definition of ethnic groups although it has some deficiencies¹⁴.

In Turkey, Zaza and Kurmanji are spoken by the majority of Kurds, but there is not an agreement on whether Zaza and Kurmanji spoken in Turkey are dialects of the same language or they are different languages, because, Zaza is not mutually intelligible with Kurmanji. Some Zaza spoken groups reject Kurdish identity and call

¹³ As noted by Turkish Deputy Chief of General Staff General Yaşar Büyükanıt, it is noteworthy that the EU decided on May 2, 2002 to include the PKK in its official list of terrorist organizations - excluded in the first list issued on December 27, 2001, just after it changed the name to KADEK (Turkish Daily News, May 29, 2002).

¹⁴ We can summarize the deficiencies as follows: First, there are those who are of Kurdish descent either from the father's or mother's side or both, but who do not speak Kurdish as mother tongue. Second, there are some people who lost their mother tongue and became Kurdish speakers like the Turkish tribes of Karakeçeli, Türkan and Beğdili.

themselves Zaza. They mostly refer to themselves as Zaza more than Kurd. (Mutlu, 1996:519).

The number of Kurds in Turkey is also a subject of dispute. The estimation of the number of Kurds speaking Kurmanji and Zaza ranges from 3 million to 15 million (Karimova and Deverell, 2001:13). In the 1965 population census, the last that collected data on the mother tongue of the population of Turkey, the Kurds have been 3,132 million, constituting %9,98 of the total population. In 1990, according to some analyses, their number reached 7 million, equal to %12,6 of the 65-million population of Turkey, but here, not the number, but the distribution of Kurds in Turkey should call our attention (Mutlu, 1995:51).

In the early years of the Turkish Republic, nearly all Kurds were living in the east and southeastern Turkey. This changed dramatically with the industrialization and modernization of Turkey. The number of Kurds living in Western Anatolia had reached in 1965 to one-fifth of the Kurdish population. Today, more than half of the Kurds are living in the West (Aydınlı, 2002:217). Istanbul is the biggest Kurdish city in terms of Kurdish population as a result of massive migration from Southeastern Anatolia. Besides Istanbul, there are also considerable Kurdish populations in the industrial centers of Turkey, such as Izmir, Adana, Ankara, Bursa, Mersin, Kocaeli, Manisa provinces. These massive population movements not only accelerated the integration of Kurds with the rest of the country, but they also put an end to the tribal social structure of the region, which is one of the main distinctiveness of the Kurdish society.

Tribes or ashirets are quasi-kinship groups that range in size from hundreds of thousands of members to small units of several dozen individuals. The heads of the tribes are aghas who expect complete loyalty from the members of tribes and who

have full authority over them. Tribes are usually held together by kinship ideology. Numerous aghas have also been leaders of the religious orders. They are usually aghas and sheikhs at the same time. This dual role has increased the tribal leaders' legitimacy in the eyes of their followers.

Before coming of the Ottoman Empire into the region in sixteenth century, Kurdish tribes were de facto independent. Ottoman Empire did not change this situation drastically and allowed the Kurds to enjoy a remarkable degree of autonomy as a prize for their siding with the Ottoman Empire against Iran. In accordance with their autonomous status, the region was governed by the leading Kurdish families, notables, religious and tribal leaders. They provided the link between the people and the Empire (Bruinessen, 1998:39).

The demise of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of the new state reshaped the relationship between tribal leaders in the region and the new Republic. The centralization policies of the Turkish Republic as a part of its nation state-building process caused inevitably confrontation between the state and tribal leaders since the centralization was meant the extension of central administration and the state's direct control over all citizens, therefore the elimination of the tribal leaders' authority (Yeğen, 1996:222).

Turkish Republic, until its transition to a multi-party political system in the 1950s, tried to break down the tribal structures in the region and integrate the population into the social structure of the state. For this reason, even some tribal leaders who resisted the state's policies and rebelled were relocated to Western Turkey (Kılıç, 1998:97). These efforts were far from changing the historically rooted tribal-based social structure of the region.

The beginning of the multi-party elections in Turkey in the 1950s gave the tribal leaders the opportunity had been longing for. Their endorsement of one party was likely to win the votes of an overwhelming majority of tribal members. Politicians cooperated with tribal leaders to use them as instrument of power in the region. Many aghas or the persons they endorsed became the members of the Turkish parliament and strengthened their authority over people.

Although the tribal based social structure of the region still continues to some extent, it is on a decrease. The rapid urbanization and the migration to the West have unavoidably weakened the traditional structure that perpetuated the power of local leaders. Compulsory military service, general education and the spread of mass media have brought remarkable changes in the social life of the southeastern Turkey as they did in western Turkey and accelerated the integration of the region into the rest of the country.

Another issue we have to examine is religion. Religion is of extreme significance in the social life of the region. It is another area like linguistic and tribal lines that divided the Kurds in Turkey. Scholars estimate that two-thirds of the Kurds are Sunni Moslems and that one-third is Alevi. Roughly an equal proportion of Kurds and Turks are Alevi (Hirschler, 2001:157).

Islamic identity plays a bridging role between different ethnic groups in Turkey. For some people, their religious identity takes precedence over the ethnic one. For example; Kurdish Alevis care more about religious solidarity with Turkish Alevis than ethnic solidarity with Sunni Kurds. The Sheikh Said rebellion was directed by a Nakshibendi sheikh and supported by some Sunni Kurdish tribes. Alevi Kurdish tribes in the region sided with government forces against those of Sheikh Said (Barkey and Fuller, 1998:70). Marriages between Sunnis and Alevis are rare,

but intermarriages between Turks and Kurds are common. Religion, as it was in the early years of the Republic, is still one of the main bonds that hold the different ethnic groups of Turkey together.

Social groups are not static entities. They change or have to change with alterations in their economic and political environment. The southeastern Turkey is not an exception. Although it could not change simultaneously with the rest of the country because of some reasons, Turkish Republic is trying to lessen the economic or social differences within Turkey with all its might. When this process is completed, the commonalities among the people of Turkey will increase and the ethnic, linguistic and religious diversities will not cause problem anymore.

3.5.Economic Aspects of the Southeastern Question:

In this section, I will take into account the economic dimension of the Southeastern Question and respond to PKK's claim that Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia were left behind intentionally in economic terms.

It is unquestionable that Eastern Turkey has been one of the poorest parts of the country. This is not a new phenomenon. Even during the Ottoman Empire, Western Anatolia had been more developed than the east, but especially after the 1950s, as a result of industrialization of Turkey, the rift between the east and west widened. According to the statistical analysis of the State Planning Organization (DPT), utilizing 58 socio-economic variables for 1993, the last 12 among 76 provinces in level of socio-economic development are all in the Eastern and the Southeastern Turkey (Mutlu, 2001:103).

These two regions' economies have been heavily dependent on livestock raising and agriculture since the nineteenth century and it still continues more or less.

Animal husbandry is very popular in Eastern Anatolia. Its topography, and climate are suitable for this, but the returns of livestock-raising are very few. Moreover, PKK terror, which made the plains that are used for grazing insecure, affected the region's economy negatively. In addition to livestock-raising, agriculture is also the principal economic activity in the southeast and eastern Anatolia. The population of the region is mainly either farmer, mostly sharecroppers or laborers, probably seasonal laborers. Only small percentage of the labor resources of the Eastern Turkey is public servant or artisans.

Local peasants in these regions overwhelmingly do not own the land they farm. By 1973, landless families constituted %30.1 of total rural households. This figure is nearly double the ratio of landless families to landed families for Turkey as a whole. Very large land holding have been the characteristic of the region for centuries. Even, some families own whole villages. In 1980, %59.9 of the total lands belonged to only %11.6 of the total households. However, % 56 of the land owing households owned only %8.7 of the total land. The dependence of peasants on landlords economically most of whom are also tribal leaders, is serving to the preservation of tribal-based social structure and of tribal leaders' political dominance over the people (White, 1998:140-143).

For those who constitute the majority of the population and who have no land for farming, sharecropping or renting is one of the alternatives. The landless farmers have to cooperate with landowners and pay a share of their crops as rent to the owners of the lands. The other alternative is to work under the supervision of the landlord for a small fee.

The spread of industrialization toward Eastern Turkey in the 1950s has transformed the relations between the large landowners and landless farmers who are

either seasonal laborers or sharecroppers in favor of the former. The mechanization of agriculture decreased the landowners' needs to laborers significantly. Machines replaced rural laborers or peasants. Furthermore, small and middle landowners could not afford to buy needed machines such as tractor or harvester to increase their crops and incomes. The result was poverty and high unemployment for the region.

The underdevelopment of the region and the spread of terrorism are two related phenomena. Per capita GDP in the southeast is less than half of the national average. Unemployment is estimated to be twice the national average at around 25 percent (Mutlu, 2001:102).

The region's economic backwardness produced the human material for terror. Nearly all PKK members are illiterate, uneducated, unemployed youth. Although PKK claims to be fighting on behalf of the Kurds, its attacks on public servants- doctors, teachers, majors- and state economic enterprises (KİTs) worsened the economic life in the region and they only brought poverty and misery to the people. Moreover, 15-year low intensified conflict with PKK affected adversely both public and private enterprise investments to the region. The Turkish governments had to delay their investments temporarily, because PKK was extorting money from bidders of government contracts and public sector in the region (Mutlu, 2002 : 463-475).

As an external factor, the First Gulf War, which resulted in UN embargo on Iraq, affected the region's economy negatively more than a decade. Turkey had to cut off its economic relations with Iraq .The border trade and the oil transformation from Iraq by trucks were playing an important role in the economic life of southeastern Turkey in general, the areas close to Turkey-Iraqi border in particular. With the UN embargo, all oil transformation and border trade stopped and thousands of drivers lost their jobs.

The Turkish governments recognized the centrality of economic issue to PKK terror in the 1980s and they accelerated the implementation of Southeast Anatolian Project (GAP), which is aimed at regenerating the economy of the region and lessening the gap between the region and Western Anatolia. Turkey's attempts to lessen the economic differences within Turkey can be traced back to the early years of the Republic.

The Turkish Republic inherited from the Ottoman Empire no industry to speak of, except a few establishments, which concentrated in mainly Istanbul and Izmir. As it was mentioned in the Izmir Economic Congress of 1923, which laid down the framework for its economic policies, the new Republic followed liberal policies in economy and fostered private sector, but lack of capital and Turkish bourgeoisie and worldwide economic crises of 1929 forced Turkey to reconsider its liberal policies. Turkey then initiated a policy of etatism (*Devletçilik*) in the 1930s. The Turkish state began to take initiative in some sectors, in which the private sector was insufficient in meeting the needs of the country.

In this period, the first state economic enterprises were founded over Anatolia in places where there was no modern manufacturing enterprises. For example, a textile factory was established in Malatya. The First Industrial Plan was implemented with success in 1934-1938. As stated in the Plan, not only economic considerations, but also social factors such as establishing a balance of economic activities throughout the country, took into consideration in the choice of location of industrial establishments (White, 1998:151).

In 1950s, Democrat Party came to power and liberal policies were adopted again in line with the principles of free enterprise and private initiative. The private sector began to develop in the 1950s and has increased its gravity in the economy

since then. For private sector, as we can predict, only the economic criteria gains priority over others, otherwise, private sector cannot continue its existence. In Turkey, like the rest of the world, the same thing happened. The private industrial investments tended to concentrate in and around a few places, Istanbul and Kocaeli in the Marmara and the Aegean and Mediterranean coastal regions respectively, except raw material oriented industries. Higher per capita income, greater population, lower transport costs, higher demand density in Western Anatolia were the main reasons for the concentration of the private industry there.

On the other hand, Turkish governments since 1950s have tried to balance the economic differences between the East and West, which is the ultimate outcome of heavy concentration of private economic enterprises in Marmara and Aegean region. Turkey, in its some industrial investments behaved in disregard of economic logic for this purpose. Social reasons superseded the economic factors; some public manufacturing investments lay in the East although they are infeasible in economic terms. Despite all its efforts, Turkish governments could not prevent the widening of economic differentiation between the Eastern and Western Anatolia (Mutlu, 2001:111). Furthermore, this situation has aggravated during the last two decades.

When we compare the economic situation of the East with the rest of the country, it is certain that the region is underdeveloped. But I argue that we cannot charge Turkey with the exploitation of the East for the benefits of the West as PKK and its sympathizers claimed. The reasons for the economic backwardness of the Eastern Turkey must be sought elsewhere.

Turkey is a developing country. It has been fighting with high inflation for more than two decades. It is still burdened with heavy debt repayments. It does not have enough resources and capital to finance its industrialization. It requires a more

or less steady flow of investment funds, which it could not get until now. Under these circumstances, we cannot expect Turkey to completely ignore economic criteria and establish factories in the East in disregard of economics in terms of both scale and location. That's why, before condemning Turkey for neglecting the East intentionally, we should evaluate it within its own context.

The East's backwardness was the natural outcome of economy and economic logic. It was unintentional. The region did not invest in itself. Even its rich have chosen to invest in the West not in the East. The state was nearly the only employer in the East. About one-ninth of the public manufacturing workers were in the region, but only one-seventieth of the private manufacturing workers were employed in the region (Mutlu, 2002:42).

Despite its own economic problems and the private sector's reluctance to invest in the East, Turkish governments have made the biggest public investment, GAP that is equal to Turkey's annual budget at 1991 prices, in its history to the region. GAP, the world's third largest dam and irrigation project, consists of 22 dams and 17 hydroelectric plants and subsidiary projects. It is estimated that, when the GAP finished, it would create 1,6 million jobs in the technical and agricultural sectors of the region, generate increases in agriculture by %20, in the services sector by %10 and in industrial production by %8. When the GAP is completed by 2013, it is expected to bring about total transformation of the region's economy and bridge the gap between the development levels of western and eastern Turkey (White, 1998: 151).

In addition to GAP, so many economic packages were implemented for the economic development of the region. By early 1990s, there was hardly a village or hamlet left without electricity or telephone service. Rural roads, health clinics were

constructed all around the region to improve the public health and transportation conditions. After Öcalan's capture, Turkey intensified its efforts to improve the economic conditions in Turkey's southeast region and defeat poverty and unemployment.



CHAPTER IV:

THE COMPARISON OF KOSOVO QUESTION WITH TURKEY'S SOUTHEASTERN QUESTION:

The Southeastern Question is the most serious internal problem in the Turkish Republic's eighty-year history. Most Westerners define this problem as an ethnic conflict, stemming from the oppression and the denial of rights of Kurds by Turks. Turkey's struggle with PKK is accordingly viewed as a national liberation movement fighting for the freedom of the Kurdish people, and it enjoys widespread sympathy in the West. In spite of terrorist activities of PKK, European Union included it into its Terrorist Organizations List only after PKK changed its name into KADEK. Even some writers (for example, Gunter, 1999) described the PKK as the Kurdish nationalist movement, but the realities of Turkey seems to suggest otherwise.

Despite almost two decades of armed conflict that cost more than 30,000 lives on both sides, the Turks and Kurds continue to live together in harmony as they did for nearly a thousand year. As some studies on the public opinion of the Kurds and the election results showed, PKK does not represent the Kurds, and the Kurdish population doesn't support PKK. Kurdish population is highly integrated into the

Turkish society as a result of inclusive understanding of Turkish social life. Significant proportion of Turkey's political and business elite is of Kurdish origin. Their representation in Turkish parliament is larger than the proportion of their population. Intermarriages between the Turks and Kurds, which are the indicator of positive relations between these communities, are very common.

All these point to the fact that the Kurdish issue in Turkey differs in many respects from such recent conflicts such as those in Kosovo and Bosnia. It is hard to define this problem as an ethnic strife and ethnic discrimination against Kurds. For this reason, I will try to reveal the obscured essentials of the Southeastern Question by comparing it with recent ethnic conflict between the Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, which carries all characteristics of an ethnic dispute.

4.1.Main Differences Between Southeastern and Kosovo Questions:

4.1.1 Specious Nationalism:

While analyzing the Southeastern Question, it is important to examine the nature of PKK's purported nationalism. Turkey's military victory over PKK and the capture of its leader made it clear that PKK is neither a popular uprising nor is it an organization fighting for the Kurds. There have been several reasons to question PKK's claim to represent the Kurdish people. First, the founders of the PKK had been the Turks as well as Kurds (Radu, 2001:50). Its Marxist-Leninist ideology, not Kurdish nationalism has always been the driving force behind the PKK. In the early years, there were as many Turks as Kurds among PKK ranks. Second, Öcalan himself was ill suited to be so-called freedom fighter. In his writings, he had described the Kurds as a savage community. His mother was of Turkish origin and

he knows neither Kurmanji nor Zaza and has always used Turkish in all communications with his followers (Özcan, 1999:53).

Last but not least, PKK always took up a hostile approach to the Kurds for which it claimed to be fighting. During the fifteen-year fight against PKK, many Kurdish civilians were the targets of PKK. In addition to this, PKK terror caused the deterioration of economic situation in the region. Many persons had to leave their ancestral villages and migrated to more secure places¹⁵.

Under PKK attacks, the inhabitants of the region have sought assistance from the Turkish government and joined in the fight against terrorist organization as village guards, which mainly consist of Kurds in the region. Their number reached more than 60,000 in 1995. In those years, 300,000 security forces, including special forces and police, had to take part in fight against PKK (Kirisci and Winrow, 1997:130). According to the study of Mutlu (1996), 13.8 percent of the Turkey's population was Kurdish at that time. This would mean that there were nearly 40,000 Kurdish conscripts in the region as a part of Turkish security forces in 1995. When we add this figure to the number of village guards, the Kurds fighting against PKK on the side of the Turkish state would reach 100,000. When we compare this figure with the number of PKK members at the height of terror in 1995 that was estimated to have 5-10,000 militias, I think it will not be wrong to say that at least, ten times as many Kurds actively sided with the Turkish state and fought against PKK.

This shows that PKK's propaganda that it is fighting for the Kurds, and that the Kurds have been waging a war for independence is open to challenge. PKK's terrorist activities gave real damage to the Kurds in the region economically and politically. As a result, PKK could not become a popular uprising and never

¹⁵ Although, the exact number of displaced persons is unknown, according to government estimates, 3236 settlements had been evacuated in Southeastern Turkey of 1999.

succeeded in gaining the support of the people as other groups like Kosovo Liberation Army have done in Kosovo. KLA, within nineteen months, was able to increase the number of its members from twenty to tens of thousands and it incited a popular uprising against the Serbian regime, which resulted in NATO intervention into Kosovo. It reached nearly all its aims by using the international conjuncture in its favor and with the support of the Albanian community.

4.1.2.Public Opinion:

In order to adequately understand the Southeastern problem, we should direct our attention to views and demands of the region's people who directly have been affected and lived with this problem more than two decades. Many reports were prepared and surveys were made by some private or official organizations to learn what the Kurds think about the Southeastern question and how they describe it. Although these studies cannot illustrate the whole picture, they are useful in understanding the essence of the problem and can be used as the indicator of Kurdish and Turkish public opinions.

The most comprehensive studies on the issue were the TOBB (Association of the Chambers of Commerce of Turkey) Report and Turk-Metal Union Report. In spite of the fact that both described the problem differently and proposed different solutions, what they agreed is that the supporters of the Kurdish nationalism remain in the minority even in the Southeast despite PKK's efforts, and what lies at the root of the Southeastern question is regional underdevelopment (Ergil,1995:27; Özdağ, 1995: 437).

TOBB Report was based on interviews with 1,267 people, all except 3.6 percent of whom were Kurds. All were either residents of the Southeastern provinces

of Diyarbakır, Batman and Mardin or were the Kurds living in the southern Mediterranean cities of Adana, Mersin and Antalya where substantial proportion of Kurdish population had migrated in recent decade¹⁶. Among its principal findings was that although 96 percent spoke Kurdish as their mother tongue, 85 percent of the respondents did not demand a separate Kurdish state. When asked to the respondents whether village guard system, the emergency rule regime and special forces should be lifted, only 2.7 percent replied ‘yes’. The report interpreted this as support for the sate policies (Ergil, 1995:26).

After TOBB Report, more comprehensive and explanatory study was prepared by a group of academics for the Union of Metal Workers based on questionnaires administered by professional interviewers to a representative sample of 8,802 individuals living in Southeastern Turkey. In this study, it was asked to the respondents what Turkey’s most important problems are in their views.

Table 1: Turkey’s biggest problems

Problem	Primary Problem	Secondary Problem
High inflation and unemployment	65.0	9.3
Terrorism	9.7	35.3
Inferiority of leaders	3.1	6.1
Foreign Policy	1.1	1.6
Corruption and Bribing	2.5	17.1
Kurdish Problem	12.5	9.3
Dispute on Laicism and Anti-laicism	0.4	1.1
Conflict among religious sects	0.3	0.6

Source: Özdağ, 1995: 73

¹⁶ The survey was funded by TOBB. Interviews with the respondents were conducted in people’s private homes and the respondents were ensured that their identities would be kept anonymous.

%65.0 and %9.3 of the respondents respectively chose inflation and unemployment as the primary and secondary vital problem of Turkey. Terror followed this option with %9.7 and 35.3 proportions. Only the %12.5 of the respondents described the Kurdish question as Turkey’s foremost problem. Table 1 gives us an important opinion about how the residents of the region see the question and it suggests that socio-economic factors rank above the ethnic ones in terms of people’s own valuation.

Another question was asked to clarify the issue. In response to the question “What are the two main reasons for the terror and conflict in the region”.

Table 2: Two main reasons of terrorism and conflict in the region

Two main reasons of terrorism and violence	(%) Percentage	
	First reason	Second reason
Poverty in the region	58.2	7.9
Negligence of the region by the state	22.7	36.7
Existence of tribal and feudalist structure in the region	2.9	6.3
Aims of external powers in the region	6.6	16.9
Terrorists creating horror on the people in the region.	1.5	6.8
People’s intention to seek for their own identity and rights.	3.7	14.3
No answer	4.4	11.1

Source: Özdağ, 1995: 83

58.2 percent declared that the poverty of the population came first as the main reason for the terror. Turkish state’s ignorance toward the region and foreign countries’ interferences into the region to weaken Turkey options got 22.7 and 6.6 percent of the responses respectively, while only 3.7 percent stated that the people of

the region were intent on getting some rights related to their political identity. In ‘second reason’ category, Turkish state’s negligence toward the region option got 36.7 percent of the responses. Aims of external powers in the region followed it with %16.9 proportion.

Academics also asked in their questionnaires how, in their opinions, this problem could be solved. %63.6 believed that the improvement in the economic situation of the region and solution to the unemployment would solve the problem. Only %16.2 stated that granting more cultural and political rights to the population could be the remedy to the Southeastern Question.

Table 3: Resolution to the conflict and terror in the region

Resolution of the problem in the region	(%) Percentage
By taking precautions to lessen the unemployment ratio and level of underdevelopment	63.6
By consigning the cultural and social rights to the people in the region	16.2
By bringing more democracy to the region	8.5
By means of increasing and improving the military precautions	3.5
By handing over more power to the local administrations	1.5
Other suggestions	2.8
No suggestion	4.0

Source: Özdağ, 1995: 84

In Turk Metal Union study, the vast majority of respondents were fully or partially Kurds –Zaza or Kurmanji speakers or Turkish-Kurdish mixed. When given a number of options in Table 4 to describe relations between people from different ethnic background, %40.8 of the respondents chose the option “We are one indivisible nation”, %32.8 “We need a bit more tolerance and respect between people from different ethnic backgrounds.” Only %5.8 selected the option that” The

relations between people from different ethnic groups are not good, especially between the Turks and Kurds and in the future, these relations will deteriorate”. This shows that PKK could not reach its aims. Tension between the Turks and Kurds have been limited. Nearly 90 percent of the respondents believed that despite some problems, Turkish and Kurdish communities could live in harmony. This report also revealed that support for education in Kurdish and demand for Kurdish broadcasting was weaker than usually thought.

Table 4: Respondent’s views on relations between different ethnic groups

Relations between different ethnic background	(%) Percentage
We are one indivisible nation	40.8
We need a bit more tolerance and respect between people from different ethnic groups.	32.8
Relations between different ethnic origins in Turkey are not good, but this problem can be solved.	17.8
Relations between different ethnic origins in Turkey are not good, especially between Turks and Kurds and in the future, these relations will deteriorate.	5.8
No answer	3.0

Source: Özdağ, 1995: 137

Özdağ, the director of the study, concluded from all these findings above that in spite of fifteen-year terror and economic difficulties, region’s people did not want to secede from Turkey.

The complexity of the problem makes it almost impossible to name the issue - ethnic problem, socio-economic problem, democratization problem- but it was certain that we couldn’t call it Kurdish problem or inter-ethnic problem. The results of the research support this. Only 5.8 percent of the respondents saw the problem as

inter-ethnic conflict. This figure is so low given PKK's intensive efforts to sow the seeds of hatred between Turkish and Kurdish communities.

In the conclusion part of the report, Özdağ proposed that rapid economic development of the region, democratization and socio-economic integration of it to the west of Turkey would be a solution to the region's problems and federation, regional autonomy proposals that saw the Southeastern Question as basically ethnic-strife might only lead to the deterioration of the situation.

In contrast, in Kosovo, we are faced with a completely different picture. Human rights violations on both sides, ethnic cleansing against the Albanians and the Albanians' attacks on Serbs following the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo after NATO bombing, are all the symptoms and indicators of an inter-ethnic conflict between the two communities.

Public surveys made in Kosovo also support this phenomenon and give an idea about the relationship between them. In an attitudinal survey, which was conducted in 1987, when asked whether, in their opinion, it is possible for Serbs and ethnic Albanians to live in a common state, 54.5 percent of the Serbian respondents replied 'yes', 40 percent replied 'no'. 19 percent of the Albanian respondents chose 'yes', 65 percent respondent 'no' to the same question. In response to the question, "In your opinion, whose human rights are violated in Kosovo", only 1.5 percent of the Serbian respondents chose 'Albanians' right' option.

The results on the Albanian side were more striking. None of the Albanian respondents asserted that the Serbs' rights violated in Kosovo. 91 percent chose 'Albanians' rights' choice (Mertus, 1999:317). This survey was made in 1987, when we asked the same questions to Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo today after all events,

as we can predict, results will be probably more disappointing for the co-existence of two nations and the possibility of two nations living together.

4.1.3.Election Results:

There is one source of data on public opinion, that is election results. Turkish Constitution forbids political parties to be established on the basis of class, religion and ethnic groups (Barkey, 1998:135). Since the creation of the Turkish Republic, the Kurds took part in mainstream Turkish parties on the right or left. Over the years, it has been estimated that as many as one-fourth of the members of any parliament may have been of Kurdish origin, but in 1990, following PKK's resolution to establish a legal socialist party in its Second National Congress, HEP (People's Labor Party) was founded as the first legal pro-Kurdish party (Criss, 1995:21).

Although the representatives of the party rejected that they were Kurdish party and extension of PKK, its deputies' provocative acts and policies in line with PKK proved that HEP was a PKK-affiliated party. It was closed down by a Constitutional Court decision in 1993 because of its links to the PKK and its activities endangering the territorial integrity of the Republic (Watt, 1999:632). DEP (the Democracy Party) took the place of HEP, but its fate was not any different from its predecessor. It was to be banned because of the same offences.

This time, a new party, HADEP (People's Democracy Party) was formed as the continuation of DEP. Like its predecessors, HADEP claimed to be separate from PKK. Although there are no organic links between the party and the terrorist organization, it was well known that the party was sympathetic to the PKK. HADEP did not participate in 1994 municipal elections. The 1995 elections were HADEP's first real test. It received only 4.17 percent of all the votes cast nationally. When we

compare this figure with the estimated proportion of Kurds in the population of Turkey, we can say that the policies based on Kurdish nationalism didn't appeal to the Kurds. HADEP's best performance was in the southeastern Turkey. In eastern Turkey where there exists a significant Kurdish population, it could not score the same performance. It got only 3.7 percent of its overall votes in Eastern Anatolia (Sakallioğlu, 1996:17).

HADEP performed even more poorly in major western cities with large Kurdish immigrant population than it did in the east and southeast. It took less than 7 percent of the vote in Adana, less than 3 percent in Ankara and less than 4 percent in Istanbul and Izmir (Bozarslan, 1996:18). These poor scores indicated that the Kurdish population in major cities had become highly integrated into Turkish society and big cities had an important integrative function in this process.

The results of 1999 elections were not much different from the previous election for HADEP. This time, HADEP received 4.7 percent of the vote, far below the 10 percent threshold required by the Constitution to enter the National Assembly. In the east and southeast, only 19.1 percent of the electorate chose HADEP. In metropolises, it garnered 4.3 percent. In 2002 elections, which changed profoundly the political arena of Turkey, HADEP slightly increased its vote and got 6.2 percent of the national vote.

In the last election (March 28,2004), HADEP formed an electoral alliance with the SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) as happened in 1991 national elections. HADEP performed poorly, this time, not only in major western cities but also in Southeastern Turkey. It lost municipal elections in some provinces such as Van, Siirt, Mardin, all of which had been regarded as the fortress of HADEP. HADEP's

performance in the elections illustrates that the Kurdish public does not support policies based on Kurdish ethnicity.

When we look at the election results in Kosovo to understand the public opinion of the Albanians, we realize that the results are consistent with public surveys showing intolerance and division between the Albanian and Serbian communities. In 1991, when the dissolution of former Yugoslavia had started, 87.1 percent of the eligible voters in Kosovo cast their ballots in favor of sovereignty and independence of Kosovo in referendum (Judah, 2000:65). Since then, the Albanians did not take part in the elections conducted in former Yugoslavia. They held their own elections although they were deemed illegal by the Serbian authorities. By declaring their one sided independence, the Albanians expressed their will of living apart from the Serbs.

4.1.4. Inter-marriages Between Different Ethnic Groups:

The degree of intermarriage between the members of different ethnic groups in a society is an important indicator of strength of the social relationships between those groups and it can be used to gain insight into the structure of ethnic and racial relationships.

Marriage can be defined simply as a legal contract between man and woman to form a family. In almost every society, marriage is considered to be the main component of social communities. Marriage relationships are, in general, strongly regulated by family laws and religious rules. This illustrates that marriage is not merely a simple process of spontaneous falling in love. In addition to this, important economic and social considerations play a role in partner selection. Even in some

countries like Turkey, not only the preferences for the partners but also the thoughts of their families and relatives are involved in marriage decision.

Mixed marriages not only link together two individuals, but also the larger groups to which these individuals belong. Intermarriages form a bridge between these larger groups. Furthermore, intermarriages are long-term decisions. If a person does not believe that the spouse's ethnic group and his/her own group are compatible, that person would not enter an inter-ethnic marriage. If intermarriage among the members of different groups is a common phenomenon, we can interpret this as the members of these groups accepting each other as social equals and expressing their will of living together now and in the future (Hosgor and Smiths, 2002:419).

Although there are not certain figures about the degree of intermarriage between the Turks and Kurds, it is estimated that more than one million intermarriages between the Turks and Kurds took place in Turkey and this process continues increasingly because of the ongoing modernization of the Turkish society. It is predicted that the strong migration from East to Western Anatolia and rapid urbanization in recent decades will accelerate the proportion of mixed marriages that promote the social cohesion of Turkish and Kurdish societies.

When we look at the intermarriage rates in Kosovo to gain insight to the quality of the relationships between the Albanians and Serbs, we see that in former Yugoslavia, Albanian-Serbian intermarriage rates were the lowest figure in Yugoslavia where ethnic marriages had been very common between different ethnic groups such as the Bosnians, Croats, and Hungarians.

The findings of the public surveys, election results and high intermarriage rates between the Turks and Kurds reveal that in spite of PKK's attempts to polarize and

create visceral hatred between the two communities, there is not an inter-ethnic strife in Turkey. The region's socio-economic backwardness lies at the root of the Southeastern Question. This does not explain the question of why an inter-ethnic conflict between the Albanians and Serbs erupted in Kosovo, but not between the Turks and Kurds in Turkey.

In the following section, I will concentrate on the factors that shape the relationships between the members of different ethnic groups in a society in general, Turk-Kurd and Serb-Albanian relationships, in particular.

4.2. Basic Factors That Shape Relationships Between The Members Of Different Ethnic Groups In A Society

4.2.1. Identities:

4.2.1.1. Turkish-Kurdish Identities:

More than %90 of today's nation-states carry significant ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities (Kilic, 1998: 91). This situation sometimes leads to conflict between the state and the minority group, sometimes it does not. One of the main factors that shape the relationships among different ethnic groups within a state is how the people of majority and minority groups view each other, rival or compatible (Somer, 2002:81).

Some characteristics of identity such as race, ethnicity are adopted by individuals at birth. The others, mainly the cultural elements of the identity like language, religion, customs constitute the essential parts of the identity and override the native elements of identity in time. Although identities look like static constructs at the beginning, they are, in fact, socially constructed and they change in the course of time (Hosgor and Smiths, 2002:420). For this reason, we have to examine the

social relationships between different ethnic groups in order to understand how their identities are shaped.

Kurds and Turks have been living together in Anatolia for centuries. They are indistinguishable in physical and religious terms. Under the Ottoman millet system, which defined people according to their religious affiliation, the Kurds were not a minority, but a part of the ruling system like the Turks. During the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, although the 1920 Treaty of Sevres gave the right of self-determination to the Kurds, the Kurds supported Turks in the National Independence War and they stood against the French, Greek, Armenian and English forces. In Lausanne Treaty, which established the basis of the Turkish Republic, the Kurds were accepted as equal citizens of Turkey, not minority.

Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, some Kurdish rebellions happened in the east and southeastern Anatolia, but they occurred between local Kurdish tribes and state forces rather than between ethnic Kurds and Turks. PKK was not exception. The polarization between Turkish and Kurdish communities did not happen despite the casualties on both sides. PKK could not start a civil war between the Turks and Kurds.

Substantial proportions of the Kurds see no contradiction between being Kurdish and being Turkish at the same time. The majority of ethnic groups in Turkey such as Balkan and Caucasus immigrants, including the Kurds who mostly integrated accept their current Turkish identity and their ancestral identities together. In a sense Turkish and Kurdish identities are not rival, but they complement each other.

On the other hand, it does not mean that all Kurds embrace the compatible definition of Kurdish and Turkish identities. The PKK members who lived in isolation from the society and some Kurds who live outside Turkey, especially in

Europe are apt to have developed hardened beliefs regarding the incompatibility of the Turkish and Kurdish identities. Nevertheless, they are minority and substantial proportions of Turks and Kurds do not see both identities as rival.

Findings from the surveys support this situation. In a nation wide study, in response to the question 'Do you identify yourself primarily as a Turk, Muslim, Citizen of the Republic of Turkey, Kurd, Zaza, Kurmanji or Alevi', 27 percent replied Turk, 35 percent citizen of Turkey, 31 percent Muslim, only %2.7 and %0.7 of all respondents chose the categories 'Kurd' and 'Zaza' respectively.

Although %12 of the respondents declared Kurdish as their mother tongue, when we take Zaza and Kurd categories together, just 3.4 percent of the respondents identified themselves with Kurdish. At least 71(8.6/12) percent of the Kurdish speakers chose nation-level categories instead of Kurdish identity¹⁷.

Other researches also reached similar results. For example, in a poll conducted in Istanbul, over 13 percent of Istanbul's population declared themselves ethnically Kurdish on both sides of their families and just partly Kurdish, only 3.9 percent of all respondents considered themselves Kurd. Apparently the remainder identified himself or herself as Turkish, Turkish-Muslim or Muslim¹⁸. This outcome clearly proves that a significant number of Kurdish people have integrated into Turkish society and they do not see their ethnic and national identities as mutually exclusive substitutes.

¹⁷ Survey was funded by Bogazici University Research Fund and conducted in November 2001 by a public opinion research company, which surveyed 3086 randomly selected rural and urban residents in 20 provinces.

¹⁸ Research was conducted by Konda Research Company by surveying 15,863 people.

4.2.1.2.Albanian-Serbian Identities:

In Kosovo, there are historically conflicting national identities of the Albanians and Serbs. This finally caused an inter-ethnic conflict between these two nations. As mentioned before, identities are not static and they are made and modified in each generation. Past events and lived experiences play an important role in this process. The Albanians see Kosovo as traditional Albanian populated area and as the cradle of the Albanian nationalism.

The national awakening of the Albanians occurred at the League of Prizren in 1878, but Kosovo also contains places of significance to Serbian national identity, too. The Serbs value Kosovo as the site of their historical Kingdom and the Patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church established in 1346 in Pec (Mertus, 1999:11). In 1389, at the Battle of Kosovo, Serbian King Lazar was defeated at the hands of the Ottoman forces. His death in the battlefield and the demise of the Serbian Kingdom after Kosovo defeat, left considerable impact in the minds of Serbian people. Kosovo became the symbol of Serbian nationalism.

During more than four hundred years of Ottoman rule, Albanians embraced the Muslim religion and the demography of Kosovo changed in favor of the Albanians because of massive population exodus. As a result of the Balkan Wars (1912-13), the Serbs reacquired Kosovo. While the Albanians saw this event as a foreign colonization preventing them from joining the newly constituted state of Albania, the Serbs evaluated it as the end of Muslim rule and the liberalization of Kosovo.

At the end of the First World War, under a Serbian dynasty, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was formed by Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia, including Kosovo. The inter-war years were marked by uneasy cohabitation between the Serbs and Albanians. Serbian oppression in this period towards the Albanians on ethnic

grounds only contributed to the growing of competing national identities of the two nations. During the Second World War, the Albanians sided with Axis forces to get rid of Serbian domination over Kosovo and to become part of the Albanian state. The defeat of the German forces by Marshal Tito brought back Serbian rule to the region. Again, the Albanians comprehended this as the return of Serbian occupation, the Serbs on the contrary, as the regaining of their country.

Some writers (for example, Mertus,1999 and Judah,2000) described Kosovo issue as a marriage that began on bad terms and grew over time. Kosovo had to marry Serbia reluctantly, because regional powers and big states decided in that way in 1913 without taking the consent of the Albanians. This increased the historical hatred between them and strengthened the construction of opposite identities. Until 1990s, tension in Kosovo continued. The Albanians tried to express their uneasiness by student demonstrations, strikes and protests. Finally, increasing Serbian abuse of Albanians that reached ethnic cleansing in Milosevic period made the divorce inevitable for the sake of both nations, and the Albanian and Serbian identities collided.

4.2.2.State Policies:

4.2.2.1.Former Yugoslavia:

Identities are socially constructed and they are vulnerable to changes in their environment. In this process, state policies play an important role. In Kosovo, the misleading policies of Tito such as refraining from giving Kosovar Albanians equal citizenship and republican status and Milosevic's Serbianisation program were the main factors that caused the confronting of oppositional Albanian and Serbian identities that resulted in a civil war.

Kosovo was used by Serbian politicians, especially Milosevic, to gain and maintain power over former Yugoslavia. Milosevic used anti-Albanian Serbian nationalism to build his power base. The mainstream Serbian press joined his campaign. The Albanians were depicted as primitive, traitor and inferior in the media. Feeling of insecurity was created among the Serbs. All these strengthened the negative Albanian image in the minds of ordinary Serbs and were used for the justification of human rights violations against them.

In 1987, Milosevic made a significant visit to Kosovo, which marked a turning point for the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, as well as his political life. He got the opportunity there to use the discontent of the Serb population in favor of his own plans for Serbia. His visit carried the Kosovo issue to the front of public opinion and political agenda. In 1989, he joined the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo commemoration. He delivered a speech there, which offered no hope of reconciliation with the Albanians (Judah, 2000:53). In contrast, his speech only fed nationalist feelings of the Serbs and consolidated his role as the protector of Serbian nation in the eyes of the Serbs and as the only leader who could solve the so-called Serbian Question whose principles were put forward in the 1986 Memorandum.

In 1990s, Milosevic began to put into practice his policies based on de-Albanisation of Kosovo and the spread of Serbian influence over Yugoslavia. He first revoked the autonomous status of Vojvodina and Kosovo. Some Albanian political leaders were arrested. Albanian demonstrations protesting the removal of their autonomous status were suppressed violently by federal troops and the police. His ultra-nationalist actions not only caused an inter-ethnic war in Kosovo but also triggered the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Milosevic first tried to hold together Yugoslavia under Serbian hegemony, but when he saw that it was impossible, he

worked for the expansion of Serbian rule, especially in the territories where substantial Serbian minorities inhabited (Ülger, 1998:168). In this period, the Albanians followed Rugova's pacifist policies to stand against severe Serbian repression.

In the post-Dayton period, it became clear that the ethnic conflict between the Albanians and Serbs would be inevitable. Serbian and Montenegrin civilians were armed by Belgrade. Excessive and indiscriminate use of security forces increased animosity between the Albanian and Serbian communities in Kosovo. Milosevic's de-Albanisation of Kosovo program which reached its final point with the ethnic cleansing and the displacement of more than half a million Albanians finally kindled inter-ethnic conflict. As a result, Kosovo illustrates how recent hatreds manipulated by politicians in addition to ancient hatreds could start a war (Mertus, 1999:262).

4.2.2.2.Turkey:

On the other hand, in Turkey, Turkish politicians did not make the same mistakes as their colleagues did in Serbia. They strongly refrained from using the Southeastern Question as an instrument for gaining power in Turkish political arena and did not exploit the national feelings of the Turkish community. They rightly diagnosed the problem as, socio-economic one, not an inter-ethnic one. That's why; they firstly tried to solve the security dimension of the issue.

In this process, Turkish security forces played the main role. They fought PKK within laws and human rights. Despite the difficulties, Turkish army tried to discriminate between terrorists and innocent civilians. Except some individual human rights violations, this struggle respected human rights. The capture of Öcalan in 1999 and the withdrawal of PKK terrorists out of Turkish borders showed that the

security dimension of the problem was almost solved by right policies of the Turkish state. Now, Turkey focuses on socio-economic aspects of the issue by implementing some economic programs.

4.2.3. Religion:

4.2.3.1. Muslim/Christian cleavage in Yugoslavia:

Religion is one of the main elements that constitute national identity. It has usually been of far greater importance than ethnicity in most communities. We can give Bosnia as an example to support this view. Although both the Serbs and Bosnians come from the same origin, Slav, Muslim/Christian cleavage between these communities caused the evolution of different identities from the same ethnic roots. In the Balkans, the role of religion in the construction of national identities is more clear. Each Orthodox Christian nation has its own church such as the Greek Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Serbian Orthodox Church, and these churches played the main role in the construction of nation states in the Balkans.

In understanding the nature of conflict in Kosovo, we should focus on Christian/Muslim division in the Balkans. Until the 15th century, Kosovo was overwhelmingly populated by Christians. The Islamization of the Albanians reached large proportions in the 16th and 17th centuries and it added religious division between the Albanians and Serbs in addition to ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences (Vickers, 1998:27). Muslim Albanians became part of the ruling class in the Ottoman Empire, which resulted in the identification of Albanians with the Turks in the eyes of Serbs.

While the Serbian nationalism developed against Ottoman rule and created the image of oppressor Turk or Muslim among the Serbian people, Albanian nationalism grew mainly against the Serbs. The Albanians sided with the Ottomans against other Balkan nations, including Serbia during the Balkan wars.

Nevertheless, we cannot call Kosovo question as completely ethnic-religious conflict. The Albanians are not homogenous a nation in terms of religion. Although majority of the Albanians are Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox Christian Albanians constitute some part of the population. Religion was not a factor in the development of the Albanian nationalism. There was no Islamic political movement among the Albanians (Malcolm, 1998:124). Where religion is a factor in the conflict is on the Serbian side. The Serbs portray Kosovo, containing monasteries founded during the Medieval Serbian Kingdom, as their 'Holy Land' and describe themselves as a nation who sacrificed itself in the name of Christianity against Muslim-Turk advance in the Balkans (Vickers, 1998:26).

In sum, religious cleavage between the Serbs and Albanians contributed to the establishment of conflicting identities of the two nations. Kosovo's religious importance in the eyes of the Serbs made the Kosovo issue more complicated. On the Serbian side, Kosovo question is an ethnic-religious conflict. On the other hand, it is more accurate to describe the problem as only ethnic one for the Albanian side.

4.2.3.2.Binding Role Of Islam in Turkey:

There is no religious division between the Turks and Kurds in Turkey. Their common religion-Islam- played a bridging role between the two communities. It facilitated and accelerated the integration of both groups with each other. Under the Ottoman millet system, the Kurds, along with other Muslims were part of Muslim

community consisting of different ethnic groups. Only non-Muslims, such as the Christians and Jews were recognized as minorities. The same system has been continued by the new Republic. During the population exchange with Greece, ethnically Turkish non-Muslim groups were sent to Greece alongside the Greeks and the immigration of ethnically non-Turkish Muslim groups, like the Albanians, from the Balkans was welcomed by Turkey.

Although the abolishing of the Caliphate in 1924 and Ataturk's reforms lessened the role of religion in state structure, Islam keeps its unifying role in social and cultural life. (Oran, 1996:36). Even in selection of marriage partner in Turkey, the spouse's ethnicity is less important whereas its religion is more. For this reason, inter-ethnic marriages between the Turks and Kurds are common.

4.2.4. Demography and Structure of the Turkish Society:

The size, condensation and dispensation of an ethnic group within a society are important factors shaping the relations between different ethnic groups. Although the Serbs do not accept the Albanians as a nation but national minority, the Albanians, nearly two million, are numerically bigger than Montenegro and Slovenian republics. After the Serbs and the Croats, the Albanians have been the third biggest nation in the former Yugoslavia. More importantly, the Albanians constitute overwhelmingly the majority in Kosovo. More than %90 of the population in Kosovo is Albanian (Pipa and Repishti, 1984:150-154). This territorial condensation is one of the main factors that enlarged the division between the Albanians and Serbs and prevented the integration of the Albanians into the country they lived. It also explains why a conflict happened in Kosovo but not Vojvodina, which was in the same situation as the former.

During the Serbian rule, the Hungarians in Vojvodina lost their majority in their autonomous province because of Serbian migration towards the developed regions of Vojvodina. For this reason, the destruction of Vojvodina's autonomy did not cause a conflict and a referendum for the independence of Vojvodina did not occur in Vojvodina (Ünal, 1998:135). In the same period, the demographic structure of Kosovo changed in favor of the Albanians thanks to their high birth rate. Despite Serbian governments' encouragements to reverse Serbian outmigration from Kosovo, the Serb population decreased. This accelerated the Albanisation of Kosovo. Milosevic's Serbianisation program based on forced expulsions and ethnic cleansing against the Albanians resulted in NATO intervention to stop humanitarian disaster in Kosovo.

The Kurds are by far the largest non-Turkish-speaking group in Turkey. Though some experts (for example; Cornell, 2001; Oran, 1996) claim that the demography is one of the major reasons that affected negatively the integration of the Kurds with the rest of the country, this is partly true. Main reason was geography, not demography. The geographic location of the Kurds played the main role in preventing the integration.

When the Turkish Republic was declared in 1923, the Kurds were living mainly in the east and southeastern Anatolia. These regions' distance from the administrative center and Ankara's inabilities mostly hindered the inclusion of the Kurds into nation-building process.

Until the 1960s, which the modernization of Turkey started, the regional distribution of the Kurds within Turkey did not change considerably. In 1965, Kurds had constituted %1.24 of the population in the Marmara region, % 0.36 in the Aegean and %4.98 in the Mediterranean region. Since then there has been massive

movement of the Kurds towards western and southern parts of the country. By 1990, % 41.96 of the total population in the East and %64.98 in the Southeastern region were Kurds (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997:120).

After increasing PKK terror and economic difficulties in the 1990s, Kurdish migration to western Turkey intensified and the regional distribution of the Kurds altered significantly. Their proportion in the population of western regions increased drastically during the last two decades. Today, it is estimated that more than half of the Kurds in Turkey are living out of the east and southeastern regions. The large-scale Kurdish migrations automatically have led to the mixing of Kurds and Turks in the cities of western Turkey. PKK unwillingly accelerated this development.

We have to lastly mention about the structure of Turkish society, which is the catalysis of Turkish-Kurdish social integration. The tolerant and inclusive understanding of Turkish society facilitated the establishment of harmony within different ethnic groups in Turkey. Its empire legacy of tolerance to other nations and religions is still alive within Turkish people.

There is no discrimination against individual Kurds as well as other ethnic groups such as Lazs, Circassians. There are so many Kurds who have risen to the ranks of generals and cabinet ministers and even to the presidency of the Republic. More than one-fourth of the deputies elected to the National Assembly have been of Kurdish origin since 1923, which is unimaginable for the Albanians in Serbian parliament in Belgrade and unacceptable for the Serbs.

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSION:

When the conflict between the Albanians and Serbs intensified and turned into a humanitarian disaster in 1998, Turkey, despite its close ties to the Albanians in the Balkans and its Albanian/Balkan origin citizens' pressure, did not act more actively as it manifested in the war in Bosnia. It followed a cautious policy and preferred only to act in line, and together, with the international community. Its policy vis-a vis the conflict in Kosovo was passive and ineffective in comparison with Turkey's energetic and active diplomacy during the conflict in Bosnia. Although Turkey's economic problems, the deterioration of its relations with Syria during the summer of 1998 and the eventual expulsion of the PKK leader from Syria distracted Turkey's attention from external developments to internal events, main reason for Turkey's cautious and silent policy stemmed from the fear that a parallelism between Kosovo question and its Southeastern Question could be established.

As reflected in the Turkish press (Cumhuriyet, 12.03.1988), during İsmail Cem's (then Turkish Foreign Minister) meeting with Milosevic, the Serb leader regarded Kosovo issue as the internal issue of a Yugoslavia similar to Turkey's

Southeastern Question. Even in Turkey, some writers (for example, Akfirat, 1998) were openly against NATO intervention into Kosovo. In their opinion, Kosovo case might become a precedent and can be used one day against Turkey in similar circumstances.

Assigning similarities of Kosovo to Turkey's Southeastern Question is not accurate. Both issues must be evaluated within their own contexts and peculiarities. On the one side, in Kosovo, there is an Albanian-Serbian conflict, which carries all the characteristics of inter-ethnic strife. On the other side, in Turkey, there is a socio-economic problem, which was exploited by some internal and external groups.

Since the end of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, the history of the relations between the Albanians and Serbs were in general more confrontational rather than cooperative. Whoever controlled Kosovo, tried to oppress, assimilate and expel the other. The inclusion of Kosovo under Serbian rule in 1913 marked the beginning of the problem, established the core of the conflict and caused the development of Albanian nationalism mainly against the Serbs.

The Albanians have never felt as the real part of the Slavic Yugoslavia and as the equal citizens of the state neither in Tito period nor in Milosevic's Yugoslavia. They have been generally treated as second-class citizens. Their existence within the Federation was not their own choice, but a consequence of political conditions.

Albanian resistance in Kosovo has never ceased. During Tito period, they expressed their discontent several times with demonstrations, strikes and boycotts such as 1968 and 1981 student demonstrations and hunger strike in 1989. Constitutional amendments in 1974, which granted an autonomous status and greater autonomy to Kosovo, could not remedy the problem. Though the Albanians acquired very large degree of autonomy with the 1974 Constitution, the Albanians remained

dissatisfied. In their view, the Constitution was satisfactory for a minority group, but they were not minority in Yugoslavia. They were numerically bigger than the Slovenes, Montenegrins and Macedonians. Only republican status could meet their expectations. With the growing autonomy of the Kosovo province, they intensified the process of Albanisation in Kosovo. They developed their own national conscious. The Serbs interpreted all these events as the slipping of Kosovo out of their hands.

In the post-Tito period, nationalism, not only in Kosovo, but also in all republics of Yugoslavia became a very strong force and took the place of Tito's "Brotherhood and Unity" motto. Throughout the 1980s, nationalist struggle between the Serbs and Albanians accelerated. In this phase, Milosevic came to power by playing the nationalist card and exploiting the nationalist fervor among the Serbs. In February 1989, the Serbian National Assembly passed the constitutional amendments, which effectively led to the loss of autonomy in Kosovo. Heavy police repression, human rights violations followed this. During the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the Albanians took a path of Rugova's "civil disobedience". They refrained from violent actions and armed conflict with the Serbian security forces. This situation continued until the Dayton Agreement. When the Kosovo issue was not addressed in the agreement, the Albanians had to reconsider their passive resistance policy, which proved to be ineffective.

By 1997, a new armed movement, KLA, which challenged Rugova's policies, engaged in an armed struggle against Serbian oppression. Milosevic's policies based on the forced expulsions of more than 90 percent of Albanians from their homes to change the demographic structure of Kosovo, the destruction of villages and ethnic cleansing against the Albanians activated NATO military intervention in 1999, which

have frozen the conflict between the Serbs and Albanians. NATO intervention provided the withdrawal of Serbian forces and the return of displaced persons.

Kosovo showed what would happen when two nationalisms confronts each other over the same territory and how the historically confronting identities used by politicians to gain and maintain their power, starts an inter-ethnic conflict. Today, though five years passed since NATO military intervention in Kosovo, as the events in March 2004, the animosity between the two groups is still alive and the probability of co-existence of two sides is far away. The restoration of the autonomy as stipulated by 1974 Constitution now cannot be solution to the problem anymore. The Albanians are so close to their ultimate goal, independence, but it seems that as happened in 1913, the international community will decide the fate of Kosovo again.

On the other hand, Turkey's Southeastern Question is mainly a socio-economic problem. The conflict occurred between PKK members and the state security forces, not between Kurdish people and the state. With the end of the Ottoman Empire, after an Independence War, state-building process was completed and Turkish Republic was created, but nation-building process still continues. Southeastern problem is the main symptom of this uncompleted nation-building process.

Although so many things have been done until now, there are still things that have to be done. The integration of the southeastern Anatolia economically and socially with the rest of the country must be completed for the permanent solution of the problem. Otherwise, southeastern region will continue to be the softy belly of Turkey and will be vulnerable to the exploitation of foreign countries as happened since the creation of the Republic.

With the capture of Öcalan in 1999, Turkey mostly solved the security dimension of the problem. The changes in the regional balances and strategic factors

in addition to Turkish security forces' success in eliminating most of the PKK units, played an important role in reaching this result, but it doesn't mean that Southeastern Question has been solved. PKK was the result of the region's socio-economic situation. That's why, only when Turkey provides socio-economic integration of the region with western Turkey, the problem will be solved.

Some scholars (for example, Ergil,1995; Barkey and Fuller,1998) who assert that Southeastern Question is fundamentally an ethnic one, propose some solutions ranging from cultural and political autonomy to federation or secession. These proposals are the product of wrong diagnosis of the problem and do not correspond to Turkey's realities socially, politically and economically. More importantly, these are not the preferences of the people as the findings of the public surveys proved. In contrast, they might create inter-communal tensions between the Turks and Kurds.

The Kurds enjoy the same rights, as all other ethnic groups under Turkish laws, thus do not need additional privileges. Autonomy or similar options could leave an impression that the Kurds have more privileges than the rest of the population and other groups such as Circassians, Lazs and Arabs might follow them¹⁹. As Süleyman Demirel (then the President of the Republic) remarked that if the Kurds were given additional rights, these would be equivalent to privileges, which would make other Turkish citizens second-class citizens (Turkish Daily News, May 8,1995).

Making such concessions to the Kurds could reverse the integration of the Kurds into Turkish society and create 'us' and 'other' division among Turkish population. Especially considering the fact that nearly more than half of the Kurds in Turkey no longer live in the east and southeastern Turkey but have moved to more western parts of the country, these proposals are not applicable. The Kurds

¹⁹ According to the news in Milliyet, February 25,2004,Circassians applied to the RTUK (Radio-Television Committee) for broadcasting in Circassian language.

themselves will be ultimately the biggest losers if such solutions are implemented. There would be tremendous public pressure on the Kurds to leave the West and similarly on the Turks and other ethnic groups in the East to move to the West. Moreover, Ankara would become less willing to subsidize southeastern region if Turkey were to be a federal state, because, then, it would be difficult to convince some of the other regions to transfer such sums to the East as the state has been doing. We saw this trend in former Yugoslavia. Economically developed republics like Slovenia and Croatia rejected to contribute to the Federal fund, which was used in the less developed regions of Yugoslavia like Kosovo.



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