

**THE PEACE PROCESS WITH THE PKK AND THE TURKISH STATE:
MECHANISMS FOR PARTICIPATION**

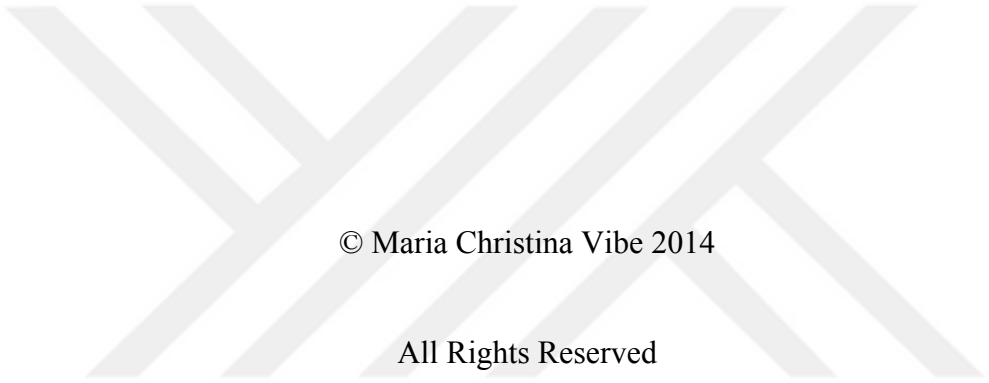
Maria Christina Vibe



Submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Sabanci University

Spring 2014



© Maria Christina Vibe 2014

All Rights Reserved

THE PEACE PROCESS WITH THE PKK AND THE TURKISH STATE: MECHANISMS FOR PARTICIPATION

Maria Christina Vibe

Conflict Analysis and Resolution M.A. Thesis

Thesis Supervisor, Nimet Beriker

Key Words

Participation; inclusion; peace process; negotiations; Kurdish conflict.

Abstract

The conflict between the Turkish State and the Kurdish populations of Turkey can be summarized into four general time periods: from the 1920's – 60's, where the Turkish nation was being formed, during the 1960's-80's where its foundations began to be contested, the 1980's – to the end of the 90's, where a civil war ensued, and up until the first decade of the 2000's, where democratization efforts ensued. Following the second millennium, and the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), attempts at a political peace process to solve the Kurdish conflict (already commenced, in the 90's) increased. Firstly, with the secret "Oslo Talks" between 2008 – 2011, and then followed by the on-going peace process, which commenced between the Turkish State and the PKK in 2012.

The aim of this research is to examine participation mechanisms of civil society, and other societal sectors, individuals and organizations, in the ongoing Kurdish Peace Process between the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Turkish State, with the help of the "Broadening Participation" framework. This thesis seeks to evaluate the analytical strength of this framework in the context of the Kurdish Peace Process, and through this, provide an overview of participation mechanisms in this case study, in order to identify and describe additional instances, also beyond the framework's reach. This research will take a broader view on participation, examining inclusion in the wider peace process, not limiting its view to only the ongoing peace negotiations. Thus it will examine inclusion models working to influence track I, but also, a wider array of activities of different sectors and tracks, in attempting to influence a resolution and transformation of conflict at all societal levels.

PKK VE TÜRK DEVLETİ BARIŞ SÜRECİ: KATILIM İÇİN YÖNTEMLER

Maria Christina Vibe

Conflict Analysis and Resolution M.A. Thesis

Thesis Supervisor Nimet Beriker

Anahtar Sözcükler

Katılım; dahil etme; barış süreci; uzlaşma; Kürt Sorunu

Özet

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti ve Türkiye'deki Kürt nüfus arasındaki çatışma dört genel zaman diliminde özetlenebilir: 1920'lerden – '60'lara, Türk milletinin şekillenme dönemi; 1960'lar – 1980'ler, bu temellerinin tartışmaya açılması; 1980'lerden – '90ların sonlarına, iç savaşın ortaya çıkışı; ve 2000'lerin ilk on yılına kadar, demokratikleşme teşebbüsleri. İki binlerden itibaren Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin (AKP) iktidara gelmesiyle siyasal barış sürecinde Kürt Sorunu'nun çözümüne yönelik ('90'larda başlayan fakat sonuç vermeyen) teşebbüsler artmıştır. Bunların ilki 2008 – 2011 yılları arasında gerçekleşen gizli “Oslo Görüşmeleri” ve onu takiben Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti ve PKK arasında 2012 yılından beri devam etmekte olan barış sürecidir. Bütün barış girişimlerine rağmen anlaşmaya varabilmek adına uzlaşmalarda kat edilen yol çok fazla değildir.

Bu araştırmanın amacı Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti ve PKK arasında devam eden Kürt Barış Süreci'ne “Katılımın Genişletilmesi” kavramsal çerçevesinin de yardımıyla sivil toplumun ve diğer toplumsal sektörlerin, bireylerin ve kuruluşların katılım mekanizmalarını incelemektir. Tez, bu çerçevenin Kürt Barış Süreci bağlamında bu kavramsal çerçevenin analitik yeterliliğini değerlendirmeyi amaçlarken, aynı zamanda çerçevenin odağında ve ötesinde yer alan diğer örneklerin belirlenmesi ve tanımlanması amacıyla katılım mekanizmalarına genel bir bakış da sunmaktadır. Bu araştırma barış sürecinde tarafların dahil edilmesi pratiklerini incelerken devam eden barış müzakerelerine bağlı kalmadan katılımı geniş bir ölçekten ele alacaktır. Bu yüzde resmi görüşmeleri etkileyecek dahil etme modellerinin yanısıra bütün toplumsal seviyelerde çatışmanın çözümü ve dönüştürülmesi için farklı sektörlerin faaliyetlerini de inceleyecektir.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapters:

1. Introduction	1
2. Inclusion in Peace Processes: A Literature Review	4
Terminology and Definitions	5
a) Inclusion Literature in Peace Negotiations and Political Transitions.....	10
b) Democratic Participation and Social Movements	14
c) Peacebuilding and Multi-track diplomacy	18
d) “Broadening Participation in Track One Peace Negotiations” Project.....	23
3. Methodology	29
Data Collection.....	30
Selecting the Case Studies of Participation Actors and Mechanisms	33
4. Chronology of the Kurdish Conflict and Peace Processes in Turkey	37
Chronology of the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey	
a) 1920-60: Nation Building	39
b) 1960 – 1980’s – Contesting the Nation State	41
c) 1980 – 90s Civil War	43
d) 2000 – 2009 ”Democratic Opening”	45
Chronology of the Peace Processes to solve the Kurdish Conflict	
a) Earlier Attempts at Track I Peace Initiatives	49
b) The “Democratic opening”	50
c) Oslo Talks	54
d) Recent Peace Initiatives (2012 – 2014)	61
2014 – Elections and a stalled process?	83
5. Analysis: Participation Mechanisms in the Kurdish Peace Processes	93
Selected Cases of Participation	93
Presenting and Analyzing the Data.....	153
6. Conclusion	172
Theoretical Implications	172
Policy Implications	175

Appendices:

Appendix A: Chronology of Peace Processes, Conflict and Participation Initiatives ...178	
Appendix B: Description of Events and Activities of Inclusion in the Peace Processes ... 222	
Appendix C: Interview Protocol and Overview of Interviews Conducted	268
Bibliography	270

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1 - The 9 Models of the “Broadening Participation” Framework 32

Table 2 - Participation Case Studies: Actors and Initiatives 33

Table 3 - Summary of main activity, model type, and additional activities, per case
166 – 169

Table 4 - Model Occurrence in the Broadening Participation Framework 172

Table 5 - Interviews Conducted 270



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP – Justice and Development Party
BİKG – Women’s Initiative for Peace
BDP – Peace and Democracy Party
CRC – Constitutional Reconciliation Commission
IHD – Human Rights Foundation
PKK – Kurdistan Workers Party
TEPAV – Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey
TESEV – Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation



Chapter 1 - Introduction

Introduction

The aim of this research is to examine participation mechanisms of civil society, and other societal sectors, individuals and organizations, in the ongoing Kurdish Peace Process between the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Turkish State, with the help of the “Broadening Participation” framework.^a This thesis seeks to evaluate the analytical strength of this framework in the context of the Kurdish Peace Process, and through this, provide an overview of participation mechanisms in this case study, in order to identify and describe additional instances, also beyond the framework’s reach. This research will take a broader view on participation, examining inclusion in the wider peace process, not limiting its view to only the ongoing peace negotiations. Thus it will examine inclusion models working to influence Track I, but also, a wider array of activities of different sectors and Tracks (1.5, II and III), in attempting to build peace.

The political rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, who came to power in 2002, will be examined. There is a prevalent view that their political tenure has brought the most progress to the process of ending the violent conflict between the Turkish State and the Kurds of Turkey. The period of the AKP’s rule has undoubtedly brought on the largest attempts to solve the Kurdish conflict, during which Track I initiatives such as the secret “Oslo Talks”, which commenced in 2008 and unsuccessfully concluded in September 2011,¹ took place. Recent talks re-commenced, and have been ongoing directly between the PKK leadership and its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, and the Turkish state, since October 2012. Hence, the time scope of this research will be the beginning of the Oslo Talks in 2008, up until the local elections taking place in March 2014, where the AKP once again won a sweeping majority.

This research aims to ultimately give an overview of the types of participation of citizens, organizations and other societal actors in the Kurdish peace processes, at various tracks and different channels, in the selected time period (2008 – 2014).^b

¹ “Turkey: The PKK and a Kurdish Settlement”, (Istanbul/Brussels: International Crisis Group (ICG), 2012)

According to Spurk, 2010,² civil society is increasingly being seen as one of the basic pillars of democracy. In the “Broadening Participation in Track One Peace Negotiations” project, participation takes into account “...all relevant societal and political groups in a context besides the main parties to the conflict.” This extensive (ongoing) study takes into account participation not only into peace negotiations, and their implementation, but also political transitions. The theoretical framework of the “Broadening Participation” project is a multi-case academic study, which (as can be inferred from the projects title) seeks to move beyond the debate of including or excluding civil society, but also to investigate the mechanisms for participation of a wider range of actors in society as well. Hence, it is seen that the study of civil society, and other sectors beyond this, are becoming of central importance to study in both the realms of conflict resolution, transformation, and also in the policy world, not least in response to real-time challenges and conflict dynamics internationally, which are increasingly undermining past, state-centric approaches.

This thesis will include an overview and summary of the research, in the current chapter, followed by a conceptual discussion on political participation and review of the relevant literature, in Chapter 2. This chapter will then be followed by an outline of the methodology employed to conduct this research in Chapter 3, including the presentation of the nine selected case studies of societal actors (selected from the chronology of participation detailed in Appendix A and its general description in Appendix B). Furthermore, a historical background of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, and description of the chronology of peace processes will be presented in Chapter 4. The presentation of the data obtained and an empirical description of the history of the instances of participation and inclusion, in parallel to these peace processes, will be outlined in detail in Chapter 5. This chapter will also present the data obtained from these selected cases, and the analysis of these, through the coding of the models and mechanisms of inclusion that took place. Lastly, a conclusion will be outlined, in Chapter 6, where the theoretical, practical and policy-oriented findings of this research will be discussed.

² Christoph Spurk, “Understanding Civil Society” In *Civil society and peacebuilding: A critical assessment*, Ed., Thania Paffenholz, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2010), p. 3.

This research was completed by research conducted in Istanbul, Turkey, mainly in the timespan June 2013 – June 2014. Through semi-structured personal interviews and media monitoring in this time period, a review of a wide range of societal and political actors in different sectors of society; such as civil society, the private sector, women's organizations, members of cultural life, academia, political parties, public figures and leaders, as well as policy makers and governmental representatives, in order to identify actors activities and inclusion in the ongoing, and previous, Kurdish peace processes.



^a The “Broadening Participation in Track One Peace Negotiations” Project, is a research project under to coordination of Dr. Thania Paffenholz from the Centre on Conflict Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), at the Graduate Institute Geneva, in cooperation with Bilkent University (Dr. Esra Çuhadar), and TUFTS University. The project is supported by the Governments of Switzerland, Norway, Turkey, Finland and Germany (Zivik/ifa). Please see the project website for more detailed information: <http://graduateinstitute.ch/home/research/centresandprogrammes/ccdp/ccdp-research/projects/current-projects/broadening-participation-in-trac.html>

^b This research concludes it's investigation with the March 2014 local elections.

Chapter 2 – Inclusion in Peace Processes: A Literature Review

This research aims to evaluate the analytical strength of the “Broadening Participation”¹ Framework, in order to provide an overview of the activities and types of inclusion mechanisms taking place in the Kurdish peace processes in Turkey. The Broadening Participation study seeks to follow up on the theoretical discussions gaining importance in the field of conflict resolution and transformation, and the study of peace processes, negotiations and political transitions, stressing the importance of participation/inclusion. This thesis aims to use this framework, but also to move beyond it, in terms of taking a broader view on participation, not limiting itself solely to the framework’s models, but to a broader range of additional peacebuilding Track I, 1.5, and III activities as well, which form part of the wider peace process efforts, beyond the scope of negotiations.

The increased focus of international organizations,^a and in the policy realm in general, on the importance of civil society involvement and other excluded sectors involvement in political negotiations during peace and political transition processes is clear. Moreover, the complimenting societal dialogue needed for transforming conflict peacefully, is now acknowledged beyond the narrow scope of the peacebuilding and conflict transformation literature. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) for instance, is focusing on the importance of civil society in strengthening a democratic, just and integrated society, in processes of development and transition, and peace processes. They outline some mechanisms of participatory dialogue to reach these ends, and the clear benefit seen to be gained through this process, including: awareness-raising; building positive and social relations; the quality of outcomes; and credibility.² The evidence of the increasing importance of the concept of inclusion in the policy and practice field can also be witnessed in the presence of an

¹ “Broadening Participation in Track One Peace Negotiations” Project, Paffenholz CCDP, Graduate Institute Geneva, with Çuhadar, Bilkent University.

² Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (DESA), *Participatory Dialogue: Towards a Stable, Safe and Just Society for All*, (New York: United Nations Publications, 2007).

expert on “gender and social inclusion” on the United Nations Mediation Expert Team for 2013, to name one example of many.³

Increased understanding and research to inform both theory and the practice world is therefore needed, as mediators and practitioners have tended to favor the exclusion of civil society and other sectors from negotiations; although several theorists have generally advocated for their inclusion.^b This has sparked a marked dissonance between the theory and practice worlds.^c This evidences a current deficit and marked need for further research and guidelines as to the ways in which civil society and other sectors participate, and may be included, in negotiated settlements and beyond, but also as to what the outcome of such inclusive practices are, and how best to manage them. Civil society and other sectors participation are favorably viewed in order to ensure sustainability and effectiveness of negotiations; ownership, sustainability and implementation; and outreach, in a given political transition or peace process.⁴

In the following section, the subject matter shaping the terminology and the theoretical backbone of this thesis will be discussed, followed by an outline of the related literature. Then, the outline of the portion of theoretical framework (“Broadening Participation” project) used in this thesis will be introduced, followed by a discussion of the advantages and limits of employing this approach, incorporating previous arguments.

Terminology and Definitions

The terms “inclusion” and “participation” are often used inter-changeably in the literature on negotiations, whether dealing with peace negotiations or political transitions. An ongoing debate has been taking place in both the practice and theoretical field about the concept of “inclusion”, and if the participation of women should be lumped together with that of civil society and other sectors, and the wider society, or not.^d Mainly, it is women’s organizations and movements that advocate for and refer to

³ “Standby Team of Mediation Experts”, United Nations Department of Political Affairs, accessed April 12, 2014, https://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/standby_team.

⁴ DESA, *Participatory Dialogue: Towards a Stable, Safe and Just Society for All*.

the term “inclusion” (thereby mainly focusing on women’s inclusion) in peace or political negotiations, and the wider peace process, while the term “participation” can be seen to generally refer to more generally to a cross-section of various social groupings. The “Broadening Participation in Track One Peace Negotiations” project,^e for instance, uses both terms interchangeably in order to focus on the important dimension of gender, which cuts across all societal groupings, but also that of wider participation of various social groups. Clearly, this is still an emerging field of study, with terminological uncertainties persisting, with a need to produce more research and standardized clarity in the conceptual literature to inform both theory and practice.

The terms “inclusion” and “participation”, as explained above, will be used interchangeably in this thesis, referring in this case to the various mechanisms set in place by different social groups, institutions and individuals to prepare, influence, support, contest and/or accompany an entire peace process, as well as its future consolidation.

Furthermore, in order to get a clearer picture as to which actors will be examined in this research, we should look at the term “civil society”. Definitions of the concept of “civil society” have been a messy and contested, in a wide variety of academic fields. Nilsson, 2012, sees civil society as “...as separate from the state and political parties, and consists of the wide range of voluntary organizations in society such as religious associations, women’s organizations, human rights groups, and trade unions.”⁵ Paffenholz, 2014, on the other hand, defines civil society as: “...organizations that take voluntary collective action around shared interests, purposes, and values and that are distinct from those of the state, family, and the market.”⁶ The latter author also sees this generalized actor as consisting of “... a large and diverse set of organizations such as trade unions, professional associations, human rights groups, faith-based organizations,

⁵ Desiree Nilsson, “Anchoring the Peace: Civil Society Actors in Peace Accords and Durable Peace”, *International Interactions*, 38 (2012): 2, 243 – 266, p. 245.

⁶ Thania Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Beyond the Inclusion–Exclusion Dichotomy”, *Negotiation Journal*, 30 (2014): 1, 69–91, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nej.12046/abstract>, p. 70.

research institutions, social movements, and peace-building NGOs, as well as traditional and community groups.”⁷ Clearly, the term is far-reaching and seems non-exhaustive.

There is an ongoing debate between notions of what civil society “is”, and what it includes, exemplified for instance, in the distinction made between “modern”, Westernized and professionalized NGO’s, and “traditional”, Non-Western associations, such as religious charities, grassroots or community organizations.⁸ The professionalization of civil society and NGO’s, and the debate between the roles of NGO’s versus grassroots is one particularly important to discussions pertaining to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, especially in cases of foreign humanitarian intervention. However, this discussion is important intellectually, in the study of civil society in peace negotiations, processes and political transitions, as well.

In terms of the role of civil society in ethno-political conflict Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, argue that the literature in this realm is “largely embryonic”, especially in terms of examining the role that civil society may play in both the escalation and resolution of such conflicts.⁹ While, they argue, civil society in divided ethno-political societies are often either analyzed to be fundamentalist or nationalistic, or alternatively, solely as drivers of democratization, diplomacy and economic modernization, their further local contributions and influence in the dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding are ignored.

Marchetti and Tocci, coin the term “conflict society”, addressing civil society in societies at conflict, in stressing the importance of including society, and civil society (and international and trans-national movements, which are not covered in this thesis), in the analysis of the dynamics in the propagation, but also in the resolution of conflicts.^f They also emphasize the dual character of civil society, which can

⁷ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, p. 70.

⁸ For instance: Kaja Borchgrevink, *Religious Actors and Civil Society in Post-2001 Afghanistan*, (Oslo: Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), 2007); Raffaele Marchetti and Nathalie Tocci “Conflict society: understanding the role of civil society in conflict”, *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 21 (2009): 2, 201-217, doi: 10.1080/14781150902872091; Paffenholz, Ed., *Civil society and peacebuilding* (2010).

⁹ Marchetti and Tocci “Conflict society”, (2009).

compromise both “civil” and “uncivil” groups.¹⁰

Paffenholz’s work, 2014,¹¹ provides the first comprehensive attempt at outlining a framework to include civil society into Track One peace negotiations, despite previous existing studies touching on the same subject.⁸ A tentative framework of 9 non-mutually exclusive models of inclusion in peace negotiations and political transitions (negotiated track I settlements), were identified by the author. Paffenholz’s theoretical models of participation will be used in this research, as a starting point for the classification of the identified instances of inclusion, to test its validity and reach to capture the identified participation activities in this case study of the Kurdish peace processes in Turkey.

Although Paffenholz, 2014, deals with peace negotiations, the later ongoing research project under the auspices of Paffenholz, as mentioned earlier, entitled “Broadening Participation in Track One Peace Negotiations”, is attempting to clarify and find empirical evidence for these models, expanding its view to include political transitions as well. Moreover, not only civil society, but also other sectors inclusion in negotiated settlements such as: religious communities, the business sector, labor unions, “spoilers”, individual citizens and grassroots movements, and political parties are studied in this research project. The broader view taken on the actors of inclusion and participation (not just “civil society”) will also be adopted in this thesis.

However, this thesis will also attempt to further broaden the scope employed in the “Broadening Participation” project, by utilizing arguments from peacebuilding and democratization literature to examine the trajectory of the wider peace process, which is not only limited to the peace negotiation phase. The “Broadening Participation” project examines 40 case studies of negotiated settlements encompassing peace negotiations and political transitions, and is therefore agreement, and implementation-focused. However, this present research only examines one case, where an agreement has never been reached, which is that of the Kurdish peace process in Turkey, thereby allowing more depth to be pursued. For instance, more detailed and specific activities and mechanism of participation/inclusion labeled loosely as “peacebuilding” activities of

¹⁰ Marchetti and Tocci “Conflict society”, (2009).

¹¹ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014).

civil society and other sectors, will be described in this case study; thereby going beyond that of solely identifying examples of the “Broadening Participation” study’s 9 models. This will be an attempt to further broaden and deepen the view on inclusion, in not only peace negotiations, but that of the wider peace process, examining the activities of a cross-section of tracks and sectors, in their efforts to address peacebuilding and conflict resolution activities in conversation, or in parallel, with the peace negotiations.

Paffenholz’s previous study, 2010, outlines different “functions”^h civil society can fill for performing peacebuilding roles in peace processes (as opposed to the 9 models of the “Broadening Participation” framework, which constitute direct mechanisms of inclusion/participation in the negotiation phase of a peace process or political transition). Though the discussion of these “functions” is beyond the scope of this thesis, arguments will be made conclusively about how the 9 models of the “Broadening Participation” framework can be enriched or broadened, by considering the additional, peacebuilding (Track 1.5, II and III) instances included in this research, or the functions already outlined by Paffenholz. Such a critique can help to push this framework, or similar ones, to produce a more “bottom-up” view on participation, as well as to be able to capture a wider range of inclusion activities, in the extremely rich and varied realm that is participation in the wider lens of a peace process, not limited to the negotiation phase.

In the following section the currents of literature on these issues will be reviewed in order to gain an overview of the multi-disciplined background and composition of the study of inclusion and participation in Track I peace negotiations and political transitions, but also that of wider peace processes. The review will be structured as follows: section a) will look at literature encompassing participation in peace negotiations and political transitions; b) democratic governance and social movement literature, in the fields of political science and comparative politics; c) Peacebuilding literature and the study of multi-track diplomacy in peace processes; and lastly, d) the ongoing research project and framework of “Broadening Participation”, will be outlined. Lastly, the theoretical approach selected for this present study will be summarized and explained, along with the backdrop of the previous conceptual discussion, and the following literature review.

a) Inclusion Literature in Peace Negotiations and Political Transitions

This literature on participation in the conflict resolution and transformation field stresses why mechanisms of inclusion should be in place throughout the agenda setting of a peace process, in order to foster ownership and legitimacy for the process in civil society, and thus, also in the wider society.¹² The importance of formal and informal consultative methods, for receiving input and sharing the content in such, generally, elite-driven processes, finds support in the literature.¹³ Research has demonstrated that peace negotiations and political transitions pose a unique political opportunity to strengthen and increase democratization and the strengthening of rights,¹⁴ not least for disadvantaged groups, as for instance, the most obvious example of women. Conflict transformation especially situates such processes in a much broader and further-reaching view on transforming not only conflict, but also society, in a movement from “negative” to “positive” peace, as coined by Johan Galtung,¹⁵ or of the structural transformation for peace, as outlined and advocated by John Paul Lederach.¹⁶

The role of civil society has been studied more generally in peace processes in a range of studies.¹⁷ However, Paffenholz, 2014, outlines that the particular role civil society

¹² Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014).

¹³ Herbert C. Kelman “Negotiation as interactive problem solving”, *International Negotiation: A Journal of Theory and Practice*, 1(1996): 1, 99-123; Harold H. Saunders, “A Public Peace Process: Sustained dialogue to transform racial and ethnic conflicts”, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 2001).

¹⁴ Christine Bell, and Catherine O’Rourke, “The people’s peace? Peace agreements, civil society, and participatory democracy” *International Political Science Review* 28 (2007): 3, 293–324; Jacqui True, *Women, Peace and Security in Post-Conflict and Peacebuilding Contexts* (Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF), 2013).

¹⁵ Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research”, *Journal of Peace Research*, 6 (1969): 3, 167–92.

¹⁶ John Paul Lederach, “The origins and evolution of infrastructures for peace: A personal reflection”, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 7 (2013): 3, 8-13, doi: 10.1080/15423166.2013.767604

¹⁷ Camilla Orjuela, “Building peace in Sri Lanka: a Role for civil society?”, *Journal of Peace Research*, 40 (2003): 2, 195-212, doi: 10.1177/0022343303040002004; Roberto Belloni, “Civil society and peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, *Journal of Peace Research*, 38 (2001): 2, 163-180, doi: 10.1177/0022343301038002003.

actors play has been understudied, with only a small number of studies in the literature on negotiations on “...the functions of civil society in peace negotiations, the impact of inclusion on reaching and sustaining agreements, the coordination between tracks including the transfer of results from Track Two to Track One negotiations, and the enabling and disabling context of these processes.”, demonstrating a lack of detail.¹⁸

Moreover, Paffenholz also found in her 2014 study that not only the mediators, but also the conflict parties themselves, may need convincing as to the usefulness of increasing inclusion of civil society in a negotiated settlement, specifically in terms of sharing and distributing decision-making power and/or the expression to groups with different views.¹⁹ This point is clearly reflected in ongoing conflicts worldwide today, for instance in the debate surrounding which groups (other than the conflict parties) to include in the respective Geneva peace conferences that took place for both Syria and Ukraine. Furthermore, the author identifies in her study that representativeness, which may rely on the vitality of civil, and the greater society, in a given conflict context, can also pose a problem in the inclusion these sectors, even when all parties agree to it.

In the first statistical analysis conducted concerning the likelihood for increased sustainability of a peace accord when civil society actors are included, Nilsson, 2012, argues that the inclusion of civil society crucially increases the legitimacy of a given peace process.²⁰ Moreover, the article concludes that the inclusion of civil society actors in peace settlement processes increases the durability of peace, the likelihood for peace to prevail where civil society and political parties are involved, and lastly, that the inclusion of civil society can significantly affect overall peace in nondemocratic societies (taking a longer view on what “peace” actually entails).²¹ Additionally, these results were tested for the effect that the presence of an already “active and vibrant” civil society may pose on influencing the likelihood for their inclusion, but the analysis showed that there was little bias, making context of less importance. This can lead us to

¹⁸ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014), p. 72.

¹⁹ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014), p. 72.

²⁰ Belloni, “Civil Society and Peacebuilding”, (2001); Orjuela, “Civil Society in Civil War”, (2004); Paffenholz, Ed., *Civil society and peacebuilding*, (2010).

²¹ Nilsson, “Anchoring the Peace” (2012), p. 243

infer that the inclusion of civil society, even in nondemocratic, repressive and conflict-affected societies, remains important for the arrival, building and prevalence, of peace.

Paffenholz, 2014, identifies the currents advocating for civil society inclusion in peace negotiations, in the peace negotiation literature, as being aligned to normative arguments.²² Here a theory-practice divide emerges as Paffenholz, outlines that these arguments are also contested: “While most of the literature emphasizes normative goals and sustainability objectives, mediators themselves tend to emphasize issues of effectiveness.”²³ This means that tension between “how much” to include and exclude may arise, in the fine line between theory and practice, and striking a balance between the effectiveness and sustainability of a peace process or political transition process.

Other important functions of civil society inclusion have also been addressed in the literature according to Paffenholz, 2014. For instance, increasing feelings of ownership of a negotiated process,²⁴ promoting accountability and legitimacy (not least in the implementation stage of an agreement),²⁵ as well as providing much-needed local insight and expertise to the, often far-removed, track I process.²⁶ There are several studies on the role of civil society initiatives and activities (Track II, 1.5) as serving as areas to test pilot projects and new ideas for a peace process.²⁷ Civil society has also been found to be vital in addressing the societal and structural root causes of conflict,

²² Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014) p. 73.

²³ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014) p. 73.

²⁴ Catherine Barnes, “Weaving the web: Civil-society roles in working with conflict and building peace”, *People building peace II: Successful stories of civil society*, P. van Tongeren, Ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005); Wanis-St. John and Kew, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations” (2008).

²⁵ “Who gets a seat at the table?” (2011); Wanis-St. John and Kew, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations” (2008).

²⁶ Barnes, “Weaving the web”, (2002).

²⁷ John W. Burton, *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1969); Ronald J. Fisher, “Assessing the Contingency Model of Third-Party Intervention in Successful Cases of Prenegotiation” *Journal of Peace Research* 44 (2007): 311, DOI: 10.1177/0022343307076638; Kelman, “Negotiation as interactive problem solving”, (1996).

beyond the immediate conflict issues discussed in negotiations (at the track III).²⁸ Yet, specific mechanisms of participation of civil and other sectors are understudied.²⁹

Several scholars, including Belloni, 2001 and Barnes, 2002,³⁰ direct criticism at peace processes being conducted behind closed doors, without the involvement or input of the wider society. Paffenholz, 2014, and Nilsson, 2012,³¹ outline the scarce, but emerging, literature on the role of civil society actors in contributing to sustainable and durable peace, underlining however, that this field of research is limited to case studies.¹ Both authors refer to the gap that currently exists in the literature on civil society's contributions to peacebuilding, urging for the need for increased future research on this.

Nilsson focuses in her 2012 article on the formal involvement of civil society, meaning whether their participation is secured in the text of a peace agreement, either in helping draft the agreement, or being guaranteed participation in the following peace implementation.³² The “Broadening Participation” however, focuses on participation in the longer view, as taking place at the various stages, prior to a negotiated agreement or political transition, during it, and in the aftermath of an agreement, in the process of implementation (though the longer, peacebuilding view is not part of its’ scope). Nilsson also stresses the discussion in the literature between weighing the potential benefits and costs of inclusion of civil society actors in terms of increasing legitimacy³³

²⁸ Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research”, (1969); Landon Hancock and Christopher Mitchell, Eds., *Zones of Peace*, (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press: , 2007); Lederach, “The origins and evolution of infrastructures for peace”, (2013); Saunders, “A Public Peace Process”, (2001).

²⁹ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014).

³⁰ Belloni, “Civil society and peacebuilding” (2001); Barnes, “Weaving the web” (2002).

³¹ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014); Nilsson, “Anchoring the Peace”, (2012).

³² Nilsson, “Anchoring the Peace”, (2012).

³³ Barnes, “Weaving the web” (2002); Bell, and O’Rourke, “The people’s peace?“, (2007); Nilsson, “Anchoring the Peace”, (2012).

while simultaneously retaining efficiency in a negotiated process,³⁴ as a central challenge.

Also preoccupied with the different roles that civil society actors perform, Nilsson, lists three functions that these actors may fulfill during a negotiated peace agreement in order to increase local ownership and the building of “peace from below”.³⁵ The first, is through consultations with civil society actors to get to know their views on the process; the second, for civil society groups with political support to be directly represented at the negotiation table; and thirdly, direct participation at the grassroots level in intercommunity meetings and public forums. The participation of civil society in a peace process may also increase transparency, and carry the potential for holding institutions accountable in carrying out the monitoring of implementation.³⁶

Clearly, the literature in conflict resolution and transformation dealing with participation and inclusion in peace processes and political transitions has generally supported the inclusion of civil society (and in some few cases other actors beyond this, most saliently, the inclusion of women).^j Yet, there still exists disagreement and skepticism on the practice side among practitioners and Track I actors.^k As an emerging subject, which has garnered greater interest in more recent years, preoccupation with the functions of civil society and other actors in negotiated processes is at an initial phase, despite a wide range of case studies and theory building, most predominantly around “how much” and “who” to include/exclude. Paffenholz in her 2014 article stresses the need to move “future need for more holistic theories for mechanisms of participation.

b) Democratic Participation and Social Movements

Social movement theory, and the study of societal “contentious” politics and collective action (among the pioneers in comparative politics include Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, commencing to work on the subject in the 1980’s and 90’s), as well as the concept of “social capital” (famously coined by Robert D. Putnam in the 90’s) have

³⁴ Nilsson, “Anchoring the Peace”, (2012); Wanis-St. John and Kew, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2008).

³⁵ Nilsson, “Anchoring the Peace”, (2012), p. 247–8.

³⁶ Nilsson, “Anchoring the Peace”, (2012); Wanis-St. John and Kew, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2008).

been examined largely in the context of democratic participation and voluntary associations. However, less attention has been given to the role of civil society and social movements in political science in times of political “transitions” (for instance, as studied by Guillermo O’Donnell,³⁷ and Adam Przeworski³⁸), or in instances of negotiated peace settlements (this has generally been confined to the realm of conflict management, resolution and transformation, though sporadically, as outlined above).

In the literature on democratic participation, and civil society activity in political processes, this sector is most commonly studied in relation to evaluating the vitality of democracies in peaceful societies, as by Robert D. Putnam,³⁹ Charles Tilly⁴⁰ and Sidney Tarrow,⁴¹ for instance. In the literature on political transitions and democratization, Przeworski 1992,⁴² for instance argues that a democracy is only complete when there are representative institutions to channel societal conflicts (he focuses on economic ones, in his Marxist reading). Moreover, Dahl 1971,⁴³ more clearly underlines that a democracy is consolidated when there is a real possibility for civil society organizations

³⁷ Guillermo O’Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Vol. 4: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986)

³⁸ Adam Przeworski, “Games of Transition” In *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O’Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 105-116, 137-42, 148-52; Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, “What Makes Democracies Endure?” In *The Global Divergence of Democracies*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 167-184.

³⁹ Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital", *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1995): 1, 65–78, doi:10.1353/jod.1995.0002.

⁴⁰ Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, “Contentious Politics and Social Movements”, In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁴¹ Sidney G. Tarrow, *Struggle, Politics and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Cycles of Protest*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1989).

⁴² Przeworski, “Games of Transition” (1992).

⁴³ Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

and associations to form, and where government policies depend, not only on votes, but also on other expressions of opinion (from civil society). Moreover, famously Putnam, who coined the term “Social Capital”, which is a concept that describes the social connections, trust and interactions that bind a society together, “makes democracy work”. Putnam, similarly to the concepts of “civil” and “uncivil” society, distinguishes between positive and negative social capital. Putnam also underlines that social capital can be unevenly distributed in society (i.e. according to gender and age, but also in the case of ethnic minorities or other disadvantaged groups in society), related to excluded societal groups and power. The concept of strengthening social capital, and the findings on the importance of civil society and citizen participation in democratization and transitions can pose important lessons for the study of inclusion in peace negotiations and processes, in the re-envisioning and re-building of society and peace after conflict.

According to Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, in their review on literature on democratic governance, in peaceful societies, civil society plays a key role in political processes. However, they argue that this sector can play an even more prominent role during times of conflict, where more intense mobilization of civil society may take place, and where stakes also are higher for their success or failure.⁴⁴ According to the same authors, the heightened activity of civil society during conflict can have the adverse effects of either fuelling conflict (referred to commonly in the literature on civil society participation as “uncivil” society), sustaining the status quo, or promoting peace, thus presenting contrasting options for this sector. If a cross-sectional view is taken, as in this present study, (thus looking at sectors also beyond “civil society”, such as political parties, business associations, religious actors etc.), it is clear that the actions of these parties may have multiple and varied outcomes.

Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, further argue that the general study of civil society has been locked in predominantly “Western, peaceful, democratic and developed contexts...”,⁴⁵ a view that is also underlined by Spurk.⁴⁶ This is clearly a difficulty when examining

⁴⁴ Marchetti and Tocci “Conflict society”, (2009), p. 201.

⁴⁵ Marchetti and Tocci “Conflict society”, (2009), p. 201.

⁴⁶ In: Paffenholz, Ed., *Civil society and peacebuilding*, (2010).

conflict-societies that are more often than not, prone to different types of political, cultural and historical circumstances and dynamics. The authors look at the trajectory of the study of the interaction between civil society and the state, which early on was seen as part of the state, and predominantly, the Western one. Nowadays, this forms a more unclear picture, as civil society and the influence of other societal actors is seen as acting at times to influence, and at other times, separate and in opposition to the state, in a variety of contexts.⁴⁷ This debate arises in connection to the increasing studies related also to transnational networks and international non-governmental organizations (INGO's) and institutions (as outlined i.e. by Tarrow, and Sikkink, in various studies).¹ The forces of the inter-connectivity of the market and globalization make social movements especially, but states additionally, more reliant and affected by developments across the globe. Hereby, also civil society and other societal sectors become empowered, professionalized and a growing actor in international disputes.

However, clearly, such participation mechanisms are not sufficient in themselves, as these must also be surrounded and accompanied by a political culture of inclusion and openness, for civil society, and society at large, to be potent enough to participate in the first place. This consideration is often the focus of the study of democratic participation in political science and comparative politics, which focuses on democratic culture and institutions as well. Tilly, for instance, emphasizes the importance of the context in a society for the meaningful participation of civil society. This institutionalism view is argued for instance in a economic-historical perspective by Daron Acemoğlu and James Robinson, whom in their acclaimed book from 2012 advocate inclusive political and economic institutions in order to provide incentives for innovation, productivity and sustained economic growth, paired with democratization, in order avoid the “failure” of the state.⁴⁸ This point is also re-iterated by Marchetti and Tocci, but specifically for conflict-affected states, who point out that the level of democratization before, directly impacts on the future the functionality or re-building of the state after conflict.⁴⁹ The political context will in this thesis simply serve as a backdrop to the main focus of

⁴⁷ Marchetti and Tocci “Conflict society”, (2009), p. 202.

⁴⁸ Daron Acemoğlu and James Robinson, *The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty: Why nations fail*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012).

⁴⁹ Marchetti and Tocci “Conflict society”, p. 203.

study (the participation and inclusion mechanisms taking place parallel to the peace processes). However, the traditionally institution-centered and mainly “top-down” approach employed by political science and comparative politics in their study of civil society and social movements is helpful to keep in mind in the study of this phenomena.

c) Peacebuilding and Multi-track diplomacy

There is a sizeable literature in the conflict resolution and transformation schools of thought on the importance of examining the different layers and actors of society during times of conflict and its resolution; some in the longer-term, peacebuilding perspective. For instance, John Paul Lederach, coined the term “infrastructure for peace” (I4P) in order to advocate for a more holistic and coordinated approach to building peace at various levels in society, examining the need to also examine dynamics between different “tracks” in a society at conflict beyond the Track I negotiation level.⁵⁰

Oliver P. Richmond’s, 2011 study,⁵¹ offers a more critical voice on liberal peacebuilding and international relations, drawing on conflict resolution theories, advocating for the need to acknowledge the agency of civil society and social agents,^m and examining the changing nature of social movements, and the emergence of hybrid, transnational and “post-liberal” peacebuilding movements and mechanisms. He postulates: “... the agency of the subject is rarely considered or is rhetorical unless mass mobilization occurs to shape the state, norms, markets, international organization and institutions.”⁵² This can be seen as important in evaluating the classical focus of international relations, and other social science disciplines, in focusing on mass mobilization, and over-looking smaller scale, localized initiatives from below. Such initiatives are for instance studied in Hancock and Mitchell’s book from 2007,⁵³ on the importance of initiatives at the community and local levels to build peace, even in the

⁵⁰ John P. Lederach, “The origins and evolution of infrastructures for peace”, (2013); Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace (USIP), 1997).

⁵¹ Oliver, P. Richmond, “Critical agency, resistance and a post-colonial civil society” *Cooperation and Conflict* 46 (2011): 419, doi: 10.1177/0010836711422416.

⁵² Richmond, “Critical agency”, (2011), p. 420.

⁵³ Hancock and Mitchell, Eds., *Zones of Peace*, (2007).

midst of conflict situations, and in ongoing mainstream situations filled with violence.

Rao, 2013, also points out that the participation of citizens is mostly understood in terms of civil society and associations, though individual actions (such as voting in referenda) should also be taken into account as a form of participation and influence. Adding to this can be that other forms of organizing or action, whether sustained or a one-off event, can put varied forms of pressure and inclusion in an ongoing peace process or political settlement. Clearly, different mechanisms and models of inclusion can come in varied shapes and sizes, and analyzing such phenomena poses a challenge. This approach is supported by authors as Harold H. Saunders, for instance, who discusses the challenge of conceptualizing a “public” peace process, where the individual citizen is engaged in peacebuilding, supporting the previous claims of the need for a Track III, societal-level peace process, alongside that of the higher tracks.⁵⁴

The varying degrees and levels at which peacebuilding can be studied have sparked the discussion of dividing peacebuilding efforts at different “tracks”. Lederach divides society into three levels for peacebuilding: Track I (top leadership, mediating parties), Track II (mid-level leadership, through problem –solving, conflict resolution workshops, think tanks, etc.), and Track III (grassroots, the wider society, conducting activities such as community projects and people-to-people encounters).⁵⁵ Additionally, the 1.5 track has emerged as a level occurring between Track I and Track II, of mid-range community leaders and officials that serve as a bridge between the lower track and the Track I process. This demonstrates the porous nature between a Track I process and conflict resolution practitioners, scholars and civil society actors and community leaders. This approach differs from the multi-track theory outlined by Louise Diamond and John McDonald (see below),⁵⁶ belonging to the conflict resolution school, with Lederach’s view on peacebuilding considered to belong to the later conflict transformation realm. The approach employed by this thesis will be closer to that of the conflict transformation stream, which employs a longer and broader view. This is also

⁵⁴ Harold H. Saunders, “A Public Peace Process”, (2001).

⁵⁵ Lederach, *Building Peace*, (1997).

⁵⁶ Louise Diamond and John McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy. A System Approach to Peace*, (Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1996).

because the conflict transformation field increasingly focuses on the “lower” tracks, seeing them as actors with agency, in contrast to its earlier predecessors:

“The largest contribution of the conflict transformation school is its shift in focus from international to local actors. It therefore puts even more emphasis on civil society and ordinary people than does the resolution school. Whereas in the resolution school these actors are subject to outsiders’ interventions, within the conflict transformation school they are at the center of peacebuilding.”⁵⁷

Clearly, the more recent shift in the scholarship on the study of conflict and negotiated settlements is growing increasingly detailed and complex, but also more holistic, in the incorporation of a wider set of actors and societal levels in the complex and multi-faceted process of building peace from the roots upwards.

The concept of “Multi-track diplomacy” was coined by Diamond, who together with Ambassador McDonald developed nine tracks of engagement of different sectors in peace processes (which do not necessarily intersect with the four tracks outlined earlier). They have outline nine different “tracks” that such peacebuilding activities could take place in, which intersects with civil society.ⁿ Clearly, the channels for participation are many. However, ultimately, the participation of these different sectors, depend on the mechanisms and opportunities made available for participation (from “above” and from “below”). These can be set into place by the government, by the framework for the peace process itself, or by the contextual factors to the conflict itself.

Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, outline that civil society may contribute to conflict escalation, management, resolution or transformation. This way of thinking will “...argue that the re-articulation of identities and perceived interests through psychological, educative and discursive change is insufficient”, and that more deep-seated change needs to take place in society to actually build “peace.”⁵⁸ Thus, issues such as the importance of inclusion in addressing “structural inequality” gains importance (i.e. as argued by Galtung in referring to “Positive” and “Negative” Peace, and the structural and societal transformation needed for peace, as argued by Lederach). As this present study wishes to take the “broad” view on the participation and inclusion

⁵⁷ Paffenholz, Ed., *Civil society and peacebuilding*, (2010) p. 55.

⁵⁸ Marchetti and Tocci “Conflict society”, (2009).

effects of, not just civil society, but also other sectors, it will identify with the last function, of possible conflict transformation, which sees different societal sectors role, as engaging not only to access Track 1 in the peace negotiations, but also to aid in societal peacebuilding encompassing the larger peace process.⁵⁹ According to Marchetti and Tocci: “Peacebuilding is concerned with issues that go beyond narrowly defined conflict issues (such as territorial readjustments, refugee return, property rights, security guarantees, etc.), but cover the wider economic, political and social make-up of countries before, during and after the end of violent conflict.”⁶⁰

The peacebuilding perspective, or lens, also incorporates the long-view when examining instances of participation and inclusion for a peace process, as it examines initiatives in the parallel of a negotiated settlement or political transition, but also, in the implementation and post-conflict situation, where issues of transitional justice and societal healing (through psycho-psychological or traditional mechanisms) may be needed. Hence, a detailed and rich description of civil society and other societal actors activities towards affecting a peace process or political transition negotiation is needed, but this is not sufficient from a peacebuilding view, where the process has preceded, and will also follow, a possible agreement.

Such issues are underlined especially in development and social dialogue literature as well. For instance, Duthie, 2009, argues that civil society (which he defines as mainly NGOs and local organizations, in his study) can be an important avenue for strengthening development in post-conflict and transitional societies, especially seen through the lens of transitional justice.⁶¹ Referring to Putnam, Duthie also argues that civil society contributes to the creation of social capital through producing “norms of generalized reciprocity”, “facilitating coordination and communication and amplifying

⁵⁹ Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: SAGE, 1996); Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research”, (1969); John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

⁶⁰ Marchetti and Tocci “Conflict society”, (2009).

⁶¹ Roger Duthie, *Building Trust and Capacity: Civil Society and Transitional Justice from a Development Perspective*, (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2009), p. 4.

information about the trustworthiness of other individuals” and “by serving as a cultural template for future collaboration.”⁶² While the author here argues this perspective of social capital as increasing development and economic progress, the same approach concerning social organization and their formation of social capital can be linked to the re-building of society after violent conflict, and the pushing of agendas of reconciliation and reparation in the absence of governmental action in these areas. Moreover, Duthie, 2009, stresses the expertise and importance of civil society and other organizations and associations in their local knowledge and contacts, in order to reach out to the wider population. Even though the more long-term post-conflict stage of conflict is beyond the scope of this research, these points raised here are all valid for the far-reaching and deep-seated effects that civil society and other sectors may play at various stages of a peace process, looking beyond the signing of an agreement and its’ implementation.

According to Paffenholz, 2010, within peacebuilding literature the inclusion of civil society and other sectors seems like an accepted fact, though it is an area of little study, with a current deficiency of theories to this respect.⁶³ The author also underlines in her book that the term “peacebuilding”, coined by Johan Galtung, is itself contentious. The concept of “sustainable peacebuilding”, attributed to John Paul Lederach, takes a longer view on peacebuilding, both in terms of time and scope – this view is closer to the wider view on participation and inclusion taken by this study – in terms of constituting an inclusive and broad definition.

Though the “Broadening participation” project’s framework, on which this thesis is mainly based (which will be explained in the following section d) only focuses on different models of direct and indirect participation in peace negotiations and political transitions, the scope of this investigation will also include peacebuilding activities. This may include; cross-community dialogue, reconciliation activities, academic and policy oriented workshops, as well as creative, artistic and other types of projects which aim to support or influence the ongoing peace process. Such activities may take place in parallel, and not always in direct conversation with the peace negotiations, either due to

⁶² Duthie, *Building Trust and Capacity*, (2009), p. 7.

⁶³ Paffenholz, Ed., *Civil society and peacebuilding*, (2010), p. 43.

lack of will or opportunity to do so. The “Broadening Participation” project is focused on models of participation that include an element of “transfer” to Track I. However, taking a broader view than the “Broadening participation” project, the widespread roles that civil society and other societal sectors perform towards peacebuilding more generally, in line with the wider vision of the peace process, will be included as well.

As mentioned earlier, the divide between theory and practice in relation to peace negotiations, and negotiated settlements at large has stayed focused on the difficulties of including more actors in reaching an agreement, and also facing the issue of which groups which should be included.⁶⁴ The usefulness of problem solving workshops, and other related track II (and not to mention track III) activities centered with the participation of civil society, despite ample evidence,⁶⁵ may be doubted as useful by diplomats and other actors at the track I of a negotiation process. There seems to be persisting skepticism at the track I levels, beyond the normative rhetoric, on the inclusion of a wider array of actors in political negotiations and peace processes, mostly due to the practical concerns. This trend may be changing, especially if foreign policy endeavors and the current character of conflicts internationally are any indication.

d) “Broadening Participation in Track One Peace Negotiations” Project

Quantitative research from peace agreements demonstrates that the inclusion of civil society actors in peace processes increases the durability of peace.⁶⁶ Paffenholz, 2010, argues that civil society can: “...better address underlying conflict drivers; counterbalance elites; include broader interests; increase ownership and accountability; shift public opinion; and provide expertise, knowledge, and a safe space to work together.”⁶⁷ While her 2010 study focuses on the peacebuilding role of civil society within the entire spectrum of peace processes, her 2014 study narrows the focus on the

⁶⁴ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014) p. 72.

⁶⁵ Lanz, “Who gets a seat at the table? (2011); Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations” (2014); Wanis-St. John and Kew, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations” (2008).

⁶⁶ Nilsson, “Anchoring the Peace” (2012) and Wanis-St. John and Kew, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations” (2008)

⁶⁷ Paffenholz, Ed., *Civil society and peacebuilding*, (2010),

role of civil society during negotiations and their implementation, in particular on participation models to impact Track I, and hence, the quality and sustainability of peace and political transitions. It is in this context that “9 models of participation and inclusion” have been identified in the 2014 study, currently subject to empirical testing in 40 case studies. Although the broader view of examining the peace process will be employed (as opposed to only a negotiated settlement), these models will be employed.

Political settlement and peace negotiation literature has in the past tended to be elite rather than citizen centered, though this trend may be shifting.⁶⁸ Paffenholz, 2014, outlines a variety of advantages of increased inclusion and participation of civil society and other sectors, including: addressing the underlying causes of the conflict; counterbalancing elites; ensuring the inclusion of broader public interests in the negotiation agenda, increasing public ownership; leading higher levels of accountability and greater legitimacy between conflict parties, increasing support for the process; offering expertise and local knowledge; providing a space alternative to the Track I for new ideas, and a new culture of understanding.⁶⁹

The 9 models from the ongoing “Broadening Participation” Project to be pursued in this thesis will be listed below, they are set up in form of the most to the least direct form of involvement, and can happen simultaneously and with overlap of included actors, and are not mutually exclusive.

The tentative 9 models of Participation and Inclusion from Paffenholz (2014) are:⁷⁰

1. *direct representation of civil society groups at the negotiation table*, either as their own delegations to the negotiations or as members of official delegations;
2. *observer status*, with no official roles but a direct presence during the negotiations;
3. *official consultative forums that run parallel to Track I negotiations*, and that are endorsed by the mediators and negotiators;
4. *informal consultations*, that lack official endorsement from all the stakeholders;

⁶⁸ Suhmed Rao, *Citizens' role in political settlements*, Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=1014>, p. 2

⁶⁹ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014).

⁷⁰ Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, (2014), p. 76 – 77.

5. *inclusive post-agreement mechanisms* that involve civil society groups in the implementation of peace agreements;
6. *high-level Track II initiatives*, nonofficial Track Two facilitation initiatives that take place in the pre-negotiation phase or parallel to official negotiations and that use a problem-solving approach;
7. *public participation*, involving the broader population via public hearings, opinion polls, “town hall” meetings, or signature campaigns;
8. *public decision making*, via referenda and other electoral forms that put major political decisions to binding public vote (e.g., terms of peace agreements, constitutional reforms); and
9. *mass action*, campaigns, demonstration, street action, protests, and petitions.

The “Broadening Participation” framework focuses on (among a number of other variables which are not included in the present study), if an initiative is “bottom-up”, “top-down”, or both, moreover, it addresses the issue of “transfer” (to Track-I) of the participation mechanisms. The “bottom-up”/“top-down” and “transfer” aspects of the framework will also be considered in this study, as this is the defining aspect for classifying an participation mechanism as model or not – however, the additional variables examined for each model pertaining to the framework will not be addressed as they are beyond the scope of this study. Inclusion activities that did not fit the framework (mainly due to lack of measurable “transfer” to the Track I negotiations), will still be chronicled alongside the models, but will not be classified as model as such.

Following the conceptual discussion, literature review and explanation of the theoretical models from the “Broadening Participation” framework which will be employed in this thesis, we can conclude that this line of research is one still in development. Previous studies in International Relations and Political Science have explored the concept of civil society in negotiated settlements and political transitions, in a mainly state-centric, institutionalist, and top-down manner (mainly in comparative politics and political science), or in peace process (mainly in conflict resolution and transformation literature). Where civil society and social movements have been studied, theses have mainly been addressed as Western-biased, associations and mass movements, where the smaller scale, communal and informal initiatives have been largely overlooked.

However, only recently have the more recent disciplines of conflict resolution, and conflict transformation, coupled with the study of peacebuilding and multiple “tracks” of societal activity, begun to address the activity of sectors beyond civil society in peace processes, in a wider view. The “Broadening Participation” study is novel as one of the first comprehensive attempts to create a framework of models on civil society and other societal sectors inclusion and participation, in their own right, in negotiated processes. The application of this framework to a case study such as the Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey is therefore interesting, in order to assess its analytical strength in helping to provide an overview of the participation and inclusion taking place, as well as the types and mechanisms that occurred. While not claiming to be an exhaustive list, the nine models serve as a good point of departure for chronicling this rich and varied realm.

In the following chapter, the methodology of this research will be presented, along with the data obtained on nine cases of participation. Chapter 4 will outline the background of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, and the various peace process attempts, followed, in Chapter 5, by the presentation of the data obtained on the selected cases of inclusion activities parallel to these track I peace efforts. The data from the cases will then later be analyzed and attempted classified into the nine models presented above to then later be further problematized according to the broader, peacebuilding and conflict transformation perspective on inclusion and participation presented above.

^a Such as the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the European Union and the Organizations for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, to name a few.

^b For instance: Diana Chigas, “Capacities and Limits of NGO’s as Conflict Managers”, *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, Eds. (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007); Anthony Wanis-St. John and Darren Kew, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Confronting Exclusion, *International Negotiation*, 13 (2008): 11-36; David Lanz, “Who gets a seat at the table? A framework for understanding the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in peace negotiations”, *International Negotiation*, 16 (2011): 275 – 295; Ronald J. Fisher, “Assessing the Contingency Model”.

^c “... although most researchers have argued for inclusion, mediators and negotiators have tended to favor the exclusion of civil society groups from peace negotiations (Chuffrin and Saunders 1993; Fisher 1997; Saunders 1999; Barnes 2002, 2005; Hemmer et al. 2006; Bell and O’Rourke 2007; Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008; Lanz 2011; Nilsson 2012).” Thania Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Beyond the Inclusion–Exclusion Dichotomy” *Negotiation Journal*, Volume 30 (2014): 1, 69–91, p. 70.

^d For instance, this debate was raised during the OSCE’s launch of their Guidance Note on “Enhancing Gender-Responsive Mediation” in Istanbul on October 24th, 2013. (<http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/en/new/enhancing-gender-responsive-mediation/>) At the conference, scholars, practitioners and civil society organizations from the member states discussed as to whether the inclusion of women in peace process and political transition negotiations should be extended, or combined, with the discussion of inclusion and participation of different sectors of society, and other marginalized groups, more broadly or not.

^e The details of this project will be outlined in the 4th and final section of this chapter.

^f A discussion of Marchetti and Tocci’s classification of the roles for civil society according to the different schools of conflict management, resolution and transformation will follow in section d) of this chapter, on peacebuilding literature.

^g For instance: Barnes, C. ‘Weaving the Web. Civil Society Roles in Working with Conflict and Building Peace’, *People Building Peace II Successful Stories of Civil Society*, ed. Van Tongeren, P., (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2005); Diana Chigas, “Capacities and Limits of NGO’s as Conflict Managers”, *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, eds. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007); Anthony Wanis-St. John and Darren Kew, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Confronting Exclusion, *International Negotiation*, 13(2008): 11-36; Lanz 2011, “Who gets a seat at the table? A framework for understanding the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in peace negotiations”, *International Negotiation*, 16 (2011): 275 – 295; and, Paffenholz (2010, 2011).

^h The functions of civil society are identified as: protection, monitoring, advocacy, socialization, social cohesion, facilitation, and service delivery in Paffenholz 2010.

ⁱ Nilsson (2012) cites as examples: Belloni, “Civil Society and Peacebuilding” (2001); Orjuela, “Civil Society in Civil War”, (2004); Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding* (2010); Mashood Issaka and Bushoki Batabiha. *Civil Society and Democratic Transitions in the DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2005); Augustine Toure, *The Role of Civil Society in National Reconciliation and Peacebuilding in Liberia*. (New York: International Peace Academy: 2002); Paul van Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, and Juliette Verhoeven, *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society*. (London: Lynne Rienner, 2005); World Bank, *Engaging Civil Society Organizations in Conflict-Affected and Fragile States: Three African Country Case Studies*. (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005).

^j To name a few of numerous examples, Bell (2013), calls for the need for increased efforts to be made to include women at all stages of peace processes. Similarly, in her analysis True (2013), stresses that the post-conflict phase poses an important opportunity for increasing the rights and positions of women in newly emerging societies. She calls for the need of a gender perspective in post- conflict institution building, humanitarian planning, and within the long-term peacemaking process itself.

^k See: Cynthia Chataway, “Track II Diplomacy: From a Track I Perspective” *Negotiation Journal*, July 14 (1998): 3, 269–287; Esra Çuhadar, “Track Two Diplomacy from a Track One Perspective: Comparing the Perceptions of Turkish and American Diplomats,” *International Negotiation*, 12 (2007); 1, 57-82.

^l For example, Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Marcharet E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics”, *International Social Science Journal*, 51 (1999): 159: 89 -101.

^m Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations”, 2014, also argues that civil society, other sectors, and the wider society, has to be considered an active agent in its own right, capable of demanding and pressuring for inclusion instead of a passive role of only begging for inclusion.

ⁿ Referring to their work: Diamond and McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy*, (1996). The tracks outlined by Diamond and McDonald include: (1) government; (2) conflict resolution professionals; (3) business; (4) private citizens; (5) research, education, and training; (6) activism; (7) religion; (8) funding; and (9) public opinion/communication. Heidi Burgess and Guy Burgess, *Conducting Track II Peacemaking*, (Washington, DC: Endowment of the United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., 2010).

Chapter 3 – Methodology

In this research I will be using a multiple case study with a single unit of analysis, in order to assess the analytical strength of the “Broadening Participation” framework in the context of the Kurdish Peace Process. The framework will help provide an overview of the types of participation and inclusion that took place, while the analysis of these will provide insight into additional events that fall outside of the framework’s scope.

For this purpose, this research will rely on a “type 3: Multiple-case holistic design”, as identified by Yin.¹ This type of research design takes into account various cases (the nine case studies) in order to identify and generalize on one single variable; in this case inclusion and participation initiatives. The context will be the Kurdish peace process in Turkey with the multiple cases being the specific societal actors and/or organizations conducting activities of participation and inclusion taking place in the Kurdish peace process, during the Oslo Talks from 2008-2011, and later commenced October 2012 talks, up until the March 2014 elections. These selected inclusion activities, events and projects will make up the comparable unit of analysis for this research. The detailed data pertaining to each case extracted from the more general data collection process,^a and the analysis of the nine case studies selected will be presented in Chapter 5.

Specifically, this research will examine initiatives by the Turkish government to engage society in the Kurdish peace process, through societal mechanisms to consult grassroots movements, organizations and institutions, to influence public opinion and support. Moreover, this research seeks to evaluate these societal sectors presence or absence in the wider peace process itself, by investigating mechanisms of participation and initiated and sustained by such non-governmental sectors themselves. This thesis will include a description of the actors activities and projects, as well as looking at the motivations and design of different initiatives, making a distinction as to whether they were initiated from “above” (state-centric), or from “below” (initiated by citizens or other organizations), for the purpose of participation from both directions.

¹ Robert K. Yin, “Designing Case Studies: Identifying Your Case(s) and Establishing the Logic of Your Case Study”, In *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5th Ed.), Robert K. Yin, ed., (Sage Publications, 2014), accessed April 17, 2014, http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/24736_Chapter2.pdf, p. 47.

Data Collection

A compilation of a chronological timeline of the Kurdish conflict, the related peace processes and the parallel instances of participation and inclusion (in terms of events, activities and initiatives of different civil society, and other sector, actors) was compiled based mainly on a media review of Turkish and international media.^b These three parallel processes were combined in one timeline (see Appendix A) in order to provide a holistic view of participation and inclusion mechanisms ongoing during the different Kurdish peace processes in Turkey, in the time period 2008 to March 2014. The chronology was also used to compile a general description of all Track 1.5, II and III activities identified as ongoing in the time period alongside Track I (see Appendix B).

After the compilation of the chronological timeline and general narrative of participation, a selection process took place, where the different activities were codified in different colors according to five categories in the timeline in Appendix A. Events or activities in the timeline that consisted of instances of Track I initiatives were highlighted in light blue, inclusion initiatives coinciding with the models of the “Broadening Participation Framework” in green, and additional or other Track 1.5, II and III participation initiatives in yellow, while democratization initiatives/policies in were highlighted in pink, and international initiatives in dark green.^c The background events of the conflict, the general political and social scene in Turkey, and the region, remained without color, producing the overall historical background and skeleton of the context factors influencing the participation events. The colors highlighted different track initiatives were later used to describe in detail both the peace process (mainly Track I), and the national participation and inclusion activities (mainly Track I, 1.5, and III), which can be found outlined in Chapter 3 and 4, and Appendix B, respectively.

Following the compilation of the timeline, the combined Track I, 1.5, II and III instances were later used as a pool to extract nine specific case studies of actors who had initiated instances of participation and inclusion in the peace process (in green). These individuals and organizations from civil society (NGO’s, academic, think-tank, grassroots movements, cultural and business sector etc.), were then contacted, or otherwise investigated through desk research and media review, in order to obtain more information on the participation and inclusion mechanisms they conducted. Additionally, the activities by these nine selected actors that were not classified as

models (in yellow) were also included in the pool of data in order to add an additional layer, and a broader view on participation beyond that of the frameworks 9 models.

The data on the case studies were mainly obtained from semi-structured interviews, employing a snowball selection process of interviewees, and again, media-monitoring of the previously mentioned news outlets. Moreover, information was gathered from primary and secondary sources from the various organizations and activities surveyed (retrieved from a variety of sources, including: organizational and activity centered websites, reports, leaflets, multimedia material, as well as conferences, workshops, participant observation at events and site visits.) The selection of these cases relied on a criteria of information availability, as well as accessibility and funds in terms of geographical restrictions on the research. Only actors and organizations mainly based in the West of Turkey, Istanbul and Ankara, were therefore deemed feasible to study.^d

The interviews conducted for this research relied on an interview protocol (see Appendix C) which was designed to un-surface particular activities of inclusion and participation of each of the identified actor, in order to chronicle and describe the relevant events, find out the aim behind organizing these events, and the participation mechanism(s) they employed, as well as their outcome. The five questions asked served as a guide during the face-to-face, phone and email interviews conducted.

Two initial face-to-face exploratory interviews were conducted, followed by eleven interviews directly aiming at cases. Of these eleven interviews, two were conducted per email, one by phone, and the remaining in person. All of the in-person interviews took place in Istanbul in the time-span August 2013 to April 2014.^e Two of the interviews were also undertaken in the context of a protest and/or civil disobedience action, meaning that the researcher combined interviewing with participant observation, while being present at both events. While the data on each case study was supplemented with desk research from organizational websites, documents, and newspaper articles, only three additional cases were solely based on such secondary resources.^f The interviews were semi-structured in nature, though dependent on the interview protocol.^g Probing and additional questions were improvised according to each case and situation. Due to the sensitive nature of research matter, the anonymity of the interviewee was underlined, as well as the consent of the use of the obtained data received.

In order to examine the degree of participation and inclusion in the peace process, these selected cases were in turn classified and coded according to the “Broadening Participation in Track One Peace Negotiations” tentative framework of “9 models of Participation and Inclusion”, which was used in the analysis section of this thesis. The project builds on previous work on civil society and peacebuilding conducted by the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, at the Graduate Institute Geneva.^h The nine models identified so far are included in the table below, (in addition there is the possibility of a “model x” in this research framework, which is included in order to capture any additional or outlying possible models).ⁱ

Table 1: The 9 Models of the “Broadening Participation” Framework	
Model	
1	Direct representation at the negotiation table
2	Observer status, direct presence during the negotiations
3	Official consultative forums parallel to negotiations
4	Consultations, less formal consultations without official endorsement
5	Inclusive post-agreement mechanisms, participation of societal and political actors in implementation institutions and mechanisms
6	High-level civil society initiatives, non-official track 2 or track 1 ½ facilitation initiatives in the pre-negotiation phase or parallel to official negotiations
7	Public participation, involving the broader population via public hearings; opinion polls; town hall meetings or signature campaigns
8	Public decision-making, referenda and other elective forms putting major political decisions to binding public vote
9	Mass action, campaigns, demonstration, street action, protests, and petitions
X	<i>Anything that follows outside the above mentioned categories, with the possibility of constituting an additional model.</i>

According to the classification of the selected cases in this framework, models were identified, and three questions were taken into consideration from the analysis and coding process in order to produce conclusions on the types and degree of inclusion and participation in the Kurdish peace process in Turkey. The first was – does the empirical evidence of participation and inclusion in the peace process in Turkey fit into the framework of the 9 models? The second question then asked was; If not, why not? Thirdly, for the cases that did fit into the models, categories were selected and how they

fit was justified. Lastly, the presence of additional or outlying participation mechanisms, or modifications of the framework according to the empirical findings, was examined. From this analysis of the findings as to the coding of the empirical evidence, conclusions as to theory, practice and policy implications were outlined.

Selecting the Case Studies of Participation Actors and Mechanisms

The following cases listed below were selected as illustrative cases of inclusion and participation in the Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey, in order to highlight individual cases and actors taking part in these activities. The cases were selected based on their perceived influence in the peace process, as well as the availability of information. In the list below, the participation and inclusion activities are grouped according to actor, by which their activities, aims and points of entry and influence to the peace process are described and evaluated in the analysis section. The table of case studies is as follows:

Table 2: Participation Case Studies: Actors and Initiatives	
1	Free Women's Democratic Movement: Women's Initiative for Peace (BİKG)
2	Ekopolitik: "Grand Dome of Turkey"
3	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV): Democratization and Good Governance Programs
4	Hafıza Merkezi (Truth, Justice and Memory Centre): Various Activities
5	Government (Track I) Initiative: Wise Peoples Commission
6	Columbia University: Roundtable on Kurdish Peace process
7	Constitutional Reconciliation Commission (CRC ¹ /Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) - Constitutional Platform: Constitutional Citizen's Assembly
8	Human Rights Foundation/ İnsan Hakları Derneği (İHD): Saturday Mothers - Cumartesi Anneler - <i>Dayîkên Şemiyê</i> (2009 – 2014)
9	Social Mobilization/Protest Initiatives of the Kurdish Political and Social Movement (2008 – 2014):
	a. Newroz Celebrations (2008 – 2014)
	b. "Peace Tent/Democratic Solution" Civil Disobedience Campaign (March 2011)

The data compiled under each of the above-mentioned cases was organized according to the interview protocol used during the semi-structured interviews (please see Chapter 5 for the data). The questions from the interview protocol provided a good framework for

structuring the data obtained. This is because the questions were designed to obtain a general view of the wide array of activities that each actor was conducting, as follows:

- 1) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)
- 2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?
- 3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?
- 4.) Did these projects/events aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?
- 5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

As can be inferred from the questions above, the nature of the interview protocol was to keep the questions as uniform as possible, to later evaluate, with the data obtained, which activities may fit with the models of inclusion and participation from the “Broadening Participation” project. (In some instances, the models occurring for one actor was obvious, and the basis for the interview being requested in the first place.) However, the general nature of the questions produced a wealth of additional empirical data as well, that uncovered additional forms of participation activities, which later were deemed unclassifiable by the nine model framework. This issue will be expounded upon in the following analysis section, however, this serves as a guiding reference when examining the wide-ranging and varied inclusion and participation activities discovered.

From the presentation above of the methodology employed to reach the selected cases of participation and inclusion in the Kurdish peace processes, a varied and rich picture can be obtained (for the general description of all Track 1.5, II and III initiatives prior to the selection of the 9 cases, see Appendix B). The following section will provide an overview of the history of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey together with an overview of the Track I, peace negotiation attempts so far. Chapter 5 will then chronicle and examine the extracted activities of participation from the nine cases in order to code and analyze them according to the “Broadening Participation” framework. Moreover, outlying events and activities will then be discussed in the subsequent analysis of the same chapter, in order to shed light on the importance of also looking at these additional events, despite their outlying nature to the framework, followed by concluding remarks.

^a Please see Appendix A for the detailed chronology of the peace process, conflict history and parallel participation activities, and Appendix B for a general description of the overall participation activities at the Track 1.5, II and III levels.

^b Mainly the newspaper sources used were online and English language, including: Today's Zaman and Al-Monitor, and to a lesser degree Hurriyet Daily News, Rudaw, and Al-Jazeera, among others (see the bibliography for more detailed information).

^c International events were considered as part of the background to the inclusion and participation initiatives ongoing in Turkey, though they will not constitute cases.

^d Although many of the organizations and activities surveyed had their headquarters or were based in the West of Turkey (Istanbul/Ankara) many operated and performed actions and activities, or visited, the South-East of Turkey, which encompasses the conflict zone. However, due to time and funding constraints, visits to this area were not conducted for this research, moreover, there is a geographical bias due to the focus on organizations operating in the urban and Western areas of Turkey, in contrast to the rural and ethnically dominated Kurdish South-Eastern regions. A mapping and examination of more informal and less professionalized organizations in this region and their influence on the peace process could be the basis for interesting further study, as this is a common critique in the literature on civil society and other sectors involvement in peace processes and political transitions. Despite the “Western” (in terms of geographical location within Turkey) of this research, it should be underlined that many organizations and actors surveyed possessed strong links and communication with grassroots movements, activists and organizations also in the South-East in the execution of their work concerning, or related to, the peace process.

^e An exception to this is one interview based on an earlier, unpublished, research on Kurdish Identity construction in Turkey, which was conducted in April 2011 in Istanbul, at the site of the “Peace Tent” civil disobedience campaign prior to the June 12th elections. For a full overview of the interviews conducted, see Appendix C.

^f These are the cases: “Grand Dome of Turkey”, “Constitutional Citizen’s Assembly Series”, and the “Newroz Celebrations”. Please see Chapter 5 for further details.

^g Please see Appendix C for the interview protocol in both English and Turkish.

^h I.e.: Thania Paffenholz, “Summary of Results for a Comparative Research Project: Civil Society and Peacebuilding” (Geneva: The Graduate Institute, The Center on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, 2009). Accessed June 14, 2014 <http://graduateinstitute.ch/files/live/sites/iheid/files/sites/ccdp/shared/6305/CCDP-Working-Paper-4-Civil-Society.pdf>;

The ongoing CCDP project “Arab Spring: Challenges during Political Transitions and Comparative Lessons for Civil Societies in the Middle East and North Africa”, under the coordination of Dr. Paffenholz, (Website, Accessed June 14, 2014 <http://graduateinstitute.ch/fr/home/research/centresandprogrammes/ccdp/ccdp-research/clusters-and-projects-1/participatory-peace-processes-an/arabspring.html>); and, Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Beyond the Inclusion–Exclusion

Dichotomy". *Negotiation Journal*, 30 (2014): 1, 69–91, Accessed May 8, 2014, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nejo.12046/abstract>

ⁱ The models are considered to be tentative as the “Broadening Participation” project is, at the time of writing, still in progress and the model’s titles are still open, and may be subject to changes according to the findings of this ongoing project.

^j Two other related commissions to the peace process and parallel democratization process were also set up in this time period: The Resolution Process Assessment Commission and Coup and Memorandum Commission, but will not be examined here due to the lack of information available on the dealings of these commissions, as well as the lack of inclusivity and participation of the public, while the Constitutional Commission, was created with the public mandate of the 2010 Constitutional referendum.



Chapter 4 - Chronology of the Kurdish Conflict and Peace Processes in Turkey

The conflict between the Turkish State and the Kurdish populations of Turkey can be summarized into four general time periods: from the 1920's – 60's, where the Turkish nation was being formed, during the 1960's-80's where its foundations began to be contested, the 1980's – to the end of the 90's, where a civil war ensued, and up until the first decade of the 2000's, where democratization efforts ensued. Following the second millennium, and the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), attempts at a political peace process to solve the Kurdish conflict (which had commenced already earlier, but without bearing fruit, in the 90's) increased. Firstly, with the secret "Oslo Talks" between 2008 – 2011, and then followed by the on-going peace process, which commenced between the State and the PKK in October, 2012.

The current peace talks between the PKK leadership and the Turkish State, commenced in October 2012,¹ are widely seen as important politically to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is seeking re-election, it is widely thought, as president, in the scheduled Presidential Elections of August 2014. The peace process under his auspices was also seen as important in receiving the majority for his AKP party in the Municipal elections were held in March of the same year.

The period of the AKP's rule has undoubtedly brought on the largest attempts to solve the Kurdish conflict, during which such initiatives as the secret "Oslo Talks", which commenced in 2008 took place.² These concluded unsuccessfully in September 2011 due to public leakages of the talks,³ as well as the renewal of PKK strikes in mid-2011,³ making the process politically impossible to pursue at the time. The most recent talks are important, but have in the period leading up to the 2014 March local elections

¹ Tulin Daloğlu, "Turkey-PKK Talks Move Ahead", *Al-Monitor*, April 3, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/talks-akp-pkk-turkey-kurdish-peace-process-move-ahead.html>.

² Yasemin Ergin, "Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll on Turkey's Image", *The Washington Times*, February 15, 2012. Accessed February 28, 2014, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/feb/15/kurdish-conflict-takes-toll-on-turkeys-image/#ixzz2tVDOA48o>.

³ Ergin, "Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll".

stalled, with one of the main issues of contention being the lack of a legal foundation for the talks to continue, and perceived backtracking by both parties on concessions. In order to understand the current peace process, and the attempts preceding it however, an overview of the conflict origins will be given in this chapter, followed by a chronology of previous peace process attempts, culminating in a description of the current, and ongoing, peace process.

Chronology of the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey

The Republic of Turkey was conceived in 1923, under the founder of the nation, Mustafa Kemal or “Ataturk” (meaning “ancestor” or “father Turk”), and from this period on there have been periodic military coups, at the turn of each decade, in the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s. These coups produced a pattern of cycles of violence and liberalization, in which Kurdish Nationalism was allowed to grow only to be severely repressed again. The Republican Peoples Party (CHP) authoritarian, one-party rule lasted for twenty-seven years. From then on, Kemalism was instated as the official government ideology, which was based on secularism and creating a Turkey that looked West. Moreover, the military was appointed as the constitutional “safe-guarders of the Turkish Republic”, against the main two threats to the republic throughout the times: Islamism and Kurdish nationalism.⁴

Up until this period, the Kurds had for centuries considered themselves as a people, having been unified under the leadership of various Kurdish kingdoms. Their shared history, culture and cosmology had since this time been developed, manifesting itself in legends, oral history traditions, literature and a shared spoken, and later written, language, as well as in cultural and customs, expressions and practices. The Kurds fought as allies to the Turkish state in the war of National Independence from the Ottoman Empire, under which they had lived with relative cultural freedom, under the “millet” system, where ethnic groups were largely respected to practice their culture.

⁴ Gönül Tol, “A New Era In Turkey's Civil-Military Relations”, Middle East Institute, Washington, D.C., August 30th 2010. Accessed August 23, 2014, <http://www.themiddleeastinstitute.org/content/new-era-turkeys-civil-military-relations>

a) 1920-60: Nation Building

The concept of a “United Kurdistan”, a separate state for those who were identified as “Kurds” and lived in the mountainous areas between what is Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey today, was a real possibility in the 1920’s after World War I. However, this plan was counteracted, and Kurdish regions were divided to be part of these four countries instead. Under the first constitution of Turkey however, before it was recognized as a state, there were amendments for some Kurdish autonomy and local governance within Turkey. With the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, however, the claims for an autonomous region for the Kurds in Turkey were disregarded, recognizing only the non-Muslim religious minorities living in Turkey. With the new constitution in the following year of the establishment of the republic, this fact was emphasized with the proclamation of no special rights for ethnic groups in Turkey, and going even further, by denying the existence of any other cultural or national identity besides the Turkish one.^b All these moves for the fostering of a strong, united Turkish identity were all part of Atatürk’s vision for the newly independent state of Turkey, as a nation-building project to create a secularized and Westernized country.

However, what this nation-building project meant in practice for the largest ethnic minority in Turkey, the Kurds, was the virtual attempt of the extinction of their unique separate cultural identity. These practices of assimilation occurred not only through the rhetoric denial, but also through systematic and deliberate actions and policies by the state apparatus. These were set in place to suppress the Kurdish identity, and the mounting political, social, and later, armed, ethnic nationalist movement, which they saw as a threat to Turkish national unity and territorial integrity.

This repression, which was often coercive and violent, took many forms, including mass deportations and forced migration of people from Kurdish villages (mainly in the South-Eastern part of Turkey), as well as a “scorched earth campaign” which consisted of burning down up to 3500 villages, producing more than 2 million refugees and internally displaced peoples⁵.

⁵ Kevin Mckiernan, *Good Kurds, Bad Kurds: No Friends But the Mountains*, Director Kevin Mckiernan, USA: Passion River, 2000.

In addition to this campaign, other practices were put into effect such as changing Kurdish village names to Turkish ones, outlawing the public use of the Kurdish language, and discriminating against the adoption of the Turkish alphabet, the Kurdish language and culture, and thus the larger issue of Kurdish identity. In addition, the ban on Kurdish music and films, as well as literature and publications, continued to hold Kurdish public and social life under strict controls.

As is emphasized by Watts (2007) in her discussion of Kurdish resistance in this time period, and the role of the state and the media:

In keeping with the state-sponsored emphasis on the Turkish roots of the Turkish Republic, the Turkish press confined discussion of the mostly Kurdish Southeast part of the country to talk of banditry, smuggling, and, at most, underdevelopment, without reference to the non-Turkish ethnicity or cultures of the people who lived there.⁶

In 1925 the Eastern Region Reform Commission was established to look at the situation in the East of Turkey which was economically underdeveloped compared to the West. The following year the Eastern Region Reform Commission Plan (ERRCP) was established to encourage the “Turkification” of the Kurds through compulsory settlement and the opening of boarding schools with instruction in Turkish and state controlled curriculums.⁷

Thus, the Turkish state’s policies of this period can be summarized into three categories, a) those of coercion, such as violence; b) political, economic and social marginalization, and c) an attempt to redefine or assimilate the cultural identity of Turkey’s Kurdish population, through suppressing identity and cultural customs.^c These politics of assimilation or denial of the existence of the “other” however, seemed to be paired with

⁶ Nicole F. Watts, “Silence and Voice: Turkish Policies and Kurdish Resistance in the Mid-20th Century”, *The Evolution of Kurdish Nationalism*, Mohammed M. A. Ahmed and Michael M. Gunter, Eds., Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Press, 2006.

⁷ Mesut Yeğen, “‘Prospective-Turks’ or ‘Pseudo-citizens’: Kurds in Turkey”, *Middle East Journal*, 63 (2009): 4, 597 -615.

a paradoxical movement by the state to establish stereotypes and negative connotations concerning the South-Eastern parts of the country, marginalizing the majority Kurdish population that resided there.^d

b) 1960 – 1980's – Contesting the Nation State

During this time period a "Reawakening" or "Rebirth" and a political reconstruction of Kurdish Nationalism and reformulation of demands took place.^e Earlier years had seen a very fragmented leadership and civil organization within the South-East and in the Kurdish communities in Turkey, which was strongly divided along tribal, religious and linguistic lines. In the 60's however, the political and social climate changed, with the influence of the first military coup in Turkey removing the ten-year rule of the Democrat Party (DP), which had enjoyed widespread Kurdish support due to the party's movement away from Kemalist politics.

The coup, paradoxically, allowed for more political expression and freedom as well as the establishment of labor unions. The new constitution put in place the following year, modeled on the European convention on Human Rights, still denied the existence of a Kurdish population in Turkey, proclaiming that every citizen is "accepted as (a) Turk regardless of ethnic or religious identity."⁸ An Independent Constitutional Court was established, as well as an independent Judiciary, protecting the rights of Kurdish and leftist activists, although the involvement of the military in the government was extensive, and severe repression on cultural expression and activism remained widespread.

During this time period the Worker's Party of Turkey (TIP) and other leftist as well as pro-Kurdish organizations were allowed to form. Moreover, in this cold-war era, and up until the 70's, a new focus of a younger generation of Kurds, who now had more possibilities to be educated in the West of the country⁹, was on overturning the power of the landed Kurdish elites, class relations were revolutionized, and the goal was the creation of a socialist state.

⁸ Watts, "Silence and Voice", p. 61.

⁹ Watts, "Silence and Voice", p. 58.

These changes in ideology for the Kurdish struggle brought diverse Kurds together, as well as bridged ethnic boundaries inciting cooperation with Turkish leftists who shared this common vision for the country.^f However, one can also argue that this radicalization of Kurdish ethno-national struggle also created divisions and polarization within the Kurdish population, dividing them into "Marxists" and "Non-Marxists", or supporters of the traditional, landed elites or tribal elders, and once again along tribal and linguistic lines. However, an important change to note was the move away from violent and local forms of resistance, to a more ethno-nationally based ideology or nationalism to combat the Turkish states repression by intellectual and peaceful means.^g Moreover, the end of the 60's saw young Kurdish intellectuals on the left starting to join movements of a more radical ethnic and separatist agenda in Turkey.

At the same time, this period also witnessed the publishing of pseudo-scientific articles arguing Kurds really stemmed from Turks, resurging traditional stereotypes that Kurds were really just "Mountain Turks", a common stereotype referring to them as Turks who had merely gone to live in the mountain and "forgotten" their language, disregarding the Kurds own unique history and culture. In addition, there were renewed efforts by the state to consolidate its influence in all parts of the country and pursue its former policies to eradicate the strength of minority cultures.

Towards the end of the 60's, Kurdish language publications, which had been flourishing, were proclaimed illegal. Moreover, census material specifically on the Kurdish population of the country ceased to be gathered according to minority group. In addition, the creation of the National Security Council (made up of top ranking militaries), as well as the feared National Intelligence Organization (MIT), showed a continued fear of the threat of Kurds and leftists during this time period. Many Kurdish activists were jailed during the rule of the military junta accused of wanting to create a "communist state of Kurdistan."¹⁰

In the fall of 1967 a massive civil disobedience campaign named the "Eastern Meetings" was launched in seven cities of the South-East, coordinated by the TIPs

¹⁰ Watts, "Silence and Voice", p. 61.

regional offices. This campaign gathered thousands and constituted one of the first mass public protests, according to Watts, since the earlier violent uprisings in the 30's and 40's. The meetings were mainly to protest economic inequalities between the East and the West of Turkey, as well as the lack of development and democracy. Watts also claims this important event exposed Western-born Kurds to the bleak situation faced by the poorer South-Eastern born Kurds. Kurdish intellectuals and poets were exposing their ideas and work publicly, and in Kurdish, something deemed to have been "unimaginable" before. Despite this liberty there was a heavy police presence, as well as various counter-rallies organized by Turkish nationalist groups.

In the early 1970's, Turkish military units known as "commandos" began clashing with Kurdish and Turkish leftists, operating in the South-East,¹¹ and on March 12th, 1971, another military coup was established.^h With this the Turkish constitution was again amended, as well as the penal code, in order to make it easier to prosecute Kurdish activism, as well as martial law was imposed on the South-Eastern region. The coup only lasted four years though, with a return to parliamentary democracy in 1974; in this period though, a Turkish ultra-nationalist group called the Grey Wolves, in addition to militant youth of the Nationalist Action Party, and left wing and Kurdish nationalist groups, engaged in violent conflict in Turkey's main cities and Eastern Anatolia. A couple of years later, in 1978, emerging from this polarized environment, the militant, guerrilla Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) was founded by Abdullah Öcalan to promote Kurdish demands and separatism. This group would play a central role in the "Kurdish Question" in Turkey in the following years, and form the armed wing of the Kurdish nationalist movement today.

c) 1980 – 90s Civil War

The decade of the 80's was again initiated with another coup by the Turkish military, this time targeting both Kurdish nationalists, Turkish ultra-nationalists, leftists and Islamists; all perceived as "a threat to the state".ⁱ The 1971 constitution was kept, proclaiming continuity with the Kemalist model and refusal to recognize Kurdish cultural identity, language, and right of association. The reign of the militaries saw the ban on the use of traditional Kurdish names, and a constitutional reform calling for a

¹¹ Watts, "Silence and Voice", p. 61.

parliamentary system where 10% of the national vote was needed for a party to be represented.^j This military coup was considered to be particularly brutal, with a widespread use of arbitrary detention, arrests and torture of anyone perceived to be a “threat”, including Kurdish activists and civilians, but also other dissenters to the official state policies. According to Yildiz and Muller, the Turkish state at the time was a “hostile, all-powerful, unaccountable institution.”^k

In 1983 with civilian rule restored, the situation was deemed to have improved, for instance with the Turkish President, Halil Turgut Özal, at the time lifting the ban on speaking Kurdish in public. However, the stability was not to last, as in the following year the PKK insurrections, launched from the Kurdish areas of Northern Iraq, against the Turkish military, began. This marked the start of the fifteen year civil war between the PKK and the Turkish military in the South-East of the country. Not only did this armed conflict produce much suffering on the part of Kurdish militants and guerilla fighters, but also affected the entire population, civilians and activists alike. Disappearances, torture, forced membership in the army or prescribed membership in the paramilitary “village guard system” (enlisting civilians to aid the military and report on and combat the on PKK in the South-East), were just some of the methods in which the Turkish state violated human rights and respect for cultural minorities. In 1987, a number of provinces under martial law were placed under a Regional State of Emergency Government (OHAL), under the rule of a “super governor” whom had an absolute mandate over decisions in the region. Suppression on Kurdish political activity, fearing collaboration with the PKK, and evacuation of villages due to the unrest were all commonplace.

Into the 1990’s the military regarded Kurdish nationalism and political Islam to be the two biggest threats to internal security, and these were heavily cracked down upon. The PKK leader Öcalan, sensing the need for a change of strategy, renounced the movement’s claims for separatism, but failed in trying to adopt a more formal party structure and in the declaration of unilateral ceasefires, as the violent attacks continued from both sides. This decade also saw the formation of various Kurdish political parties, some of which even gained representation in the Turkish parliament, but were consecutively banned as new ones sprang up on claims of collaboration with “an illegal organization”, namely the PKK.^l Moreover, these parties faced charges of having

formulated Kurdish particularistic demands, having incited “separatism” or “ethnic or racial hatred”, as outlined in the constitution.

Some progress was made with the legalizing of Kurdish music and music videos which had previously been strictly forbidden and confiscated. The beginning of this decade also marked the First Gulf war in Iraq which produced an exodus of millions of Kurdish refugees crossing the border to Turkey fleeing Saddam Hussein’s repressive regime. The war sparked international awareness and solidarity on the situation of Kurds in the area. However, it also produced a situation where the Kurds of Iraq became viewed as the “good” Kurds fleeing repression, while the Kurds in Turkey, were seen as “bad” Kurds, due to the PKK’s armed struggle in Turkey, and their case being less known and sympathized with.^m In the midst of the atrocities and violence, Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, was arrested in 1999 in Kenya, with the help of US intelligence. Upon his capture he called for another unilateral ceasefire which would last for five years. The event was deemed to be turning point for the Kurdish struggle, as well as for the following attitudes of the Turkish state towards the country’s Kurdish population. With this Öcalan’s capture, the fifteen year civil war in Turkey was considered over, although tension and incidents between Kurdish activists and politicians and the Turkish state remained frequent, with violence persisting.

d) 2000 – 2009 ”Democratic Opening”

Between February 2002 and July 2004 Turkey underwent an intense period of legislative reform, with eight “harmonization packages” were passed, under the auspices of the ruling AKP party, at a time where membership in the EU was considered to be much higher up on the political agenda then it is today.

With the perceived end of the armed conflict, Turkey’s consideration as an official EU-candidate just before the turn of the millennia, and the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) coming to power, there were a lot of expectations for change in Turkey. The party undertook various reforms in anticipation of EU accession and this brought about hope especially for the improvement of the situation of the Kurds in the country. The same year that the party came to power, a New Penal Code came into action with the lifting of the State of Emergency in the South-East, shorter police detention periods, as well as the lifting of the ban on the use of the Kurdish language in public. In addition,

in efforts to adopt the EU-criteria and fulfill the Copenhagen Criteria, the Turkish Parliament abolished the death penalty and legalized private Kurdish language classes (though several "bureaucratic hurdles" restricted and delayed the implementation of these.)¹¹ To this day, the easing on language rights still bans the teaching of the Kurdish language from the state education system (article 42 of the constitution on "mother-tongue"), as well as at a university level, except for in private universities and as an elective course.

Moreover, the constitutional changes enacted that same year did not provide much of an improvement to rights and protection for minorities, while the 6th and 7th pro-EU reform packages applied did improve the fields of freedom for Kurdish language in the areas of broadcasting, personal names, and language tuition,¹² as well as allowing Kurdish to be spoken in prison. The situation for Kurdish political prisoners and activists saw a slight turn of events, with the premature release of four former members of Parliament, among them the renowned Kurdish politician Leyla Zana. These parliament members had originally been sentenced for 15 year, for speaking Kurdish and wearing the Kurdish colors at their swearing in ceremony to Parliament.

The situation in the South-East even seemed to be changing with the PKK reorganizing itself as KADEK, the Congress for Democracy and Freedom in Kurdistan, as well as the continued upholding of the unilateral ceasefire. Later on KADEK converted into Kongra-Gel or the Peoples Congress of Kurdistan, seeking a more civilian and political path, moving away from the more militarized and radically separatist rhetoric of the past. However, in 2004, Kongra-Gel 's listing as a terrorist organization by the EU was later that year revoked, up until the five-year-long unilateral ceasefire. These changes all took place as Turkey, in 2005, commenced its formal negotiations for EU-accession, causing considerable pressure on the government to tackle the "Kurdish Question". Renewed violence and a PKK attack in November of 2008 on the Aktutun military base in the Semdinli region of Hakkari province overshadowed the attempts at democratization reform, however.¹³

¹² Yildiz and Muller, *The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights*, p. 67.

¹³ "Turkey's Dialogue with PKK may remain unfinished", *Today.Az*, January 17, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.today.az/news/regions/117788.html>.

In March 2008, the General Penal Board of the Court of Cassation outlined that individuals joining demonstrations where the PKK called for public participation should be charged with “membership” in the PKK.¹⁴ (This piece of legislation is frequently used to prosecute Kurdish activists and politicians even today.) In Spring of the same year, talks of a peace initiative to disarm the PKK began to circulate.¹⁵ In July, the ruling AKP narrowly avoided closure, as a complaint targeting its “anti-secular activities” failed to convince the supreme court.¹⁶ After the 2008 Zap operation failed, the government approach to the PKK changed; Ilker Basbug, Chief of Staff of the Military, and Prime Minister Erdoğan agree on pursuing a relaxation on culture and language rights. This culminated for instance, in the launch of a Kurdish language TV channel, which entered the agenda prior to the local elections of 29 March 2009.”¹⁷

The first half of 2009 was still marked by societal tension with widespread and violent protests. For instance, in February, marking the 10th Anniversary of Öcalan's capture, which culminated in clashes between protestors and police for several days in several South-Eastern cities.¹⁸ That same month, Ahmet Türk, then chairman of the pro-Kurdish DTP, gave a speech in Kurdish with the state TV channel, which immediately cut the live broadcast.¹⁹ In the lead up to the March 29 local elections, however, the

¹⁴ “Turkey: Events of 2009”, *Human Rights Watch: World Report 2010*, Human Rights Watch. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2010/turkey>

¹⁵ Soner Cagaptay and Ata Akiner, “In their own words: PKK leaders on Peace, Dialogue and the United States”, The Washington Institute, July 29, 2009. Accessed February, 19, 2014, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/in-their-own-words-pkk-leaders-on-peace-dialogue-and-the-united-states>

¹⁶ “Turkey criticized for closing pro-Kurdish political party”, *Amnesty International*, December 14, 2009. Accessed February, 19, 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/turkey-criticized-closing-pro-kurdish-political-party-20091214>

¹⁷ “Democratic Resolution Declaration From KCK”, *Kurdish Info*, October 16, 2013. Accessed February 26, 2014, <http://www.kurdishinfo.com/democratic-resolution-declaration-kck>

¹⁸ “Police clash with Kurdish protestors for second day in Turkey”, *E-Kurd.net*, February 16, 2009. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2009/2/turkeykurdistan2108.htm>

¹⁹ Sarah Rainsford, “MP breaks language law in Turkey”, *BBC*, February 25, 2009. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7909242.stm>.

PKK vowed to keep its' armed activity to a minimum. After the elections, the ruling AKP party remained a majority, though declined considerably in comparison with the 2007 elections. In mid-April the KCK declared that the non-conflict situation pursued before the local elections should be maintained, also in view of the increased standing of the Kurdish democratic movement in the local elections, giving renewed hopes for a political solution.²⁰ However, the day after the KCK declaration, on April 14, several members of the Kurdish nationalist political movement were arrested, comprising hundreds of Kurdish politicians, elected mayors, branch and provincial administrators.²⁰ In the same month, PKK leader Öcalan sets up a new roadmap to peace and sends "Peace Groups" (of former PKK combatants) to Turkey, in a renewed attempt to signal the need for a political solution.²¹ Throughout this time period arrests and military operations continue in the South-East of Turkey.

In May of 2009, the seasoned reporter Hasan Cemal conducted an interview with Murat Karayilan, an active PKK leader, for the Turkish newspaper Milliyet. In the interview the PKK declares its readiness for dialogue, and welcomes the increased openness in discussing the topic in the media. Moreover, the idea of a "wise man's committee" (later to become the "wise peoples commission",^p which would be initiated by the government to explain and prepare the public on the peace process) was already mentioned as an idea at this time.²² The increasing openness did not come with its pitfalls, as Cemal is later accused of conspiring with the PKK for his article.²³ As of May 2009 however, the official position of the Turkish government was still that it did not "negotiate with terrorists".²⁴ This hardline position coexisted however, unknown to

²⁰ "Democratic Resolution Declaration From KCK", *Kurdish Info*.

²¹ "Democratic Resolution Declaration From KCK", *Kurdish Info*.

²² Servet Tosun and Jeff Allen, "Is Turkey-PKK dialogue on the horizon", *Kurdish Herald*, 1 (2009): 2. Accessed February 26, 2014, <http://www.kurdishherald.com/issue/002/article03.php>.

²³ Tosun and Allen, "Is Turkey-PKK dialogue".

²⁴ "Official Ankara not to hold any dialogue with PKK: Ambassador", *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, May 29, 2009. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/78664/asd.html>

the public, with a secret dialogue process between the State and the PKK, which was dubbed the “Oslo Talks”, due to the location of the talks.

It is clear that throughout the Kurdish conflict’s history in Turkey, there has been a dissonance between the official rhetoric and the actual attempts at solving the conflict politically and peacefully, which though frequently kept out of the public eye, have taken place. The next section will outline the chronology of the two most recent track I peace processes (the Oslo Talks, and the most recent process), in order to provide the basis for the chronology of the inclusion and participation mechanisms which took place at lower tracks parallel to, and in the same time period (outlined in Chapter 4).

Chronology of the Peace Processes to solve the Kurdish Conflict (2008 – 2014)

In this section, a chronology of the peace process, and earlier attempts will be given, focusing on the Track I attempts to resolve this conflict. In the next chapter, a chronology of participation will be provided, in order to highlight the same time period, but centered on the activity of the lower tracks (Track II, III and 1.5) in the peace process, by their parallel as well as participatory activities in the ongoing Track I process. This will produce to complementary chronologies (combined in Appendix A), utilized later on to select specific case studies of participation for study and analysis.⁹

a) Earlier Attempts at Track I Peace Initiatives

Already in the years of his leadership of Istanbul’s Metropolitan Municipality (in the mid-1990s), Prime Minister Erdoğan formed a working group on the Kurdish question and its possible solutions.²⁵ Erdoğan’s background as part of the Turkish Islamist leader Necmettin Erbakan’s movement, were popular in the Kurdish regions, giving him considerable influence and legitimacy, in some sectors, even before he became Prime Minister.²⁵ Even before the AKP came into power however, it has been known that Turkish authorities had held open a dialogue channel with PKK leader Abudullah Öcalan about ending the PKK armed conflict, ever since his capture in February 1999.²⁶ In what can be classified as the “first attempts” at negotiations and the granting of

²⁵ “Amending Turkish Constitution for Kurdish Question”, Al Jazeera Center for Studies, Last updated March 21, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/positionpapers/2013/03/2013336372537622.htm>.

²⁶ Cagaptay and Akiner, “In their own words”

increased rights for Kurds, the presidency of Turgut Özal, between 1991-1993, involved a partial lifting of the ban on the use of the Kurdish language in schools and government agencies. His unexpected death in 1993 prevented meetings he had planned with the leadership of the PKK from taking place.²⁷ Thereafter, Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's attempted to hold indirect talks with the PKK leadership in 1997, though he was unseated by the military and could not follow through on his planned attempts.²⁸

b) The “Democratic opening”

In the summer of 2009, the government seemed to shift their strategy and launched a new project called the "Democratic solution to the Kurdish problem" (later called the “National Unity Project”, and known as the “Kurdish” or “Democratic” opening) in an attempt to make steps towards initiating negotiations through democratic reform. The process was portrayed as an attempt at initiating public consultation and negotiation to address Kurdish grievances and put an end to the PKK armed activity. Initiated with the opening of a 24-hour state-run Kurdish-language television channel and the promise of other reforms to end discrimination,²⁹ the project also aimed at re-integrating PKK fighters in Northern Iraq, by having them return to Turkey and laying down arms. In July 2009, Prime Minister Erdoğan even held a long awaited meeting with Kurdish politician Ahmet Türk concerning the commencement of a dialogue process, though nothing concrete was announced at the time.³⁰

This process also suffered from mixed signals however, especially in relation to the “opening up” of increased cultural rights for Kurds. For instance, in August, 2009, on the 25th anniversary of the first PKK attack in Erzurum, Kurdish Singer Ferhat Tunç gave a

²⁷ “Turkey and the Kurdish Issue: Opportunities for a negotiated solution”, *Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies – Doha Institute*, April 10, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014, <http://english.dohainstitute.org/release/bb56d7bc-d371-4ce5-8a21-898dbd06d5b3>.

²⁸ “Turkey and the Kurdish Issue” *Doha Institute*.

²⁹ Cagaptay and Akiner, “In their own words”.

³⁰ Hasan Cemal, “The Erdoğan-Türk meeting: An positive first step”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, July 8, 2009. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=the-erdogan-turk-meeting-an-affirmative-first-step8230-2009-08-06>.

speech which later landed him criminal charges.³¹ Moreover, The National Police Academy held a workshop on the government's "Kurdish Opening" initiative, but were conversely later prosecuted for said attempt at raising awareness on the government's new initiative.³² These are just a few examples at the time of back-tracking of the governmental decision for increased liberalization in the social and political realms for Kurds, (a practice which is still ongoing). However, the general political shift also brought some progress, as in September of the same year, trials began in Diyarbakir looking into state perpetrators of extrajudicial killings and disappearances; on trial stood a colonel, village guards and informers for the murder of 20 individuals in the period 1993-5 in Cizre, in the South-Eastern province of Şırnak.³³ This landmark step was seen as signaling a willingness to look into Turkey's "Dirty years" of civil warfare, and at least partially admit the mistakes of previous government's policies towards Kurds.

In October, 2009, a group of PKK militants crossed into Turkey from Iraq at the Habur border gate in what AKP officials claimed was the beginning of a process that would result in the entire organization laying down its arms.³⁴ The project of the Democratic Opening was thus partially implemented, but efforts remained strained after PKK supporters gave a warm "hero's welcome" to these militants returning to Turkey from Northern Iraq, which also sparked a strong counter-reaction from the Turkish opposition, Nationalist groups and the general public, with violent protests erupting. The government canceled the return of more groups, and several fighters who had been promised immunity from prosecution were arrested and imprisoned under Turkey's anti-terrorism laws.³⁵ Öcalan had dubbed these groups "peace groups" which were meant to show the PKK's willingness to disarm and re-integrate in return for democratic

³¹ "2010 Human Rights Report: Turkey", *U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour*, April 8, 2011. Accessed February 20, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/eur/154455.htm>.

³² "2010 Human Rights Report: Turkey", *U.S. Department of State*.

³³ "Turkey: Events of 2009", *Human Rights Watch*.

³⁴ Gareth H. Jenkins, "The AKP's new dialogue with Öcalan: A process but which process?" Central Asia-Caucasus Institute: Silk Road Studies Program, *Turkey Analyst* 6(2013): 1. Accessed February 19, 2014. <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2013/130116A.html>

³⁵ Ergin, "Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll".

rights. Thus an opportunity to commence an actual open negotiation process, through this attempt at a confidence building measure, was missed due to the lack of inclusion and preparation of this process of the public.

Though the “Democratic Opening” was considered dead after this, secret talks continued between the government and the PKK in this period (later, these would become known as the “Oslo Talks”). During this period both conflict parties decreased their armed activity.³⁶ The process was poorly planned and hastily implemented. In its anxiety to reap the political benefits of putting an end to a conflict that had already cost nearly 40,000 lives, the AKP failed to both prepare the Turkish public and to create a legal framework for disarming PKK militants.³⁷ However, that year saw a shift in discourse as DTP Co-Chairman and head of the Kurdish Democratic Congress (KTK), Ahmet Türk, started to use the term “Kürt coğrafyası” (Kurdish geography), for instance referring to the majoritarian Kurdish populated areas.³⁸ At the time a conversation was increasingly emerging among various politicians, civil society organizations, academics and the media, as well as the president, Abdullah Gül (and not without its critics), about how the “Kurdish Question” in Turkey should be solved through peaceful means.³⁹ Moreover, the media especially saw a shift away from self-censorship towards the calls for the need for a solution to the “Kurdish issue.”⁴⁰ The political parties were viewed as slowly changing position as well: the AKP seemed to be considering steps towards dialogue, while the CHP met representatives from the DTP for the first time.⁴¹

³⁶ Jenkins, “The AKP’s new dialogue with Öcalan”.

³⁷ Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

³⁸ Robert Olson “Kurdistan: Another state in the making in the Middle East?”, *Today’s Zaman*, December 11, 2013. Accessed February 15, 2014. [http://www.todayszaman.com/news-333774-kurdistan-another-state-in-the-making-in-the-middle-east-by-robert-olson-.html?fb_action_ids=1404714966451023&fb_action_types=og.recommends&fb_source=other_multiline&action_object_map=\[228178867351767\]&action_type_map=\[%22og.recommends%22\]&action_ref_map=\[.](http://www.todayszaman.com/news-333774-kurdistan-another-state-in-the-making-in-the-middle-east-by-robert-olson-.html?fb_action_ids=1404714966451023&fb_action_types=og.recommends&fb_source=other_multiline&action_object_map=[228178867351767]&action_type_map=[%22og.recommends%22]&action_ref_map=[.)

³⁹ Tosun and Allen, “Is Turkey-PKK dialogue”.

⁴⁰ Tosun and Allen, “Is Turkey-PKK dialogue”.

November 2009, saw the AKP government addressing parliament in terms of its intentions to strengthen Kurdish human rights in Turkey.⁴² Meanwhile, anti-terrorism arrests and trials continued however, for instance with 31 members of the mainly-Izmir based trade unions affiliated to the public sector workers' trade union confederation KESK standing trial on charges for being members of the PKK. In December of the same year however, the government strengthened Kurdish language rights and reduced the presence of the army in the South-East. Yet, on December 11, the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) faced closure, as well as the banning from politics for 5 years of 37 of its members, including the co-chairs Member of Parliament Ahmet Türk and Aysel Tuğluk.⁴³ The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) was formed in its place, maintaining the Pro-Kurdish stance of its predecessor, and currently still exists.

For many, the disappointment of the AKPs 2009 “Democratic” or “Kurdish” opening was only too clear, bringing disillusion in the government as a whole. Many accused the government of not being genuine, and argued that the initiative had in fact failed completely.⁴⁴ The focus on social and development issues in its approach,⁴⁵ and the lack of acknowledgement of identity, social and political issues and demands at hand proved the strategy unsuccessful, rightly pointing towards the need for more involvement and consultation from the stakeholders themselves in such a process. As is outlined by Ömer Taspınar, referring to the PKK's persistent popularity in Turkey: “Breeding grounds for radicalism and terrorist recruitment emerge not necessarily under conditions of abject poverty and deprivation, but rather when negative social, economic and political trends converge.”⁴⁶ The increase in PKK attacks in the summer of 2009 also didn't help the government's Kurdish initiative or sway public opinion. However, the last years have also seen increased action by civil society organizations for the PKK to lay down its weapons, as well as for military operations in the South-East to cease, in order to look

⁴¹ Tosun and Allen, “Is Turkey-PKK dialogue”.

⁴² “Turkey: Events of 2009”, *Human Rights Watch*.

⁴³ “Turkey criticized”, *Amnesty International*.

⁴⁴ Ömer Taspınar, “The Root Causes of Turkey's Kurdish Challenge”, *Today's Zaman*, February 9, 2010, Brookings Institute Website. Accessed June 14, 2014 <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2010/02/09-turkey-kurdish-taspinar>.

for a political settlement solution instead. The September 2009 referendum to amend the 1980's constitution from the military coup showed a will to move away from Turkey's militarized past. Moreover, progress was later seen, as in August of 2009, a unilateral ceasefire was established after a meeting between the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), Kurdish intellectuals, members of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), civil society groups and PKK-affiliated organizations.⁴⁵

As outlined in the EU Commission's 2010 Turkey Progress Report, and part of the conference's final resolutions the "...specific areas of concern include freedom of expression and association, access to justice and independence of the judiciary, freedom of religion, children's rights, gender equality and the harsh treatment of human rights defenders", as well as the task of supporting Turkey's EU-accession and urging all parties to commit to negotiation and dialogue process. For instance, one of the concerns of the yearly International Conference on "EU, Turkey and the Kurds" in 2010, was that although Turkey had undergone certain reforms and constitutional amendments in the right direction, these had not been exercised with a consultation with political parties and civil society organizations and therefore lacked legitimacy.

c) Oslo Talks

In what can be considered the second generation of attempts to solve the Kurdish question, the AKP launched their Democratic opening, followed by the so-called "Oslo-Talks" between 2008 – 2011. However, the "Democratic Opening" was viewed to basically be abandoned in the period leading up to, and during, the Oslo talks.⁴⁶ There were some easing of restrictions during 2010, specifically targeted at the Kurdish question, but in practice easing language use for other minorities as well, as radio and television stations were allowed to broadcast in the following "languages besides Turkish" during this year: Arabic, Bosnian, Circassian, and Kurdish (both Kurmanci and Zaza dialects).⁴⁶ Despite these moves from the government, violence continued in

⁴⁵ Gönül Tol, "Turkey's Chance for Reconciliation", *Middle East Institute* (Washington, D.C.) September 10, 2010. Accessed March 14, 2014 <http://www.mei.edu/content/turkeys-chance-reconciliation>

⁴⁶ "2010 Human Rights Report: Turkey", *U.S. Department of State*.

demonstrations related to the Kurdish problem during the rest of the year in the South-East of the country.⁴⁷

Indirect talks were said to have been pursued between the PKK and the Turkish State already in 2008, mediated and organized by a Norwegian civil society group and the Norwegian government.⁴⁸ Between 2009 and 2011 talks,⁴⁹ or rather “talks about talks” commenced between the Turkish state and the PKK, dubbed the “Oslo talks” (due to some of the face-to-face meetings being held in Oslo).⁵⁰ After Hakan Fidan was appointed the new undersecretary of the MİT, replacing Emre Taner in 2010 the talks continued.⁵¹ Little information is available from these talks, as they were conducted in strict secrecy, and only concluded with the leaking of tapes from the talks, sparking public outrage, in 2011. The new Pro-Kurdish party, the BDP, played an important role at the time, with Deputy Sırrı Sakık and previous DTP Co-chair and independent deputy Ahmet Türk, providing contact between the two parties in the lead up to the Oslo Talks between 2006 and 2010. This process commenced after “positive signals” had been received by the two Kurdish politicians from undisclosed government sources that rapprochement between the two conflicting parties was desired.⁵² The deputy undersecretary of the Prime Ministry at the time, Hakan Fidan, (who became the head of the MİT later), MİT deputy undersecretary Afet Güneş, and three members of the European wing of the PKK, Mustafa Karasu, Sabri Ok and Zübeyir Aydar, attended the

⁴⁷ “2010 Human Rights Report: Turkey”, *U.S. Department of State*.

⁴⁸ “Amending Turkish Constitution for Kurdish Question”, *Al Jazeera Center for Studies*.

⁴⁹ “Tyrkisk leder foreslår fredssamtaler med kurdere i Oslo”, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, September 27, 2012. Accessed March 29, 2014, <http://www.aftenbladet.no/nyheter/utenriks/Tyrkisk-leder-foreslar-fredssamtaler-med-kurdere-i-Oslo-3038577.html#.UzajjF5YXeZ>

⁵⁰ Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

⁵¹ “Observers say Oslo talks were key to solving Kurdish problem”, *Today’s Zaman*, February 10, 2012. Accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-271069-observers-say-oslo-talks-were-key-to-solving-kurdish-problem.html>.

⁵² Göksel Bozkurt, “We paved way the for Oslo talks: BDP deputy”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, October 9, 2012. Accessed March 7, 2014. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/we-paved-way-the-for-oslo-talks-bdp-deputy.aspx?pageID=238&nID=31967&NewsCatID=338>

various meetings that constituted the “Oslo Talks”,⁵³ of which further detail as to the talks extent and content is not readily known to the public to date.

In April of 2010, debates on constitutional reform began arising, most prominently due to the pressure that the Kurdish question was putting on Turkey’s political consensus, but also on its international image. Subsequently, easing on restrictions on the use of Kurdish language continued, with the amendment on April 11 of the political parties law and the election law in order to allow the use of “languages other than Turkish” during election campaigns, as well.⁵⁴ In May of the same year, the conflict faced renewed intensification after one year of relative calm, with the stepping up of military operations and respondent PKK attacks.⁵⁵

In July 2010, the PKK leader Karayilan issued a statement saying that the PKK were willing to disarm in return for increased legal rights for Kurds. This could be interpreted as a series of public statements and signals by the PKK leadership to test the waters for a future negotiation process at the time. Moreover, it was speculated at the time that this may be an outcome of the secret, ongoing talks. On 13 August, 2010, further progress was made with a ceasefire being called by Öcalan, complying with the request of the Turkish government for non-violence ahead of the September 12th constitutional referendum. The ceasefire was later prolonged until the general elections held in June 2011, producing almost a year-long period of non-violence.⁵⁶ On August 20, 2011 the CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu publicly referred to the ongoing Oslo talks between the government and the PKK, underlying the party was not against said talks. Prime Minister Erdoğan, in response strongly, denied the talks were taking place.⁵⁷ However, on September 19, 2011, and following the leaks and the end of the Oslo talks, Prime Minister Erdoğan admitted that they had taken place, underlining however: “The state

⁵³ “Chronology of Oslo Dialogues with PKK”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 28, 2012. Accessed March 7, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/chronology-of-oslo-dialogues-with-pkk.aspx?pageID=238&nID=31190&NewsCatID=338>.

⁵⁴ “2010 Human Rights Report: Turkey”, *U.S. Department of State*.

⁵⁵ “Democratic Resolution Declaration From KCK”, *Kurdish Info*.

⁵⁶ “Democratic Resolution Declaration From KCK”, *Kurdish Info*.

⁵⁷ “Chronology of Oslo Dialogues with PKK”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

had talks (with the PKK) not the government.” (Referring by the “state” to the intelligence agency MİT which had conducted the talks representing the state).⁵⁸

For as long as they lasted, the secret Oslo talks take place in a climate of much domestic political turmoil. Throughout the year of 2010, prosecutors in Istanbul continued to arrest and indict prominent military, business, and media personalities on charges of plotting to foment unrest and topple the elected government as members of an alleged network known as "Ergenekon". The network was accused of attempting a military coup in 2003, with more than 250 persons being indicted by that year's end.⁵⁹ On December 16, the first session of a trial of 195 suspects in the alleged "Sledgehammer" coup plan began. Suspects included active-duty military generals and civilians, accused of obstructing the government and plotting to overthrow it. The trial continues until the year's end. Many observers see this trial as politically motivated, similar to the Ergenekon case, while others see it as bringing to justice those who attempted to overthrow the government.⁶⁰

Parallel to this process, was the “KCK trials” (referring to the Kurdish Communities Union) which were ongoing in this period.^v The first session of a case against 151 suspects, including several elected mayors, political party officials, and human rights activists, began in Diyarbakir on October 10, 2010. These individuals were charged with disrupting the integrity of the state; being members and/or administrators of the KCK, and assisting and sheltering a terrorist organization under Turkey’s “anti-terror” legislation. The suspects requested to defend themselves in Kurdish, but this was denied in court as constituting an “unknown language”.⁶¹ The KCK trials commenced at a time of relative inactivity of the Oslo process, and were seen to reverse the positive efforts which had initially spurred the process on in the beginning.⁶² Years later, on February

⁵⁸ “Chronology of Oslo Dialogues with PKK”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

⁵⁹ “2010 Human Rights Report: Turkey”, *U.S. Department of State*.

⁶⁰ “2010 Human Rights Report: Turkey”, *U.S. Department of State*.

⁶¹ “2010 Human Rights Report: Turkey”, *U.S. Department of State*.

15th, 2012, a bill regulating the MİT was changed in a move to protect the intelligence agency from being obligated to testify in the still ongoing KCK probe. Fidan, Güneş, and Taner (active in the Oslo talks) were invited to testify, but it was speculated that this was to question them on the Oslo talks.⁶³ This move shows the prevalent culture of secrecy surrounding the actual extent and content of these initial talks.

The last meeting, according to the Chief of the PKK's Europe branch, Zübair Aydar (who was present at the Oslo talks) between the PKK and the MİT, took place in May 2011.⁶⁴ According to him, by this time three protocols had been prepared by Öcalan for discussion with his counterparts. After that no other meeting took place, though they were expecting a follow-up to take place in June. The year of 2011 proved not to be one of much progress for the nascent political peace process. On March 1 the PKK ended its ceasefire though it said it would not re-commence violence before the June elections.⁶⁵ The political moves toward reconciliation came to a halt finally though, after PKK militants began launching strikes in mid-2011 on Turkish soldiers and police.⁶⁶ A sharp escalation in violence was continuously accompanied by growing political repression, including a massive crackdown on pro-Kurdish media and arbitrary arrests of thousands of Kurdish activists, intellectuals and politicians.⁶⁷ Finally, the "Oslo Talks" faltered in the run up to the June 12th elections,⁶⁸ whereby the ceasefire called almost a year before was finally breached.

⁶² "PKK wants to restart negotiations: Report", *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 24, 2012. Accessed March 6, 2014. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/pkk-wants-to-restart-negotiations-report.aspx?pageID=238&nID=30904&NewsCatID=338>

⁶³ "Chronology of Oslo Dialogues with PKK", *Hürriyet Daily News*.

⁶⁴ "PKK wants to restart negotiations: Report", *Hürriyet Daily News*.

⁶⁵ Ekrem Eddy Güzeldere, "Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011", *The Global Dispatches*, May 19, 2011. Accessed February 19, 2014. <http://www.theglobaldispatches.com/articles/kurdish-politics-and-newroz-2011>

⁶⁶ Ergin, "Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll".

⁶⁷ Ergin, "Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll".

⁶⁸ Jenkins, "The AKP's new dialogue with Öcalan".

After the June 12th, 2011 elections, the AKP won an overwhelming majority.⁶⁹ Following these elections, Erdoğan was increasingly perceived as adopting a hardline stance on the Kurdish issue, and military operations increased in the South-East.⁷⁰ This culminated in the increased incidence of PKK attacks, and a bitter end to the hope of a resolution as started by the Oslo process.⁷¹ Moreover, de-facto “Democratic Autonomy” was announced by the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) a platform of Kurdish parties and organizations. The government responded with anger to this declaration, and guerilla and military clashes followed, with a sharp increase in violence and continued arrests. This period until Autumn 2012 proved to be the most deadly in the conflict, with the AKP government choosing to try to again solve the conflict militarily instead of non-violently through continued talks and negotiations.⁷²

In September 2011, an almost 50-minute long voice recording revealed the secret talks that had taken place between representatives of the Turkish government and members of the PKK in Oslo, Norway, as well as Imrali Island, in the Marmara sea of Turkey, held sometime in 2010.⁷³ The leaks from the secret Oslo Talks faced various accusations as to who could have produced the leak willingly, in terms of spoiling the process. PKK member Zübair Aydar, for instance, accused the religious Gulen Movement of leaking the Oslo talks to the media.⁷⁴ ⁷⁵ For instance, a video message

⁶⁹ Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

⁷⁰ Jenkins, “The AKP’s new dialogue with Öcalan”.

⁷¹ Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

⁷² “Democratic Resolution Declaration From KCK”, *Kurdish Info*.

⁷³ “PM Erdoğan: PKK leaked secret Oslo talks to media”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 28, 2012. Accessed 28 March, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-293692-pm-erdogan-pkk-leaked-secret-oslo-talks-to-media.html>.

⁷⁴ “PKK accuses Gülen Movement of leaking Oslo talks”, *Kurd Press*, 28 January, 2013. Accessed May 5, 2014, <http://www.kurdpress.com/En/NSite/FullStory/News/?Id=3665#Title=%0A%09%09%09%09%09%09%09PKK%20accuses%20Gulen%20Movement%20of%20leaking%20Oslo%20talks%0A%09%09%09%09%09%09%09>

⁷⁵ Wladimir Van Wilgenburg, “Turkish power struggle leaves new questions on Kurdish issue”, February 4, 2014. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.al->

released at the time by the leader of the Gulen Movement, Fetullah Gulen (in exile in the United States) was interpreted by the PKK leadership as hostile towards their movement and Kurds in general.⁷⁶ Prime Minister Erdoğan later blamed the PKK for the leaks as well.⁷⁶ Although much remains unclear about the process, Murat Karayılan, the leader of the PKK, admitted in an interview on June 15, 2012 that “the solution was very close in Oslo.”⁷⁷ Moreover, later on, in Sept. 18, 2012, CHP spokesperson Haluk Koç argued that the PKK and the AKP had signed an agreement in Oslo and reveals the alleged documents.⁷⁸

August 2011 brought the appointment of new top generals to the TSK, reviving hopes towards renewed democratization efforts in Turkey, increased governmental control over the military and better civil-military relations.⁷⁹ In October the PKK killed 24 soldiers in Çukurca and Yüksekova, in South-Eastern Turkey, constituting the deadliest attack of the group since the 1990s.⁸⁰ In turn, 53 PKK fighters were killed in three days in the same region⁸¹ with the Turkish army conducting bomber plane attacks in Northern Iraq on PKK bases as well.⁸² These events, together with the renewal of PKK strikes in mid-2011, and the leaking of the talks, meant that the secret talks became politically impossible to pursue. However, democratization and reform initiatives

monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/02/turkey-power-struggle-reveals-kurdish-questions.html.

⁷⁶ “PM Erdoğan: PKK leaked secret Oslo talks to media”, *Today’s Zaman*.

⁷⁷ “Chronology of Oslo Dialogues with PKK”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

⁷⁸ “Chronology of Oslo Dialogues with PKK”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

⁷⁹ Constanze Letsch and Helen Pidd, “Turkey names new military chiefs”, *The Guardian*, August 4, 2011. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/04/turkey-middleeast>.

⁸⁰ Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

⁸¹ “Tyrkiske soldater har drept 49 kurdiske opprørere”, *NRK*, October 22, 2011. Accessed March 29, 2014, <http://www.nrk.no/verden/--49-kurdiske-opprorere-drept-1.7845082>.

⁸² “Tyrkia’s regjeringshær angriper kurdere i Irak”, *NRK*, October 19, 2011. Accessed March 29, 2014, <http://www.nrk.no/verden/tyrkia-angriper-kurdere-i-irak-1.7840189>.

continued, and on October 19, a Constitutional Reconciliation Commission (CRC) was set up to outline a new civilian constitution, with the membership of all parties in parliament represented equally, encompassing the AKP, CHP, MHP and Pro-Kurdish, BDP. However, 2011 culminated tragically, putting a stop to these efforts for increased political reconciliation for that year. As on December 28th the Roboski/Uludere bombings take place, in which 34 Kurdish civilians, mostly young teenage boys, were killed while smuggling goods, constituting food supplies and cigarettes, over the Turkish border. This produced a national outcry, not least among the Kurdish population, who recalled previous atrocities perpetrated towards Kurdish civilians in the past.^x The government did not handle the situation well in relation to the ongoing reconciliation efforts, and instead of quickly acknowledging the situation, called the young smugglers “terrorists”, which in turn sparked more outrage in Kurdish society.

d) Recent Peace Initiatives (2012 – 2014)

In the third attempts at talks, again pursued by the AKP government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Erdoğan, the negotiations had many names (perhaps reflecting the stop-and-go dynamic that characterized and still characterizes it). Initially it was referred to the “İmralı” process, named after the island where leader Öcalan sits imprisoned. Later on Erdoğan coined it the “Solution process” (*Çözüm süreci*), which later became known as simply the “Peace process.”

Following up on their previous attempts to employ a dual strategy of democratization and reform, going hand in hand with political dialogue, the AKP started again in the interval between 2011 – 2013 (and following the failures of both the “Kurdish opening” and the “Oslo Talks”), with releasing four judicial reform packages, culminating in a constitutional reform package in September 2013. The year of 2012 also brought about an attempt at renewed talks (which are at the time of writing, currently taking place). Officially commenced in October 2012, these were widely seen as important politically to Prime Minister Erdoğan. Moreover, in difference to the first round of “Oslo Talks” these renewed talks were attempted in a more public fashion, with media coverage of the meetings taking place (though not much insight into their content), and with official declarations by the Prime Minister and other politicians, acknowledging the process.

The first half of the year leading up to renewed talks in October 2012 was marked by an escalation in the armed conflict, as well as regional turmoil in Syria. January, seemed to start off on a promising note, with a parliamentary inquiry created to look into the case of the Roboski/Uludere bombings of the previous year.⁸³ However, in June, a civilian court in Diyarbakir conducting the investigation issued a controversial decision of non-jurisdiction on the case, transferring it to military prosecutors.⁸⁴ February of that year brought about an escalation in the armed conflict, with cross border raids in Iraq on suspected PKK bases, with hundreds killed, lessening the hopes that a non-violent solution would be possible to the conflict.⁸⁵ Moreover, that year's Newroz celebrations in March were marked with clashes between demonstrators and police,⁸⁶ with many injured and hundreds arrested, and with one protester killed, namely the head of the Istanbul branch office of the BDP, Haci Zengin.⁸⁷ There was political disagreement surrounding the yearly event as the BDP wanted to organize it on the 18th of March, a Sunday, while the government wanted Newroz celebrations to take place on the usual day, the 21st. This rift lead to an all out ban of the celebrations that year, though crowds gathered regardless.⁸⁸

⁸³ Howard Eissenstat "The Uludere Bombing: When will their families get justice", *Amnesty International Human Rights Now' Blog*, December 27, 2012. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://blog.amnestyusa.org/europe/the-uludere-bombing-when-will-their-families-get-justice/>.

⁸⁴ "Turkish military prosecutors dismiss investigation into Uludere massacre", *Hürriyet Daily News*. January 7, 2014. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-military-prosecutors-dismiss-investigation-into-uludere-massacre.aspx?pageID=238&nID=60668&NewsCatID=339>.

⁸⁵ Ergin, "Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll".

⁸⁶ "I haven't seen such violence since Vietnam protests': Swedish delegation in Turkey", *Ekurd*, March 26, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/3/turkey3860.htm>.

⁸⁷ "Turkish police clash with Kurdish protesters", *Al-Jazeera*, March 18, 2012. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/03/2012318173842690891.html>.

⁸⁸ "The stupidity of banning Newroz", March 21, 2012, *Hürriyet Daily News*. Accessed February 19, 2014. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-stupidity-of-banning-newroz-.aspx?pageID=238&nid=16465>.

In June of the same year, the government announced that schools were permitted to offer Kurdish classes (though only as an elective course).⁸⁹ Moreover, violence escalated again as PKK bases were struck in Iraq, after 8 TSK and 10 PKK fighters were killed in the South-Eastern Hakkari province in clashes between the two sides. With the increased fighting that took place that autumn, and in July, a Turkish plane was shot down by Syrian forces, there were increased worries as to how the conflict would impact Turkey, as well as its ongoing Kurdish peace talks. In September, there were further air strikes on PKK bases in Northern Iraq, with the TSK gaining military advantage and inflicting heavy casualties on the PKK.⁹⁰ These events brought about renewed calls by the BDP to recommence negotiations to avoid further loss of life in the military conflict.⁹¹ With the PKK gaining military advantage in October, legislation was also passed allowing cross border military raids into Northern Iraq, in order to be able to target PKK headquarters.⁹² On the 20th of November, a Major PKK branch leader and 151 members of the “Self-defense Units” (ÖSB) of the PKK were detained in the South-Eastern province of Diyarbakir in a sweeping operation against the guerillas.⁹³

In the summer of 2012, the PKK experienced an increase in its’ self-confidence in terms of gaining support from Kurdish nationalists in the region. Looking to its neighbors, with the increased independence of the semi-autonomous region of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) from the Iraqi central government, and with the separate majority Kurdish population area called “Rojava” (North-Eastern and Northern Syria) emerging in the increasingly chaotic Syria, under the control of the PKK related

⁸⁹ “Prime Minister Erdoğan promises Kurdish as elective course in schools”, *Today’s Zaman*, June 12, 2012. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-283331-prime-minister-erdogan-promises-kurdish-as-elective-course-in-schools.html>.

⁹⁰ Jenkins, “The AKP’s new dialogue with Öcalan”.

⁹¹ “PM Erdoğan: PKK leaked secret Oslo talks to media”, *Today’s Zaman*.

⁹² Emrah Senel, “Leyla Zana vil gjenoppta Oslo-samtalene”, *NRK*, July 2, 2012. Accessed March 29, 2014, <http://www.nrk.no/verden/vil-gjenoppta-oslo-samtalene-1.8229354>.

⁹³ “Major PKK branch leader, 151 others detained in Diyarbakir anti-PKK operation”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 20, 2012. Accessed June 16, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-298778-major-pkk-branch-leader-151-others-detained-in-diyarbakir-anti-pkk-operation.html>.

Democratic Union Party (PYD), throughout July 2012, the PKK began to attempt holding control over territory gained from its armed attacks for the first time in 20 years.⁹⁴ By September, the Turkish armed forces seemed to be retaining the upper hand militarily, with only the harsh winter conditions in the South-East putting the situation on hold, but demonstrating a military stalemate on both sides, which seemed to produce the adequate conditions for a renewal of talks. In addition to this, on September 12, Kurdish prisoners began a hunger strike campaign in order to continue the pressure felt by the government to make advances in its dealing with the Kurdish issue. People both inside and outside of prison joined the strike, with over 700 people taking part by mid-November 2012. Those striking proclaimed to be doing so in accordance with the demands of the PKK: for the recognition of full Kurdish language rights, an easing of the policy of isolation Öcalan in prison, the devolution of some of the powers of the central government to local authorities in the South-Eastern, Kurdish dominated areas, and the establishment of “democratic autonomy” in these areas.⁹⁵

There was a whole back-channel political process also leading up to the commencement of renewed talks in October of 2012, built on the contacts and lessons already learned from the earlier rounds of talks mentioned before. For instance, on June 1st, 2012, the opposition CHP proposed the launching of an initiative to find a resolution to the Kurdish issue with two commissions; a joint parliamentary commission and another “wise peoples” committee to work with the parliamentary commission. The latter idea has also previously been an idea launched by Öcalan. The AKP responded positively to these ideas, making them their own, while the MHP refused them in principle, with the BDP gradually agreeing to the proposition, and their participation.⁹⁶ Diyarbakır independent deputy Leyla Zana met with Erdoğan on July 1st, two weeks after she said that it was “Erdoğan who could solve the Kurdish issue,” suggesting talks with the PKK should be re-started.⁹⁷ There was support for renewed talks from the opposition CHP

⁹⁴ Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

⁹⁵ Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

⁹⁶ “Chronology of Oslo Dialogues with PKK”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

⁹⁷ “Chronology of Oslo Dialogues with PKK”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

with an official statement of leader Kılıçdaroğlu on September 21st.⁹⁸

The talks began with the Prime Minister sending Hakan Fidan, the head of the MİT, for an initial face-to-face meeting with Öcalan, on İmralı island, South of Istanbul, where he is currently imprisoned for life.⁹⁹ From January 2013, there takes place 10 such visits, with MP's from the BDP also taking part in these high level political dialogues. However, critics viewed these talks as increasingly giving the upper hand to Öcalan and the PKK. For instance, Öcalan issued a statement asking to meet more people while in prison, where he had been kept in isolation, like civil society representatives and journalists. Moreover, the wording of using “negotiations” instead of “dialogue”, and insisting on his demands to be met in order for the continuation of the process, were interpreted by political commentators as a sign that the jailed leaders was pushing his agenda primarily.¹⁰⁰ The whole process commenced to slow down as the PKK was seen to be “rushing” a democratic reform package in September 2013 through parliament, before its July 2013 break, The government on the other hand accused the PKK for not being efficient enough in withdrawing their militants from Turkish soil, as agreed upon in their negotiations.¹⁰¹

The visits to İmralı continued, and on November 17, 2012, Öcalan's younger brother Mehmet was granted a visit to the prison. After the visit his brother announced Öcalan's wish for an end to the hunger strike (ongoing since September), before any deaths took place. His wishes were granted immediately, demonstrating the great power that the PKK leader still wields over the Kurdish movement in Turkey.¹⁰² On December 28, 2012, (on the one-year anniversary of the Roboski/Uludere bombings coincidentally), the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan announced the beginning of a new dialogue process

⁹⁸ “Chronology of Oslo Dialogues with PKK”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

⁹⁹ Murat Yetkin, “Öcalan raises the bar in Turkey's Kurdish bid”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 17, 2013. Accessed March 30, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/ocalan-raises-the-bar-in-turkeys-kurdish-bid.aspx?pageID=449&nID=54570&NewsCatID=409>

¹⁰⁰ Yetkin, “Öcalan raises the bar”

¹⁰¹ Yetkin, “Öcalan raises the bar”

¹⁰² Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

with imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, in order to disarm the organization.¹⁰³ There was an interesting use of rhetoric with the government framing the process as mainly one of “disarmament”, while the PKK attempted to paint the process as one of “negotiations”, and mutual concessions. The tension between these contesting views from either side was demonstrated on January 1, 2013, when Murat Karayılan, the most influential of the PKK commanders in Northern Iraq, answered Erdoğan’s statement with one of his own, underlying that it was the Turkish army that should be withdrawing its forces from “Kurdistan” (referring to South-Eastern Turkey), and not the other way round.¹⁰⁴

On January 3, 2013, two Kurdish nationalist members of parliament, Ahmet Türk and Ayla Akat Ata, visited Öcalan on İmralı.¹⁰⁵ Highly reported in the media as a step forward in the peace process, the two MP’s made a declaration announcing that the PKK leader wished to pursue the resolution of the Kurdish issue through “democratic means”. However, critiques remarked that the process was still rather cosmetic, with the government not actually including wider elements of the PKK, or the BDP, in actual negotiations.¹⁰⁶ Suspicion remained in the Kurdish nationalist movement as to whether the only aim of the government with this process was simply to disarm the PKK, and not to actually grant increased rights and address the deep-rooted causes of the conflict. Clearly, the lack of trust between the two parties persisted. To compound the tensions, on January 7th 2013, 100 PKK fighters attacked a military post close to the Iraqi border, in Çukurca, an unusual event in the winter months when the weather makes armed activity in this area extra difficult. Although the media professed the “end” of the dialogue process, the attack turned out to actually be a retaliation for the death of Ertem

¹⁰³ Jenkins, “The AKP’s new dialogue with Öcalan”.

¹⁰⁴ Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

¹⁰⁵ “Öcalan’s brother travels to İmralı to see PKK leader”, *Today’s Zaman*, June 12, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-318042-ocalans-brother-travels-to-imrali-to-see-pkk-leader.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

Karabulut on December 31, 2012, a PKK regional commander and member of its ruling council, thus, the event did not actually have major repercussions.¹⁰⁷

On January 9th, 2013 three Kurdish women activists, Sakine Cansiz (founding member of the PKK), Fidan Doğan (member of the Kurdistan National Congress in Paris) and Leyla Saylemez (member of the Kurdish youth movement) were killed in Paris. The assassinations was seen by both the Turkish government and the Kurdish political movement as a major attempt to try and derail the peace talks with the PKK. One year later, leaks to the media brought suspicion as to whether the government was responsible,¹⁰⁸ with accusations being made, particularly by Kurdish Nationalists, targeting the AKP.¹⁰⁹ On January 10th, Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç issued a statement condemning the Paris killings, however, the majority of the other AKP officials, including Prime Minister Erdoğan also tried to use it as an opportunity to speculate in whether the PKK had factions within it opposed to the peace process.¹¹⁰

Peace seemed to be far away from the agenda when on January 13-14, 2013, Turkish warplanes bombed PKK camps and bases in Northern Iraq yet again. Parallel to this military activity was the mass funeral of the three slain Kurdish activists in Paris which, upon their arrival in Diyarbakir, were met by masses of people.¹¹¹ In February, an Istanbul prosecutor who oversaw the investigation into the KCK trials for links to the PKK asked the Ankara Prosecutor's Office to hear the testimony of MIT undersecretary Hakan Fidan, as well as obtaining warrants for four other MIT officials. Fidan was also asked to testify in the ongoing Kurdish Communities Union (KCK) trials.¹¹² This was

¹⁰⁷ Ergin, "Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll".

¹⁰⁸ Wilgenburg, "Turkish power struggle leaves".

¹⁰⁹ Ergin, "Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll".

¹¹⁰ Jenkins, "The AKP's new dialogue with Öcalan".

¹¹¹ "Turkey bombs PKK bases on the eve of assassinated politicians' funerals", *The Kurdistan Tribune*, January 16, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://kurdistantribune.com/2013/turkey-bombs-pkk-bases-on-eve-of-assassinated-politicians-funerals/>.

¹¹² "Prosecutor insists on MIT head's testimony as warrant issued for others", *Today's Zaman*, February 10, 2012. Accessed February 1, 2014,

seen as an infringement on the governments authority and independence in pursuing the peace process in some circles, and is also as an attempt to investigate the Oslo talks.

However, March 2013 brought perceived steps forward endorsing the peace process, with a ceasefire being called in mid-March by Öcalan during the Newroz celebrations, which were conducted more peacefully then previously in the anticipation of his announcement.¹¹³ From March to June, the “Government Take a Step” (Hukümet Adım) civil disobedience campaign was launched by the BDP to keep pressure towards this end.¹¹⁴ In March, the Parliamentary report on the Roboski/Uludere bombings, following 15 months of inquiry, was released, concluding that there was no evidence found to prove the attack was intentional. It cited “poor coordination” between the army and intelligence as the main reason behind the deaths,¹¹⁵ resulting in great disappointment from large segments of the Kurdish population who were demanding an official apology from the state, for this deeply symbolic event, standing in their mind for present and past violations perpetrated by the state towards Kurdish people.

In April, 2013 the government announced a plan for the “Wise persons” commission. The senior PKK commander Karayılan said that Öcalan had proposed the establishment of eight commissions to facilitate the process. “... a justice commission, a socio-economic commission, a National Pact [Misak-I Milli] commission, a women’s freedom commission, an ecology commission, a civil society commission, a security commission and a truth commission”¹¹⁶ On April 4, the first meeting of the Wise

<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-271015-prosecutor-insists-on-mit-heads-testimony-as-warrant-issued-for-others.html>.

¹¹³ Jenna Krajeski, “Peace comes to Turkey”, *The New Yorker*, March 24, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2013/03/peace-comes-to-turkey.html>.

¹¹⁴ Nar photo collective, Facebook photo album: “March ‘Hükümet adım at/Government take a step’ (Amed/Diyarbakır 30/06/2013)”, posted June 30, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013. https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.364302207025275.1073741829.185519248236906&type=1¬if_t=like.

¹¹⁵ “Turkish military prosecutors dismiss investigation”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

Peoples committee took place in Dolmabaçe palace, the Prime Ministers Office in Istanbul, with the Prime Minister and several other officials present.¹¹⁷ After their initial meeting, the Wise Persons commission began public meetings throughout all the regions of Turkey in order to gather views on the conflict, and inform the public on the ongoing peace process, through town hall style public meetings. There was some progress as on April 25th, PKK commander Karayilan said the PKK would begin their withdrawal from Turkish territory on May 8th.¹¹⁸ The PKK honored this promise (with only the PKK's Lice group objecting), following the orders of Öcalan.¹¹⁹ In May, in a perceived increased political rift, Karayilan, publicly blamed the Gulen movement for the Paris killings of three Kurdish women activists, as well as for the Uludere bombings.¹²⁰

On May 10th, the Prime minister was briefed by the Wise Peoples Commission on their findings.¹²¹ The next day saw the Reyhanli bombings in Hatay province (bordering

¹¹⁶ "The wise peoples commission subgroups begin nationwide rounds", *Daily Sabah*, April 13, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://english.sabah.com.tr/National/2013/04/13/the-wise-persons-commission-subgroups-begin-nationwide-rounds>; "Turkish government 'working on' wise men peace commission", *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 20, 2013. Accessed December 3, 2013 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-government-working-on-wise-men-peace-commission.aspx?PageID=238&NID=43283&NewsCatID=338>

¹¹⁷ "Fuat Keyman has been appointed to the 'Commission of Wise People'", *Istanbul Policy Center*, n.d. Accessed March 3, 2014, <http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/en/new/fuat-keyman-has-been-appointed-to-the-commission-of-wise-people/>.

¹¹⁸ "Erdoğan says PKK did not fulfill promises concerning withdrawal", *Today's Zaman*, August 16, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-323764-erdogan-says-pkk-did-not-fulfill-promises-concerning-withdrawal.html>.

¹¹⁹ Tulin Daloğlu, "Kurdish peace process is on knife edge – again", *Al-Monitor*, December 9, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/kurdish-peace-process-risk.html?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8700.

¹²⁰ Cahit Mervan, "Kirli bir Network: Gülen Cemaati", *Firat News*, May 1, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.firatajans.com/news/guncel/kirli-bir-network-gulen-cemaati-cahit-mervan.htm>.

¹²¹ "Wise people brief PM about settlement perceptions during meeting", *Today's Zaman*, May 10, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-315028-wise-people-brief-pm-about-settlement-perceptions-during-meeting.html>.

Syria), with speculations linking the two car bombs that claimed 46 lives and injured more than 100, to the faltering Assad regime in neighboring Syria. This bombing was considered the worst terror attack in Turkey's history (as the largest PKK attack claimed 33 lives in 1993, in Bingöl).¹²² June saw renewed national unrest in Turkey with the anti-government Gezi protests taking place in Istanbul, and throughout the country, seen as one of the major political challenges faced by the AKP government. Kurds were accused of being largely missing in the demonstrations due to the fear of derailing the peace process, and therefore made their presence in the protests less visible. On June 28th, a protestor of Kurdish origin was killed protesting the construction of a military police "jandarma" post in Lice, a historically rebellious town in the South-East, sparking increased protests in Lice and throughout Turkey in the aftermath of Gezi.¹²³

July 2013 saw a stalling in the peace process with the PKK announcing a stop to the actual withdrawal of its forces from Turkish territory. They were accused by the government again of not being sincere in the peace process, as at the beginning of the year, the total number of PKK fighters were estimated to be around 5,000, but since the commencement of the peace process, the PKK was found to have added more than 2,000 new recruits to its ranks from among young Kurds, according to an intelligence report released at the time.¹²⁴ Thus they were accused of using the withdrawal and negotiation process to add new members to its ranks, showing the continued and pervasive mistrust on all sides. On July 9th, Öcalan sent a letter with the BDP to the PKK Kandil base. During this period the PKK and the BDP were vocal on the need for democratic reforms to initiate the "2nd phase" of the peace process. During this month the Wise peoples commission presented its report to the government, however, it was not publicly accessible, and none of the findings were discussed openly (though they later become accessible individually online on the different regional groups

¹²² Tulin Daloğlu, "Reyhanli worst terror attack Turkey has witnessed", *Al-Monitor Al-Monitor*, May 12, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/05/reghanli-bombing-turkey-syria-policy.html>.

¹²³ Tulin Daloğlu, "Could a murder derail Turkish-Kurdish Peace Process?", *Al-Monitor*, July 8, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/07/murder-derail-turkish-kurdish-peace-process.html>.

¹²⁴ "PKK attracts more recruits during settlement process", *Today's Zaman*, July 14, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-320658-.html>.

websites, and in 2014 were gathered on one website.) No governmental effort was made to widely disseminate and follow up on the reports findings. On July 21, the BDP met again with Öcalan, and in a written statement announced that that he wanted to meet with the press and civil society to be able to make a stronger contribution to the settlement process,¹²⁵ in what was perceived as an attempt to move the stalled process forward.

In July 2013, the administration of the KCK changed, and Cemil Bayık, known for close ties with Iran, replaced Murat Karayılan.¹²⁶ At the same time, the situation in neighboring Syria intensified with Arab Islamists, represented by the Al-Nusra group battling Kurdish militants for control of key towns close to the Turkish border, and an announcement of the Kurds in Syria who declared local autonomy.¹²⁷ Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu quickly stated that Turkey had no enmity for any ethnic group in Syria, but that Ankara opposed a bid by Syrian Kurds to create an autonomous region along the Turkish border, saying steps that could generate further conflict should be avoided, referring to a recent political rift in the Kurdish politically armed group PYD, which is affiliated with the PKK.¹²⁸ Also, in July, and in a perceived attempt to gain control over the regional dimensions of the Kurdish conflict, Prime Minister Erdoğan hosted the Iraqi Kurdish leader Nechirvan Barzani, ahead of a planned “grand Kurdish conference” in Arbil in August, which was expected to bring together major Kurdish political groups in the Middle East.^y Barzani's visit also followed Ankara's hosting of Saleh Muslim, the leader of the PYD, with whom the Turkish-Kurdish peace

¹²⁵ “PKK chief Öcalan says wants to meet with Turkish media”, *Today's Zaman*, July 21, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-321417-pkk-chief-ocalan-says-wants-to-meet-with-turkish-media.html>.

¹²⁶ “Is KCK preparing for war or peace?”, *Today's Zaman*, July 14, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-320657-is-kck-preparing-for-war-or-peace.html>.

¹²⁷ Roy Gutman “Kurdish-Nusra battle becoming war within a war in Northern Syria”, *McClatchy DC*, July 23, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2013/07/23/197477/kurdish-nusra-battle-becoming.html?storylink=addthis#.Ue_YVFMnXea.

¹²⁸ “Turkey warns Kurdish autonomy in Syria may lead to wider conflicts”, *Today's Zaman*, July 24, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-321727-.html>.

process was then discussed.¹²⁹ During an “iftar”, the fast-breaking dinner in the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, Erdoğan met with families of the Roboski/Uludere bombings, underlining that he did not order the strike,¹³⁰ in a symbolic display of reconciliation.

In August 2013, Prime Minister Erdoğan announced that Turkey's parliament would reconvene early from its summer recess to pass laws to expand Kurdish rights through democratization, a move seen as crucial to resolving this almost 30-year old armed conflict.¹³¹ Öcalan later issued an ultimatum to the government to “announce the reform plan, required for the second stage (of the peace process), by September 1st and start implementing it by October 15” as well as an appeal for the formation of parliamentary commissions to “contribute to the process,”¹³² demonstrating his still strong drive to move the process forward, and also to tell to attempt to steer the process.

In September 2013, Cemil Bayık, the new leader of the military wing of the PKK, announced that the PKK had halted the withdrawal of its members from Turkish soil to Northern Iraq and would retaliate if the TSK attacked, setting September 1st as a deadline for the government to take further steps to move the stalled process forward.¹³³ This announcement was perceived as a threat. On September 1st however, Bayık's comments were clarified by the BDP as not meaning the end of the peace process, but

¹²⁹ “Turkey hosts Iraqi Kurdish leader ahead of Kurdish congress”, Today's Zaman, July 30, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-322290-turkey-hosts-iraqi-kurdish-leader-ahead-of-kurdish-congress.html>.

¹³⁰ “Turkish military prosecutors dismiss investigation”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

¹³¹ “Turkish parliament may re-open to pass rights legislation – PM”, News Republic, August 8, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.news-republic.com/Web/ArticleWeb.aspx?regionid=3&articleid=11769406>.

¹³² Yavuz Baydar, “Is Turkey-PKK peace process at a dead end?”, *Al-Monitor*, August 30, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/08/turkey-pkk-peace-process-dead-end.html#ixzz2msy2fjpo>.

¹³³ “BDP: PKK chief's remarks do not mean end of withdrawal process”, *Today's Zaman*, September 5, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-325579-bdp-pkk-chiefs-remarks-do-not-mean-end-of-withdrawal-process.html>.

as a warning to the government, showing some backtracking and confusion.¹³⁴ Earlier, on the third anniversary of the constitutional referendum of September 12, 2010, it had already been noted that the Parliament had yet to bring its legislation into harmony with the amendments the referendum requires, causing grave concerns about the government's willingness to continue with the reforms required for democratization,¹³⁵ as well as needed in order to move meaningfully forward with the peace process. In the same month, the opposition CHP party announced it would continue its visit to the mostly Kurdish-populated South-Eastern Turkey to explain the party's stance on the decades-long Kurdish issue and peace process,¹³⁶ demonstrating the clearly political importance that this issue retained for both the governing and opposition parties.

On September 9, the KCK released a statement saying that the withdrawal of PKK had halted,¹³⁷ further creating confusion as to how the peace process would move forward, and whether violence would in fact resume.¹³⁸ On September 11, at a security summit,

¹³⁴ “BDP: PKK chief’s remarks do not mean end”, *Today’s Zaman*.

¹³⁵ “3 years on, gov’t shows lackluster performance on 2010 referendum”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 11, 2013. Accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326090-3-years-on-govt-shows-lackluster-performance-on-2010-referendum.html>.

¹³⁶ “CHP to visit Kurdish-populated areas to explain its views on settlement process”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 11, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326035-chp-to-visit-kurdish-populated-areas-to-explain-its-views-on-settlement-process.html>; “CHP visits Southeast, says not against settlement process”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 12, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326129-chp-visits-southeast-turkey-says-not-against-settlement-process.html>.

¹³⁷ “KCK halts withdrawal, ceasefire continues”, *Kurdish Info*, September 9, 2013. Accessed February 26, 2014, <http://www.kurdishinfo.com/kck-halts-withdrawal-ceasefire-continues>.

¹³⁸ “PKK ‘halts withdrawal’ from Turkey”, *Al-Jazeera*, September 9, 2013. Accessed April 21, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/09/201399724433841.html>; “Terrorist PKK halts withdrawal from Turkey, maintains cease-fire”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 9, 2013. Accessed September 12, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-325823-pkk-forces-halt-withdrawal-from-turkey.html>; “About 600 terrorists pulled out according to PKK figures”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 10, 2013. Accessed September 12, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326011-about-600-terrorists-pulled-out-according-to-pkk-figures.html>; Huseyin Özey and Önder Çelik “Is PKK planning to

government members discussed plans by the PKK to resume armed action should the process fail. A security report on the latest situation in the peace process at the time stated that the PKK had outlined plans for violent action in 10 areas if the government fails to take steps on democratization. The plan included raids on offices of political parties in the South-East and the abduction of parliament members.¹³⁹ According to this intelligence report, which obtained by the *Taraf Newspaper at the time*, claims were made that the withdrawal had in reality halted already in mid-August, claiming that most of the PKK fighters had taken up position in the border region of Hakkari (within Turkey), with others going to urban areas. The report also estimated that around 600 militants had pulled out of Turkey, going to Northern Iraq, but that they were mostly sick or elderly individuals.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, the intelligence services collected information demonstrating changes in the higher echelons of the KCK and the PKK, determining that armed units had been restructured accordingly, raising fears as to the possible renewal of violence should talks fail.¹⁴¹

On September 30th, as expected, Prime Minister Erdoğan announced the content of a new democracy package,¹⁴² which was welcomed, but also criticized¹⁴³ for not living up to the widespread hopes, especially for the increased protection and demands for ethnic

resume military operations?”, *Al-Monitor*, September 15, 2013. Accessed September 12, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2013/09/pkk-plan-resume-action-reconciliation-fail.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter; “Öcalan talks about new format, gov’t says not worth commenting on”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 16, 2013. Accessed September 12, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326546-ocalan-talks-about-new-format-govt-says-not-worth-commenting-on.html>.

¹³⁹ Özey and Çelik “Is PKK planning to resume”.

¹⁴⁰ Özey and Çelik “Is PKK planning to resume”.

¹⁴¹ Özey and Çelik “Is PKK planning to resume”.

¹⁴² “Erdoğan to announce comprehensive democracy package”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 11, 2013. Accessed September 12, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326104-erdogan-to-announce-comprehensive-democracy-package.html>.

¹⁴³ “News of consulting Öcalan on democratization package causes controversy”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 13, 2013. Accessed June 16, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326347-news-of-consulting-ocalan-on-package-causes-controversy.html>.

minorities and women.¹⁴⁴ The package also contained symbolic measures, relating to reconciliation in relation to the Kurdish issue, for instance, in the returning of the Kurdish city Dersim back to its original name of Tunceli.¹⁴⁵ With expectations running high throughout Turkey ahead of the democratization package however,¹⁴⁶ such symbolic changes were not seen to be satisfying the expectations of the public, and particularly that of Kurdish segments of the society in relation to the ongoing peace process. Among the reactions and criticism to the democratization package¹⁴⁷ was the lack of any substantial reform to the anti-terror law, which has imprisoned many Kurdish activists, journalists and politicians, as well as the lack of changes to the election system to change the election threshold for parties to be represented in parliament, which was seen to particularly affect Kurdish parties, like the BDP.^z Other measures deemed to be important to ethnic minorities, like Kurds, however was the abolishment of the National Oath, seen to discriminate minorities from the schools, as well as the establishment of anti-discrimination commission to combat hate crimes.¹⁴⁸ The issues of media freedom, women's rights, freedom of speech, rights to protest, police violence, and judicial independence were not largely prioritized though,

¹⁴⁴ “Erdoğan to announce comprehensive democracy package”, *Today's Zaman*, September 11, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013 <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326104-erdogan-to-announce-comprehensive-democracy-package.html>.

¹⁴⁵ “Tunceli residents pleased for restoration of original name” , *Today's Zaman*, September 15, 2013. Accessed March 28, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326467-tunceli-residents-pleased-for-restoration-of-original-name.html>.

¹⁴⁶ “Expectations run high ahead of gov't announcement”, *Today's Zaman*, September 29, 2013. Accessed September 29, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/national/news-327724-expectations-run-high-ahead-of-govt-announcement.html>; “Turkey's Southeast eagerly waiting for democratization package”, *Today's Zaman*, September 29, 2013. Accessed September 29, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-327715-turkeys-southeast-eagerly-waiting-for-democratization-package.html>.

¹⁴⁷ “PM introduces landmark reforms, but admits more needs to be done”, *Today's Zaman*, September 30, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-327738-govt-unveils-reform-package-to-strengthen-democracy.html>; Göksel Bozkurt, “Turkish PM Erdoğan to unveil earnest 'democracy package', *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 30, 2013. Accessed March 30, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-erdogan-to-unveil-earnest-democracy-package.aspx?pageID=238&nID=55379&NewsCatID=338>.

¹⁴⁸ “Turkey's Erdoğan announces Kurdish reforms”, *BBC*, September 30, 2013. Accessed March 30, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-24330722#TWEET905672>.

according to critics. Moreover, the move to make political propaganda legal in Kurdish was noted to have been mandated by the constitutional court several years before, thereby actually not bringing about any major change. However, the reform package was generally heralded as the first formal step indicating that the government took the peace process seriously. One of the first reactions from the BDP however was that this move was positive, but not sufficient, as in their view (which is largely shared by many Kurds in the nationalist movement) these rights belonged to Kurds in the first place.^{aa}

During this time, the PKK bombed a construction site at a military post in South-Eastern Turkey, also briefly kidnapping four workers in the Pervari district of Siirt province.¹⁴⁹ In mid-September, the final and 10th visit to Öcalan took place with BDP Co-chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş and parliamentary group deputy chairwoman Pervin Buldan travelling to İmralı Island, amid mounting concerns over the fate of the peace process.¹⁵⁰

In October 2013, Murat Karayılan, leader of the KCK maintained that the ceasefire would be respected while underlining the process was in a “fragile stage.”¹⁵¹ In the same time period, polls showed overwhelming societal support for the peace process.¹⁵² Moreover, the BDP was in this month declined its request to undergo another visit to

¹⁴⁹ “PKK bombs military post construction site, briefly kidnaps four”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 13, 2013. Accessed Decemebr 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326340-pkk-bombs-military-post-construction-site-briefly-kidnaps-four.html>.

¹⁵⁰ “BDP delegation meets with PKK chief after suspension of militant withdrawal”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 15, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-326410-bdp-delegation-meets-with-pkk-chief-after-suspension-of-militant-withdrawal.html>.

¹⁵¹ “PKK to preserve fragile cease-fire, rejects reform package”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 7, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-328346-pkk-to-preserve-fragile-cease-fire-rejects-reform-package.html>.

¹⁵² “People overwhelmingly support democracy as answer to Kurdish issue”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 6, 2013. Accessed Decemebr 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-328300-people-overwhelmingly-support-democracy-as-answer-to-kurdish-issue.html>.

Imrali,¹⁵³ seemingly signaling a shift in the governments approach to the process. On October 15th, Öcalan issued a long-awaited statement on the reform package.¹⁵⁴ On 22 October, at 12:30pm, Cemil Bayık, KCK Executive, declared that the ten-month-long peace negotiations between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement had come to a halt. Shortly after, at 12:48pm: PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan communicated via his brother that. “If the Turkish state authorities do not visit me once again (concerning the peace negotiations), I suppose this indicates that peace talks are over for them, and thereby it is over for us too.”¹⁵⁵ However, on October 24th, continuing with the inconsistency in public statements seen before in this process, with all parties involved, in a letter disclosed by BDP Chairman Selahattin Demirtaş, Öcalan stated he could still contribute to PKK fighters “coming home” and laying down arms as part of the ongoing peace process.¹⁵⁶

During this time, a new political party was formed, the Peoples Democratic Party (HDP), managed by co-chairs Sabahat Tuncel and Ertuğrul Kürkçü, who were, respectively, İstanbul and Mersin deputies from the BDP.¹⁵⁷ The party is viewed as providing a left-leaning alternative with less of a focus on Kurdish identity, as compared to the BDP. In discussions on the role of Öcalan in the peace talks, BDP parliamentary deputy group chairman İdris Baluken suggested that the PKK leader be

¹⁵³ “Government, BDP on bad terms over Öcalan visit”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 22, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-329513-government-bdp-on-bad-terms-over-ocalan-visit.html>.

¹⁵⁴ “PKK leader to issue statement over process next week”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, October 7, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/pkk-leader-to-issue-statement-over-process-next-week-.aspx?pageID=517&nID=55871&NewsCatID=338>.

¹⁵⁵ Çağrı Yoltar, “Sere Giran: Being a Kurd in the Turkish prison”, *Jadaliyya*, November 11, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15050/sere-giran_being-a-kurd-in-the-turkish-prison.

¹⁵⁶ “PKK chief says could convince militants to return home”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 24, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-329710-pkk-chief-says-could-convince-militants-to-return-home.html>.

¹⁵⁷ Orhan Miroğlu, “Turkey’s new party: HDP”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 31, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, http://www.todayszaman.com/columnists/orhan-miroglu_330257-turkeys-new-party-hdp.html.

named “Chief Negotiator”.¹⁵⁸ This comment came as part of an ongoing political debate as to the Kurdish side’s demand for the official recognition of Öcalan as an equal party to the negotiations, as well as the need for a legal foundation to back up the talks.

In November 2013, Prime Minister Erdogan announced, around the 10 year anniversary of the AKP, that he wished to change Turkey’s parliamentary system to a presidential one. This created tension in the Constitutional Commission, and increased political stalemate nationally.¹⁵⁹ On November 15th the PKK fired on four military convoys, putting the ongoing ceasefire in danger, though it was not called off (and is at the time of writing still in place). With things worsening in Syria, Cemil Bayık, a founding member of the PKK announced that the group had the right to retaliate if the government did not proceed with negotiations, interpreted by the government as a veiled threat.¹⁶⁰ The construction of a security wall between the Kurdish populated areas of Turkey and Syria was halted, among large protests.¹⁶¹ On November 15th, another near breach of the ceasefire took place, as the PKK fired on a Turkish military

¹⁵⁸ “BDP says Öcalan should be given official title in talks”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 31, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-330226-bdp-says-ocalan-should-be-given-official-title-in-talks.html>.

¹⁵⁹ Tulin Daloğlu, “Erdogan’s bigger game: change the constitution”, *Al-Monitor*, November 5, 2012. Accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2012/al-monitor/turkeyerdoganconstitution.html>.

¹⁶⁰ “Terrorist PKK threatens new fight in Turkey as Syria clashes intensify”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 22, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-329430-terrorist-pkk-threatens-new-fight-in-turkey-as-syria-clashes-intensify.html>.

¹⁶¹ “Construction of wall on Syrian border halted”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 8, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331000-construction-of-wall-on-syrian-border-halted.html>; Wladimir Van Wilgenburg, “Syrian Kurdish part calls on Turkey, KRG to end embargo”, *Al-Monitor*, November 25, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/syria-kurds-embargo-end-turkey-border-crossing-trade.html?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8631; Franco Galdini and Pishko Shamsi, “Syria’s Kurds and Turkey”, *Jadaliyya*, November 12, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15078/syria%E2%80%99s-kurds-and-turkey>.

convoy in the South-Eastern province of Mardin. This was the biggest attack to occur since the eight-month cease-fire, with the Turkish army responding with fire.¹⁶²

Barazani of the KRG paid another visit to Turkey to discuss with Erdoğan the peace process, the role of the PKK, and the situation of Syrian Kurds, in increasing improved relations between the Northern Iraqi Kurdish leadership and Turkey.¹⁶³ While on November 16th, Prime Minister Erdoğan paid a visit to Diyarbakir,¹⁶⁴ the spiritual capital of the mainly Kurdish populated South-East, where a symbolic meeting and concert was held with KRG leader Barazani, and Kurdish artists Ibrahim Tatlis and Siwan Perwer. This was seen as a symbolic confidence building measure to back up the faltering negotiation process.¹⁶⁵ There was attention in the media brought to the fact

¹⁶² “PKK terrorists fire on Turkish military convoy despite cease-fire”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 15, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331592-pkk-terrorists-fire-on-turkish-military-convoy-despite-cess-fire.html>; “President says Turkey to respond if PKK breaks cease fire”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 16, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331628-president-says-turkey-to-respond-if-pkk-breaks-cess-fire.html>.

¹⁶³ “Davutoğlu says relations with Kurds of Mideast not a threat”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 12, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331291-davutoglu-says-relations-with-kurds-of-mideast-not-a-threat.html>; “Erdoğan to meet with Barzani in Diyarbakır”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 11, 2013. Accessed November 17, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331125-erdogan-to-meet-with-barzani-in-diyarbakir.html>.

¹⁶⁴ “Civil society groups discuss settlement, urge for braver steps”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 11, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013 <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331168-civil-society-groups-discuss-settlement-urge-for-braver-steps.html>.

¹⁶⁵ “Kurds more hopeful for peace than ever after Barzani-Erdoğan visit”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 16, 2013. Accessed November 17, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331631-kurds-hopeful-for-peace-more-than-ever-after-barzani-erdogan-visit.html>; “Erdoğan, Barzani see eye to eye on four issues in Diyarbakır visit”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 17, 2013. Accessed November 17, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331684-erdogan-barzani-see-eye-to-eye-on-four-issues-in-diyarbakir-visit.html>; “Erdoğan says settlement process to continue with snowball effect”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 17, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331660-erdogan-says-settlement-process-to-continue-with-snowball-effect.html>; Ferda Çetin, “Erdoğan and Barzani cooperating against the revolution in Syrian Kurdistan”, *Ekurd*, November 19, 2013. Accessed June 17, 2013, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/11/turkey4850.htm>; Irfan Aktan, “Lo Siavno, ‘kine em?’- Hey Sivan who are we?”, *Jadaliyya*, November 30, 2013. Accessed December 1, 2013, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15383/lo-sivano-%E2%80%98kine-em%E2%80%99-hey-sivan-who-are-we>.

that Erdoğan used the term “Kurdistan” in his speech, following which Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir also adopted the use of the term in public as well.¹⁶⁶ The polarization and stalemate was not only within the peace process, but also the constitutional reform and democratization process nationally. This was demonstrated when the Parliamentary Constitutional Reconciliation Commission on the Constitution de-facto dissolved in this time period. The Parliament Speaker Cemil Çiçek said he did not believe the commission would come up with a new constitution, adding that he would write a letter to the leaders of the four political parties represented in Parliament, who are the only ones who could in fact terminate it.¹⁶⁷

On November 12th, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled on an important case of village destructions and executions (the “Scorched earth campaigns”) in the 90’s, fining the Turkish State.¹⁶⁸ Afterwards, the Justice Minister, Sadullah Ergin, issued a statement saying there would be a national investigation into the historical cases as well, signaling a will to take on cases of past atrocities committed by the state towards its Kurdish citizens.¹⁶⁹ On November 13th, the national political scene was hit with another tumultuous event as a bill was announced by the AKP to close down Gülen movement schools, in a move seen to curb the political influence that the movement had exercised in the police forces and the legislature. Moreover, it was seen

¹⁶⁶ Olson “Kurdistan: Another state”.

¹⁶⁷ “Hopes fade for a new charter as commission dissolved”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 19, 2013. Accessed February 15, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331799-hopes-fade-for-a-new-turkish-constitution.html>; “No hope for new charter, Turkish parliament speaker tells party leaders”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 22, 2013. Accessed November 22, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-332096-no-hope-for-new-charter-turkish-parliament-speaker-tells-party-leaders.html>.

¹⁶⁸ Orhan Kemal Cengiz, “Turkey may investigate military’s burning of Kurdish villages”, *Al-Monitor*, November 21, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/turkey-may-investigate-military-burning-kurdish-villages-90s.html?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8604; “Ergenekon goes beyond coup plot case, evidence overlaps with murders”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 25, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-332378-ergenekon-goes-beyond-coup-plot-case-evidence-overlaps-with-murders.html>.

¹⁶⁹ Kayhan Karaca, “Ankara’dan AIHM atağı”, *NTVSNBC (Türkiye)*, November 13, 2013. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.ntvsnbc.com/id/25479129/>.

as move in response to the earlier probe into the operations of the MİT, which was interpreted as a hidden attack on the government by the religious movement.¹⁷⁰

On December 8, the PKK kidnaps four Turkish soldiers on the highway from Diyarbakir to Lice, however, the local people protested against this and they were released.¹⁷¹ Later on in December, the possibility of granting amnesty to former PKK combatants was discussed as a possible part of the negotiation agenda.¹⁷² In parliament however, there was renewed tension as all four deputies of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), Sebahat Tuncel, Ertuğrul Kürkçü, Sırrı Süreyya Önder and Levent Tüzel, started a hunger strike in Parliament in protest of court rulings that recently rejected a demand to release five Peace and Democracy (BDP) deputies in the South-Eastern province of Diyarbakır.¹⁷³ A major national political battle was simultaneously unleashed on December 17th 2013, as a Graft Corruption Probe commenced in the government.¹⁷⁴ Erdogan was quick to label the probe a 'coup attempt' by those who wanted to undermine the Kurdish peace process, and blamed the Gülen movements supporters in the government and the judiciary. Protesters clashed with the police over the Corruption Probe, as anger over the leaked recordings of alleged government corruption were released.¹⁷⁵ The increased focus on the government's increasing "feud"

¹⁷⁰ Wilensburg, "Turkish power struggle leaves".

¹⁷¹ Tulin Daloğlu, "Kurdish peace process is on knife edge".

¹⁷² "Amnest may come to agenda after Erdoğan's remarks in Diyarbakır", *Today's Zaman*, November 18, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331779-amnesty-may-come-to-agenda-after-erdogans-remarks-in-diyarbakir.html>.

¹⁷³ "Pro-Kurdish HDP deputies start hunger strike in Parliament", *Today's Zaman*, December 17, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014) <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-334271-pro-kurdish-hdp-deputies-start-hunger-strike-in-parliament.html>; Uzay Bulut, "Jailed MPs: In Turkey, there is a separate law for Kurds", *Rudaw*, December 19, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/19122013>.

¹⁷⁴ "Turkey PM Erdoğan condemns 'dirty' corruption probe", *BBC*, last updated December 18, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25437624>.

¹⁷⁵ "Turkish protesters urge PM's resignation as graft scandal shakes govt", *RT*, December 26, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://rt.com/news/thousands-protest-turkey-erdogan-804/>; "Istanbul clashes as Turkey PM Erdoğan condemns 'plot'", *BBC*,

with the Gülen movement, and its internal problems were, in light of the upcoming local elections of March that year, were consuming much more political capital than the peace process.

However, in the same month, and following the MIT's contacts through Fidan, Öcalan delivered a message to his followers via BDP deputies to not violate the de facto cease-fire with government until the end of the March 30th elections,¹⁷⁶ as had been the tradition of the PKK previously. On December 20th, BDP chairman Selahattin Demirtaş, Kars deputy Mülkiye Birtane and Van deputy Nazmi Gür went to Kandil to get a letter, but the KCK said the letter was not yet ready. The BDP deputies said instead that the KCK conveyed a verbal message on the settlement process for them to deliver to Öcalan.¹⁷⁷ On December 28th, 2013, on the second Anniversary of Roboski/Uludere bombings, protests were convened in Diyarbakir and elsewhere, stressing the need for an apology and fair investigation and trial.¹⁷⁸ On December 30th, an opening of a monument to commemorate the Roboski/Uludere bombings in Diyarbakir took place,¹⁷⁹ demonstrating the continued symbolic meaning of this event. By the end of the year, Öcalan's Newroz letter hinting at an end to the PKK's 30-year

December 23, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25491341>; "Tear gas and corruption: Istanbul police disperse protesters as graft scandal heats up", RT, December 22, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014 <http://rt.com/news/istanbul-protest-gas-corruption-644/>; "Urban rally turns into graft protest in Istanbul's Kadıköy", *Hürriyet Daily News*, December 22, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/police-attack-anti-corruption-protest-in-istanbuls-kadikoy-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=59950&NewsCatID=341>.

¹⁷⁶ Murat Yetkin, "Kurdish and German angles of Erdoğan-Gülen rift", *Hürriyet Daily News*, February 3, 2014. Accessed March 23, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/kurdish-and-german-angles-of-erdogan-gulen-rift.aspx?pageID=449&nID=61889&NewsCatID=409>.

¹⁷⁷ "Two pro-Kurdish deputies travel to Kandil", *Today's Zaman*, December 29, 2013. Accessed February, 202014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-335190-two-pro-kurdish-deputies-travel-to-kandil.html>.

¹⁷⁸ Fehim Taştekin, "Turkey's Kurds want explanation, apology for Roboski massacre", *Al-Monitor*, December 30, 2013. Accessed February 16, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/turkish-kurds-remain-estranged.html?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8822.

¹⁷⁹ "Turkish military prosecutors dismiss investigation", *Hürriyet Daily News*.

armed campaign, Erdoğan's switch from calling the dialogue process a "peace process" and the beginning of the withdrawal of militants from Turkish territory had created hopes for a political solution to Turkey's long standing Kurdish conflict.¹⁸⁰

2014 – Elections and a stalled process?

In January 2014, and in the following months, both the BDP and the PKK repeatedly accused the government of not taking sufficient steps to move the political process forward, especially stressing the points relating to democratic autonomy in South-Eastern provinces and the need for a legal foundation to the peace process.¹⁸¹ During this month, a military prosecutor rejected the further investigation of the Roboski/Uludere bombings.¹⁸² The decision outraged relatives and lawyers, and the Diyarbakir Bar Association announced they would appeal to the ECHR if their individual complaint to Turkey's Constitutional Court would be rejected.¹⁸³ On January 6th, representatives from the AKP, the CHP and the BDP resolved to form a commission to resolve the problem of arrested lawmakers by amending relevant articles of the Constitution (five jailed deputies from the BDP, two from the CHP and one from the MHP were elected to Parliament in June 2011.¹⁸⁴) On January 7th, the five lawmakers from the BDP (Selma Irmak, Faysal Sariyildiz, Gulser Yildirim and Ibrahim

¹⁸⁰ Yetkin, "Öcalan raises the bar"

¹⁸¹ "Opposition slams MİT bill", *Today's Zaman*, February 21, 2014. Accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-340138-opposition-slams-mit-bill.html>.

¹⁸² "Turkish military prosecutors dismiss investigation", *Hürriyet Daily News*; Orhan Miroğlu, "New process for Roboski", *Today's Zaman*, January 9, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/orhan-miroglu_336210_new-process-for-roboski.html; Tulin Daloğlu, "Turkish Kurds react to court decision on Roboski bombing", *Al-Monitor*, January 8, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, [http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/01/turkey-kurds-react-court-decision-roboski-bombing.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+\[English\]&utm_campaign=026ebd317b-January_9_20141_8_2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-026ebd317b-93129921](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/01/turkey-kurds-react-court-decision-roboski-bombing.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+[English]&utm_campaign=026ebd317b-January_9_20141_8_2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-026ebd317b-93129921).

¹⁸³ "Turkish military prosecutors dismiss investigation", *Hürriyet Daily News*.

¹⁸⁴ "Three parties agree on constitutional change for arrested lawmakers", *Hürriyet Daily News*, January 7, 2014. Accessed February 1, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/three-parties-agree-on-constitutional-change-for-arrested-lawmakers.aspx?PageID=238&NID=60656&NewsCatID=338>.

Ayhan) and independent MP Kemal Aktas were sworn in after they were released from prison, seen as another confidence-building measure for the stalled peace process.¹⁸⁵ A MIT statement released on January 15th maintained that the attempt to implicate it in the Paris assassinations was an aim to discredit the agency,¹⁸⁶ which had played an active role in the settlement process. It described the ongoing leaks of secret political dealings and meetings as “an operation to expose functionaries involved in the process so as to render them incapable of carrying out their duties”.¹⁸⁷ The agency went on to specifically blaming the Gülen movement for trying to hamper its activities related to the peace process.

Also in January 2014, Öcalan sent letter to Barzani to ask for his support of the autonomous “Rojava” region in Syria, and to back the Turkish-Kurdish peace process.¹⁸⁸ On January 21st, Kurdish Autonomy was declared in Northern Syria (“Rojava”), ahead of the Geneva II Peace talks on the Syrian crisis.¹⁸⁹ On the same day Erdoğan visited Brussels and met with the leaders of political groups in the European Parliament, where he, among other issues, discussed the ongoing peace process, demonstrating its international reach and interest beyond Turkey. On the 28th and 29th of January Kurds declared a second and third autonomous administration in Afrin, a

¹⁸⁵ Wilgenburg, “Turkish power struggle leaves”; “Turkey’s pro-Kurdish MPs sworn in after freed from prison”, *Reuters*, January 7, 2014. Accessed April 16, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/07/us-turkey-kurds-idUSBREA060RW20140107>.

¹⁸⁶ “Dudak uçuklatan iddia”, *Taraf*, January 15, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, <http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber/dudak-ucuklatan-iddia.htm>.

¹⁸⁷ Orhan Kemal Cengiz, “New developments in Paris killings threaten to derail PKK peace talks”, *Al-Monitor*, January 20, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/01/turkey-military-mit-kurds-murder-paris-activists.html>.

¹⁸⁸ “Öcalan letters asks Barzani support in Rojava, peace process”, *Rudaw*, January 31, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/310120141>.

¹⁸⁹ Isabel Coles, “Kurds solidify autonomy in Syria on eve of peace talks”, *Reuters*, January 21, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSBREA0K1KD20140121?irpc=932>; “Syrian Kurds declare autonomy on eve of Geneva 2”, *RT*, January 21, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, <http://rt.com/news/syria-kurds-autonomy-geneva-989/>.

Kurdish-populated area in Rojava, about a week after declaring autonomy in Cizîre and Kobani, two other Kurdish-populated areas of Northern Syria¹⁹⁰ There was tension on the Turkish/Iraqi border as local residents of Roboski/Uludere village protested the construction of a road and the bolstering of border security.¹⁹¹

In February and March 2014, in the lead up to the local elections, there was violence perpetrated against opposition parties headquarters, including the CHP¹⁹² and HDP,¹⁹³ in Istanbul and other cities throughout Turkey, as the national political situation tensed. On February 2nd, Vatan newspaper published an interview with one of the leaders of the PKK, Cemil Bayik, where he sided with the Erdoğan government in its political strife with the Gülen movement, stating a “foreign based conspiracy” attempted to undermine the peace process, thus clearly siding with the AKP, seen as a sign of trust emerging.¹⁹⁴ On February 15th, a law to allow more control of the executive over the judiciary, the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK) was passed in parliament over mounting tensions in society in general over back-sliding

¹⁹⁰ “PYD declares autonomy, seeks recognition from int’l community”, *Today’s Zaman*, January 29, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-337963-pyd-declares-autonomy-seeks-recognition-from-intl-community.html>; “Syrian Kurds declare new autonomous administration in Kobani”, *Today’s Zaman*, January 28, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-337839-syrian-kurds-declare-second-autonomous-administration-in-kobani.html>.

¹⁹¹ “Seven detained as gendarmerie raids houses of Uludere residents”, *Today’s Zaman*, January 19, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-336985-seven-detained-as-gendarmerie-raids-houses-of-uludere-residents.html>

¹⁹² “Main opposition CHP’s election bureau in Istanbul attacked with Molotov cocktails”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 11, 2014. Accessed June 19, 2014, http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/main-opposition-chps-election-bureau-in-istanbul-attacked-with-molotov-cocktails.aspx?pageID=238&nid=63441&NewsCatID=338&utm_content=buffer5dc54&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer.

¹⁹³ “Pro-Kurdish HDP office attacked in Fethiye, 28 taken into custody”, *Today’s Zaman*, March 10, 2014. Accessed March 11, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-341667-pro-kurdish-hdp-office-attacked-in-fethiye-28-taken-into-custody.html>.

¹⁹⁴ Mustafa Akyol, “Why is the PKK siding with the AKP in the AKP-Gülen conflict?”, *Al-Monitor*, February 3, 2014. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/02/pkk-supports-akp-gulen-conflict.html>.

democratization.¹⁹⁵ On February 18 President Gül signed a controversial internet bill into law, further limiting the shrinking space for freedom of expression in Turkey.¹⁹⁶ The bill faced national and international reactions as it was seen as a step back for democratization. On February 25, following the leaks of corruption of members of the government having emerged, protestors clashed with the police in Istanbul, Ankara and throughout Turkey.¹⁹⁷

The following month, on March 11th and 12th, widespread protests took place again in Istanbul, Ankara and various other cities in Turkey protesting the death of the 8th victim of the Gezi protests, who was until then lying in a coma.¹⁹⁸ On March 18th the lifetime imprisonment of Öcalan was announced as being a violation of the European Convention on human rights by the ECtHR.¹⁹⁹ On March 21st, Newroz celebrations took place, with tensions ahead of the day due to fear for the renewal of violence, which seemed probable after the lack of progress in the previous months in the peace process.

¹⁹⁵ “Turkey to bid farewell to rule of law if president approves HSYK law”, *Today’s Zaman*, February 17, 2014. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-339715-turkey-to-bid-farewell-to-rule-of-law-if-president-approves-hsyk-law.html>.

¹⁹⁶ “Turkey’s Gül approves tighter control of internet”, *Today’s Zaman*, February 18, 2014. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-339798-turkeys-gul-approves-tighter-control-of-internet.html>.

¹⁹⁷ “Turkey protesters clash over ‘fake’ wiretap”, *Al-Jazeera*, February 26, 2014. Accessed February 26, 2014, [http://www.narphotos.net/SpotNews/Thumbnail/protest-against-government-corruption/117/](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/02/turkey-protesters-clash-over-fake-wiretap-2014226531712540.html?fb_action_ids=10153885667335503&fb_action_types=og.likes&fb_source=other_multiline&action_object_map=[216900938518483]&action_type_map=[%22og.likes%22]&action_ref_map=[; Nar photos, “Protest against government corruption”, photo album, n.d. Accessed February 26, 2014, <a href=).

¹⁹⁸ Fevzi Kizilkoyun, “Two million marched, 417 arrested during Berkin Elvan protests as ‘disproportionate force’ probed”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 14, 2014. Accessed March 11, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/two-million-marched-417-arrested-during-berkin-elvan-protests-as-disproportionate-force-probed.aspx?pageID=238&nid=63566&NewsCatID=341>.

¹⁹⁹ “PKK leader’s life sentence ‘right violation’, European court rules”, *Today’s Zaman*, March 18, 2014. Accessed March 11, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-342426-pkk-leaders-life-sentence-rights-violation-european-court-rules.html>.

However, the celebrations took place with relative calm, with a new letter urging the formalization of the talks by Öcalan, in a move interpreted as a continued support for the peace process, at least ahead of the upcoming local elections.²⁰⁰

The March 30th local elections produced a convincing victory for the AKP yet again, and were also seen as a referendum for the continued leadership of Erdoğan, who seemed likely at the time to run for the August 2014 presidential elections.²⁰¹ Apart from this, the election could be seen to give a renewed and strengthened political mandate to continue pursuing the peace process. There were around a hundred arrested, and ten reported deaths during the day of the election, as well as numerous electrical black-outs and allegations of election fraud, however.²⁰²

In this mixed picture, and ongoing situation of political turmoil, the current peace talks have taken a back-seat to more pressing national political issues. Large expectations are being placed on the scheduled presidential elections of August 2014, and it seems that in an election year, larger steps forward in the ongoing peace process is unlikely. Despite this slow process, and its perceived stalling of late, the landmark achievements of this process should be considered as a first for Turkey, and of great importance to one day solving the Kurdish issue of the country peacefully. However, in line with other democratization challenges and a fast-changing political landscape, the peace process will remain largely dependent on national, regional and international developments, not least due to the trans-national character of the conflict.

²⁰⁰ “Despite noting flaws, Öcalan makes fresh push for stalled peace process”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 21, 2014. Accessed March 23, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/despite-noting-flaws-ocalan-makes-fresh-push-for-stalled-peace-process.aspx?pageID=238&nID=63925&NewsCatID=338>; “PKK head: Dialogue should turn into negotiations”, *Today’s Zaman*, March 21, 2014. Accessed March 22, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-342728-pkk-head-dialogue-should-turn-into-negotiations.html>.

²⁰¹ “Turkey PM Erdoğan claims election victory”, *BBC*, March 31, 2014. Accessed March 31, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26807067>.

²⁰² “10 die, dozens wounded, hundreds detained on election day across Turkey”, *Today’s Zaman*, 31 March, 2014. Accessed March 31, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-343440-10-die-dozens-wounded-hundreds-detained-on-election-day-across-turkey.html>

The section above presented the background of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, and the associated Track I peace negotiation attempts initiated in this respect. The following chapter will detail the activities of participation of the 9 selected cases of actors of inclusion in the various Kurdish peace process in Turkey (for a general overview of the parallel inclusion attempts to the wider peace process see Appendix B). The selected actors activities will then be coded according to the “Broadening Participation” framework, and the broader view on their participation events discussed as well, in order to discuss what activities could be coded and which not, and the implications. The next chapter will be followed by a concluding chapter discussing this thesis’s findings.

^a In September 2011, an almost 50-minute long voice recording revealed secret talks had taken place between representatives of the Turkish government and members of the PKK in Oslo, Norway, as well as Imrali Island, in the Marmara sea of Turkey, held some time in 2010. (“PM Erdoğan: PKK leaked secret Oslo talks to media”, Today’s Zaman, September 28, 2012. Accessed March 28, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-293692-pm-erdogan-pkk-leaked-secret-oslo-talks-to-media.html>)

The Gulen movement was at the time accused by the PKK of leaking the Oslo Negotiations between the state and the MIT and the PKK to derail the talks, even though the ceasefire remained intact, talks ceased. (Wladimir Van Wilgenburg, “Turkish power struggle leaves new questions on Kurdish issue”)

^b With statements such as: “The state does no recognize any other nation then Turks” and “Turkey is not a multi-national state”. Mesut Yeğen “‘Prospective-Turks’ or ‘Pseudo-citizens’: Kurds in Turkey”, *The Middle East Journal*, 63 (2009): 4, 597 -615.

^c “The state’s primary goals towards Turkey’s Kurdish communities throughout these years can be roughly summarized as seeking to destroy Kurds as an independent power base, and to suppress collective, public expressions of Kurdish Identity in the name of Turkish national unity and security. Watts, “Silence and Voice”, p. 56.

^d Kurds at the time were associated with “threat, backwardness, pre-modernism, conservatism, and Islamic fanaticism”, Watts, “Silence and Voice”, p. 66.

^e “Decades of silence (ended in the 1960’s) Kurdish intellectuals began publishing Kurdish-language periodicals; politicians, activists, editors and journalists began publicly debating the status of the country’s Kurdish communities – explicitly naming them as such; and Kurdish activists founded new organizations intended to articulate Kurdish grievances and further Kurdish ethno national interests.” Watts, “Silence and Voice”, p. 52.

^f “Kurdish activists were integrated into the political process and student organizational life through the Türkiye İsci Partisi (TIP, or the Worker Party of Turkey) and through left – wing student organizations. Kurds and Turks working in these organizations, as well as through the socialist and liberal press, re – cast Kurds in the public realm as an oppressed and revolutionary national population.” Watts, “Silence and Voice”, p. 54.

^g "Whereas an earlier generation of Kurdish activism was led primarily by religious and tribal elites who challenged the state through armed uprisings, this one was led mostly by an educated intelligentsia using legal, non-violent repertoires." Watts, "Silence and Voice", p. 54.

^h The "Kurdish Threat" was sufficient to rationalize the Turkish military's March 12, 1971 "Coup by memorandum", Watts, "Silence and Voice", p. 53.

ⁱ "Turkey's penal code and other legislative provisions have traditionally been geared overwhelmingly towards protecting the state against "attacks" by individuals, rather than, as the rule of law is commonly conceived in liberal democracies, protecting vulnerable individuals from arbitrary incursions by the state." Kerim Yildiz and Mark Muller, *The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights*, London/Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005, p. 43.

^j Until today this is still a major demand from the Kurdish social and political movements in Turkey as it prevents smaller parties from being represented in the parliament.

^k Kurds were particularly subject to torture especially under martial law and the state of emergency in the 1980's – 90's, according to Yildiz and Muller, *The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights*, p. 45.

^l The PKK is on the US and EU terror list, as well as it is seen as an illegal, terrorist organization by the Turkish state, charging pro-Kurdish or Kurdish parties and politicians for links to the PKK is still commonplace today and reason enough to sanction or ban these from elections.

^m This distinction is made in: Kevin Mckiernan, *Good Kurds, Bad Kurds: No Friends But the Mountains*, Director Kevin Mckiernan, USA: Passion River, 2000.

ⁿ Among these: restrictions on timetables permissible, content of curricula, and no state funding. Yildiz and Muller, *The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights*, p. 67.

^o "According to Cemal, President Gül, State Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Cicek, and Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan initially scheduled meetings with him following his trip to Qendil, but then suddenly either postponed or cancelled the appointments because they did not want to be victims of the same accusations. (*Milliyet*, May 30, 2009)" Servet Tosun and Jeff Allen, "Is Turkey-PKK dialogue on the horizon", *Kurdish Herald*, 1 (2009): 2. Accessed 26.02.2014, <http://www.kurdishherald.com/issue/002/article03.php>

^p Details on the Wise Peoples Commission can be found in Chapter 4 outlining the case studies of different forms of participation in the ongoing peace process.

^q Appendix B chronicles the more general picture of the Track 1.5, II and III initiatives ongoing in parallel to the peace process. While by no means attempting to be an

exhaustive overview of the initiatives of participation, detailed and important events and activities are highlighted to give a general overview of the wider inclusion at the time.

^r Please see Nimet Beriker (“The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Issues, Parties and Prospects”, *Security Dialogue*, 28 (1997): 4, 439-452) for a comprehensive presentation of the political dynamics and peace attempts in the mid-90’s, as this period is beyond the scope of this thesis.

^s Based on interviews done in April 2011 in Istanbul, this view was repeated in interviews conducted with stakeholders in 2013/2014, again in Istanbul, as well.

^t “The Turkish military and Turkey’s Kemalist establishment have a tendency to see the root causes of the Kurdish question in two major sources, social and economic problems in south-eastern Anatolia and external dynamics... This approach presents a number of problems. Perhaps the most important one is the fact that it misses the “identity” dimension of the problem and all the faults committed by the Turkish Republic in repressing this Kurdish identity.” Ömer Taspınar, “Dancing with the Kurds”, *Today’s Zaman*, Brookings Institute, October 20, 2008. Accessed June 14, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2008/10/20-kurds-taspinar>

^u Although later on, and starting in 2011 until 2013, the AKP continued its democratization efforts related to the Kurdish issue by releasing four judicial reform packages and a constitutional reform package in September, 2013. Ergin, “Kurdish Conflict Takes Toll”.

^v This court case is an ongoing and drawn-out one, with cases ongoing in 2014.

^w Referring to this quote: “ “Destroy their unity, burn their houses and exterminate them” (Wilgenburg, “Turkish power struggle leaves”).)

^x Please see: “‘Uludere’ye sivil savcı baksın’ talebine ikinci ret”, *Radikal*, July 24, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/uludereye_sivil_savci_baksin_talebine_ikinci_ret-1143145;

“Judiciary to seek accounting for Uludere incident, Erdoğan says”, *Today’s Zaman*, July 30, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-322240-.html>;

“Roboskili aileler, katliamın 645’inci gününde yürüyüş gerçekleştirdi”, *Hür Bakis*, October 3, 2013. Accessed October 4, 2013) <http://hurbakis.net/content/roboskili-aileler-katliaminin-645inci-gununde-yuruyus-gerceklestirdi>;

“ECtHR finds Turkey guilty of violating convention in village bombing”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 12, 2013. Accessed November 12, 2013. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-331233-ecthr-finds-turkey-guilty-of-violating-convention-in-village-bombing.html>

^y In November 2013 however, this long-awaited Kurdish National Convention, was delayed for the third time, this time indefinitely. (“Long-awaited oan-Kurdish National

conference postponed indefinitely”, *Ekurd*, November 11, 2013. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/11/state7483.htm>)

^z Currently the threshold is a 10% of votes, though the Kurdish political and nationalist movement have for years demanded a reduction of this in order for their MP’s to be able to be elected through parties and not as independents as has been done previously.

^{aa} Please see the following articles for more details:

Göksel Bozkurt, “Turkish PM Erdoğan to unveil”; “Kurds, BDP unsatisfied with democratization package”, *Today’s Zaman*, September 30, 2013. Accessed September 30, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/national/news-327784-kurds-bdp-unsatisfied-with-democratization-package.html>; “Turkey presents reforms aimed at pressing Kurdish peace process”, *Reuters*, September 30, 2013. Accessed April 21, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/30/us-turkey-reform-idUSBRE98T09D20130930>; “Kurds and women top Turkish PK reform plans”, *Al-Jazeera*, Last modified October 1, 2013. Accessed March 12, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/09/kurds-women-top-turkish-pm-reform-plans-201393095032209408.html>; Andrew Finkel, “With neighbors like these”, *The New York Times*, September 20, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/20/with-neighbors-like-these/?_r=0; Letsch and Pidd, “Turkey names new military chiefs”; “Turkey’s democratic reforms fall short according to Kurds”, *Euronews*, October 1, 2013. Accessed October 1, 2013, <http://www.euronews.com/2013/10/01/turkey-s-democratic-reforms-fall-short-according-to-kurds/>; Jose Miguel Calatyud, “Turquia anuncia reformas democraticas que favorecen a kurdos e islamistas”, *El Pais*, September 30, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2013/09/30/actualidad/1380535016_574710.html; Yavuz Baydar, “Erdoğan’s democracy package gets cool reception”, *Al-Monitor*, September 30, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/09/erdogan-democracy-package-reception-cool.html>; “PKK says reform package is not aimed at peace”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 1, 2013. Accessed October 1, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/national/news-327879-pkk-says-reform-package-is-not-aimed-at-peace.html>; Emre Kızılkaya, “5 reasons why Erdoğan’s package is more about elections than democracy”, *The Istanbulian*, September 30, 2013. (Accessed 01.10.2013) <http://istanbulian.blogspot.com/2013/09/5-reasons-why-erdogans-package-is-more.html>; “Kurdish intellectuals: PM’s reforms opened the way for progress”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 1, 2013. Accessed October 1, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/national/news-327899-kurdish-intellectuals-pms-reforms-opened-the-way-for-progress.html>; Hugh Pope, “Ottoman Ghosts”, *The Majalla*, October 1, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.majalla.com/eng/2013/10/article55245700>; Orhan Kemal Cengiz, “What does Erdoğan’s democratization package offer Kurds, minorities?”, *Al-Monitor*, September 30, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/09/democratization-package-kurds-turkey-minorities.html?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8280; “Hate crime law positive step, but not without pitfalls”, *Today’s Zaman*, October 1, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/national/news-327885-hate-crime-law-positive-step-but-not-without-pitfalls.html>; Tulin Daloğlu, “The democratization package that missed the point”, *Al-Monitor*, October 2, 2013. Accessed October 3,

2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/10/democratization-package-missed-opportunity.html?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8290;
Cengiz Çandar, “Mysterious reform package disappoints Turks”, *Al-Monitor*, October 2, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/10/turkey-reacts-to-reform-package.html?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8290;
Jonathan burch and Gulsen Solaker, “Kurdish rebels, politicians say Turkish reforms not aimed at peace”, *Reuters*, October 1, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/01/us-turkey-kurds-pkk-idUSBRE9900WO20131001>;
Amed Dicle, “Rojava’s political structures”, *Jadaliyya*, September 23, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/14272/rojavas-political-structure>



Chapter 5 - Analysis: Participation Mechanisms in the Kurdish Peace Processes

Chapter 4 provided an outline of the conflict history, as well as the previous, and current, Track I peace processes ongoing in the Kurdish issue in Turkey (please see Appendix A for a more detailed trajectory). It is in the establishment of a wider peace process, that the activity of “lower” tracks often precedes the activity of higher tracks in the initiation of political peace process. This high-level process is then continuously accompanied and mirrored by a rich and vast activity at the societal level, as the discussions at the higher political level do not exist in a vacuum. The history as to the activity of participation in the peace processes taking place at the Track II, III and 1.5 levels are outlined in detail in Appendix B (organized by year). From this general overview, 9 cases outlining different actors of participation in the peace processes in Turkey were selected, in order to chronicle the specific activities employed by each. From these activities, specific models of participation to influence Track I, according to the “Broadening Participation” framework, were selected. Moreover, additional peacebuilding activities were also included in the description of each case, in taking the broader view beyond the 9 models, including participation in the wider peace process.

Selected Cases of Participation

The selected cases of participation and inclusion activities will in this section be presented according, firstly, to the actor which was executing them, and then structuring the data obtained on each actor’s activities according to the interview protocol questions (see Appendix C). Below, are the accounts that were documented with the help of interviews conducted with civil society and organizational actors, as well as desk research, media monitoring and information gathered from organizational material and primary sources (like websites, leaflets, audio-visual material and site visits). The answers listed constitute the data used for the subsequent analysis of this thesis.

*Case 1) Free Women’s Democratic Movement (Demokratik Özgür Kadın Hareketi, DÖKH): Women’s Initiative for Peace (Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi, BİKG)*¹

¹ Personal correspondence, member of BİKG, August 14, 2013 and August 15, 2013.

1) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

BİKG has conducted monitoring of the commenced withdrawal of the PKK fighters in the South-East, organized an international conference on women's participation in peace processes in Istanbul, published research and reports and presented their findings to Wise Peoples Commission initiative of the government. They work for the implementation of UN SCR 1325 (on Women's participation in all levels of peace processes and peacebuilding for a sustainable peace) in the current peace process, as well as for the adoption of Turkey of a National Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming.

The organization follows the work of previous organizations working with women and conflict, including *Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi/Women's Initiative for Peace* (1996), *Arkadaşıma Dokunma/Touch My Friend* (1993), *Barış Anneleri/Mothers for Peace* (1993), *Barış İçin Kadın Buluşmaları/ Women's Encounters for Peace* (2004), *Vakti Geldi / Time Has Come* (2005).² There are some parallel events and organizations currently addressing similar issues of women and conflict as well, for instance the 3rd International Feminist Forum, held in Ankara by the LGBT organization Kaos GL Association, the Women's Problems Research and Implementation Centre (KASAUM) of the Ankara University Department of Women's Studies, on the 14-16 March 2014, to discuss the participation of women in peace and peace-making processes (with the presence of members of BİKG too).^a However, at the present time, BİKG are at the forefront of this conversation, in their goals of the pursuing gender issues and representation in the Kurdish peace process, and for a national action plan for Turkey, which would target all levels of government and policy, including the peace talks.³

The Women's Initiative for Peace was created in 12 towns and cities along with a women's press agency (JINHA). The initiative sprang out of the Free Women's

² *Observation Report on Dersim*, (Istanbul: Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi (BİKG), July 2013). Accessed June 30, 2014, <http://www.barisicinkadinlar.com/en/popup/haber-yazdir.asp?haber=370>.

³ Teri Murphy and Maria Christina Vibe, *Gender Mainstreaming: Turkey's policies and practices in peacebuilding initiatives*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, 2013).

Democratic Movement (Demokratik Özgür Kadın Hareketi, DÖKH), which was created in 2003, which “unites hundreds of activist Kurdish women from civil society, women’s organizations, youth groups, political parties, and local government bodies. It has created Women’s Assemblies in 25 cities, women’s shelters for victims of gender-based violence, 17 women’s cooperatives, six women’s associations and three women’s academies that provide training for academics from all disciplines in gender equality.”⁴ DÖKH as a whole is also responsible in ensuring that the Kurdish political party ensures gender equality in their policies. The umbrella organization is made up of: “political parties, women assemblies and women MPs, locally elected women politicians, syndicated women laborers, women activists in civil society organizations, women associations and institutions, cooperatives, women workers in press and publications, women working in the sphere of art and culture, women in academia, and women activists from people’s delegates.”⁵

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

Women’s Initiative for Peace was established in 2009, however after the peace initiative formally began in January 2013, they began pushing for women's participation in the peace process based on UN SCRS 1325, as well as local experiences, taking the form of workshops, lobbying and activism. An international conference was held on May 4th 2013, after that various commissions were established on thematic areas. A monitoring of the retreat process later that month was also conducted in Dersim/Tunceli.

Other activities took place with the networks groups in Bursa, İzmir, Antalya, Mersin, Diyarbakır, Ankara, Denizli, Van and Istanbul. Their email list includes 400 women from all sections of society including feminists, leftists, Islamic, Alevi, non-Muslim, Muslim, young, old, Kurdish, and Turkish. Until January 2013, most of their activities were aimed at consciousness raising and organizing a demand for peace on the part of

⁴ Eva Bernard, “Women and the Kurdish Movement in Turkey: ‘There will be no turning back’”, *The WVoice: A Publication of Women’s Voices Now*, Heidi Basch-Harod & Molly Lower Eds., 2 (2014): 4.

⁵ “Democratic Freewomen Movement”, Middle East Women’s Conference. Accessed May 26, 2014, <http://middleeasternwomenconference.wordpress.com/democratic-freewomen-movement/>.

women. Most of their activism involved street demonstrations and sit-ins. However, they also organized many workshops to come up with a list of all the ways in which women were harmed by the ongoing war both in the East and in the West of the country in order to raise awareness on the gender-dimensions of the war.

For instance, on February 24th 2013, a group of 60 women, comprised of activists, writers, journalists and academicians belonging to different social groups, convened to discuss how women could participate in and influence the on-going peace process. Dr. Nazan Üstündağ, assistant professor in the Department of sociology of Boğazici University, made a presentation on the roles played by women during 102 peace talks realized around the world, in order to employ a comparative perspective to Turkey.⁶ Their discussions and ideas were presented at a press conference on March 3rd 2013.⁷

Moreover, the network organized an international conference entitled “Women are taking an active role in the peace process!” on May 4th, 2013 at Boğazici University. 200 women were in attendance, among them were “...members of the women's movement in Turkey, feminists, women from the Democratic Free Women's Movement, women's organizations, women from different religions and ethnic groups, women from the LGBT community, women from trade unions, women from professional organizations, women from political parties, women in the parliament, journalist women, women from academia, human rights defender women, and women from various provinces.”⁸

Following the conference, various working groups were created. A monitor group, consisting of 12 members of the Women’s initiative for peace visited the Tunceli/Dersim region on 29-30th May, 2013 in order to observe the peace process and the retreat process. Through the visit they observed the retreat of the PKK fighters, as well as the state and army activity in the area, talked to women, met with women

⁶ “The role of women in peace processes around the world 24th February 2013”, Women for Peace Initiative/Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi, July 20, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014, http://www.barisicinkadinlar.com/en/haber_detay.asp?haberID=367.

⁷ “The role of women in peace processes”, BİKG.

⁸ “The role of women in peace processes”, BİKG.

activists from different parties including the AKP, CHP and EMEP, and talked to female staff of the municipality and visited KAMER (The Women's Centre, a women's rights organization with a strong presence on the ground assisting women in various ways in the South-East, and elsewhere, in Turkey), and the women's observation tent of BDP. The group then published a report, which discussed the issues especially pertaining to women in the aftermath of the conflict situation, as well as in the transitional period of the (tentative) de-militarization of the area.⁹ Research was conducted, and interviews were made with different social groupings, in different Kurdish provinces, as well as the West, (for instance, Çanakkale, Antalya and Ankara), in order to understand the different perceptions on the conflict and future peace. Additionally, an observer group was established to "...monitor the parties for a sustainable negotiation process, warn the parties of violations, insist on the equal and qualified representation of women and share the criticisms with the public and prepare reports."¹⁰

A contact group was created to "...conduct transparent and open meetings with all parties of the negotiation process; with women from the political parties in the parliament, minister women, guerrilla women, and women's organizations from all the regions. The group will share the results of these meetings with women."¹¹ While additionally, a lobby group was created to disseminate the findings of the network, presenting their findings and demands to the Solution Commission, and talking to women parliamentarians, as well as the conflict parties, such as women guerrillas.¹²

Additional working groups created for future projects were the Truth Commission Work group, the Security Reform Group, the Gender Equality, and the New Constitution Group.

⁹ *Observation Report on Dersim*, BİKG.

¹⁰ "Women's Initiative for Peace will meet all parties!", Women's Initiative for Peace/ Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi (BİKG), May 19, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014, http://www.barisicinkadinlar.com/en/haber_detay.asp?haberID=364.

¹¹ "Women's Initiative for Peace will meet all parties!", BİKG.

¹² "Women's Initiative for Peace will meet all parties!", BİKG.

Lastly, an all-day film festival and event was held on September 14th, 2013, in Antalya, sponsored by the Women's Initiative for Peace and the Flimmor Women's Co-operative (an organization of women filmmakers and activists). More than 100 women were in attendance watching films and discussing issues of women in Turkey, and particularly in relation to the ongoing peace process, and the importance of including women, but also reaching out to different segments of society and the different parties to the conflict. Further plans for events in Diyarbakir and Van, in the South-East, were announced during the event.¹³

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

The group was created in response to the arrests of many Kurdish women with whom the group was working with in feminist projects and activities in 2009. With the peace process the group changed their focus, and are now trying to get Turkey to make its own national action plan for women in accord with 1325. Moreover, the group is fighting for the enforcement of the presence of women and women's issues in the ongoing peace process. Women were only represented at 14% in the "wise peoples" commission, and are virtually not part of the peace process at all.¹⁴

The group wishes to engage in both the formal government driven process as well as community, informal processes of building peace. According to the group, while men see the peace process as "...a new repartition of a old hegemony, and power over what piece of land,"¹⁵ women are seen as addressing other issues, and having experience in peacebuilding in communities and from their everyday lives (for instance, referring to the activism of women against the security wall being built with Syria by the government.)¹⁶ Moreover they stressed that the increased militarization (despite the

¹³ "Ses Türkiye-Women in Antalya recently attended a film festival and held a discussion about peace in Turkey", Women's Initiative for Peace/ Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi (BİKG), October 3, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014, http://www.barisicinkadinlar.com/en/haber_detay.asp?haberID=371.

¹⁴ "Women and Peace in the Middle East" panel discussion, Istanbul Policy Center, March 6th, 2014, with participation of member of Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi (BİKG).

¹⁵ "Women and Peace in the Middle East", panel discussion.

started withdrawal process) of the South-Eastern region, with the construction of police stations and military outposts (“Jandarma”) in regions such as Lice, have led to demonstrations and the need to examine how these development affect women, in the aftermath of the retreat of the PKK guerillas.

The group recognized the importance of having more contact between women (across the East/West divide in Turkey) and to understand the conflict and examine the future for peace; promoting understanding through creating a widespread women’s coalition. Through collaborative learning the group believes that women can eventually become leaders in this peace process locally and nationally.

4.) Did these projects/events aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?

The group met with a wide range of actors, from female parliament members, to women in the (PKK) guerrilla and talked to all of them about 1325.

Moreover, the group has made a presentation to the "Resolution Process Assessment Commission" created in the Parliament), and met with the so-called “wise women” (of the “wise peoples commission” assigned by the government).

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

The group has held numerous workshops and one international conference. They have conducted observations and monitoring in various Kurdish cities regarding the withdrawal process of the PKK fighters to Northern Iraq. A report based on the trends observed in the withdrawal process and other work done by the network, in order to highlight the underlying issues for women in peacebuilding and in the current peace process.

¹⁶ “Women and Peace in the Middle East”, panel discussion.

The network have through collaborative workshops and meetings identified demands in relation to the ongoing peace process, which are:

- a) the creation of a truth commission investigating crimes against women during conflict
- b) equal representation of women in all commissions created for peace including the parliament
- c) gender based security reform
- d) change of the constitution so that discrimination against women in general, and Kurdish women in particular, will stop.

Case 2) Eko-Politik: “Grand Dome of Turkey” (Türkiye’nin Büyük Çatısı)¹⁷

1.) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

The organization Ekopolitik engaged in academic and policy-oriented activities and research organized the “Grand Dome of Turkey” meetings over a two year period, facilitated by Professor Vamik Volkan, famed inter-group relations social-psychologist. This was done in order to bring together individuals from various sides of the conflict, including Turkish and Kurdish Nationalists, former intelligence and military officials from the Turkish side, as well as former BDP Members of Parliament, as well as PKK members, from the Kurdish side, among other sectors represented from society at large.

Issues discussed included language rights, legally securing human rights, removing the humiliation historically faced by Kurds, as well as opening schools where classes would be taught in Kurdish, and restoring original Kurdish names to certain towns and cities where Kurdish citizens were the majority. There was agreement that geographically separating Turkey’s Kurds and Turks was unrealistic. There was also a key discussion on how to reintegrate PKK fighters from the Kandil mountains into society. Similar

¹⁷ Vamik D. Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch: A Psychopolitical Journey Through War and Peace*, (Durham, NC: Pitchston Publishing, 2013).

discussions continued, with the aim of coming up with “prescriptions” for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue, with the aim of bringing these to the authorities attention afterwards.^b

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

Ekopolitik's project “Turkey’s Grand Dome” first gathering took place on November 16 and 17, 2009. There were three preparatory meetings in January, and one in October. Several gatherings and related activities took place up until late 2011 in Istanbul, Ankara, and various Western and South-Eastern cities of Turkey.

There were 17 groups of Turkish and Kurdish Nationalists facilitated by Professor Volkan on various occasions, the meetings took place all over the country, in both the East and the West. Professor Volkan worked as a consultant, maintaining his role as an independent academic, while Ekopolitik operated as a civilian think tank. The process was aimed at being transparent and accessible to society, in order to raise the level of awareness in society for a possible negotiated solution, and to come up with solutions. The meetings took place on a large scale, and were of a public and inclusive nature.

Ekopolitik considered itself to be a politically independent initiative, with its proceedings and findings being entirely available to any political party. The facilitator Volkan insisted that women be actively part of this project. The facilitator was not present at all the meetings and gatherings, but helped develop a “core group” of Turks and Kurds after the first meeting. From this group eventually would emerge a “task group” overseeing the project's activities together with Ekopolitik staff, keeping contact with the facilitator that was based in the United States.^c

General Coordinator of Ekopolitik Tarik Çelenk and Director Murat Sofuoğlu selected the most influential Turks and Kurds that would also represent the diversity existent within these non-monolithic groups. Participants were granted participation on a voluntary basis, and represented “nationalist” Turks and Kurds, as well as “religious” Turks and Kurds, with both men and women represented from influential political and

societal spheres.¹⁸ The dialogues took place with participants and observers present (who were asked not to intervene but keep their comments until the end.) Following the first meeting of the group, all the participants met with the minister of interior and “other distinguished guests” to inform them on their progress.¹⁹ The dialogue was meant to be the start of a longer process to find common issues and areas for discussion pertaining to the Kurdish issue in Turkey. The whole dialogue process was transcribed (from November 16 – 17, 2009), and was made available by Ekopolitik (in Turkish).

The first dialogue Project had seventeen dialogue participants and around thirty observers, among these were members of “Core group” (which emerged in later sessions), as well as other participants, all from different groups and walks of life:

The Core group included: Cezmi Bayram (Turkish Nationalist, leader of various Turkish culture and business organizations), Murat Belge (well-known Liberal Turkish scholar), Musa Serdar Çelebi (former Director of the Turkish Islamic Togetherness Association and former politician, and member of the Foreign Economic Relations Board, Istanbul), Seydi Fırat (former PKK member, but who surrendered in 1999 to the Turkish government with Öcalans permission), Ümit Fırat (political of Kurdish origin, former member of Kurdish Labour Party until he founded the first Kurdish organization in Turkey in 1969, active in organizing Kurds in Eastern Turkey politically), Altan Tan (of Turkish/Kurdish background, conservative and religious politician, architect and newspaper columnist, was member of core group until summer 2011 when he was successfully elected to parliament), Mete Yazar (former military officer in the Turkish Army Special Forces, with more than 10 years experience in Southeastern Turkey’s conflict affected region), Cevat Öneş (former assistant director of the Turkish secret service (MIT), Avni Özgürel (Nationalist Turk, writer for various Turkish newspapers and often appearing on television), Özdem Sanberk (past Turkish Representative to the European Union and former Turkish ambassador to Great Britain, former director of the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV)), Halit Yalçın (conservative Kurdish activist from Hakkari, past political prisoner, author and Kurdish spokesperson).

¹⁸ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 379.

¹⁹ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 379.

Other participants included: Bayram Bozyel (Politician and writer of Kurdish origin and former political prisoner, founder of political party Hak-Par), Cengiz Çandar (advisor to former President Özal, and well-known newspaper columnist), İbrahim Kalın (author of books on Islam, adviser on international affairs to Prime Minister Erdoğan), Gültan Kışanak (Kurdish, journalist and elected MP for the BDP since 2007) Deniz Ülke Arıboğan (Political scientist, then rector of Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul), Ayşe Betül Çelik (Associate Professor teaching conflict resolution at Sabanci University, Istanbul), Esra Çuhader Gürkaynak (Political scientist, Bilkent University, Ankara), Sema Sezer (retired member of MIT).

The core group that emerged from the first meeting, had one more meeting in Istanbul, followed by a first trip to Hakkari (in South-Eastern, mainly Kurdish populated, Turkey, close to the Kandil Mountains and the Iran-Iraq border where the PKK have their base) in January, 2010. This was deemed a landmark step for the group, especially for the Turkish members of the core group, as the meeting with political, civilian and youth groups who were not members of the PKK were eye-opening for some members (as a large portion of the youth that joined the PKK were from Hakkari.)

A third meeting with the core group with Professor Volkan took place in July 2010. Between this, which was to be the last meeting with Professor Volkan, Ekopolitik made three more trips to Hakkari, in February and July (2010), and also to Mersin on the Mediterranean coast, where several displaced Kurds had immigrated too. In their meeting there the core group talked to local leaders and planned larger gatherings for the near future. Representatives from these trips from Hakkari and Mersin were thereafter incorporated to the final July meeting in Istanbul as well, with a visible expansion of the consultation process to include a widening audience, as well as geographical reach.

A meeting including President Gül took place on August 26, 2010, with 16 of the core members, as well as the recent members from Hakkari and Mersin. The meeting took place in the summer residence of the president in Istanbul. Professor Volkan facilitated the talk, which was scheduled to be 1.5 hours, but ended up lasting 3 hours. The

psychologist/advisor to the group, Ayla Yazıcı, presented findings from her report on conflict affected individuals in Hakkari, highlighting the psychological dimension.²⁰

In early December 2010, Professor Volkan and members of the core group members went to Mersin, meeting with the governor, the mayor, political leaders from the AKP, CHP and representatives from business and civil society for a Grand Dome meeting. The participants made public speeches, appeared on television and collected information on the effects of this conflict on this particular city. After this visit the facilitator urged Ekopolitik to concentrate on Mersin and Hakkari, where they had conducted previous visits, before visiting other cities (which also had been done), in order to concentrate and deepen their efforts. However, the need for funding kept the group concerned with remaining in the public eye and demonstrating their outreach.

In a core group meeting in Istanbul in December 2010, there were over one hundred observers, and the facilitator was taken back by the demand to speak by the audience, proving a turning point for the exercise, especially in the eyes of the facilitator, who found the meeting unmanageable.²¹ After this very crowded meeting, the Deputy Director of Ekopolitik and Professor Volkan again flew to Ankara and to the presidential palace to brief the president. However, someone at Ekopolitik had typed up seventy-six “prescriptions” presented at the “huge and chaotic” meeting,²² which had not been properly discussed and without the permission of the facilitator, was publicly disseminated. News quickly spread in the media of the “76 prescriptions” (some of which were quite unrealistic) and publicized in the media as “Dr. Volkan’s list”, dealing a heavy blow to both the Grand Dome Project, and himself, according to the facilitator.

After this incident, despite the facilitators wish for a more slow and focused process, the activities of Ekopolitik seemed to continue at a fast rate, taking place in more and more locations throughout Turkey (and even including meeting in Mosul, Iraq). However, positive developments remained, for instance Ekopolitik’s 5th meeting in Hakkari in January 2011, which included a “nationalist” core member, along with a close aid of

²⁰ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 385.

²¹ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 386.

²² Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 386.

Öcalan and a respected journalist, deepening the work in this location. This meeting also included meetings with governors and other community leaders. The last meeting facilitated by Professor Volkan took place in mid-July 2011, with several guests, including former lawyers of Öcalan, after a related seminar to university students as to the work of Ekopolitik.

Other activities, included the participation of young student volunteers, inspired by the activities of the “Grand Dome”, it seems; “Soon students from different universities in Istanbul, both religious and nationalistic, men and women – including women who wore a head covering – volunteered to become involved in Ekopolitik. These young persons’ enthusiasm for doing something for their country was most impressive.”²³

Moreover, the facilitator took part in several public events and conferences. In May 2010, Professor Volkan met with these student volunteers to give seminars introducing them to psycho-political concepts. He also (in 2009 and 2010) attended Turkish Police Academy meetings in Antalya, Turkey, to explain Kurdish children’s psychological dilemmas particularly, for cadets assigned to conflict affected areas.²⁴

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

Taking a psycho-psychological approach, this initiative seeks to address the deep-rooted causes of the conflict, including issues of identity and facing “the other”.^d

Turkey’s Grand Dome project was considered to also be a major response to the call from the AKP’s “Democratic Initiative Project” or the “Kurdish Initiative”, (though in fact the dome commenced its activity before the government’s project was launched, leading some to say that the dome was in fact a “pilot” for a larger initiative.)

4.) Did these projects aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?

²³ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 383.

²⁴ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 383.

The track I was highly interested in the initiative and followed it closely. For example, President Gül acknowledged the meetings and was even present at one.²⁵ Often, either before or after Ekopolitik meetings Vamik Volkan the facilitator/consultant, together with Tarik Çelenk (the leader and general coordinator of Ekopolitik) would brief President Abdullah Gül on the progress of the dialogues.²⁶ For instance, In February an December 2010, the facilitator had a meeting with President Abdullah Gül and Tarik Çelenk (director of Ekopolitik) in Ankara to brief him on the Grand Dome meetings. Ekopolitik took pride in that their initiative preceded that of the governments own initiative to solve the Kurdish question.

Moreover, after the third meeting (in-between the two previous ones, in July 2010) the General Director of Ekopolitik Tarik Çelenk, and Professor Volkan again flew to Ankara to brief the president on the progress of the dialogue group. According to the facilitator, the President wanted to ensure himself that all members of the group really were supportive of a peaceful initiative to end the conflict, before commencing a similar initiative at the political level. After this briefing, it was agreed on that a session would be conducted with the president present (it took place on August 26th, 2010). After this the hope of the facilitator was that the government would conduct an initiative to follow up Ekopolitiks work, however no such initiative was announced.²⁷

The group focused on close contact with politicians and local authorities to make the process inclusive. For instance, during a meeting in 2010 in Mersin and Hakkari, the group met governors and mayors from the BDP.²⁸ Minister Beşir Atalay, minister of interior at the time, was in charge of the governmental initiative for the attempt for “democratic solution” to the Kurdish conflict and wanted to consult intellectuals from different professions in order to gather their suggestions for this new initiative. On

²⁵ “Ekopolitik sets up moderate meeting of Turkey’s extremists”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 17 August, 2012. Accessed February 21, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=ekopolitic-brings-together-polarized-actors-to-solve-kurdish-problem-2010-08-17>.

²⁶ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 378.

²⁷ “Ekopolitik sets up moderate”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

²⁸ “Ekopolitik sets up moderate”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

August 10th, 2009,²⁹ he met with Professor Volkan, discussing for three hours the methodology used in the “dome”.³⁰ After this initial meeting, the then minister of interior (Beşir Atalay, and the previous deputy prime minister, until June 2011, Cemil Çiçek) joined the members of Ekopolitik, dialogue participants, observers of the dialogue, and other guests (numbering more than 100), in order to listen to the dialogue participants reports and in order to take part in the discussion of issues pertaining to the Kurdish conflict.³¹

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

The “Democratic Initiative Project,” “unity and Fraternity Project,” or the “Kurdish Initiative” (it would go by several names, but mostly referred to as the “Democratic Opening” or “Kurdish Opening”) would be launched shortly after the commencement of the Grand dome activities in 2009, and can be seen as an outcome of the activity.³²

The activities of the Grand Dome project became well-known in Turkey, as it was highly publicized in the media (through frequent television appearances of the core members and of Professor Volkan, for instance), and helped raise awareness of the need to solve this issue in the Turkish public.

The outreach done by the facilitator, Professor Volkan himself, as well as the societal enthusiasm created, for instance as witness by the young student volunteers, are considered important in awareness-raising of society towards toward these issues.^e

²⁹ Tolga Korkut, “Minister Atalay speaking to political parties about initiative”, Bianet English, August 11, 2009. Accessed April 15, 2014, <http://www.bianet.org/english/minorities/116395-minister-atalay-speaking-to-political-parties-about-initiative>.

³⁰ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p.373,

³¹ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 385.

³² Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 373.

According to Professor Volkan, the document produced from the dialogues, with the “76 prescriptions” constituted “...a significant historical document illustrating how influential citizens of Turkey with various backgrounds can talk very openly and respectfully about the ethnic problems in Turkey and create a “public voice” after decades of terroristic, militaristic, and political ways of dealing with these problems. This document is a marker illustrating that a civil investment in this chronic tragedy has its own significant place.”³³

Following the last meeting of the Grand dome in mid-July 2011, an internal rift appeared with Director Murat Sofuoğlu leaving Ekopolitik to start his own civil society organization, and General Coordinator of Ekopolitik Tarik Çelenk remaining with the organization (including some of the staff members too) ending the “dome”.

After this last meeting of the Grand dome, in September 2011, Professor Volkan visited Beşir Atalay, then deputy prime minister, though still in charge of overseeing the “Kurdish issue”. The political climate at the time was that of thinking that the PKK was loosing power and would soon be persuaded to pursue a political, as opposed to military, solution. With the earthquake that took place in the South-East at the time, as well as the flourishing “Arab Spring” revolutions the dynamics again changed, and the Kurdish issue was not seen as the main policy priority for Turkey at the time though.

*Case 3): Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV): Democratization and Good Governance Programs*³⁴

1.) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) is an independent organization, with no political affiliation, which sees itself as neutral but trying to

³³ Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 379.

³⁴ Interview, representative from TESEV, Istanbul, March 10, 2014.

influence policy on the Kurdish issue and process. Its funding comes from the business sector, the EU and research grants.

Activities organized under the Democratization program have included:

- The production of a documentary about the “compensation law” for IDP’s.
- Publications, workshops and conferences, under the programs of democratization and good governance.³⁵
- A constitutional process monitoring project, which has its own website.^f
- Various research reports on the Kurdish issue, the ongoing peace process, and constitutional and judicial reform have been produced to support this process.

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

2010

- 24 – 25 June, Nippon Hotel, Istanbul TESEV organizes its first Democratization Program Conference “Politics, Institutions and Citizenship in a Changing Turkey: Is It Possible to Live Together?”³⁶

2011

- March 27, Istanbul, TESEV Democratization Program holds a press conference and panel on its report “What Sort of Constitution Are We Heading Towards?”, as the third report in its Monitoring the Constitutional Process Project.³⁷

³⁵ “Kurdish Question”, TESEV Website. Accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/kurdish-question/working/1234.html>.

³⁶ “Democratization Program Conference, 2010: ‘Politics, institutions and citizenship in a changing Turkey: Is it possible to live together?’”, TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/democratization-program-conference,-2010---politics,-institutions-and-citizenship-in-a-changing-turkey--is-it-possible-to-live-together---/Content/1136.html>.

³⁷ “Press Conference and Panel: What sort of constitution are we heading towards?”, TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/-press-conference-and-panel--what-sort-of-constitution-are-we-heading-towards/Content/1452.html>.

- September 23, Istanbul, TESEV Democratization Program organizes a press conference and panel on its report “Judicial Reform Packages: Evaluating Their Effect on Rights and Freedoms”, under its Constitutional Monitoring Project.³⁸
- October 3, Istanbul, TESEV organizes a press conference and panel on its report “The Basic Principles and the Choice of Government System in the New Constitution”, the 4th monitoring report for its Constitution Monitoring Project.³⁹
- November 21, 2012 Ankara, TESEV Democratization Program hold a press conference and panel on its report (based on a public survey done by KONDA) “Definitions and the Expectations Regarding the New Constitution”, under Monitoring the New Constitutional Process Project.⁴⁰
- November 25, Amsterdam, TESEV and the Turkije Instituut, Supported by the University of Amsterdam, organized the conference “The Need for Consensus: Overcoming the Rift in Turkey on the Kurdish Issue”⁴¹ November 25, TESEV organizes a press conference and panel in connection with the launching of its report “The Other side of the Ergenekon: Extrajudicial Killings and Forced Disappearances”⁴²

³⁸ “Judicial reform packages: Evaluating their effect on rights and freedoms’ Press conference and panel”, TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/judicial-reform-packages--evaluating-their-effect-on-rights-and-freedoms-press-conference-and-panel/Content/1554.html>.

³⁹ “Press conference and panel: ‘The basic principles and the coice of government system in the new constitution”. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/press-conference-and-panel--the-basic-principles-and-the-choice-of-government-system-in-the-new-constitution/Content/1463.html>.

⁴⁰ “Press conference and panel: ‘Definitions and expectations regarding the new constitution’”. Accessed March 22, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/press-conference-and-panel--definitions-and-the-expectations-regarding-the-new-constitution/Content/1057.html>.

⁴¹ “Conference in Amsterdam: ‘The need for consensus: Overcoming the rift in Turkey on the Kurdish issue”. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/conference-in-amsterdam--the-need-for-consensus--overcoming-the-rift-in-turkey-on-the-kurdish-issue/Content/1049.html>.

⁴² “The other side of Ergenekon: Extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances’ Report and press conference”. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/the-other-side-of-the-ergenekon--extrajudicial-killings-and-forced-disappearances-report-and-press-conference-/Content/1566.html>.

- November 28, TESEV Democratization Program together with the EU Parliament Greens Group hold a panel in Brussels on the democratization process and EU reforms in Turkey, issues debated including “the Human Rights Aspect of EU-Turkey Relations”, “the New Constitution Making Process and Judicial Reform Packages”, “on the Kurdish Issue and KCK Trials”, and on “Civil Military Relations and La won Court of Accounts”.⁴³

2012

- February 9, Istanbul, TESEV Democratization Program organizes a film screening of “Settlement” (“Sulhname”), a documentary about the “Law on Compensation for Losses Resulting from Terrorism and the Fight against Terrorism”, or the “Compensation Law”, enacted ‘in 2004, for the purpose of partially compensating the losses of more than one million individuals forcefully evicted from their villages in the 1990s. ⁴⁴
- February 9, Istanbul, TESEV Democratization Program organized a panel “Is Turkey back to square one? The Kurdish Question, 1990s and Today”.⁴⁵
- March 2, Istanbul Conrad Hotel, TESEV Democratization Program shares its first studies on the constitution making process in a public press conference, through the launching of its first Constitution Monitoring Report, and the launching of a Constitution Monitoring Website. Parliament Speaker Cemil Cicek was also present.⁴⁶
- 4 – 7 March, Brussels, TESEV Good Governance Program and Friedrich Ebert Foundation Brussels Office organized the Brussels Dialogue Program Conference

⁴³ “Panel: ‘Perspectives on democratization and EU reforms in Turkey”, TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/panel--perspectives-on-democratization-and-eu-reforms-in-turkey/Content/986.html>.

⁴⁴ “Documentary screening: ‘Settlement’(Sulhname)”, TESEV website. Accessed May 5, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/documentary-screening--settlement-%28sulhname%29/Content/1169.html>.

⁴⁵ “Panel: ‘Is Turkey back to square one? The Kurdish question 1990s and today”, TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/panel--is-turkey-back-to-square-one-the-kurdish-question,-1990s-and-today/Content/1065.html>.

⁴⁶ “Press conference and panel: ‘Monitoring the constitutional process’”. TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/press-conference-and-panel--monitoring-the-constiutional-process/Content/1027.html>.

“European Experiences in Regional Governance: Lessons for Turkey” (Deputies Nihat Zeybekçi, AKP; Melda Onur, CHP and Demir Çelik, BDP participated).⁴⁷

- April 6, Diyarbakir, TESEV Good Governance Program (with contributions of the Friedrich Ebert Association) organizes a workshop “Local and Regional Government in the New Constitution”. The results were afterwards presented to the conciliation commission in the Turkish National Assembly.⁴⁸
- November 14, Stockholm, TESEV Democratization Program and Olof Palme International Center and Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University, hold panel on “Democratization Process and Reforms in Turkey”.⁴⁹
- May 8, NYU New York, TESEV Democratization Program and the Center for Constitutional Transitions at NYU Law School organize a panel on “Turkey’s Constitutional Transition: Institutional Reform, Regime Change and Bill of Rights: Are They Possible?”⁵⁰
- May 9, New York, TESEV Democratization Program and World Policy Institute organizes a closed meeting “Democratization in Turkey: Progress and Pitfalls”.⁵¹

Other projects included:

- The “Encounters project: In Trabzon and Diyarbakir”, to produce meetings between the East and West of the country. The people in Trabzon said they didn’t know any

⁴⁷ “Brussels dialogue program and conference”, TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014), <http://www.tesev.org.tr/brussels-dialogue-program-and-conference/Content/1019.html>.

⁴⁸ “‘Local and regional government in the new constitution’- Diyarbakir workshop”, TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/local-and-regional-government-in-the-new-constitution--diyarbakir-workshop/Content/1089.html>.

⁴⁹ “Panel: ‘Democratization process and reforms in Turkey’”, TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/panel--democratization-process-and-reforms-in-turkey/Content/1127.html>.

⁵⁰ “Turkey’s constitutional transition, institutional reform, regime change and bill of rights: are they possible?”, TESEV website. Accessed May 5, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/turkey%E2%80%99s-constitutional-transition,-institutional-reform,-regime-change-and-bill-of-rights--are-they-possible-/Content/1159.html>.

⁵¹ “Democratization in Turkey: progress and pitfalls”, TESEV website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/democratization-in-turkey--progress-and-pitfalls--/Content/1204.html>.

Kurds or what they wanted, and wanted to meet them. First the project travelled to Trabzon, and then the Trabzon group went to Diyarbakir. However, finally the Diyarbakir group were not able to go to Trabzon. Trabzon is a traditionally nationalist stronghold and this exchange was meant to challenge peoples perception of the other so they could get to know each other.

- For the “What Kurds want” report, workshops were held in Diyarbakir, and the report was brought to Ankara, Izmir, Diyarbakir and Trabzon to be discussed.

Current projects:

- Their current project concerning “Disarmament and Re-integration” Is looking at the possible return of militants, and Diaspora from various European countries. This process has taken place interviewing over 400 individuals, in Kandil mountains, Mahmur camp (Iraq), and Europe. As well as in prisons: includes individuals with ties or alleged ties to PKK.
- They have asked these individuals if the peace process is sustainable, will forced migrants outside of turkey like to return to obtain their citizenship, integrate again, what do they need? And what would be possible problems?
- The questions involved 4 areas: That of social integration, economic/work, what they would do upon return (join political party etc.) and questions on psychological well being upon return, these are central to the peace process.

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

Their vision for their various projects is bringing together of academia, civil society and various political parties, combining the inclusion of different tracks. They take advantage to introduce government officials to civil society organizations that do not traditionally meet with the government – as the government most usually meets with their affiliated civil society. They also chose to pursue close links to the government and political parties, though TESEV is independent. TESEV wants to prepare the ground for when the peace process reaches the point that people and activists may return to Turkey.

4.) Did these projects aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?

For instance, when Beşir Atalay was interior minister (until July 2011, he is now Deputy Prime Minister), they kept him informed on the progress and findings of the “What Kurds Want” report. In their research they prefer to keep a dialogue open with the politicians involved in these issues. During the constitutional writing process, the think tank also remained connected to the parliamentary commission on constitutional reconciliation, to inform their constitutional monitoring program to inform about their progress. They are in contact with people responsible for the peace process (Track 1) in order to share with them the findings (through regularly briefings) and will present their findings (of their most recent report “Disarmament and Re-integration”, coming out after summer) to them even before making it public.

Local governance is also important in collaboration to their projects, at the Trabzon-Diyarbakir “Encounters” meeting in Diyarbakir for instance, the Mayors office provided the location and support, and was very interested in the initiative. Individual’s from Mayor Osman Baydemir’s party (the BDP) and the Diyarbakir municipality hosted the group and followed their project.

Their reports have always been publicized with a press conference, and Members of Parliament from all of the four major parties the AKP, CHP, MHP and BDP, (with the MHP only attending the constitutional related events though) have been invited and been in attendance to be informed on their research findings. It is part of the vision of TESEV to always involve the government, and to do policy oriented and influencing activity, contacting to the related ministries. For instance, for their report on IDP’s the Ministry of interior was involved and alerted, as well as governors in the South East and civil society organizations. Furthermore, a future project is doing continued work on judicial reform and on the legal profession in Turkey. This project will be pursued in consultation with policy makers and the relevant ministries, and they are conducting meetings with the ministry of interior and justice in order to look for areas for future collaboration and in order to provide briefings. Transfer to Track 1 from this actor to the peace process happens through research and reports mainly, as well as informal contact and consultations.

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

- During the constitutional reform process (which has slowed as of late) they helped increase the participation of civil society to give input to this process.
- Their activities helped connect civil society to have a voice in the media too.
- Following the Trabzon people-to-people meeting an aid tent for migrated South Eastern workers was set up along with other small scale projects in Trabzon, due to the interest sparked by the meetings with Kurds and the visit to Diyarbakir.
- There have been 4 reports published on the Kurdish issue and settlement process, entitled: “What Kurds Want”, “What Turks Want”, “Constitutional and legal solutions”, and “Disarmament and Re-integration” (in progress).

Future projects:

- Includes research on extrajudicial killings and disappearances in the 90's.
- They are following the KCK cases in Diyarbakir, and working with the Diyarbakir Bar association, which is very influential in the region. They have produced a website which is monitoring and following these cases: www.failibelli.org.

*Case 4) Hafiza Merkezi – The Truth, Justice and Memory Center: Various activities*⁵²

1.) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

Hafiza Merkezi was established in November 2011 by a group of human rights activists, journalists and lawyers “to advocate for an adequate institutional and societal response to past grave violations of human rights targeted especially against national minorities.”

⁵³ The NGO grew out of larger foundation, namely Anadolu Kültür, and transitioned out of, and built further on, previous activities commenced under this umbrella organization, which had been operating since 2008 (they still work closely and overlap.)

⁵² Interview, representative from Hafiza Merkezi, Istanbul, February 24, 2014.

⁵³ Hafiza Merkezi website, homepage. Accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.hakikatadalehafiza.org/sayfa.aspx?PageId=52&LngId=5>.

The main focus of Anadolu Kültür initially had been enforced disappearances. DEPO is an art and exhibition space in Istanbul where Hafiza Merkezi has their offices.

Hafiza Merkezi has conducted various activities, regarding culture and memorialization, transitional justice and addressing past human rights violations in accordance with minorities especially. They also conduct research and hold conferences and workshops to highlight these issues in Turkish society. They have especially been proponents of addressing transitional justice issues in the Kurdish peace process through events and research addressing issues pertaining to the conflict. They have also suggested the establishment of a truth commission, and the need for the state to address past grievances in order for conflict resolution and transformation to take place in Turkish society.

The organization conducts three main activities:⁵⁴

Legal advocacy: Legal documentation, a database on court cases, contact with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), with law offices in Diyarbakir, Sirnak and Istanbul. Basic information about enforced disappearances is also collected and advocated.

Dissemination: Informative workshops of truth, justice and memory. (i.e. Sabanci University academic workshops in 2013, 2014), Operating social networking sites. Reaching out to other NGOs and academics. Providing essential tools and trainings.

Documentation: In their research they conducted interview with the families of disappeared persons for instance (with a team collecting oral history, with narrative evidence through video and audio recording, with 80 interviews conducted so far. Estimate 850–1200 disappeared, in Cizre, Sirnak, Diyarbakir, Mardin, Idil and Istanbul)

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

2008

⁵⁴ “Enforced disappearances”, Hafiza Merkezi website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.hakikatadalehafiza.org/calisma.aspx?PageId=102&LngId=5>.

- March 11 - Anadolu Kültür: “Civil Organizations: New Perspectives in Developing Intercultural Dialogue”, in Antakya. Organized within the scope of the 11. International Istanbul Biennial’s Cultural Movement program.⁵⁵

2010

Anadolu Kültür (of which later is to emerge Hafıza Merkezi) starts Project “Towards A Blueprint for Reconciliation: Engaging the Civil Society and Capacity Building”, conducting activities between February – December.⁵⁶ Through this Project interviews with 28 civil society organizations in Istanbul and Diyarbakır whose work concerns the solution of the Kurdish situation were conducted, as well as the creation of the Hafıza Merkezi website on transitional justice and reconciliation.

- May - June, Anadolu Kültür organizes “Human Rights Documentaries Project” in Batman and Mardin (later on, also in 4 Western cities).⁵⁷

October – December, Anadolu Kültür organizes “Human Rights Documentaries Project” in Afyon, Bursa, Canakkale, Eskisehir, Izmir (earlier on, in the East.)⁵⁸

- December 4 – 5, Istanbul, Anadolu Kulutur organizes the workshop “Truth, Justice, Memory: Experiences, Testimonies, Quests”⁵⁹

2011

- Anadolu Kültür /Hafıza Merkezi conducted a study trip from 11-15 April 2011 in order to study initiatives of confronting the past. These experiences were shared in September in a report, as well as in a presentation/discussion at DEPO Istanbul.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Anadolu Kültür website, events. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.anadolukultur.org/en/areas-of-work/projects/other-events/114>.

⁵⁶ “Towards a blueprint for reconciliation: Engaging the civil society and capacity building – II”, Hafıza Merkezi website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.hakikatadalethafiza.org/calisma.aspx?PageId=180&LngId=5>.

⁵⁷ “Human rights documentaries”, Anadolu Kültür website. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.anadolukultur.org/en/areas-of-work/projects/human-rights-documentaries/119>.

⁵⁸ “Human rights documentaries”, Anadolu Kültür website.

⁵⁹ “Workshop on truth, justice, memory”, Hafıza Merkezi website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.hakikatadalethafiza.org/duyuru.aspx?NewsId=15&LngID=LngId=5>.

- March – December, Anadolu Kültür and Hafıza Merkezi Phase II of the “Towards A Blueprint for Reconciliation: Engaging the Civil Society and Capacity Building”⁶¹
- June 15 – September 15, Anadolu Kültür organizes artistic initiative “Remembering with Photography Workshops” (1) in Batman, Mardin, Sirnak, Van and Yuksekova)⁶²
- 23 – 24 July, Cezayir Meeting Venue in Istanbul. Together with the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, YAKAY-DER, Göç-Der, the Foundation for Social and Legal Studies (TOHAV), and the Legal Aid Office Against Custodial Sexual Harassment and Rape, Hafıza Merkezi organized a meeting called "Civil Society Initiative for Truth Commissions" (54 people from 26 Civil Society organizations participated)
- October 15 – 16, Istanbul, Anadolu Kültür/Hafıza Merkezi organized a meeting on “Truth Commissions: Turkey in Light of World Experience”, with Turkish, as well as US, South African, Peruvian and Serbian experts, and attended by CSO representatives, MPs, activists, academics, journalists and artists.⁶³
- 21 November – 24 May (2012), Anadolu Kültür: Bilingual Children’s Books Project.⁶⁴ (Related Panel at the Istanbul book fair “Bilingual Children’s Books and the Use of the Mother Tongue in Early Education” 20 November 2011, 30th International Istanbul Book Fair, Istanbul)⁶⁵
- December 17 – 18, Hafıza Merkezi organizes “Monuments, Museums and Memorial Initiatives Workshop”⁶⁶, first workshop on Memorialization.

2012

⁶⁰ “Towards a blueprint for reconciliation”, Hafıza Merkezi website.

⁶¹ “Towards a blueprint for reconciliation”, Hafıza Merkezi website.

⁶² “Events”, Anadolu Kültür website.

⁶³ “Civil society meets for truth commission”, Hafıza Merkezi website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.hakikatadaletahafiza.org/duyuru.aspx?NewsId=18&LngID=LngId=5>.

⁶⁴ “Bilingual childrens books”, Anadolu Kültür website. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.anadolukultur.org/en/areas-of-work/projects/bilingual-childrens-books/120>.

⁶⁵ “Events”, Anadolu Kültür website.

⁶⁶ “Anıtlar, müzeler ve anma girişimleri atölyesi”, Hafıza Merkezi website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://hafiza-merkezi.org/duyuru.aspx?NewsId=27&LngID=LngId=1>.

- May 4 – June 6 Anadolu Kültür organized “Remembering with Photography Exhibitions” (2) (Photo exhibition of photos taken by residents in South Eastern cities reflecting on their lives.)⁶⁷

2013

- February, Hafiza Merkezi organizes a workshop in Mardin in order to explore further memorialization and the ways in which it can contribute to human rights and democracy that came up during this first workshop, bringing together Turkish participants from various political, ethnic and religious groups.⁶⁸

- 25 October 2013 - 15 December, DEPO: Exhibition “Bir Daha Asla” (“Never Again: Apology and Coming to Terms with the Past”)⁶⁹

- October 25 and 26, the Columbia Global Centers office in Turkey hosts an academic conference in connection to the “Istanbul Workshop on Regional Network for Reconciliation and Historical Dialogue”, with members from Hafiza Merkezi (Truth, Memory and Justice Center) and the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), Columbia University.⁷⁰

Project descriptions:

1. Enforced Disappearances (work commenced with Anadolu Kültür in 2008): “The Unspoken Truth: Enforced Disappearances”⁷¹

- Koridox – a Swiss NGO – built the database on enforced disappearances for them.
- The disappeared are catalogued here, with information on them and their case.

⁶⁷ “Events”, Anadolu Kültür website.

⁶⁸ “Memorialize Turkey”, Hafiza Merkezi website. Accessed February 20, 2014, <http://www.hakikatadalethafiza.org/calisma.aspx?PageId=191&LngId=5>.

⁶⁹ “About”, DEPO website. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.depoistanbul.net/en/about.asp>.

⁷⁰ “Istanbul workshop on regional network for reconciliation and historical dialogue”, Columbia Global Centres – Turkey website. Accessed January 31, 2014, <http://globalcenters.columbia.edu/istanbul/content/istanbul-workshop-regional-network-reconciliation-and-historical-dialogue>.

⁷¹ “Towards a blueprint for reconciliation”, Hafiza Merkezi website.

- They also interviewed 150 of their relatives (for the last two years).
- There are videotapes and transcriptions on the website with photos.
- There is also a tab for suspects of the enforced disappearances.
- The number in the database of disappeared is compiled from lists from all the Human Rights organizations (for instance IHD) with an estimated 1350 in total. They are trying to verify each of these. They have verified close to 300 (meaning they have checked at least two sources connected to the disappearance).

2. “Towards A Blueprint for Reconciliation: Engaging the Civil Society and Capacity Building” (started within Anadolu Kültür in 2010, which entered its second stage between March 2011 – December 2011) ⁷²

Activities that took place under this project included:

- “Interviews with 28 civil society organizations in Istanbul and Diyarbakır whose work concerns the solution of the Kurdish situation. Among the organizations we spoke with, there were individuals working on gender, children, poverty, forced migration, health, disappearance, the construction of peace, human rights advocacy, and education.” ⁷³ (With the findings from these interviews, the “Civil Society Organizations Interview Report” was published.)
- A meeting, entitled "Truth, Justice, Memory: Experiences, Testimonies, Quests," was held in Istanbul on 4-5 December 2010, was then held with the civil society organizations surveyed in the above research and report.
- A Hafıza Merkezi website was created,^g in order to inform a wider audience on transitional justice, confronting the past, and different work of different national and international institutions on these issues.^h

From March 2011 the second phase included activities:

- In-depth workshops, translations for providing information on their website, public events to inform society on these issues, and a study visit to Argentina (11-15 April 2011), to learn more about memorialization work in practice, as well as the experiences

⁷² “Towards a blueprint for reconciliation”, Hafıza Merkezi website.

⁷³ “Towards a blueprint for reconciliation”, Hafıza Merkezi website.

the country had had with transitional justice, presented to a larger audience through the publishing of a report.

- Moreover, in September 2011, a presentation/discussion at DEPO Istanbul was held about their study trip to Argentina, in order to compare different experiences of dealing with post-conflict peacebuilding, and transitional justice issues for past atrocities during times of conflict.

- Several meetings, all held in 2011, were the following: Civil Society Initiative for Truth Commissions (Istanbul, 23-24 July), Truth Commissions: Turkey in Light of World Experiences (Istanbul, 15-16 October), Monuments, Museums, and Memorial Initiatives Workshop (Istanbul, 17-18 December)

3. The “Memorialize Turkey” project, was created as a collaboration between the World Policy Institute (New York), the Fetzer Institute (Kalamazoo, Michigan) and Hafiza Merkezi.ⁱ

- Workshops were organized, an initial one in Istanbul, in December 2011 and in Mardin in February, 2013. The second workshop brought together individuals from varying political, ethnic and religious groups engaged in memorialization work. Alongside these participants were experts on memorialization from Germany, Israel and Bosnia.⁷⁴

4. A “Regional Network on Historical Dialogue and Accountability in the MENA Region” is under development together with Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights. The network follows the model of the Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability (AHDA) network based at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR). “AHDA is a convening body which aims to facilitate exchange among scholars, advocates, and organizations dedicated to historical dialogue and accountability.”⁷⁵

- On October 25 and 26, 2013 the Columbia Global Centers office in Turkey (connected to Columbia University) hosts the “Istanbul Workshop on Regional Network for Reconciliation and Historical Dialogue”, with members from Hafiza Merkezi (Truth,

⁷⁴ “Memorialize Turkey”, Hafiza Merkezi website.

⁷⁵ “Memorialize Turkey”, Hafiza Merkezi website.

Memory and Justice Center) and the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), Columbia University. In attendance are participants from Cyprus, Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel, and scholars from Columbia University in order to agree on a framework for the established network.⁷⁶

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

Aims:⁷⁷

- Uncovering human rights violations
- Contributing to democratization
- Dissemination of innovative methods to the public
- Development of mechanisms for the structural transformation of the state.
- Raising awareness of actors in civil society
- Promotion of communication in civil society actors in the field of transitional justice

The philosophy of the organization behind the work they do, and connected to the ongoing peace process in Turkey, is the following:⁷⁸

- Promoting sustainable peace with justice.
- The documentation of Human rights violations in the conflict. (Account them)
- Their main aim is to establish a solid foundation of data now, in order for the past not to be forgotten, and to ensure that justice and reparations are made.
- Moreover, the organization sees itself as acting towards “Empowerment, Capacity Building and Cooperation” - “Attacking the grassroots”, Empowering families of enforced disappearances, and setting in force restorative processes (for a type of catharsis for the conflict society).

Aims for specific projects:

⁷⁶ “Istanbul workshop on regional”, Columbia Global Centres – Turkey website.

⁷⁷ “Enforced disappearances”, Hafiza Merkezi website.

⁷⁸ Interview, Representative Hafiza Merkezi, Istanbul, 24.02.2014

- For the “Enforced Disappearances Database” project - It’s aim with this project was to examine the practice of enforced disappearances, which started in Turkey in the early 1980s, turned into being used as a “war strategy” in the 1990s (continuing even today). Moreover, they wish to monitor legal proceedings, inform the public, and pressure relevant parties.

- For the “Towards A Blueprint for Reconciliation: Engaging the Civil Society and Capacity Building” Between February and December 2010, (and organized still within the structure of Anadolu Kültür) national and international civil society initiatives were compared to map future solutions and activities to contribute to the resolution of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey. “The aim of these projects was to gather experiences from post-conflict societies related to truth commissions, criminal justice, memorialization, and institutional reform and translate them to Turkish on the website to make them readily available to disseminate to the wider Turkish public.”⁷⁹

Moreover, networking meetings for civil society groups in the field aimed to facilitate and increase capacity for the active participation of civil society in the facilitation of peace and reconciliation, and to increase collaboration/networks. Another important point was the wish for increasing information on the topic of how civil actors around the world use various means and techniques of confronting the past by publishing and translating guide on transitional justice.

- The “Memorialize Turkey” project also took a comparative approach in order to seek for lessons learned in other conflict situations to apply these to Turkey, particularly in terms of looking at democratization, but also transitional justice and memorialization, and contested histories.⁸⁰

- For the “Regional Network on Historical Dialogue and Accountability in the MENA Region”, it’s aim is, as is pursued by the ADHA Network at Columbia, to bring together “academics, representatives of civil society organizations, journalists, educators and artists as well as policy makers who all pursue historical dialogue in

⁷⁹ “Towards a blueprint for reconciliation”, Hafiza Merkezi website.

⁸⁰ Memorialize Turkey”, Hafiza Merkezi website.

conflict, post-conflict and post-dictatorial societies.”⁸¹ Moreover, the aim of the network will be to examine and discuss the role of the history of conflict on society, and the importance of memory in this process.

4.) Did these projects aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?

- Reports written by Hafiza Merkezi have been presented to the CHP, AKP and to the (former) Minister of Justice, as well as to the Parliamentary Solution Commission. It should be stressed that this was at the initiative of Hafiza Merkezi itself, and not opposite.

- In general this organization does not work closely with the government, even though their reports, research, public events and projects could potentially be argued to stand to have a future influence to inform the ongoing peace process. The organization has not conducted lobbying activities for their work.

- In their view, it seems like civil society is working in parallel, and not with, the Track I political process. For instance, with their Judges/prosecutors project, they asked the former minister of justice for input, but received no response.

- The outcome has been no follow up, politically with this project. They consider their role as pushing for the peace process to continue and for participation in it. However they view their isn't much inclusion now, almost none.

- Lastly, in their work targeting the violations of previous governments (in the 90s) some human rights perpetrators (i.e. mayors of cities with many disappeared) are still in office, and as they sometimes publish names this can be a sensitive issue in terms of governmental relations, and also affects how closely they can collaborate with them.

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

⁸¹ “Regional network of alliance for historical dialogue and accountability (AHDA)”, Hafiza Merkezi website. Accessed June 29, 2014, <http://www.hakikatadalethafiza.org/calisma.aspx?PageId=192&LngId=5>.

- Production of a Documentary “Buka Barane” (Screening throughout the country)
 - Reports on Transitional Justice/Missing Persons, for instance the latest “Unspoken Truth: Enforced Disappearances” (2013)
 - Regional network on historical dialogue and accountability
 - Memorialize website, showing sites of memory throughout the country.^j
 - A standardized international database on enforced disappearances.^k
- They also worked with publishing parallel case studies to show examples of similar cases and how to deal with them. For instance, they translated ICTJ material on how to create a truth commission for the government, the process, and guides for civil society.

Future planned/ongoing projects:

- Starting a gender project – 99% of the disappeared are men, only women are left and their legal situation is precarious. They see it as important to look at women in the peace process, DDR, Guerillas for the future of the process.
- Together with the established reconciliation network: attempting to establish a fellowship program with Columbia University and Global Centers, as well as an exchange on projects and a joint website to update on conflict in the region.

Case 5) Wise Peoples Commission⁸²

1.) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

A Commission, composed of 63 members, within which there are seven regional sub-groups with nine members each, carried out its activities over a period of one month. On Thursday, April 4, 2013, its first meeting took place at the Turkish Prime Ministry’s Dolmabahçe Office.⁸³

A 63 Person Wise Peoples Commission, was set together, including well-known journalists, prominent leaders of nongovernmental organizations, celebrities (such as

⁸² Interviews with members of the Wise People’s Commission, Istanbul, December 4, 2013, and Istanbul, March 4, 2014.

⁸³ “Fuat Keyman has been appointed”, *Istanbul Policy Center*.

movie stars and popular singers), writers, journalists, lawyers, unionists and businessmen, several academic experts, and generally reputable individuals.⁸⁴ Among them were the following individuals "...Turkey's famous actress Hulya Kocyigit and actor Kadir Inanir. Orhan Gencebay, a legendary Turkish popular music singer who was identified as the founder of Arabesque music in Turkey in the 1970s... Leftist intellectuals Murat Belge and Baskin Oran ... A controversial name could be Hasan Karakaya, the editor-in-chief of the radical Islamist daily *Yeni Akit*, who until recently was showing peace proponents as targets.",⁸⁵ which produced a varied group. According to Women's Initiative for Peace (BİKG) however, women were only represented by 14%.⁸⁶ Diversity was important in the composition of the groups, for instance by religion, ethnicity and political affiliation, though some critics noted an over-representation of individuals "close" to the government.

Each province of Turkey was visited, with various different segments of society involved in outreach, including civil society, the media, students, local politicians and ordinary people. Especially the media was important in the advertisement and dissemination of the initiatives meetings and agenda. An initiative of the AKP, the opposition CHP was participating, while the MHP remained against but mostly kept its criticism low-key, and there appeared to be a relative consensus on the process.

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

The Wise Peoples Commission was announced established in April 2013. Initially convened for 1 month, the commission extended its work to take place over 2 months. The meetings took place in all 7 regions of Turkey.

⁸⁴ Cengiz Çandar, "Turkey's Kurdish initiative in a regional context", *Al-Monitor*, April 7, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/syria-iraq-aspects-turkish-kurdish-peace.html#ixzz2xoD12aXY>.

⁸⁵ Kadri Gürsel, "Erdoğan asks 'Wise people' to make case for peace", *Al-Monitor*, April 15, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/erdogan-wise-people-commission-peace-process.html>.

⁸⁶ "Women and Peace in the Middle East", panel discussion.

The group was equally divided between the seven geographic regions of Turkey, with only the Aegean having eight members. Each regional sub-delegation had a chairperson, a vice chair and secretary, and these were pre-selected. However the Prime Minister said this was just to save time, and could be changed if needed or wanted, as a fixed structures was no envisioned. According to participants in the exercise there was relatively little direction or involvement from the government side, giving each group responsibility, and not directly enforcing a standardized procedure for every group.¹ All the members were pre-selected, and personally invited by the Ministry of Interior (The members would usually receive a phone call from either Beşir Altalay, Deputy Prime Minister, responsible for overseeing the peace process, or Yalcılık Doğan, advisor to the Prime Minister). There were a few meetings that informally took place both within and between the wise people's group, but no coordination or much contact took place across or between the groups to compare experiences. The funding for the entire exercise was provided by the state.

During the 1st meeting with the PM on April 4th, 2013 in Dolmabaçe palace⁸⁷ (which lasted 5-6 hours) not much information was shared about the process itself, nor were the wise people given much direction as to how they should organize meetings, giving them relative room for autonomy. Each committee selected themselves who could participate in the meetings with locals. The meetings were described as taking place as “Toquevilleian town hall meetings” that took place including all sectors of society, including universities, political parties, and the business sector, to name a few.

The groups travelled all over their regions, with the main idea being to listen. The groups would note down complaints and demands from the people. Complaints and documents were received, but usually on a personal initiative, not by the selected groups present in the formal meetings. Villages were also visited, and the initiative was meant to reach as many people from as many sectors as possible. The meetings took place with around 60 – 80 people, sometimes more, with groups such as doctors chamber, architects, NGOs, the business sector, there was a slight bias towards religious organizations, and a presence of some activist Kurds and PKK affiliates. When the (East group) travelled to Diyarbakir they met with representatives from the BDP, CHP, as

⁸⁷ “Fuat Keyman has been appointed”, *Istanbul Policy Center*.

well as the AKP, and HAK-PAS (another smaller Kurdish Party), however the MHP didn't want to meet them. They attempted to reach all political parties. Sometimes there were clashes, and small protests at the commissions meetings. With people chanting slogans such as 'You are betraying nation' (in the case of the Aegean region for instance), however this was not widespread and did not pose a major threat.

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

-The aim of the exercise was to calm public fears and concerns related to the peace process, as well as to inform people as to the process and answer their questions.⁸⁸

- The government announced a plan for the “Wise person” commission which can be seen to be an adoption of, what senior PKK commander Karayılan had previously announced had been an idea of Öcalan to establish eight commissions to facilitate the peace process. “... a justice commission, a socio-economic commission, a National Pact [Misak-I Milli] commission, a women's freedom commission, an ecology commission, a civil society commission, a security commission and a truth commission”⁸⁹

- The prime minister was perceived to be confident in the developments of the peace process, so he adapted this idea making it his own. Making it larger, with a different function, the Wise Persons commission was established as a mechanism to penetrate and consult society, instead of confine the discussion only to the Track 1 negotiations.

- Interviewees stressed that this exercise was also one of bridge-building between the Western and Eastern populations, and of “meeting” the Kurdish populations for the wider Turkish public (which is less applicable for the Eastern group, of course).

- The same point goes to the aim of wanting to “take the steam off” the Turkish nationalists, who were greatly opposed to the process (concentrated in Western regions).

- The initiative was also meant to be demonstrated as a democratic exercise from the governments side, in including the wider population in the peace process. Also, it was

⁸⁸ Gursel, “Erdoğan asks ‘Wise people’ to make case for peace”.

⁸⁹ “The wise peoples commission subgroups begin nationwide rounds”, *Sabah*. n.d. Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://english.sabah.com.tr/National/2013/04/13/the-wise-persons-commission-subgroups-begin-nationwide-rounds>; “Turkish government ‘working on’ wise men peace commission”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 20, 2013. Accessed December 3, 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-government-working-on-wise-men-peace-commission.aspx?PageID=238&NID=43283&NewsCatID=338>.

seen as playing a role in creating deliberation on a societal level, in order to foster dialogue and increase the transparency of the mainly closed and high level process.

- It is argued that the move was part of the negotiation process between Öcalan and the State itself, as in order to reach a ceasefire and disarmament and democratic reform, gaining societal support to accept the process was an integral part of their deliberations.
- Ideally, it was also meant as a form of influencing the Track I talks too, and was interpreted that way by some participants and some sectors of the public consulted.
- Lastly, it was envisioned as a way to get society involved, foster societal engagement and build social capital, for societal conflict resolution on the larger and holistic scale.
- Critics of the process would say though that the wise people were put together to advocate the AKP's specific view on the peace process, and just that however.^m

4.) Did these projects aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?

There was a second meeting with all the regional groups in Dolmabahçe palace on May 10, 2013, where Prime Minister Erdogan, as well as the Deputy Prime Ministers Beşir Atalay and Bekir Bozdağ, Interior Minister İdris Naim Şahin and Culture and Tourism Minister Ömer Çelik also attended. The meeting lasts for nearly seven hours, with no official statement made afterward. Wise people did speak to the press later ensuring that they had informed the Prime Minister about people's view on the process.⁹⁰ In July 2013, a report was prepared and presented from each regional group to the Prime Minister at the end of the country-wide meetings. There were isolated protests taking place outside of Dolmabahçe during the final meeting, in July 2013, but these were not examples of noteworthy opposition.

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

The final meeting the report was given to the Prime Minister, but were not published (as they reports were seen to been commissioned by the government, they were seen as the owners of the reports), and were not disseminated or publicized widely. All the reports from the wise men were ultimately gathered into one website.ⁿ There were views that

⁹⁰ "Wise people brief PM about settlement", *Today's Zaman*.

also the reports produced were of varying quality, with for instance the South East and East group being increasingly published (on various websites), while some Western reports seemingly taking the exercise less seriously. There seemed to be a stalemate on the reports politically as to how to proceed. A book with photographs from the experience was also released (but it was more commemorative and was seen as not having much substance.)

As to the general societal view, despite some small scuffles along the way (which were blown out of proportion by the media according to participants) the process went smoothly, especially in the nationalist Aegean and Black Sea region. The process was seen as a good test of how ready people were for this process. By critics, the exercise was seen as politically a way of gaining time in the negotiation process ahead of the 2014 local and presidential elections. In the end though, the aims of the process were identified as being met in terms of: 1. Societal engagement 2. Talking/deliberation (groundbreaking and novel on the issue, in Turkey) 3. Support and trust in the process was perceived by some to have increased overall. As to political criticism to the initiative, the CHP and MHP were initially against the process, however, they did not stand in the way of it.⁹¹ As for the BDP they organized a meeting where all the regional groups attended.

In the aftermath of the initiative though the outcome of the process cannot be clearly seen, and it seems that after the exercise the government put the project on the back burner. The national increasingly polarized environment, with the Gezi protests, which ensued in the end phase of the commissions' work, and the government's overreaction to this, and the volatile regional and international scene, with the events of the Egyptian toppling of Morsi, for instance, overshadowed the government's focus on the commissions work. Although the government was seen to back-track after the above-mentioned scares, the exercise was seen to improve the social-psychological view of the conflict and the peace process on a whole. Although the planning and execution of the commission was ultimately considered ad-hoc and unstructured by some, it was clearly visible.

⁹¹ Kadri Gürsel, "Erdoğan asks 'Wise people' to make case for peace".

Summing up, during the April 4th meeting, Prime Minister Erdoğan shared the results of polls, showing that "...in Turkey's heavily Kurdish populated regions of the southeast and east, support for the process appears to be 87% and 71%, respectively. In the strong conservative and nationalist Central Anatolia region support is said to be 57%. From figures of Central Anatolia it is understood that the ruling party has captured some Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) strongholds and dented its popular base. Those who approve and do not approve are equal at 33% in the Black Sea region, while 47% is in favor and 41% is against the process in the Mediterranean region... the Marmara region supports the "peace process" with 59%. In the country's least conservative Aegean region in the west... 49% of the people appear to be against the "peace process." In the Aegean region, support for the process is a little more than 40%." ⁹² Polls demonstrated that after the commissions activity, increasing numbers of support emerged for the peace process, according to members of a group, as well.

With the virtual end of the constitution making process, there was a vacuum in the wise people commission as well. For instance, it was suggested that each region could have created a platform for the constitution, as a more durable mechanism. The work and outcomes of the commissions were deemed to have been a missed opportunity for the government in the advancement of the (now stalled) process. However, members also point out that the meetings grew large groups of people, and produced interest in the population for these issues. However, the fact that this is a long-term process, not fixable in 2 months work, was also acknowledged. The importance of a continued democratization process and of inclusion of rights and representation/inclusion for all minorities (and not just Kurds) was seemed to be a take-away from this exercise by the participants. Moreover, the deliberation process proved a concern and wish to discuss the constitution and democratization packages, in the wider social view of the process. The initiative also demonstrated that a new phase is taking place in Turkey, one of non-violence, which hopefully will remain. For instance, in the media, the members of the commission were counting the days during the commissions work of no casualties publicly.

⁹² Candar, "Turkey's Kurdish initiative in a regional context".

*Case 6) Columbia University: Roundtable on Kurdish Peace process*⁹³

1.) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

The Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights and Columbia's Global Center/Turkey convened a "Roundtable on the Kurdish Peace Process", in December 2013 in order to discuss experts, academics and civil society representatives views and ideas on the current process, with the aim on building on previous meetings and to potentially build future alliances.

Prior to this roundtable, an academic conference on "International Reconciliation Models" from various international examples (excluding Turkey) on truth and reconciliation, historical memory as a tool for conflict resolution, justice and amnesty options, and international experience with disarmament and demobilization took place. (All issues related to, and applicable to, the Kurdish case, though this case did not feature as one of study during the conference itself.) It was organized on May 8th 2010 at the Istanbul Policy Center, Istanbul. A consortium of international scholars and practitioners converged to discuss these topics. The exercise was also designed as a dialogue between Turks and international scholars on these subjects. It was co-sponsored by Sabanci University's Conflict Resolution Program and Bosphorous University Peace Center, as well as American University's Center for Global Peace, Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights, and the Netherlands Institute for Higher Education. The government of Norway funded it. According to the organizer, David Phillips, the exercise was deliberately illustrative and not prescriptive. A publication of a report outlining the cases and topics covered, in both Turkish and English was produced.⁹⁴ A continued dialogue was envisioned for the international panel and Turkish civil society, opinion leaders and policy-makers on these topics.

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

⁹³ Interview, participant at the roundtable, February 5, 2014.

⁹⁴ Ed. David Phillips, "International Reconciliation Models", Istanbul Policy Center - Sabanci University, June, 2010.

The Columbia Global Centers Office in Istanbul was the site for the “Roundtable on the Kurdish Peace Process”, on December 23rd, 2013, with the idea of the creation of a Civic Peace Platform in order to inform the ongoing peace process with ideas and knowledge from other Tracks. The workshop was convened on the initiative of David Phillips, Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights, in New York. Prof. At the workshop Turkish academic Dr. Doğu Ergil presented a Turkish perspective and David L. Phillips presented an American perspective on the Kurdish peace process, while Cengiz Candar served as interlocutor and moderator. Participants included scholars and other civil society representatives.⁹⁵

The workshop noted that: “Participants debated whether the government’s approach qualifies as a “peace process.” They pointed out that political dialogue should be dynamic, transparent, and inclusive. While commending work of the “wise men,” they noted the absence of broad participation by civil society. They discussed the need for a qualified interlocutor representing Kurdish interests, and considered Öcalan’s role.”⁹⁶

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

The workshop was established at a time in the peace process where the resurgence of violence is probable, due to the recent year’s slowdown in the process and lack of progress. As the conflict is seen by the participants to be linked to a broader process of political and cultural rights, unfortunately after the September 30th “Democracy package” unveiling there has been little activity in relation to democratization initiatives or other moves related to the peace process. Radical new shifts in thinking are needed.

However, hopeful signs can be seen as well, meaning instances to push the process forward should be pursued. For instance, the mutually kept ceasefire, KRG President Barzani’s visit to Diyarbakir in an attempt to marginalize extremist factions of the PKK and the PYD, and Öcalan’s siding with Erdoğan after the corruption scandal are all

⁹⁵ “Meeting Notes”, Memorandum from roundtable, January 1, 2014.

⁹⁶ “Meeting Notes”Memorandum from roundtable, January 1, 2014.

signs that point to a continuation of the process. Therefore a strategy for the increased involvement and consultation with academia and policy circles is needed in the future, for the continuation of the constitutional reform process and for democratization.

4.) Did these projects aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?

There was a perceived gap between the September 30th democracy package and the likelihood for increased political dialogue surrounding the peace process. The Wise people's commission was therefore thought as a measure to fill this gap by generating some activity around peace dialogue. After the workshop of December 23rd, a small group of the roundtable participants met again to discuss the establishment of a "Civic Peace Platform." According to the memorandum from the workshop: "The Civic Peace Platform was envisioned as a mechanism to engage civil society in the peace process. It is also intended to show motion during a time when, due to Turkey's election cycle, the Imrali peace process is slowing down and may stall. The project will engage a broad cross-section of civil society in an inclusive and transparent discussion about the terms of a peace agreement."⁹⁷

Thereafter, a group of 15 of the wise people went to Ankara and actually proposed to make a peace platform as was envisioned in the platform. TESEV was envisioned as an organization which could facilitate this process. However the idea did not receive much interest or feedback from governmental circles in Ankara.

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

There was no outcome, other than network building among the participants and airing of ideas, as the idea of a "civic peace platform" was not followed up on by track I.

⁹⁷ "Meeting Notes", Memorandum from roundtable, January 1, 2014.

*Case 7) Constitutional Reconciliation Commission (CRC) and Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı – TEPAV) Constitution Platform: Constitutional Citizen's Assembly Series*⁹⁸

1.) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization has planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

The Constitution Reconciliation Commission (CRC) of the Turkish parliament was formed to provide Turkey with a new constitution, a key aspect in the peace process. The commission was criticized for its lack of activity, but discussed issues pertinent to the peace process related to constitutional reform such as the legal foundations of “Turkishness” and citizenship in Turkey. Other central issues related to both processes include language and minority rights, as well as the percentage for the election threshold of parties. Moreover, constitutional reform is central to Turkey’s democratization process, seen as parallel and going hand in hand with the peace process. The need for providing a legal foundation for the peace process, which is as of today still missing, will be an important future task for any constitutional reform. The commission is composed of the four parties in the government the AKP, and the opposition CHP, MHP and BDP, with equal representation of three representatives from each party.⁹⁹ The commission was set up on the 19th of October, 2011 and operates in the parliament. The commission conducted regular weekly meetings in parliament.¹⁰⁰

TEPAV’s Constitution Platform, consisted of syndicates, professional organizations and civil society organizations, organized the Constitution Platform Citizens’ Assembly

⁹⁸ “Turkey Constitution Watch”, TESEV website. Accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.turkeyconstitutionwatch.org/>; Tulin Daloğlu, “Turkey’s Constitution Commission keeps working”, *Al-Monitor*, November 27, 2013. Accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/turkeys-constitution-commission-keeps-working.html>; “The results of the Constitution Citizens’ Assembly meetings to be submitted to Parliament”, TEPAV website. Accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/haberler/s/2890>.

⁹⁹ Daloğlu, “Turkey’s Constitution Commission keeps”.

¹⁰⁰ Daloğlu, “Turkey’s Constitution Commission keeps”.

meetings in Ankara, Konya, Edirne, Diyarbakir, Izmir, Ankara (with women only), Antalya, Samsun, Bursa, Trabzon, Gaziantep, Erzurum and Istanbul, working alongside the mandate of the CRC to assist them in their efforts towards constitutional reform.¹⁰¹ Members included individuals from: TOBB, TZOB, Türk-İş, Memur-Sen, Türkiye Kamu-Sen, TUSKON, TÜRMOB, TÜRİSAB, the Union of Turkish Public Notaries, TÜMSİAD, TÜRİKONFED, TESK, Hak-İş, the Union of Turkish Bar Associations, MÜSİAD, TOFED, Association of the Retired, Youth for Habitat, the Turkish Federation of the Disabled, and TİSK.

13 Citizens' Assembly meetings were held throughout the country in order to capitalize on the work already done by the CRC in parliament. Citizens were invited to attend these messages via text message. The meetings took place with group of 10, with individuals that had never met before, and without the presence of a facilitator. In these groups, participants discussed issues pertinent to the constitutional reform, and were asked around 50 questions, designed to foster discussion as well as a survey.¹⁰²

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

The CRC commission in the parliament began its' activity in October and November 2011, but did not actually begin work until May 2012. Being mandated to conclude its' work by the end of 2012, it had only completed 103 articles by this date, with agreement on 31. Speaker of parliament Cemil Çiçek (AKP) asked for an extension to the commissions work, which was granted until April 2013.

The Constitution Platform of TEPAV came together in 2007, and Citizens' Assembly meetings were carried out in Ankara, Konya, Edirne, Diyarbakir, Izmir, Ankara (with women only), Antalya, Samsun, Bursa, Trabzon, Gaziantep, Erzurum and Istanbul with a total participation of 6,500 people.¹⁰³

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

¹⁰¹ "The results of the Constitution Citizens' Assembly", TEPAV website.

¹⁰² "The results of the Constitution Citizens' Assembly", TEPAV website.

¹⁰³ "The results of the Constitution Citizens' Assembly", TEPAV website.

The aim of the CRC parliament commission was to come up with a draft constitution for parliament, which needed to be supported by 367 of the total 550 members, while 330 in support would bring the document to referendum. However, after commissions work lagging there was also the possibility for the AKP to individually write a draft.¹⁰⁴

The commission was envisioned as a central part of Turkey's democratization process due to the current one being drafted under the military regime of the 1980 military coup in Turkey, endorsed by a referendum in 1982. Although having 30 amendments to it, the need for a more civilian and representative constitution was deemed necessary.¹⁰⁵ Aside from this however, each party has been viewed to be pushing for the demands of their particular party and constituencies: while the pro-Kurdish BDP party has pushed for issues relating to the peace process, the CHP worked, among other things, to free their jailed deputies (of which there also are from the BDP and MHP parties), while the MHP has fought greater changes to the 1980s military constitution.¹⁰⁶ The wish of the AKP, and specifically the Prime Minister, to change the structure of government to a presidential system (to enable his potential election as President), by changing constitutional amendments was greatly contested.¹⁰⁷

4.) Did these projects aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?

Related to the Kurdish issue, the AKP party was also attempting to make changes to state institutions such as the judiciary and army in order to facilitate the peace process. The constitutional amendments defining citizenship and nationhood are also seen as

¹⁰⁴ "Amending Turkish constitution", Al-Jazeera Center for Studies.

¹⁰⁵ Kadri Gürsel, "In Turkey, AKP proposes 'elected sultan regime'", *Al-Monitor*, February 12, 2013. Accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/02/akp-erdogan-constitution-referendum-authoritarian.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Yavuz Baydar, "Turkey's draft constitution appears dead", *Al-Monitor*, November 20, 2013. Accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/turkey-constitution-parliament-polarization-democratization.html>.

¹⁰⁷ "Amending Turkish constitution", Al-Jazeera Center for Studies.

contentious, yet central, issues to solving, and moving forward, the Kurdish peace process. Moreover, as a central piece to the AKP governments democratization efforts, which parallel and compliment the peace process, the commission plays a big role.

The Constitution Platform submitted its report to Parliament Speaker Cemil Çiçek, to be handed over to the Parliamentary Constitution Commission with a ceremony held on the TOBB premises on Wednesday, 9 May 2012.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, TOBB had earlier met with Minister of the Interior Beşir Atalay on August 12th, 2009 to talk about the Kurdish opening, and the governments' views on it.¹⁰⁹

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

On November 18th, 2013, the speaker of the parliament and the CRC chairman, Cemil Çiçek, one of the deputy-chairmen from the AKP, publicly announced his will to resign due to the lack of progress made by the commission. However the commissions rules state that only the four participating parties are able to terminate the commissions work. The commission has (from the time of writing) been severely delayed in their work due to a lack of consensus between the parties, with a mandate originally stipulated for 12 months, the work has taken more than the double of this, receiving harsh criticism from the Prime minister. The last six months of 2013 were especially charged in stalemate between the parties. Specifically, the opposition parties were opposed to the amendment bid by PM Erdoğan and his party to change the parliamentary system in Turkey into a presidential one.¹¹⁰

The slow progress of the commission is seen to be produced by the lack of will, especially by opposition parties CHP and MHP to reform the constitution, as well as the disagreement and views over what changes to make, also by the AKP and BDP. While the commission has agreed on a number of articles, (60 articles, as of November,

¹⁰⁸ "The results of the Constitution Citizens' Assembly", TEPAV website.

¹⁰⁹ "Minister Atalay speaking to political parties about initiative", Bianet, August 11, 2009. Accessed April 15, 2014, <http://www.bianet.org/english/minorities/116395-minister-atalay-speaking-to-political-parties-about-initiative>.

¹¹⁰ Daloğlu, "Turkey's Constitution Commission keeps".

2013)¹¹¹ the central and most contentious articles to the constitution remain unresolved; the nationalistic preamble to the constitution defining “Turkishness” and citizenship, on education in mother tongue and the decentralization of power – all central issues to the ongoing peace process.¹¹² With the local elections of 2014 the commissions work was stalled, with the need for renewed bargaining with the opposition or the AKP to present a draft to move the process forward. A report based on the meetings and voting procedures (excluding the Istanbul meeting) was compiled from the Citizen’s assembly meetings and delivered to parliament to be reviewed by the constitutional commission.

Case 8) Human Rights Foundation - İnsan Hakları Derneği (IHD):

The Saturday Mothers - Cumartesi Anneleri - Dayîkên Şemiyê (2009 – 2014)

1.) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

Beginning on May 27th 1995, the “Saturday mothers” have gathered on Istiklal Street in central Istanbul (in front of the Galatasaray high school, a common cite for protest in Istanbul’s central Taksim district) to protest the disappearances of their relatives. The Saturday mothers were forced to end their protests in 1998 due to governmental pressure, however they re-commenced their activity in January of 2009.¹¹³ Seen as a landmark event that inspired these protests was the disappearance and death of famous poet and political figure Sabahattin Ali (62 years ago). However the movement only started in 1995, with mothers and relatives began meeting in front of Galatasaray high school in Istanbul with red carnations and posters with the pictures names and dates of birth and disappearance of their loved ones. Mostly the group will sit in silence, where

¹¹¹ “60-article amendement on constitution shelved”, *Today’s Zaman*, November 7, 2013. Accessed June 29, 2014, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-330804-60-article-amendment-on-constitution-shelved.html>.

¹¹² Baydar, “Turkey’s draft constitution appears dead”.

¹¹³ Nilden Postalci, “Saturday Motehrs of Turkey: 17 years of Silent Protest”, *Reflections Turkey*, n.d. Accessed March 22, 2014, <http://www.reflectionsturkey.com/?p=990&sthash.0haKZmOf.dpuf>.

the stories of a couple of the stories of some disappeared sons or daughters or relatives, mostly during the military coup of the 1980's, but also later on, are told by their relatives.¹¹⁴

As disappearances took place in Istanbul but also other cities, such as Diyarbakir and Sirnak, the Saturday mothers have also been meeting for years in other locations throughout the country, in their local communities, and always in public spaces where their demands can be clearly visible and heard. The group received inspiration from the Madres de Plaza de Mayo Association which held walking protests once a week in front of the Presidential palace in Buenos Aires Argentina (until 2006) to protest the disappearances of their children and relatives during Argentina's military dictatorship.¹¹⁵

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

The relatives of the disappeared had, as of December 2012, met for 404 weeks in Istanbul's Galatasaray Square, for 202 weeks in front of Diyarbakir's Right to Life Monument, on Gülistan Boulevard in Batman for nearly 200 weeks, and in Cizre, in front of the Cizre High School for exactly 100 weeks, since 2009.¹¹⁶

In the case of the more recent initiative in Cizre, a South-Eastern town, they commenced their activity after the opening of the Temizöz and others case in Diyarbakir, a legal proceeding to indict individuals (i.e. Cemal Temizöz and Kamil Atağ) responsible for murders and missing persons. A group of relatives and community members began to commute between Cizre and Diyarbakir to attend the court proceedings which cemented a regular group from that community. Hence the first sit-ins from Cizre were actually in front of the courthouse in Diyarbakir. Following the example of similar "sit-in" protests in Diyarbakir and Istanbul a regular protest movement was established also in Cizre. After a meeting in January 2011 with members

¹¹⁴ Özlem Kaya, "The Saturday Mothers of Cizre in their 100th Week", *Hafıza Merkezi website*, December 24, 2012. Accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.hakikatadalethafiza.org/duyuru.aspx?NewsId=150&LngId=1>.

¹¹⁵ Postalci, "Saturday Mothers of Turkey: 17 years of Silent Protest".

¹¹⁶ Kaya, "The Saturday Mothers of Cizre in their 100th Week".

of the Progressive Lawyers Association (*Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği*, or *ÇHD*), human rights advocates, and family members, the name of Saturday Mothers was also adopted by the group, agreeing to meet on Saturdays. The first meeting was held on 29 January at a park in Cizre Dörtüol. The movement is made up primarily of relatives of the disappeared, with a majority of women being represented as many of the men have been implicated in the ongoing KCK trials.¹¹⁷

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

The Saturday Mothers movement main aims are establishing collective memory and memorialization; seeking justice for their relatives and children, with the identification of perpetrators; obtaining information and knowledge as to where to find the bodies; and the wish to protest state terror and receive acknowledgement of their suffering.¹¹⁸ It is reported that during meetings however, the mothers of missing persons stress that they “sought no revenge; only justice”.¹¹⁹ More recently, the mothers have included the disappearances linked to the Ergenekon case, as well as the need for the systematic identification and mapping of actual and potential mass graves of missing persons. Moreover, the relatives want for the government to open the relevant police files from the disappearance periods, in order for them to receive information as if to investigations to their respective cases are ongoing or not.¹²⁰ Lastly, the Saturday Mothers movement asks for acknowledgement and information as to what actually happened in the years their relatives were disappeared, as for instance, an illegal intelligence unit called JİTEM, (whose existence has not been accepted by the Turkish Military as of today) is blamed for many of these disappearances, of which The Human Rights Association of Turkey (İHD) claims the victims number more than 17.500.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Kaya, “The Saturday Mothers of Cizre in their 100th Week”.

¹¹⁸ “Saturday Mothers”, Memorialize Turkey/Hafıza Merkezi website. Accessed February 22, 2014. <http://www.memorializeturkey.com/memorial/saturday-mothers/>.

¹¹⁹ Kaya, “The Saturday Mothers of Cizre in their 100th Week”.

¹²⁰ Postalci, “Saturday Mothers of Turkey: 17 years of Silent Protest”.

¹²¹ Kaya, “The Saturday Mothers of Cizre in their 100th Week”.

4.) Did these projects aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?

In February 2011 Prime Minister Erdoğan met with representatives of the Saturday Mothers for the first time, listening to their demands for justice for their relatives.¹²² Moreover, in April 2011 The Parliamentary Human Rights Commission held a meeting with representatives of the Saturday Mothers¹²³ The movement has several demands (see previous point) which they want the government to comply with and which should, in their view, form part of the current peace process, and which they try to communicate through their protests and other public actions.

For the newer Cizre gatherings, local politicians and party members, including BDP members of the Şırnak Municipal Council, the directors of the BDP, mayors, Association of Help with Families of Missing Persons (MEYA-DER), and the directors and members of ÇHD have supported the protests, after 99 weeks of protest the Şırnak Bar Association also expressed support for the initiative.¹²⁴

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

Though the meeting with Prime Minister Erdoğan demonstrated (for the first time) for the mothers an engagement of the governing AKP to listen to their demands, they experienced that there was not much progress or outcome from their meeting, leaving the meeting to a symbolic gesture.¹²⁵

Moreover, with reactions outside the country, after 1995, Amnesty International published international reports about the Saturday Mothers in Turkey, gaining them

¹²² “Saturday Mothers”, Memorialize Turkey/Hafıza Merkezi website.

¹²³ “Saturday Mothers”, Memorialize Turkey/Hafıza Merkezi website.

¹²⁴ Kaya, “The Saturday Mothers of Cizre in their 100th Week”.

¹²⁵ “Saturday Mothers”, Memorialize Turkey/Hafıza Merkezi website.

international recognition with other members of anti-disappearance movements including Argentinean Madres de la Plaza Mayo, The Bosnian Mothers of Sebrénica and the Committee of Families of the Disappeared in Lebanon paying them visits.¹²⁶

Case 9) Social Mobilization/Protest of the Kurdish Political and Social Movement

9.a) Newroz Celebrations (2008 - 2014)

1.) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

Only in 1995 did Newroz celebrations become legal, and the feast has now been adopted officially, (some fear in an attempt to “co-opt” this traditionally Kurdish holiday).¹²⁷ Especially in the 90’s the event was marked by violence and clashes between the Kurdish protesters and Security forces, though violence, on a lesser scale, and clashes still have occurred in later celebrations into the 2000’s. In 1992, about 50 people were killed by the security forces in clashes in various South-Eastern cities.¹²⁸

“Newroz, celebrated on 21 March is the most important date in the secular Kurdish calendar. The “New Day” starts the new year and the beginning of spring, but it is also the day Kurds celebrate the mythological liberation from tyranny when the blacksmith Kawa saved his people from the tyrant Dehak. This is why it has always had political connotations for the Kurdish national movement and explains why all celebrations were banned after the 1980 military coup right up until the early 1990s, when the Newroz celebrations became more and more politicized.”¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Kaya, “The Saturday Mothers of Cizre in their 100th Week”.

¹²⁷ “The stupidity of banning Newroz”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

¹²⁸ “Kurds killed in Turkey protests”, *Infowars.com*, March 24, 2008. Accessed April 14, 2014, <http://www.infowars.com/kurds-killed-in-turkey-protests/>.

¹²⁹ Güzeldere, “Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011”.

Traditionally, participants in the Newroz celebrations dress in traditional dress, dance and sing and play Kurdish music, as a clear underlining of the importance of Kurdish identity markers, which had in previous years been banned. For instance, flags and items holding the colors of red, green and yellow are worn as they are considered the colors of the Kurdish “flag”. Moreover, political propaganda for the BDP (and predecessor Kurdish parties) as well as for the PKK and affiliated organizations, and portraits of Öcalan are present. A “Newroz” bonfire is generally lit with young men jumping over it, as part of the ritual of celebrations.

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

The largest celebration is held each year in Diyarbakir, the unofficial “capital” of the Kurdish South-Eastern region (referred to as “Amed” by many Kurds),¹³⁰ and also the biggest city. The massive celebrations/protests are there held in “Newroz Park”, a large lot at the outskirts of the city, usually taking place on the 21st of March each year.¹³¹ The second largest Newroz gathering usually takes place in Istanbul each year.

2008

Influenced by the intensification in the armed conflict between the Turkish army and the PKK, where cross-border raids were conducted in Northern Iraq in February of 2008.¹³² Following this polarized environment, in March of the same year, the General Penal Board of the Court of Cassation outlined that individuals joining demonstrations where the PKK has called for public participation should be charged with “membership” in the PKK,¹³³ severely undermining attempts at celebrating Newroz of that year. Reportedly, hundreds of Kurdish protesters clashed violently with police for four days in various South-Eastern cities, where at least two people (one was shot in Yüksekova, and another in Van) and dozens were injured.¹³⁴ There was a ban by the authorities to

¹³⁰ “Newroz 2008 in northern Kurdistan and Turkey”, *KurdMedia*, March 22, 2008. Accessed April 14, 2014, <http://kurdmedia.com/article.aspx?id=14678>.

¹³¹ Güzeldere, “Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011”.

¹³² “Kurds killed in Turkey protests”, *Infowars.com*.

¹³³ “Turkey: Events of 2009”, *Human Rights Watch: World Report 2010*.

continue Newroz celebrations further then on the one designated day, Friday, whereas protestors wanted to continue their activity over the weekend. The demonstrations had been called by the then Pro-Kurdish party, the Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP), with large celebrations going against the ban and gathering in Western cities like Izmir and Istanbul (with large migrant populations of Kurds) on Sunday as well.

2009

The pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) organize Newroz throughout Turkey, attendees at the celebration in Diyarbakir were estimated to have reached 75,000 by the governor of Diyarbakir's office, and 500,000 by the DTP.¹³⁵ Prior to the local elections on March 29th the PKK vows to keep guerilla activity to minimum. The ruling AKP party remains a majority, though decline considerably in comparison with the 2007 elections.¹³⁶

2010

As the DTP is banned the previous year, this marks the first year that Newroz is organized by the BDP party, though continuity in members is clearly maintained. The public events around the country celebrating the Newroz holidays (Kurdish New Year) of this year are generally peaceful, in comparison to earlier years.¹³⁷ This year's Newroz takes place in the backdrop of the (until then still) publicly unknown Oslo talks.

2011

The Newroz celebrations of this year are moved to March 20th, as March 21st falls on a Monday in order to attract more people; the decision is announced on short notice by

¹³⁴ "Kurds killed in Turkey protests", *Infowars.com*.

¹³⁵ "Newroz in Turkey: Calls for solution to Kurdish question", *Bianet*, March 23, 2009. Accessed May 25, 2014, <http://www.bianet.org/english/minorities/113305-newroz-in-turkey-calls-for-a-solution-to-kurdish-question>.

¹³⁶ Eser Sekercioğlu, "Turkey's March 2009 elections: Loss without defeat, gain without victory", The Gloria Center, June 2, 2009. Accessed February 19, 2014, <http://www.gloria-center.org/2009/06/sekercioğlu-2009-06-02/>.

¹³⁷ "2010 Human Rights Report: Turkey", *U.S. Department of State*.

the organization committee.¹³⁸ BDP politicians deliver speeches in Kurdish and Turkish, which would have been reason enough for arrest only a few years before.¹³⁹ An estimated 500,000 crowd of people is estimated to have gathered in Diyarbakir alone. Diyarbakir Mayor Baydemir, BDP co-chairperson Kisanak and former party leader Ahmet Türk repeat the BDP's (echoing the Kurdish movement and PKK's demands) for mother-tongue education, the release of political prisoners, the lowering of the 10 percent threshold to enter parliament, and for decentralization.¹⁴⁰ The PKK has called for an ending of their unilateral ceasefire on March 1st of that year, but also vow to keep their ceasefire until after the June elections of that year, in an increasingly tense environment.¹⁴¹ Widespread violence and military escalation ensues after the elections.

Following the Newroz celebrations, a spontaneous march with fewer participants is initiated to a central park in Diyarbakir where the BDP had set up a "Tent for a Democratic Solution". In the park some of the protestors throw stones and are tear gassed by the police in clashes surrounding this unplanned march.¹⁴² Three days later the BDP leaders announce launching of a new civil disobedience campaign dubbed the "peace tents" with in theory peaceful actions such as sit-ins in major squares in cities throughout South-Eastern and Western Turkey, in order to raise their awareness and voice demands for the June elections. Their demands include: the freedom of Öcalan, increased language rights, the lowering of the political party threshold to be represented in parliament, and democratic autonomy in the South-Eastern region of Turkey.¹⁴³

2012

¹³⁸ Güzeldere, "Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011".

¹³⁹ Güzeldere, "Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011".

¹⁴⁰ Güzeldere, "Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011".

¹⁴¹ Güzeldere, "Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011".

¹⁴² Güzeldere, "Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011".

¹⁴³ Güzeldere, "Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011".

The year's Newroz celebrations in March are marked with clashes between demonstrators and police,¹⁴⁴ with many injured and hundreds arrested, with one protester being killed, namely the head of the Istanbul branch office of the BDP, Hacı Zengin.¹⁴⁵ There was political disagreement as the BDP wants to organize the event on the 18th of March, a Sunday, while the government wants the event to take place on the usual day, the 21st, leading to an all out ban of the celebration that year, though crowds gathered regardless.¹⁴⁶ This has been a symbolic and telling struggle in various of the previous years between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish State, with the former attempting to show its strength and the latter attempting to control it.

2013

March 2013 brings perceived steps forward endorsing the peace process, with a ceasefire being called in mid-March by Öcalan during the Newroz celebrations, which are conducted more peacefully then previously with the anticipation of his announcement.¹⁴⁷ According to one estimate hundreds of thousands of people gather in Istanbul alone, in celebrations organized by the BDP and People's Democratic Congress (HDK), where BDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş and Istanbul deputy Sırrı Süreyya Önder spoke.¹⁴⁸ By contrast, in Mersin, a South-Eastern city, there was a large presence of police forces and equipment, with ten thousand people participating, including BDP deputy Ertuğrul Kürkçü, BDP Akdeniz Mayor Fazıl Türk and a number of BDP officials and Peace Mothers.¹⁴⁹ Around ten thousand people gather in İzmir, while novel celebrations take place in Adana as well.¹⁵⁰ Hundreds of thousands are reported to

¹⁴⁴ “‘I haven’t seen such violence since Vietnam protests”, *Ekurd*.

¹⁴⁵ “Turkish police clash with Kurdish protesters”, *Al-Jazeera*.

¹⁴⁶ “The stupidity of banning Newroz”, *Hürriyet Daily News*.

¹⁴⁷ Krajewski, “Peace comes”.

¹⁴⁸ “Hundreds of thousands celebrate Kurdish new year Newroz across Turkey”, *E-Kurd.net*, March 17, 2013. Accessed April 16, 2014, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/42013/3/turkey4585.htm>.

¹⁴⁹ “Hundreds of thousands celebrate Kurdish new year Newroz”, *E-Kurd.net*.

gather in Van, people arriving from the surrounding areas such as Bitlis, Muş, Ağrı, Kars, Ardahan, Erzurum, Iğdır and Hakkari. Moreover, thousands gather in Thousands in Bingöl, Mardin, Dersim and Ceylanpınar.¹⁵¹

2014

On March 21st, Newroz celebrations take place, with tensions ahead over the possible renewal of violence after the local elections at the end of March, with the PKK announcement of keeping the ceasefire till at least the March 30 local elections. Newroz takes place with relative calm, with a new letter from Öcalan urging the formalization of the ongoing peace talks. Following the elections violence does not resume however.

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

As explained above in the “Peace tent” case, Newroz is Kurdish New year and a symbolic event where according to legend Kurds gained their freedom from a despotic King. Newroz has coincided with several Kurdish rebellions and uprising throughout history.

4.) Did these projects aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts heard at the higher level?

As seen by Öcalan’s choice in the past for announcing ceasefires, and the most recent historic ceasefire called on Newroz 2013 to mark the start of the current peace process, Newroz holds a symbolic importance in the struggle for justice but also for peace for the Kurdish Nationalist movement, but also for Kurds in general. It is an important event also for the Kurdish political movement (primarily represented by the BDP, but as of more recently, also the HDP) as a show of strength, and to rally around their demands in their political agenda as well as in the peace process. Their main demands have not changed much since 2008 being the right to mother tongue education and the strengthening of cultural identity rights (of which Newroz is an important event to demonstrate these), increased rights and release for political prisoners and for Öcalan specifically, as well as the increase of democratization in Turkey, the lowering of the

¹⁵⁰ “Hundreds of thousands celebrate Kurdish new year Newroz”, *E-Kurd.net*.

¹⁵¹ “Hundreds of thousands celebrate Kurdish new year Newroz”, *E-Kurd.net*.

election threshold for parties to be represented in parliament (i.e. through constitutional reform) and as of more recently, the need for a legal basis to the peace process. Although championed in other ways and through other events, these demands are expressly made clear and heard on Newroz, and have to a certain extent been registered and follow up on by the government over the years, the culmination of which is being discussed now in the peace process, of which results will have to be seen.

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

Examples of resulting campaigns (usually called by the BDP and the wider Kurdish Nationalist movement) include:

- 2011 – The “Peace Tent” Civil Disobedience campaign leading up the June elections.-
- From March to June, 2013 the “Government Take a Step” (Hükümet Adım) civil disobedience campaign launched by the BDP to keep pressure towards this end.¹⁵²
- During Newroz 2013, the calling of the ceasefire by Öcalan with the commencement of a new (and the current) peace process with the AKP to resolve the Kurdish conflict.
- Vocalization of demands from the Kurdish nationalist and political, as well as civil society and grassroots (i.e. including victims organizations) movement towards peace, through speeches, demonstrations, cultural and traditional rites and official declarations.

9.b) “Peace Tent/Democratic Solution” Civil Disobedience Campaign¹⁵³

1.) Could you give examples of a few projects/events that your organization/initiative planned to influence an increased understanding of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey? (i.e. conferences, protests, workshops, other?)

During the “Kurdish Opening” of the AKP, and in the run-up to the 2011 Elections, a civil disobedience campaign was called by the BDP and affiliated grassroots and Kurdish nationalist movement organizations to put pressure on the government to

¹⁵² Nar photo collective, Facebook photo album: “March ‘Hükümet adım at/Government take a step’”

¹⁵³ Participant observation and informal interviews at Aksaray peace tent, Istanbul, June 2011.

provide advances in solving the conflict through providing increased political and cultural rights, and democratization reforms. Since March 2011 the conflict re-intensified as military operations were re-commenced in the South-East, and the PKK broke its almost one-year-long unilateral ceasefire, escalating in the summer.^o

2.) When and where did these take place, and how long did they last?

In response to this and the lack of addressing of the “Kurdish Question” of the government,^p and coinciding with that year's Newroz celebrations, the so called “Democratic Solution” or “Peace Tent” civil disobedience campaign was launched on March 18th, 2011 in Diyarbakir. This campaign took place throughout Turkey, both in the West, notably in Istanbul, and in the East, in large cities such as Diyarbakir and Batman, as well as smaller cities, and internationally, in several European capitals. This process lasted up until the June 12th, 2011 with the parliamentary elections in Turkey, in hope of getting the political demands of Kurds heard in the political arena.

This initiative was organized as a joint effort of the Peace Mothers, the pro-Kurdish, Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) Union of communities in Kurdistan (KCK) and the Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) the village communes, Neighborhood Councils, City Council, mayors, municipal councils, as well as Kurdish Civil Society Organizations, and ordinary people. Together they were announcing the “four demands” outlined by the BDP in their election campaign: Education in the Kurdish language and freedom to use it in political arena; the end of military operations in the South-East; the release of all political prisoners, including the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and the removal of the 10 % electoral threshold for parties to get elected into parliament (which adversely affects the BDP, and previous Kurdish parties). In addition to this was the demand that a new constitution including these demands be prepared after the elections.

A short timeline of (representative) events taking place during the initiative include:¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ “Newroz 2011: Democratic Peace Tents and Kurds”, *KNK*, (*This website and report was last accessed in June 2011, but has in 2014 been banned in Turkey*) http://www.kongrakurdistan.net/Nu/PDF/KNK_Newroz%20March2011en.pdf?phpMyAdmin=pVCkhj1DhYYwS1Yw3rs%2Cv%2CyaAq5.

- Monday, April 18th,: 12 Independent (pro-Kurdish and Kurdish, 7 were BDP backed) candidates were barred from participating in the June 12th Elections in Turkey due to previous “criminal convictions”, by the YSK (Supreme Election Board).
- Thursday, April 21st: 7 independent candidates were reinstated to run after providing missing documentation.
- 25 April, in Hakkari police detained 35 people, including an acting mayor, as part of an investigation into a group prosecutors accuse of ties to the PKK terrorists.
- 152 suspects, including 12 mayors of several Southeast Anatolian cities, (all BDP), as well as many other local politicians are on trial accused of membership in the Kurdish Communities Union, or KCK (an alleged urban branch of PKK) Hundreds more are under arrest in connection with the investigation. (These trials are ongoing.)
- March 23rd – A 20, 000 person sit-in strike in Batman.
- March 23rd – Raiding and removal of Peace Tent in Batman; Molotov cocktails and terrorist documents.
- March 21st –Sabahat Tuncel slaps a policemen during Newroz celebration in Silopi¹⁵⁵ (this incident sparks student clashes in Istanbul).
- April 8th – Police intervene when a Peace tent is attempted pitched in a square in Diyarbakir.
- Tuesday, April 19th - Protest march from Taksim Square to Aksaray – violent clashes and use of Molotov cocktails by demonstrators, and tear gas by the police.

3.) What was the aim behind these projects/events? What did you want to achieve?

The spring festivities of Newroz, celebrated on March 21st have in Kurdish history in Turkey, and elsewhere (i.e. Iran), often marked a joyous occasion of celebrating the end of winter with music, dancing and the traditional jumping over bonfires. However, as an indisputable expression of Kurdish cultural identity, it has also developed into a form of resistance, and often coincided with the launching of civil disobedience campaigns, protests, marches as well as violent clashes against the Turkish state.^q

According to a BDP politician present at the gathering in the June 2011 in Aksaray square in Istanbul: “(The tents) are organized by the BDP, but they are not for the elections. They are to make a stance, demanding rights, and a change.” The Diaspora

¹⁵⁵ Güzeldere, “Kurdish Politics and Newroz 2011”.

parliament in Europe, the Kurdistan National Congress's report on the campaign outlines that: "The tents are an intervention to put a democratic solution of the Kurdish question on the agenda as well as acting as platforms for debate and discussion."¹⁵⁶

The Diaspora parliament in Europe, the Kurdistan National Congress's report on the campaign outlines that: "The tents are an intervention to put a democratic solution of the Kurdish question on the agenda as well as acting as platforms for debate and discussion."¹

4.) Did these projects aim to affect the current peace process set in place by the government? Were your efforts as civil society heard at the higher level?

Though the action didn't have direct transfer to the government, its widespread and public nature makes it classify as a clear display of discontent towards the governments "Kurdish opening" policy, demonstrating the stance that not enough is being done, and an impatience to gain rights. Moreover, the influence that it had as part of the election campaign of the BDP means that the actions on the ground, and locally, could impact the higher levels through the Members of Parliament that were elected in June 2011.

5.) What were the results of these efforts/projects? (i.e. publications, change in public opinion, changes in society/communities etc.)

Clearly, this civil disobedience campaign, showed an increased urgency and will from Kurdish political organizations and civil society to impose their demands in the political (as opposed to the armed) arena and to influence the nascent democratization attempts and a future peace process. Showing an interesting example of the combination of social, political, but also cultural and identity-based demands and struggles in one campaign. The fact that these were too take place (in principal) in a peaceful manner, and nationwide show a widespread ability to of the Kurdish nationalist and political movement to make grievances and demands heard vocally and publicly, as just one example of various similar campaigns organized by these forces through the years.

¹⁵⁶ p. 3, "Newroz 2011: Democratic Peace Tents and Kurds", *KNK*.

As is shown in the above overview, the history of the Track I process (outlined in Chapter 4) can both differ and compliment the activities of the lower tracks II, III and 1.5. Moreover, it is clear that these different activities of participation in the ongoing peace process (whether public or not), at a societal level, can take many different shapes and sizes, with endless creative character. Especially in circumstances where societal mobilization is constricted, the various forms of civil society and other sectors organization must seek multiple channels to make their voices heard, and more so in instances of a lack of more formal channels of Track I consultation with other tracks. An analysis of the selected case studies of actors of participation will now follow.

Presenting and Analyzing the Data

In order to evaluate and make sense of the data compiled regarding the selected cases of participation and inclusion, the selected cases will be codified according to the different models from the “Broadening Participation” project. Additionally, the reasons and justification of the clustering of models will be explained, as well as possible outlying cases and initiatives that were discovered in the conscious choice of taking the broader, peacebuilding view on participation in the wider peace process. The framework focuses on (among a number of other variables which are not included in the present study), if an initiative is “bottom-up”, “top-down”, or both, as a useful additional way of explaining the organization and fit with the models. This consideration will be included in the justification of the models selected for each case, though the entire framework is not utilized here. Moreover, the models identified will be justified with the connection and influence they had on “transfer” to the Track I negotiation process; additional, smaller scale, peacebuilding activities will have a more indirect and general influence.

As mentioned earlier, after the selection and description of the above-mentioned nine cases, three questions were asked to guide the analysis process. The first was – does the empirical evidence of participation/inclusion in the peace process in Turkey fit into the framework of the nine models? The second question then asked was; If not, why not? Thirdly, for the cases that did fit into the models, their classification was explained. The above mentioned models were then compared to the data from the selected cases in order to see if it was possible to identify models used for each actor. In all cases one main model or activity was identified, however additional activities were found for all cases. In this case, outliers and different types of inclusion and participation

mechanisms, which were not classifiable by the framework, were also identified. The analysis and justification according to the models, and peacebuilding activity performed by each actor, can be found in the following section, followed by a summarizing table.

*Case 1) Free Women's Democratic Movement (Demokratik Özgür Kadın Hareketi, DÖKH): Women's Initiative for Peace (Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi, BİKG)*¹⁵⁷

The model from the “Broadening Participation” framework (outlined in detail in Chapter 3) that fits most closely with the work of BİKG is Model 4 “Consultations” (informal, without official endorsement from Track 1). This model is defined as less far-reaching, and being conducted by either Track 1 representatives, the mediator (if any), or by any of the conflict parties, with only selected groups/actors (as opposed to a larger, more representative sample of the population) in relation to a peace process. The event that they conducted which can be classified as a Model 4 consisted in the consultations that were done by the Wise Peoples Commission with the BİKG.

The reason to classify BİKG as Model 4 was mainly because according to the data obtained on the activities and aims of the organization, it seems to take a multi-track approach to peacebuilding. This means that it actually works as bridge builder, but from the “bottom-up”, between the grassroots, conflict parties and the Track-1, governmental circles involved in the peace process. Its activities can be summed up as taking place primarily among one conflict party, the Kurdish social and political movement (as the initiative sprang out of the Free Women's Democratic Movement, DÖKH), as well as targeting a specific group, women on all sides of the conflict. However, arguably, they also produce consultations and awareness in other circles of society, with their meetings and conferences aimed at influencing the peace process, and discussing the issues pertaining to it, and coming with new ideas and opinions to influence the process. Moreover, they group goes beyond the narrow conception of “consultations”, and actually turn investigations and reports resulting in these, into actions and demands.

Although BİKG can, in fact, also be seen as campaigning for becoming/being granted a title in the talks, the classification here must be done in accordance to what activity has

¹⁵⁷ Personal correspondence, member of BİKG, August 14 and 15, 2013.

actually taken place, and not what actors aspire to become (although it is an interesting point to keep in mind). The Monitoring label has been seen in a variety of peace processes, where interestingly women's groups, among other "minorities", have gained this title in order to have their voices heard, which will otherwise be under-represented in the peace process. Though arguably, the talks in Turkey are not at the formalized stage where such observer groups would even be able to be present, as the process is closed, un-inclusive and unstructured (and its future undetermined) for now. However, a last point is that seen from this perspective, BİKG have in fact named themselves, and begun to act as a type of "unofficial monitor", as they have conducted monitoring of the withdrawal process of the retreating PKK fighters, for instance, though they clearly have not had the possibility to monitor actual talks.

BİKG has also in fact (among a couple of other organizations, like Hafıza Merkezi) been vocal in arguing for the need for a "Model 5: Inclusive post-agreement mechanisms" in the peace process in Turkey, of which no examples have been found in this study, since the peace process is at a much too early stage, without an agreement.

Their previous experience with protest and civil disobedience can be clustered as a Model 9 ("Mass Mobilization"). In addition to the above mentioned activities BİKG also conducted an academic research and advocacy function, conducted lobbying at the Track 1.5 level, and propagated public dissemination of their findings to raise awareness and participation of the public into the substance of the conflict and its resolution, specifically concerned with the ongoing peace process. Artistic forms for participation and reconciliation, like the film festival, which they conducted cannot be disregarded as a form of participation.

As we can see from these additional activities, most of the participation in this case was "bottom-up" driven by grassroots and civil society sectors, with some access to Track I (namely through the presentation to the "Wise Peoples Commission"). The activities of this actor preceded the most recent peace process heavily with Model 9 protest and mass mobilization, but shifted strategy to accompany the official peace process mainly through consultations (Model 4), to add demands to the peace process agenda (through non-official channels, as they were not consulted directly or part of the Track I), but also through additional and creative activities such as research, events and workshops.

Case 2) Ekopolitik: “Grand Dome of Turkey” - Türkiye’nin Büyük Çatısı

The “Grand Dome of Turkey” dialogue project is considered according to the framework a “Model 6: High-level civil society initiative”. This mechanism of participation is a non-official Track II or Track 1.5 process, in the pre-negotiation phase to talks, or in parallel to a peace process. In this case, there was a combined Track II and Track 1.5 process characterizing this exercise, with the participation of retired officials and high ranking individuals, as characterized by former intelligence and military personnel, as well as ex- members of parliament and community leaders, as well as other representatives from society. It was Track II in terms of the actual meetings, but Track 1.5 in the briefings and communication channel which was open, and even made public, at times, between the organizers and facilitator of the “dome” and the Track I, mainly represented by President Gül and Interior Minister Atalay. Moreover, this dialogue and societal conflict resolution process was in fact taking place in parallel to the secret “Oslo Talks”, however, the public was at the time aware of this.

The exercise was both a “bottom-up” exercise as it was initiated and organized by a think-tank and famous Social-Psychologist, Professor Vamik Volkan, and the exercise built on the discussions of the members to come up with ideas and suggestions for the resolution of the conflict, which were later passed on “upwards”.

In addition to the main activity, namely the “dome”, people to people exchanges took place, through trips by members to the South-East, as well as lobbying at the higher political levels and meeting local authorities, bridging tracks. Additional public events, dialogues, conferences, lectures and public outreach in the media propagated the arenas and levels of participation that this initiative fostered. Additionally, trainings in social psychology and the Kurdish conflict, in form of lectures to students and the police academy, can be seen as another educational form of increasing participation of the public. All of these later activities could not be readily classified in the framework as they constituted more general peacebuilding initiatives in the wider peace process.

Case 3) Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV): Democratization and Good Governance Programs

The main model identified for TESEV's activities was "Model 4: Consultations", and this in combination with their policy-oriented research project as many of their reports, specifically in this case on their series related to issues being discussed in the peace process, were developed in consultation with track I actors. For instance, their findings would be briefed to track I actors to inform the peace negotiations on issues pertaining to it, before the findings would be published, while the track I would in turn request subjects and issues for study of interest to the current process. Moreover, there was a high level of track I and political party (track 1.5) representation at the launching events and conferences discussing the reports connected to the peace process and constitution.

Although the "broadening participation" project, does not look at the wider peacebuilding functions of civil society, but mainly on the models and mechanisms for participation, (the important precursor to this work however, Paffenholz (2010), identifies core functions of civil society in peace processes, which will not be employed in this research, however, as they constitute a different lens focusing on general "functions" and not on types of activities). The remaining activities undertaken by TESEV do fit the frame of a more general, peacebuilding, and societal reconciliation function, which could constitute an additional model, or alternatively, a broader view of inclusion/participation than is envisioned for the "broadening participation" project and framework.^f This type of Track III, II and 1.5 activity constitutes academic, and people-to-people meetings and dialogues, that though only unofficially and loosely connected to the peace process, may be assessed, in the broad view taken in this research, as having an impact. The question for the inclusion of such activities would be how far to "cast the net" in collecting instances of participation and inclusion of course.

Additionally, one could argue that some of TESEV's activities could even constitute a modified "Model 6: Track 1.5 Conflict Resolution Workshops" (high-level workshops, involving Track II, 1.5, with influential people involved), because of the focus of the think-tank on inviting and involving governmental officials in their activities. Clearly, it does not constitute a clear Model 6 however, as their activities have generally not been conflict resolution workshops where dialogues have taken place, but more research and academic based activities, that have involved dialogue on issues relating to the peace process, with the officials in the background, as spectators, and not actively involved.

Lastly, and more generally, it is not unthinkable that academic and think-tank pursuits, events and publications, could be considered alternative forms of participation in a peace process, especially when they aim to reach a broader audience with their research on issues pertaining to the peace process. For example, they can take the form of press conferences, or website publications. Moreover, when such groups aim to influence, inform and lobby the government officials, and potentially Track I, with these products, it increasingly starts to resemble some form of participation in the peace process, where the aim of the activities have a “higher purpose”, and where there are channels for transfer and an advising role to the Track 1 process.

Case 4) Hafiza Merkezi – Truth, Justice and Memory Centre: Various Activities

The case of the different activities of Hafiza Merkezi is considered as mainly a “Model X”. The selection of this case shows the aim of taking a broader view on participation, in order to classify and include the activities of Hafiza Merkezi as well. Their advocacy role is clearly stated in the aims for their projects, and can be seen through the various public and inclusive events they conducted, which have an important impact on the development of Track II discourse which develops around issues central to the peace process. Additionally, although working less closely with government and possible Track I then TESEV, Hafiza Merkezi did engage in transfer activities to share and disseminate their findings relating to the Kurdish conflict. In terms of monitoring issues pertaining to the conflict, as a human rights and memorialization organization their cataloguing and research into past atrocities, and visions for the future, as well as societal reconciliation, can be seen as a separate, but important parallel process to that of Track I. The case could also be made for Hafiza Merkezi’s activities that if a model should be chosen, many of their larger conferences and workshops most closely fit into a modified version of the “Model 6: Track 1.5 Conflict Resolution Workshops”, though the activities it has undertaken are most Track II and III, and rarely Track 1.5 (and hence its main activities of reconciliation will remain clustered as a Model X).

Moreover, the focus of the activities of Hafiza Merkezi highlights another important form of inclusion, in addition to research and organizing events, namely the cultural and artistic dimension. If the scope is even further widened, in order to allow various forms

of participation and influence for the dissemination of the issues discussed in a “peace process”,^s Hafiza Merkezi is a good example of track III and II people-to-people exchange activities as well, consisting of conflict resolution and transformation processes, and presentations of grievances done through creative means of expression. Their focus also on more psycho-psychological aspects of conflict, which clearly qualifies as a peacebuilding exercise as well, such as cites of memorialization and the need for future mechanisms for transitional justice in Turkey, are also important aspects of the peace process which they have been, and have a potential to, be participating in, but which also do not constitute any models according to the framework.

Case 5) Wise Peoples Commission

The Wise People’s Commission can be considered a “Model 7: Public participation”, which involves activities targeting the a broader portion of the population, by events such as public hearings, opinion polls, town hall meetings and signature campaigns. In the case of the Wise People’s Commission, the three first activities listed were all part of the exercise. Moreover, the Commission, though commissioned by the government side, was also endorsed by Öcalan, thus providing it with a wide mandate for conducting consultations and receiving input, as well as raising awareness, as to the peace process. This case is one of the most clear fits with the framework found.

Moreover, this mechanism can also be classified as a “Model 3: Official/endorsed consultations”, as it was mandated by the government in order to learn the views of society on the current peace process, and in order to “pave the way” for the process. The views of society on issues related to the violent conflict and related to the peace process, including the intertwined constitutional reform process, were discussed, and gathered in a report that was handed over to the Prime Minister and presented to track I actors. Although it was perceived that words, and the findings of this process were not turned into action, the effect of this exercise on the process and the mindset of the track I negotiating team, may be measurable in the future when more is known about the inner workings of this currently secret peace process.

Case 6) Columbia University: Roundtable on Kurdish Peace process

The “Roundtable on the Kurdish Peace Process” event lies as an example of “Model 6: Track 1.5 Conflict Resolution Workshops”. I have chosen to cluster it as model 6 though it was a one-time event (planned in a series of events that did not materialize). Since there was participation of former “wise people”, who had Access to Track I, for instance, as well as academics and civil society representatives, the workshop can be considered high level, with a varied participation sample.

Established by a previous, purely academic meeting on “International Reconciliation Models”, the following roundtable meeting was more inclined towards the Track I, as it had envisioned to establish a “Civic Peace Platform”, to facilitate the participation of civil society in the ongoing peace process. This platform would be sustained with the participation of some of the “wise people” (influential individuals), government officials and with the possible facilitation of TESEV, a think-tank. However this never materialized with the lack of access and agreement from Track 1 for the project. However, here again we see an example of an academic Track II, and 1.5 (if we count the visit of the Wise people to propose the idea to Ankara to propose the establishment of a “Civic Peace Platform”), exercise aimed at influencing greater participation of different sectors into the ongoing peace process.

Case 7) Constitutional Reconciliation Commission (CRC) and Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı – TEPAV) Constitution Platform: Constitutional Citizen’s Assembly

The CRC/TEPAV Constitution Platform public assemblies can be considered as an example of “Model 7: Public Participation”, as it included actors from various sectors all over the country. Moreover, the model had a clear transfer mechanism in delivering its report to the CRC and working with the commission in their findings and for the purpose of influencing this track I mechanism and process (constitutional reform).

The CRC itself could be considered a “Model 5: Inclusive post-agreement mechanism”, if the modification of considering it a parallel-to-agreement seeking (instead of post-agreement) was made. Model 5 seeks to encompass the “...participation of societal and political actors in implementation institutions and mechanisms”, and gives as examples of mechanisms such as commissions to implement a constitutional reform agenda,

including different actors, or commissions to implement peace agreements. In light of this, the CRC, with the participation of the four different parties in parliament, which represent very different constituencies, also in the range of conflict parties of the conflict, seems to fit the description well, with only a slight modification to the occurrence of the model. However, it will not be clustered as a model 5 in this instance, as this would necessitate a change to the timing of the model occurrence, which is not specified in the framework as of yet.

In this sense, despite the lack of progress of the commission, one could even say that the Turkish agenda for the peace process is ambitious (others might say unrealistic) in planning for constitutional reform ahead even having reached a peace agreement. In this case of Turkey, the constitution is well established (although created under military tutelage), and must not be made from the scratch, therefore allowing its reform to take place parallel to, and as an intrinsic part of, the peace process. Clearly, since the articles in the constitution in need of reform are so directly linked to, and in fact in some cases the root cause of some of the issues in the conflict (i.e. definitions of citizenship and nationhood, the Penal code, and the Anti-Terror act), it does make sense to make the democratization, constitutional reform process, and peace talks run parallel. This is especially true in the current situation where the Kurdish counterpart, represented by Öcalan and the PKK, but in fact spanning the entire Kurdish population of Turkey, demands the guaranteeing of democratic and human rights for Kurds (and ethnic/religious minorities as whole in Turkey) as a central peace to the negotiations.

One drawback with the current attempt at a Model 5 parallel to peace negotiations is that despite its focus on “reconciliation” in its work, among the political parties, and being inclusive in this form, it has till date not been very participatory. In terms of the inclusion of civil society and a larger sector of society in the form of suggestions of ideas and needs, or consultations for changes and amendments to be made, this has not taken place (though a constitutional referendum in 2010 showed favor towards reform).

As will be seen in the various examples of “Model 9: Mass Action” discussed in this section, the participation and pressure from “below” in this sense seems to be pushed from other channels than the official ones, in general. Although the constitutional draft was envisioned to be approved by a referendum (which co-incidentally is another

model, “Model 8: Public decision-making”), this does not lie in the near future, and lastly, the referendum of a constitutional draft was originally thought to be a second-best option, if the draft is not able to receive enough support in the parliament first. This last point clearly demonstrates that the exercise of the CRC is mainly “top-down” focused in its philosophy, though it also springs from mobilization on the issue from below, for instance the “Yes, but not enough” movement of intellectuals and civil society that demonstrated an increased need for increased reform after that of 2010.

Case 8) Human Rights Foundation - İnsan Hakları Derneği (IHD):

Saturday Mothers - Cumartesi Anneler - Dayîkên Şemiyê (2009 – 2014)

The Saturday Mothers could qualify as a mechanism of “Model 9: Mass Action” for participation, however I have chosen to cluster it as “Model X”, due to the smaller scale of the initiative, as well as it being a civil disobedience initiative specifically, and not a form of “mass” protest. Though their activity has been ongoing long before any attempts at a peace process in Turkey commenced, and their activity was outlawed for a long period of time, the renewal of their civil disobedience activity coincided with a time of increasing political liberalization surrounding the Kurdish issue, as well as renewed attempts to solve the conflict politically, through the commencement of the “Kurdish Opening” reforms, as well as the (secret at the time) “Oslo Talks”, and then later on, the present more open process, which all paralleled their ongoing activity. The Mothers have played an important role mainly in calling for an end to violence and the reaching of a peaceful agreement to the conflict, but have also in their own way, called on the need for Track 1 and the State to focus on justice and accountability for past crimes in any ongoing peace process, in order to achieve meaningful peace in Turkey.

In civil disobedience, the symbolic value of the actions of actors often speaks louder than the number of people (“mass”) that participate in a protest action. Thus, a possible modification to the “Model 9: Mass Action” could be made, to include symbolic, innovative events such as civil disobedience (another example, which was not selected as a case, is for instance the hunger strikes of Kurdish prisoners called by the Kurdish political movement which pressured the government to recommence talks in 2012).

Histories of resolving violent conflicts by political and peaceful means have various examples of strong symbolic activities of civil disobedience, in order to pressure governments towards change. Specifically in instances where international attention is directed towards such initiatives, pressure towards a government to resolve a certain situation can be strong. For instance, the “Mothers of Plaza de Mayo” in Argentina, from which the Saturday mothers gathered inspiration, became worldwide icons and symbols for the fight against the Argentina dictatorship, despite their relative modest numbers, due to their periodic public meetings and symbolic white headscarves. The Saturday mothers in Turkey have adopted similar symbolic attire, with many of the peace mothers wearing white headscarves for peace, and relatives often bringing large pictures of the “disappeared”, along with red flowers to symbolize their loss. The public nature of such meetings, and the audience it draws should be considered as a form of demanding justice, but also as a call for the peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict. The peace mothers are clearly an example of a “bottom-up” process as well.

Case 9) Social Mobilization/Protest of the Kurdish Political and Social Movement (2008 – 2014)

The following activities/groups which make up the Social Mobilization and Protest cases are all classified as “Model 9: Mass Action”. For simplicities sake the model will shortly be described again here, so as not to be repeated in detail again below. This model is exemplified in the framework as events including (but not limited to) campaigns, demonstration, street action, protests, and petitions. These should be organized with the aim of putting large scale pressure on the negotiating parties, according to the framework to: end violence, sign an agreement, bring about regime change, or add pertinent issues to the negotiation agenda.

Moreover, though this will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion, this model is the one that occurs the most often in the case of the ongoing Peace process, but also arguably, in the history of Turkey. This is interesting in the debate surrounding the need for increased channels and mechanisms for participation, not only in the peace process, but in the general political process. In general, such protests movements will by definition be considered “bottom-up” processes, but there are some distinctions to be made according to case. Mass action usually relies on a rallying point, organizer or

instigator, and so although demands will be made from the grassroots, usually to the government/regime and/or Track 1, they will also be the subject to leaders or organizations coordinating or managing the goals and frameworks of such events.

Case 9.a) Newroz Celebrations (2008 – 2014)

The various Newroz celebrations taking place over the years since a peace process in Turkey has been present can be considered participation in form of “Model 9: Mass Action”. The event is a symbolic rallying point for the joint forces of the Kurdish nationalist (armed and non-armed), political, and societal/grassroots movements. Moreover, it is probably the largest showing of strength and of the demands for this conflict party in terms of issues in relation to the resolution of the conflict and expectations for a peace process. A wide array of campaigns have been launched in the event of Newroz, such as the “peace tent”, but also other civil disobedience campaigns, including increased language rights and improvement of prison conditions for political prisoners, and Öcalan in particular, or hunger strikes to pressure the government to make increased steps in the peace process. Additionally, the day has been the point of departure for launching specific initiatives such as petitions on specific issues, like the release of Öcalan from prison, as well as a general day of protests, marches, and cultural manifestation of identity, in itself seen as, at worst a “threat” by the government, and at best, a signal that this conflict will not go away by itself and necessitates recognition.

The persistence of marking this event every year (despite it being legal or not, depending on the year) has been a major pressure point on the government due to the public nature of the gatherings, as well as the massive and widespread turnout. Speeches held by Kurdish politicians in Kurdish, in the years that this was still illegal, can be seen as a deliberate defiance and form of resistance to the status-quo on the situation for Kurds in Turkey of those years, only strengthened by the size of the audience that these events attracted. Moreover, the playing of Kurdish music, dancing and other cultural markers for Kurds have been integral to these mass meetings as a form of protest and resistance.

Lastly, in relation to this latter point, the letters written by Öcalan to be publicly read at Newroz are similarly more powerful when read at such a symbolic and well-known

event for Kurds, and have therefore also been able to be important signals and essential milestones for the peace process, for instance with the calling of the ceasefire in 2013. The transfer ability of making public statements in such a forum shows the strength and importance that lie in the organization of such events to communicate the public will.

Case 9.b) “Peace Tent/Democratic Solution” Civil Disobedience Campaign (March 2011)

The “Peace Tent” civil disobedience campaign of the Kurdish political and wider social grassroots movement, in mobilization towards the June 2011 elections, is considered a “Model 9: Mass Action” This model is exemplified in the framework as including events that are similar to (but not limited to) campaigns, demonstration, street action, protests, rallies and petitions, for instance. These should be organized with the aim of putting large scale pressure on the negotiating parties, according to the framework to: end violence, sign an agreement, bring about regime change, or add pertinent issues to the negotiation agenda.

In some form or another, the mobilizations that took place surrounding the Democratic Solution initiative can be considered to have been called to pressure the government towards all the four aims presented earlier. The movements demands (arguably for a future process, since publicly, the existence of the ongoing Oslo talks was not known) included the action of the government towards language rights, prisoner rights, electoral law and the end of violence in the South-East, and the signing of an agreement towards this end. Stretching the demands of this mobilization (and other mobilizations towards Kurdish rights, particularly those supporting the PKK and its affiliated social and political organs), regime change can be seen as an underlining demand, if not directly, in terms of the change of government, also in a deeper sense in the wish for a restructuring of the State in terms of the wish for the devolution of power regionally, and “democratic autonomy”, and increased cultural, political and social rights for Kurds.

The peace tents can be seen as an initiative, which again similar to other Model 9’s which will be discussed further down, and general mass mobilization in the Kurdish political movement, which is called for or encouraged, usually by the Pro-Kurdish party existent at the time (in this case, the BDP), and at times from the PKK or affiliated

organizations (i.e. the KCK), who then have connections to, and support from, the grassroots and public. At the peace tent in Istanbul, in Aksaray square for instance, the BDP members underlined that this was a “grassroots” initiative, however the reality was that the party did call for the initiative (announced after the Newroz celebrations that year, in Diyarbakir), and the tents formed an important part of their election campaign. However, the communal and civil disobedience aspect of the events cannot be discounted as simply an “initiative from above”, as the events filtered down to the very local level, with widespread adherence, meaning that local and civil society engagement from “below” was also important, and vocal in the organization of these events. Lastly, the adherence and participation of such a large audience means the aims of the project were also largely agreed with and shared in the Kurdish population as demands that they wished to be heard and communicated to the government.

Table 3 - Summary of main activity, model type, and additional activities, per case:

	Models	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	“X”
Actors and activities											
1) Free Women’s Democratic Movement											
Model 4: “Consultations” “Women’s Initiative for Peace”					X						
<i>Overseeing the withdrawal of PKK guerilla. (Dersim/Tunceli) and consulting women.</i>											
<i>Academic research reports, and workshops</i>											
<i>Lobbying, Track I, I.5, (i.e. Presentation to Wise Peoples commission)</i>											
<i>Small protest (2009 -2013)</i>											
<i>Civil disobedience actions</i>											
<i>Artistic reconciliation initiative (Film festival)</i>											
2) Ekopolitik											
Model 6: “Track 1.5 conflict resolution workshop”: Grand Dome of Turkey							X				
<i>People-to-people (Track III): (Hakkari, Mersin)</i>											
<i>Lobbying: High level briefings, meetings and interaction with local authorities</i>											

	Models	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	“X”
<i>Public events, dialogues and conferences, lectures with students and media</i>											
<i>CR training: with police academy (psycho-social)</i>											
3) TESEV											
Model 4: “Consultations” TESEV Peace Process Research with Track I					X						
<i>Academic: publications, workshops and conferences (under the “democratization” and “good governance” programs)</i>											
<i>Lobbying: Track I, I.5 (i.e. informing politicians on research findings, collaborating on projects)</i>											
<i>Monitoring: Constitutional process project (website)</i>											
<i>Artistic: Documentary on IDP compensation</i>											
<i>Public events and press conferences</i>											
<i>People-to-people (Track III): exchange through the “Encounters” project (Diyarbakir – Trabzon)</i>											
4) Hafiza Merkezi											
Model X: Transitional justice initiative											X
<i>Legal advocacy: (online database, following court cases with local law offices and the ECHR)</i>											
<i>Workshops, conferences, and events</i>											
<i>artistic exhibitions/documentaries</i>											
<i>Documentation: research, online database, reports.</i>											
<i>Artistic/Reconciliation Initiative: Documentaries, book project, exhibitions.</i>											
<i>Academic: i.e. Regional Network on Reconciliation and Historical Dialogue, research reports, conferences, workshops.</i>											
5) Wise Peoples Commission											
Model 7: “Public Participation”: Nation-wide consultations				X				X			
6) Columbia Uni.											

	Models	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	“X”
Model 6: “Track 1.5 Conflict Resolution Workshop”: Roundtable on the Kurdish Peace process							X				
7) Constitutional Reconciliation Commission/TEPAV: Constitutional Platform											
“Model 7: Public Participation”								X			X
8) Human Rights Foundation (IHD)											
Model 9: “Mass Actions” The Saturday Mothers										X	
<i>Legal support/advocacy</i>											
<i>Documentation of human rights abuses, reports, and dissemination of information.</i>											
<i>Social mobilization and protest (on a smaller scale, not in the “mass”)</i>											
9) Social Mobilization/Protest of the Kurdish Political and Social Movement											
Model 9: “Mass Actions”: (a.) Newroz celebration (2008 – 2014)^t										X	
“Mass Actions”: (b.) Peace /Democratic Solution Tent - protests										X	
<i>Smaller civil disobedience</i>											

In sum we can see from the analysis and coding of the different case studies of actors that different models of participation, but also additional, outlying activities, emerge from the data obtained. Below, a table summarizing these findings is displayed, with the main activity (corresponding to a model from the framework in most cases) is listed in bold after the actors name, followed by additional activities, in italics, which have not been attempted classified according to the models in the framework as they were not applicable. Concluding remarks on the findings will be made in the next chapter.

^a Kaos GL's 3rd International Feminist Forum was supported by SIDA, the Norwegian Embassy, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Frontline Defenders, Mediterranean Women's Fund and Ankara University KASAUM. For more information please see event description: <http://www.kaosgl.com/page.php?id=16085>.

^b "In October 2009, one month before the first meeting of Ekopolitik, 34 Kurds had left the PKK's base in the Kandil mountains entering Turkey at a checkpoint on the Iraqi border, with the permission of Öcalan. They were dubbed the "Peace Group", they were all allowed to go free without any trial. Beşir Atalay announced in a public statement that this was part of the "Kurdish Initiative" of the government, and that similar moves were to follow. The move and announcement produced a public outcry however, as the fighters were depicted in full uniform." (Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 383.)

^c Unlike other trainings led by Professor Volkan, none of the Ekopolitik core group members were trained in psychodynamic approaches to small- or large-group meetings. However, in 2010, Ayla Yazıcı, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst based in Istanbul became part of the core group, acting as an advisor on psychological knowledge on these social issues to the Ekopolitik staff and the student volunteers. (Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 381.)

^d "There are identity problems in Turkey in which people 'otherize' each other," Çelenk said. "With the help of Vamık Volkan, we gather people using a methodological technique, the conflict-resolution method, which aims to bring enemies together.", "Ekopolitik sets up moderate meeting of Turkey's extremists", *Hürriyet Daily News*.

^e "In spite of this unfortunate outcome (referring to the split in the organization) I knew that the work they had carried out during the previous couple of years had been extremely important for Turkey. It brought a public voice to the surface, one with which previously unspoken ideas could be discussed respectfully. It showed that citizens were tired of seemingly unending terror and military actions and that there was a realistic political way to find peaceful and satisfactory solutions that were acceptable to the general public." (Volkan, *Enemies on the Couch*, p. 387.)

^f TESEV's constitutional monitoring website is the following: <http://www.failibelli.org/>

^g The Hafıza Merkezi website is: www.hakikatadalethafiza.org.

^h Related local and international institutions can be found at the link below: <http://www.hakikatadalethafiza.org/calisma.aspx?PageId=179&LngId=5>.

ⁱ "The initial project idea was suggested by Belinda Cooper of the World Policy Institute after attending Hafıza Merkezi's first workshop on Memorialization in December 2011.", ("Regional network of alliance", Hafıza Merkezi website.)

^j The memorialize turkey project website: <http://www.memorializeturkey.com/en/>.

^k The database on enforced disappearances is found at: www.zorlakaybetmeler.org.

^l “Before the delegation started its work, Erdogan had said that they will be working together with the Prime Ministry’s Undersecretariat for Public Order and Security, but this was eventually put aside.” (Gürsel, “Erdogan asks ‘Wise People’”).

^m “Who are these Wise People? The vast majority of them are figures who are known to be pro-government, some with Islamic identities or those who would think of criticizing the government as the very last resort. But their common denominator is to believe in and advocate for a peace solution to the Kurdish question. Nevertheless, the delegation with former AKP deputies and parliamentary candidates is expected to promote the peace process formulated and implemented by Erdogan.” (Gürsel, “Erdogan asks ‘Wise People’”).

ⁿ The sub-groups report from the wise people’s commission are available at the following website (in Turkish): <http://www.ukam.org/RaporlarDetay.aspx?id=20#.Uy3Sqi69Kc1>

^o “...since early March, there have been organized military operations in Sirnak, Dersim, Mus, Bingol, Hakkari, Diyarbakir and Batman leading to the deaths of seven guerrillas.” In addition, the PKK announced the death of three Turkish soldiers in this time period. (“Newroz 2011: Democratic Peace Tents and Kurds”, *KNK*, p. 2)

^p Except for the ongoing, secret Oslo Talks, which were not public at the time.

^q “According to the traditional myth the people gained their freedom from a despotic king on Newroz. Also known as the start of the spring festival, Newroz symbolizes freedom for the people. Newroz has become a stage for full public rebellion for the Kurds through their struggle for freedom and rights over the past 20 years. So far, hundreds of Kurds have lost their lives during Newroz celebrations due to the severity of the state’s response.” (“Newroz 2011: Democratic Peace Tents and Kurds”, *KNK*, p. 2)

^r This could arguably also be noted that is possible as this study is examining one context and case study only, the Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey, while the “Broadening Participation” project is conducting a review of 60 peace processes and political transitions across the globe, and must therefore maintain a more limited view.

^s The point should be made here that by “peace process”, the general societal, and also political, changes taking place instigated by a formal peace process are considered to be part of this process here. This is not limited to the Track I process only. I want to make this clarification as many civil society and other sectors would disagree that they are “supporting” or “part of” the official peace process, as they may either be against it, or doubt if the current effort is genuine, is in fact a peace process at all, or may be against its’ current format, and so will highlight that their efforts are “pointing in the same direction”, but are not set in place to facilitate the efforts of the government specifically.

^t Newroz took place from 2008 – 2014 once each year, so will be counted 7 times.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

According to the findings and analysis of the previous chapter (summarized in the final table), classifying the selected actors activities according to the “Broadening Participation” framework, Model 9 (“Mass Mobilization”) was overall the most common model, occurring nine times (as Newroz celebrations were counted for each year they were surveyed, 2008 - 2014). Apart from this Model 4 (“Consultations”) 6 (“High level civil society initiative”) and 7 (“Public participation” involving the broader population via public hearings; opinion polls; town hall meetings or signature campaigns”) each occurred twice each. Model 3 (“Official consultative forums parallel to negotiations”) occurred only once, along with two cases of Model X (for outliers).

Table 4 - Model Occurrence in the Broadening Participation Framework

Model	Occurrence
1) Direct representation at the negotiation table	0
2) Observer status, direct presence during the negotiations	0
3) Official consultative forums parallel to negotiations	1
4) Consultations, less formal consultations without official endorsement	2
5) Inclusive post-agreement mechanisms, participation of societal and political actors in implementation institutions and mechanisms	0
6) High-level civil society initiatives, non-official track 2 or track 1 ½ facilitation initiatives in the pre-negotiation phase or parallel to official negotiations	2
7) Public participation, involving the broader population via public hearings; opinion polls; town hall meetings or signature campaigns	2
8) Public decision-making, referenda and other elective forms putting major political decisions to binding public vote	0
9) Mass action, campaigns, demonstration, street action, protests, and petitions	9
X) Anything that follows outside the above mentioned categories, with the possibility of constituting an additional model.	2

The aim of this research was to test the analytical strength of the Broadening Participation framework, in order to classify instances of inclusion in a peace process. The aim was to be able to look beyond the framework and identify additional activities, which may add richness and detail to the description of these mechanisms. In order to make conclusions on the applicability of the models that did occur in this case (the models that did not occur will not be discussed in detail), and possible modifications, each occurring model will be discussed individually according to the data obtained in the following section on theoretical implications. This section will then be followed by a final discussion on policy related findings and outcomes of this research.

Theoretical Implications

According to the analysis of the previous chapter, Model 4 (“Consultations”) was a useful model, perhaps allowing to its rather wide interpretation, its full description being simply “less formal consultations without official endorsement”. In general, this did not put any restrictions as to the format. For instance the Women for Peace Initiative were consulted by the Wise peoples commission. However, their preparatory work for this consultation was done through additional activities, such as two conferences dialoguing with a cross-section of women, in order to influence the peace process, as well as through research, and subsequent site visits parallel to conducting a monitoring of the withdrawal process. Moreover, the flexibility of the consultations not needing to be officially endorsed was helpful for this classification as a Model 4, as the Women for Peace were not officially represented in the negotiations, and had no official role. Moreover, consultations could take different forms, as long as they had the same aim, to influence and consult with Track I, as for instance TESEV conducted research and briefings with top tier ministers in order to inform, academically, the peace process.

Although Model 5 (“Inclusive post-agreement mechanisms”) did not occur, it will be shortly discussed as the CRC could have been classified as this model. This model’s description could clearly be less restrictive on the stage of the peace process (and not only negotiations) that it aims to identify. As has already been outlined, a slight modification could be made for the purpose of this study to this model in this respect, re-naming Model 5 “Inclusive parallel mechanism” as opposed to “post-agreement”. The full description of the model outlines: “participation of societal and political actors in implementation institutions and mechanisms”. However, an inclusive institutional mechanism, like the Constitutional Reconciliation Commission, can clearly take place in parallel, as part of an ongoing peace process, not necessarily needing to wait for an agreement, especially in circumstances where democratization and peace are related. Alternatively, the CRC as a “parallel inclusive mechanism” could potentially be considered a “Model X” where such high level, and institutional mechanisms of inclusion take place in parallel to negotiations, and not in the post-agreement phase.

The experience with the various Model 6’s (“High-level civil society initiatives”) identified was that although it was clustered a few times, there were several participation exercises that were “borderline” to this model (and which, for security’s

sake, were clustered as simply Model “X”). The full description of this model encompassed: “non-official track 2 or track 1 ½ facilitation initiatives in the pre-negotiation phase or parallel to official negotiations”. Firstly, there was not much space for more peacebuilding, Track III, i.e. people-to-people exercises (which may be organized or facilitated by Track II or 1.5 at times) such as those conducted by think-tanks and NGO’s (such as TESEV and Hafiza Merkezi) to be included in this model. Hence, perhaps a more generous multi-track approach could be allowed Model 6. Moreover, the wide array of academic workshops and conferences, which were in many cases attended by Track I or 1.5, posed difficult to cluster. The format and types of events that encompassed Model 6 simply were difficult to ascertain, meaning that perhaps more examples or clues might be helpful in this models future description.

Activities which could have potentially been classified as Model 9 (“Mass Mobilization”), including smaller protests and mobilizations, generally weren’t because of the restriction on size (by “mass”) in order to constitute a model. Smaller, but sustained or frequent, protests were in this case also no classified according to this reading of Model 9, as not being inclusive of smaller and more informal activities and mobilization. Moreover, the description of Model 9 (“Mass mobilization”) as encompassing “Mass action, campaigns, demonstration, street action, protests, and petitions” was constricting in classifying cases of civil disobedience actions in general (which encompassed the sustained activities of, for instance, the Saturday Mothers). In terms of more symbolic and creative forms of resistance and protest, the flexibility of Model 9 (“Mass Mobilization”) remained unclear, and could be increased, at least to involve the term “civil disobedience”, which is widely used in conflict contexts, and in the Turkish case especially, as it is widely employed by the Kurdish social and political movement which employ tactics such as hunger-strikes and “sit-ins” regularly.

Lastly, all the other types of outlying activities, which remained un-clustered according to the Broadening Participation framework, consisted of a wide array of activities, mostly aimed at peacebuilding at the societal level, but also some aimed at higher-level, and inter-track activity and communication were left un-clustered. For instance, activities pertaining to the fields of the arts and culture (all of Hafiza Merkezi/Depo activities), societal reconciliation and healing (Grand Dome of Turkey psycho-social trainings), memorialization and transitional justice (Hafiza Merkezi), as well as

documentation and legal advocacy (IHD and Hafiza Merkezi) did not seem to fit within any of the models. This despite their clear connection to wanting to add pertinent issues to the conversations on the Kurdish conflict, ranging from the societal level (Track III), to the Track II and 1.5 level, and up to the Track I (depending on the aims of the individual actors and projects, which differed). The lobbying and cross-track facilitation that took place (by TESEV and Women's Initiative for Peace, for instance) shows the inter-related developments that take place between the different tracks, when it comes to i.e. conferences and research, that may also take other forms than Model 4 "Consultations". Clearly, the activities un-clustered in the table were those of a more broad peacebuilding and conflict transformation nature, which weren't discounted as participation mechanisms in the broader peace process, in the view taken by this research. Despite lacking a clear "transfer" mechanism to Track I in the views of the "Broadening Participation" framework, this thesis argues that the transfer could potentially be extended, and measured in other ways, in a broader sense, as exercising influence from the societal and organizational level, up to the higher tracks.

In sum, the results of this picture demonstrate that the "Broadening Participation" framework attempts to look at both direct and indirect, and "high" and "low" level initiatives of participation in peace negotiations (and political transitions), (as exemplified by the inclusion of Model 9 at all as a model). However, the framework is still relatively heavy on the track I, elite driven participation side, with less focus given to the wider activities of track 1.5, II and III peacebuilding initiatives that are more "bottom-up" in a wider peace process. From the data compiled on the different actors varied activities towards participation in the Kurdish peace processes, whether direct (through seeking contact and interaction with Track I), or through more indirect means (by pursuing agendas more geared towards peacebuilding, supporting the peace process, but at a greater "distance"), was uncovered. The complexity and varied nature of this participation poses a challenge. When attempting to organize and cluster this information, certain lacks of the framework of the nine models were discovered.

The "Broadening Participation" study underlines that the models are tentative and may be subject to change (after the results from the ongoing study are obtained), and in no way claims to be an exhaustive list (as evidenced by the inclusion of a "Model X" to capture additional models that may be identified). Therefore, it is a framework open to

suggestions and changes. As a case study employing such a new and flexible framework, the usefulness of the models was seen, however, certain nuances seemed to be missing from these categories. As can be seen in the summarizing table in the previous chapter, the lack of more models (apart from model 9) addressing more specific forms of participation in civil society and society at large is still missing. For instance, some of the categories of functions of civil society, identified in Paffenholz's 2010 study on civil society and their peacebuilding functions, demonstrates the possibility that peacebuilding and "lower level" initiatives can be classified, not just as functions, but also as forms of inclusion and participation in an ongoing peace process, as this thesis demonstrates. Hence this research concludes with the thought that perhaps Paffenholz's earlier work could be a starting point to inform the later "Broadening Participation" framework, and similar exercises seeking to identify mechanisms of inclusion and participation, in the direction of being less elite and Track I centered, and taking the wider view on participation.^a This seems counter-intuitive as the aim of the project is namely to broaden participation, however, with the many activities left unclassified, clearly the models are still too exclusive and selective in terms of classifying what participation "is" and "is not".

Additionally, the instances of creative, arts-based, psycho-psychological, reconciliation initiatives at Tracks II and III in society, as well as different symbolic forms of protest as civil disobedience for example, forms of participation, often considered "soft" forms of conflict resolution, should be allocated a space in the framework, and consider participation in its own right. As this research demonstrates, there was a rich base of such activities taking place beforehand, as well as in parallel to the ongoing peace process. Moreover, this form of activity has a long history and is a sustained form of participation which will most likely not falter, according to the actors themselves, should the formal Track I negotiations fail. Therefore, though perhaps not so visible to the high level peace process realm, participation in different shapes and sizes must be considered in order to get a firm grasp of what "participation" really entails, and to examine the richness and possibilities it holds.

Policy implications

Examples of participation mechanisms can be witnessed from the different designs of international cases of peace processes. These can range from and include Truth

Commissions (such as in South Africa), Consultative Civil Society Bodies (Such as in El Salvadorian), the writing of a Peace Process Report (Guatemala), or Civil Society “Round Tables” (as in Colombia), to “Wise People” committees, consisting of civilian intellectuals, who inform public opinion on the peace process (as was the case in the current process in Turkey). Such different forms of participation take place at different levels of societal dialogue during conflict and can include a variety of societal actors, which can perform a range of different functions and roles.

Turkey’s democratization efforts can be seen to go hand in hand, and to essentially be intertwined with, the peace process in terms of increasing the legal rights of Kurds, in cultural, social and political terms, but also more widely in fostering a climate of respect for minorities more generally in Turkey. This process has especially spurred by Turkey’s EU harmonization process since the early the 2000’s, showing important steps towards moving from a frozen conflict towards the commencement of a peaceful resolution, which will be a longer process than simply the agreement on a peace process through negotiations.

This ongoing democratization process, as well as Turkey’s recent social turmoil related to the “Gezi Protests” of summer 2013 and leading up to the March 2014 local elections and August presidential elections, shows not only important transitions from armed conflict to peace ongoing in Turkey, but also wider political and social transformations nationally. These changes are also taking place in the context of regional upheaval, with the so-called “Arab spring” revolutions and the violent social and political conflicts, and ongoing transitions or political stalemates, that have enveloped the entire region. If we expand the picture even further, the world is increasingly seeing unprecedented instances of citizens and social movements participation towards change or protest in light of event such as the global economic crisis, climate change, or demands for increased democratic rights and freedoms.

These national, regional and international inter-linked processes are increasingly creating a demand for more transparency, and space for participation by citizens in a country with traditionally hierarchical and closed political structure, such as Turkey. As peace processes have been deemed to be political opportunities for inclusion and the establishment of future political norms and democratizing efforts, the notion of

inclusion and participation in the peace process itself, and in wider peacebuilding attempts, are important indicators not only as to the sustainability of a peace process, but also in terms of the securement of its future implementation and sustainability. These reflections are important for Turkey, but apply for other conflict situations too.

This thesis refocuses not only on “civil society”, but also other forms of organizations and initiatives that are actively participating in the activities of fact finding, reconciliation and peacebuilding, or in some other way supporting, or attempting to influence in some way the peace process, in tune with its related themes, aims and activities. Clearly, there is a need to examine this ongoing case from new angles. The lessons learned from the previous rounds of talks in Turkey’s Kurdish conflict, and in the current processes, could possibly be of immediate concern and implementation for ongoing efforts at a policy, academic and practical level to resolving the conflict. The knowledge and experience that the “lower” tracks (track 1.5, II and III) possess in participating for a peace process in Turkey could clearly be capitalized on further by Track I, and could demonstrate a learning exercise for peace processes elsewhere. Especially in this context where the majority of the work for peace and reconciliation has been implemented and pioneered by lower tracks, the study of their participation is vital, in relation to this case study, but also for other similar cases elsewhere.

Only through the understanding and familiarization with studying “lower tracks” and “bottom-up” processes in times of political transitions, or transitions to peace, can we begin to shift our attention away from the elite-driven processes that certainly influence, but seldom can on its own, sustain a peace or political agreement. The concept of participation lies central, both in terms of the legitimacy and acceptance of an agreement, as well as its later implementation and maintenance, to the “success” of a negotiated settlement. It is clear that a shift as to what we see as “important” or “influential” in a peace process must be turned on its head, if we are really to study such a socially and politically transformative process as resolving conflicts for good.

^a The forms in which these two theoretical approaches could be merged is beyond the scope of this thesis.

