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THE THREE STAGES OF THE DISPERSION OF THE KURDISH POPULATION INTO ANATOLIA IN THE POST-WORLD WAR II ERA

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Abstract*: Kurds are a Middle Eastern people dispersed across four countries, i.e. Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. The purpose of this study is to examine the external reasons for the dispersion of the Kurdish population throughout Turkey after World War II. Until the end of World War II, Kurds in Turkey largely lived together in specific regions of the country. According to the claim of this study, Kurds in Turkey have been forced to disperse throughout the country beyond natural population growth and internal factors due to several external reasons over the past millennium. The first reason is the push factor and domino effect created by autocratic regimes in the Middle East, with Turkey attracting this population as a relatively safe country. The second reason is the PKK terrorism recognized as a terrorist organization by many states, including the United Nations and the United States. The third reason is the rapid urbanization trend in Turkey.*

Keywords*: Kurds, Turkey, Middle East, Dispersion of Kurdish Population, Post-World War II Era.*

Rezumat*: Cele trei etape ale dispersării populației kurde în Anatolia în epoca de după cel de-al Doilea Război Mondial.* *Kurzii sunt un popor din Orientul Mijlociu răspândit în Turcia, Irak, Iran și Siria. Studiul examinează motivele externe ale dispersiei populației kurde în Turcia, după cel de-al Doilea Război Mondial. Până atunci, aceștia trăiseră în mare parte într-o anumită regiune a Turciei, fiind forțați să o părăsească, deși*

trăiseră acolo circa un mileniu, şi să se disperseze în întreaga ţară din cauze externe, dincolo de creşterea naturală a populaţiei şi de alte motive interne. Prima dintre cauzele externe a fost dată de puterea de atracţie şi efectul de domino creat de regimurile autocratice din Orientul Mijlociu. De aceea, Turcia a atras această populaţie din cauza calităţii sale de ţară relativ sigură. A doua cauză este indusă de către terorismul PKK, recunoscut ca organizaţie teroristă de multe state, în special de SUA, precum şi de către Naţiunile Unite. A treia cauză a fost constituită de către tendinţa de urbanizare rapidă din Turcia.

INTRODUCTION

There are numerous ethnic groups in the world. Some claim that this number exceeds 5 thousand. Similarly, there are also different languages whose number is closer to this figure. However, only a small group of those ethnic groups, approximately 250 of them, have their own separate states but there are only 194 member states of the United Nations. Moreover, particular groups of those states belong to the same ethnic groups. For instance, Arabs have 22 states, the nations that speak English and speak Spanish have similar numbers of states and some others as well.[1] Although being a unique and homogenous ethnic group is not necessary for a society in theory like Sweden, Belgium and USA to become a state, most states rely upon an ethnic group in reality.

The Kurds are a Middle Eastern ethnicity mostly spread to four countries which are Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. This ethnic group is one of the most political groups that have a big population without state in the world alongside some similar others such as Berbers throughout north African countries, Balochees and Azarees in Iran, Tamils in India, Moros in Philippines, Chechens in Russia, Catalans and Basks in Spain, Scots and Irish in England, Hutus in Rwanda and Uganda, Sundanese and Madurese in Indonesia, etc.[2] Most of these ethnic

[1] John Meyer et al., *World society and the nation-state*, in "American Journal of sociology", Vol. 103, 1997, No. 1, pp. 144-181.

[2] Paul R. Brass, *Ethnic groups and the state*, in "Ethnic groups and the state", Routledge, 2023. pp. 1-56. For further information, see: Walker Connor, *A nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group is a….*, in "Ethnic and racial studies", Vol. 1, 1978, no. 4, p. 377-400; Myron Weiner, *Peoples and states in a new ethnic order?* in "Third World Quarterly*",* Vol. 13, 1992, no. 2, pp. 317-333; Andreas Wimmer, *Who owns the state? Understanding ethnic conflict in post-colonial societies*, in "Nations and nationalism"*,* Vol. 3, 1997, No. 4, p. 631-666; Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups*, Harvard University Press, 2006; Montserrat Guibernau, *Nations without states. Political communities in a global age*, Polity Press, 1999.

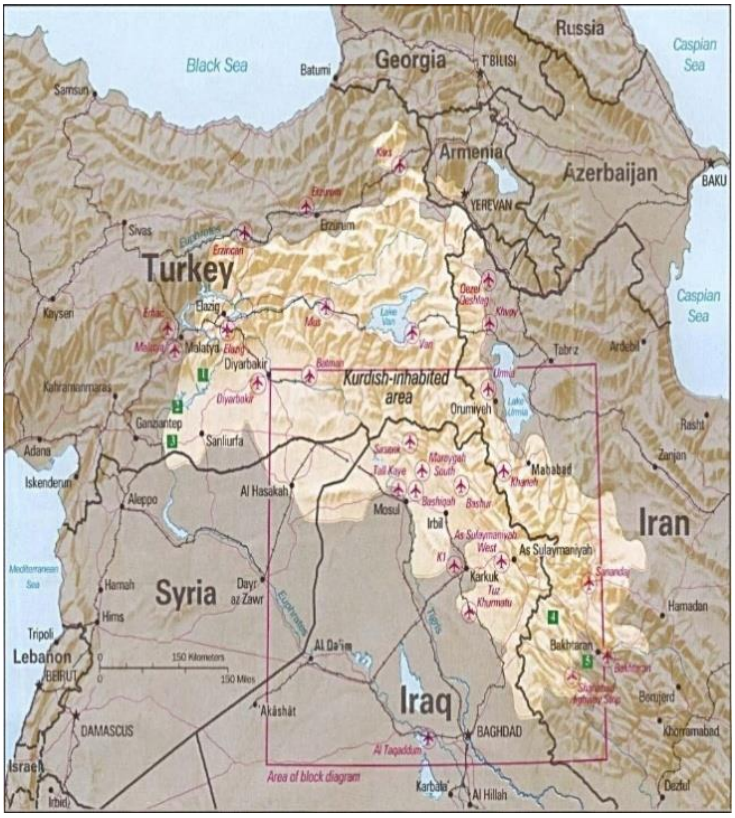
groups have spread from limited and small regions to other bigger and larger geographies in history. However, the one that spread to the largest areas compared to the others is probably the Kurdish population.

Almost all of societies have changed their homelands throughout history due to factors such as natural population growth, drought, famine, epidemic, war, exile or any other similar reasons. The ethnicities' change of their location might produce several problems such as ethnic, political, economic, judicial, cultural and religious issues and the like. One of two main reasons of emergence of ethnic minorities is migration with all the dimensions mentioned above and the other one is imperial conquests. The Kurdish population has spread throughout the Middle Eastern geography due to several special reasons appropriate to its own geopolitical circumstances throughout history.

Map-1: The Zagros Mountains, which have been accepted as the historical Kurdish homeland.[3]

[3] The Zagros Mountains, http://www.eecrg.uib.no/projects/AGS_BotanyExp/Iran/Iran.htm (Accessed on 05. 02. 2024).

Two events can be considered crucial in the migration history of Kurds in the Middle East. The first is the dispersion of Kurds from the Zagros Mountains region[4] in Iran, considered their homeland, over the past millennium, spreading as a nomadic people to other mountainous areas of the Middle East. The second is the demographic mobility following World War II, marking their departure from south-eastern Turkey and their spreading throughout the country. This study will focus on, evaluate, and interpret the latter demographic mobility rather than the former.



Map-2: Areas where Kurdish people populated mostly since the 18th century.[5]

[4] Vladimir Minorsky et. al., *Kürtler & Kürdistan* [Kurds & Kürdistan], in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, translated by Kamuran Fıratlı, İstanbul, Doz Publication, 2004, p. 51-57. For further information, see Ferdinand Hennerbichler, *The origin of Kurds*, in "Advances in Anthropology", Vol. 2, 2012, No. 2, p. 64-79; John Limbert, *The origins and appearance of the Kurds in pre-Islamic Iran*, in "Iranian Studies", Vol. 1, 1968, No. 2, p. 41-51.

[5] Map of most populated regions: https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/kurdish_lands_92.jpg (Accessed on 09.03.2024).

In this study, the concepts of expansion for relatively spontaneous and natural population growth among Kurds and dispersion due to external reasons and partly coercion have been employed. The population expansion of Kurds in Turkey is closely related to events in the Middle East. The expansion of this population in Turkey, fundamentally, relies on three factors after World War II. Firstly, Kurds fleeing from authoritarian regimes in the Middle East viewed Turkey as a relatively safe and accessible haven, leading to their entry and, in a domino effect, the dispersal of larger Kurdish-origin populations across the country. The second reason for migration is PKK terrorism, which began in Turkey in 1984 and has continued to the present. The third and final factor driving movement is the urbanization process in Turkey. It can be said that the first two factors result in population dispersion, while the third leads to population spread.

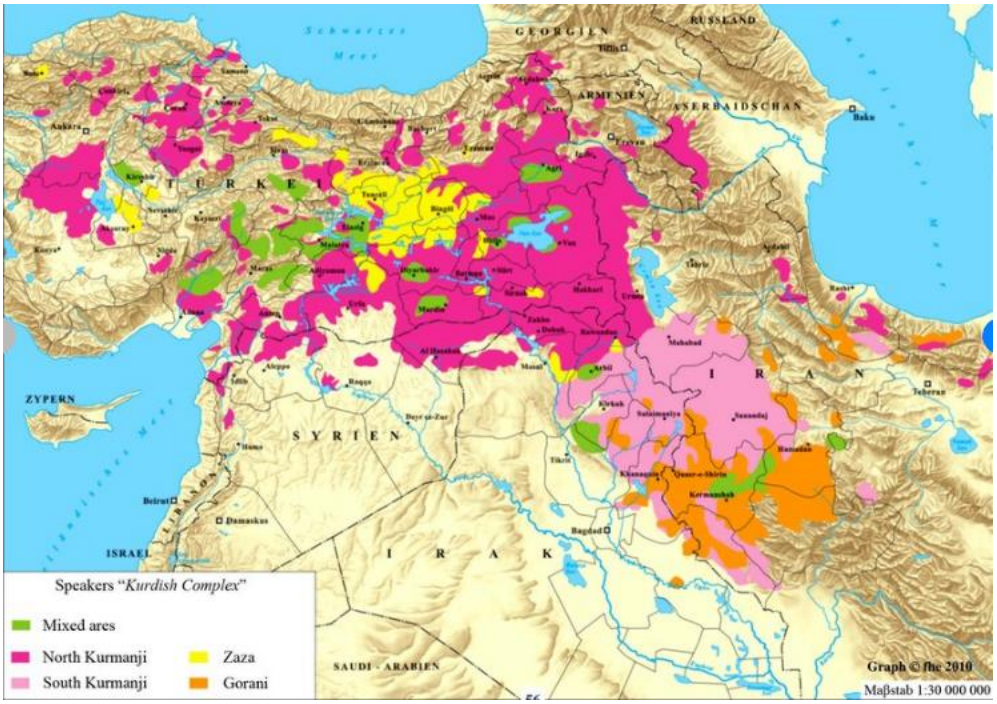
FIRST STAGE: THE INTER-STATE MIGRATION CAUSED BY THE AUTOCRATIC REGIMES IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The Middle Eastern states are characterized by their autocratic and authoritarian political administrations. All the states around the world have some kind of tension with their peoples due to their societies' demand for more liveable circumstances to survive and more right to express themselves, on the one hand, and the state's desire to maintain political and economic stability on the other. The Middle Eastern states are among the most prominent in the world in terms of tensions with their people.

While Iran already had an autocratic state tradition as a Middle Eastern state, it was transformed into another autocratic system after the Islamic Revolution. As all states undergoing a revolution experience, Iran also excluded a significant amount of people from the state apparatus formally and/or informally. Due to this exclusion, approximately 1.5 million Iranians migrated to Turkey and obtained temporary refugee status in Turkey between 1980 and 1991.[6] During this period, the Turkish government adopted a temporary policy allowing Iranians to enter and stay in the country without formal permission. Although Turkey intended to pursue a policy related with Iranian refugees encouraging them to resettle in a third country, a considerable part of them continued to stay

[6] Celia Mannaert, *Irregular migration and asylum in Turkey*. UNHCR., 2003. p. 2. https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/3ebf5c054.pdf (Accessed on 11.02.2024).

in Turkey and obtain citizenship in time.[7] There is no doubt that some of them were Kurdish refugees. They preferred to stay in Turkey as a place where they already had cultural, religious and historical ties.



Map-3. Spread of the Kurdish population according to kurdish dialects[8]

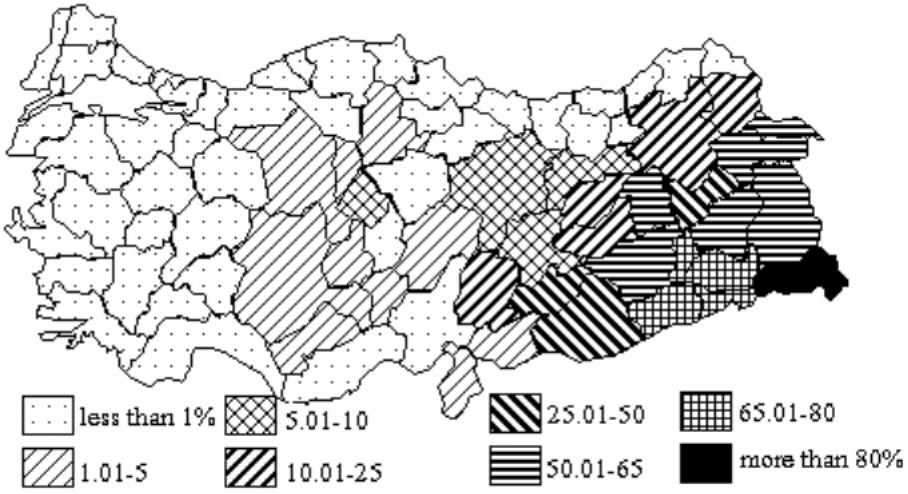
Another Kurdish migration wave from Middle Eastern states having autocratic regimes came from Iraq. During the Halabja bombings in 1988, approximately 70 thousand northern Iraqi Kurds fled from the other side of the border to the Turkish side and, at the end of the turmoil, most of the immigrants chose to stay in Turkey receiving citizenship from the Turkish government.[9] The

[7] Caysie Myers, *Refugee Flows Through Turkey: 1980 to 2017*, https://www.turkheritage.org/en/publications/issue-briefs/refugee-flows-through-turkey-1980-to-2017-4421 (Accessed on 08.03.2024). For further information, see: Martin Van Bruinessen, *The Kurds in movement: Migrations, mobilisations, communications and the globalisation of the Kurdish question*, Tokyo, Islamic Area Studies Project, 1999; Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish society, ethnicity, nationalism and refugee problems*, in *The Kurds*, Routledge, 2005, p. 7, 14-15.

[8] Ferdinand Hennerbichler, *The Origin of Kurds*, in "Advances in Anthropology", Vol. 2, 2012, No. 2, p. 67.

[9] Caysie Myers, *op. cit., passim*. For further information, see: Diane E. King, *Asylum*

author of this essay also met two of them while residing in İstanbul as a student at İstanbul University. They were the second generation of Kurds in Turkey and were speaking fluent Turkish. These types of migrations have been continuing almost uninterruptedly based on individual, family or small group experiences.



Map-4. The Kurdish population according to the 1965 census.[10]

SECOND STAGE: THE SECURITY CONCERN CAUSED BY PKK TERRORISM FROM 1984 UP TO TODAY

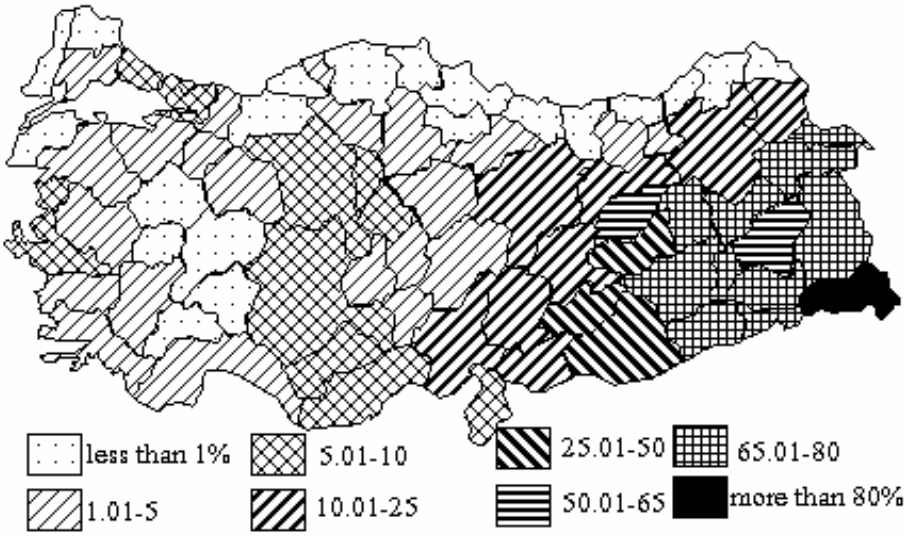
The Kurdish migration has been proceeding increasingly from eastern Anatolia to the western regions of Turkey for centuries due to the natural increase of population, economic, social and security related conditions. This migration is much more measurable in the last century. The proportion of the Kurds in all regions of Turkey constantly increased from 1965 to 1993. In these 28 years, the Kurdish population increased from 0.9 to 4 percent in the west; from 5 to 11 in the south; from 4 to 6 in central Anatolia; from 0.5 to 2 percent in the north and from 48 to 60 percent in the eastern regions.[11] It can be easily said by looking at

seekers/patron seekers: interpreting Iraqi Kurdish migration, in "Human Organization", Vol. 64, 2005, No. 4, pp. 316-326.

[10] Servet Mutlu, *Ethnic Kurds in Turkey: A Demographic Study*, in "International Journal of Middle East Studies", Vol. 28, 1996, pp. 517-541.

[11] İbrahim Sirkeci, *Exploring the Kurdish Population in the Turkish Context*, in "Genus", Vol. 56, 2000, No. 1-2. p. 156.

the data that the proportion of the Kurdish population in Turkey was not more than 1 percent prior to the 20th century except the eastern part of the country. While tracing these increasing proportions related to the Kurdish population in Turkey, some researchers predicting that within fifty years, the Kurdish population would exceed the Turkish population in Turkey[12], Kirişçi and Winrow do not agree with this idea because most Kurds living in western Turkey transform their identity and make intermarriages with the Turkish population.[13] Moreover, they adapt to city culture and city social conditions in two–three decades and have fewer children. Therefore, their natural birth-rate decreases in cities, and this also make Izady's prediction impossible to come true.



Map-5. Kurdish Population – 1990 according to Mutlu[14]

The terrorist activity in eastern Turkey began in 1984 and escalated to significant unrest in the region by the mid-1990s.[15] Terrorism-induced instability

[12] Mehrdad R. Izady, *A Concise Handbook: The Kurds*, Washington DC-Londra, Taylor and Francis, 1992, p. 119.

[13] Kemal Kirişçi, Gareth M. Winrow, *Kürt Sorunu Kökeni ve Gelişimi* [The Kurdish Question: Origins and Development], translated by Ahmet Fethi, İstanbul, Tarih Vakfi Yurt Publication, 1997. p. 140.

[14] Servet Mutlu, *op. cit., passim*.

[15] Djordje Stefanovic, Neophytos Loizides, and Samantha Parsons, *Home is where the heart is? Forced migration and voluntary return in Turkey's Kurdish regions*", in "Journal of Refugee Studies", Vol. 28, 2015, No. 2, p. 276-296.

had a domino effect, exacerbated by ineffective security measures. In this turbulent environment, a small portion of the local population fled from the state to join the organization, while others sought refuge by collaborating with the state. A third segment escaped from one state to another. The second group consisted of tribes that began collaborating with the state, typically assuming security roles like village guards in rural areas, to escape the organization's pressure. The third segment encompassed broad swathes of society migrating from rural areas under state control to urban areas and from the eastern region's dominance to the western region's dominance.

Because of the armed conflict and the security policy of the Turkish governments due to the PKK terror, it can be said that a massive domestic migration wave has occurred in Turkey since 1984. This massive migration began through the 1980s and rose each year and peaked in the 1990s. There are different figures in the literature about how many villages were subjected to evacuation. Natali claims that 1800 villages were abandoned, and 3 million people were forced to migrate from the eastern rural provinces to the city centres.[16] President Süleyman Demirel determined those settlements as 2.253 in 1995.[17] Bruneau claims that 3.500 villages were evacuated in this process by the security forces.[18] The most reliable figure is probably given by Sirkeci. He reports that 400 thousand people, mostly Kurdish, migrated from the region to the eastern but mostly to the western city centres of Turkey.[19] Depending on that reality, urban dwellers among Kurds (about 85 percent) are higher than their Turkish fellows (about 75 percent) in western Turkey.

Table-1. Estimated Kurdish population by region in Turkey 1965–1990[20]

Geographic Regions	1965		1990	
	Thousand	Percent	Thousand	Percent
Marmara	72.65	1.24	810.13	6.09

[16] Denise Natali, *Kürtler ve Devlet Irak, Türkiye ve İran'da Ulusal Kimliğin Gelişmesi* [The Kurds and the State Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey and Iran], translated by İbrahim Bingöl, İstanbul, Avesta Publication, 2009. p. 165.

[17] Kemal Kirişçi, Gareth M. Winrow, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

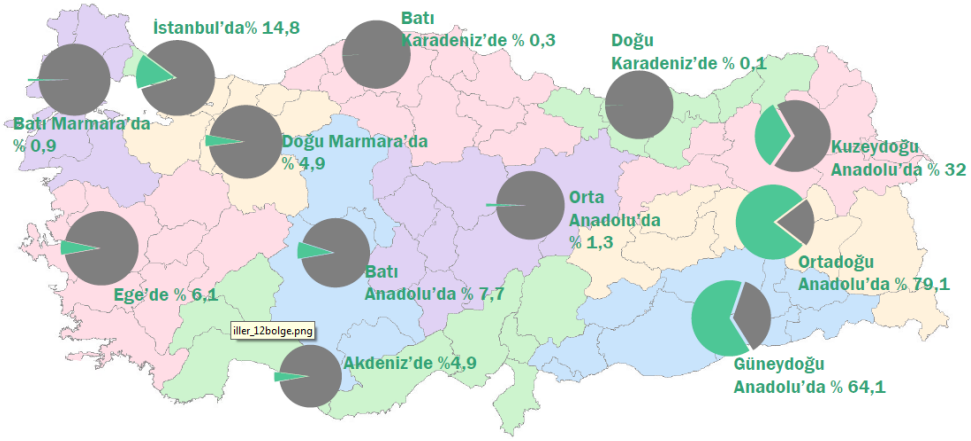
[18] Michel Bruneau, *Küçük Asya'dan Türkiye'ye Azınlıklar, Etnik-Milli Homojenleştirme, Diasporalar* [Minorities, Ethnic-National Homogenization, and Diasporas from Asia Minor to Turkey], translated by Ayhan Güneş, İstanbul, İletişim Publication, 2018. p. 219. For further information, see: Joost Jongerden, *The settlement issue in Turkey and the Kurds: an analysis of spatial policies, modernity and war*, Vol. 102, 2007, Brill.

[19] İbrahim Sirkeci, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[20] Servet Mutlu, *op. cit., passim*.

Aegean	15.77	0.36	296.99	3.93
Mediterranean	190.22	4.98	726.55	8.95
Central Anatolia	262.64	4.13	579.38	5.53
Black Sea	28.72	0.51	37.88	0.50
Eastern	1,192.73	38.87	2,230.29	41.96
South-eastern	1,192.73	64.24	2,365.04	64.98
Total	3,132.39	9.98	7,046.25	12.60

Table-1 illustrates the percentages of the ethnic groups and the spread of the demographic structure of the ethnic groups in four categories – Kurds, Turks, Zazas and Arabs – throughout eastern and south-eastern Turkey. It is clear from Table-1 that there are 19 cities throughout eastern Turkey, while 12 of them (Ağrı, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Mardin, Muş, Siirt, Şırnak, Tunceli, Van) have predominantly Kurdish population, and 7 of them (Adıyaman, Elazığ, Erzurum, Gazi Antep, Kahraman Maraş, Malatya, Şanlıurfa) have predominantly Turkish population. The ethnic distribution of the 19 cities in the region consists of 55% Kurdish, 30% Turkish, 6% Arabian, and 6% Zaza populations in total.



Map-6. Distribution of the Kurdish Population by regions in 2010[21]

According to another research, which was conducted in 12 cities consisting of Adıyaman, Ağrı, Bingöl, Batman, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Kars, Mardin, Şanlıurfa, Şırnak, Tunceli and Van that are mostly populated by the Kurds, carrying out a poll involving 1918 persons, the Kurdish population was 73 percent, the Zaza

[21] KONDA, *Biz Kimiz'10 Kürt Meselesinde Algı ve Beklentiler* [Who We Are'10 Perceptions and Expectations on the Kurdish Issue], İstanbul, İletişim Publication, 2011, p. 16.

population was 12.8 percent, the Turkish population was 8.9 percent and the Arab population was 4.6 percent.[22]

THIRD STAGE: URBANIZATION AND THE SPREAD OF THE KURDISH PEOPLE IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

After World War II, Turkey rapidly began urbanizing. The urbanization rate, which was 20% in 1950, tripled to 60% by the year 2000. It is believed that, in present-day Turkey, the urbanization rate has exceeded 70%.[23] This process affected not only rural areas but also urban centres in the east. Similarly, this process effectively encompassed Kurds, leading them to migrate to cities in mass numbers due to both push and pull factors. These migrations definitively influenced the volume and proportion of the Kurdish population both in the areas they left and in the areas they moved to. While the Kurdish population sharply decreased in rural areas in the east, the number and proportion of Kurds in urban centres in both the east and west markedly increased.

Table-2. Ethno-demographic structure in Eastern and Southeast Turkey[24]

Ethnicity	First Region (12 City)		Second Region (7 City)		Eastern and Southeast Anatolia, Total Population and Percentages of 19 Cities	
	Ağrı – Batman – Bingöl – Bitlis – Diyarbakır – Hakkari – Mardin – Muş – Siirt –Şırnak – Tunceli – Van		Adıyaman – Elazığ – Erzurum – G.Antep – K.Maraş – Malatya – Ş. Urfa			
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
Kurds	4,987,068	80.49	2,191,819	32.62	7,178,887	55.59
Turks	243,037	3.92	3,701,857	55.10	3,944,894	30.55
Zazas	550,018	8.87	319,065	4.75	869,083	6.73

[22] Mesut Yeğen et al, *Kürtler Ne İstiyor Kürdistan'da Etnik Kimlik, Dindarlık, Sınıf ve Seçimler* [What Do the Kurds Want? Ethnic Identity, Religiosity, Class, and Elections in Kurdistan], İstanbul, İletişim Publication, 2016, p. 85.

[23] Gülen Elmas, *Women, urbanization and regional development in Southeast Anatolia: A case study for Turkey*, in "Turkish Studies", Vol. 5, 2004, No. 3, p. 1-24.

[24] BILGESAM, *Kurds and Societal Perceptions in Turkey*, (Institutional Report), prepared by Mehmed Sadi Bilgiç, Salih Akyürek, Istanbul, BILGESAM Publication, 2012.

Arabs	372,117	6.00	488,353	7.27	860,470	6.64
Others	42,971	0.69	16,252	0.24	59,227	0.45
Total	6,195,211	100.00	6,717,350	100.00	12,912,561	100.00

According to the data, the Kurdish population increased from 3.1 million in 1965 to 10.2 million in 2003. As it is shown in Table-2 the same population rose from 9.2 percent to 14.5 respectively. This rapid increase should be considered a result of both the increase of the average natural birth rate (3.3% percent for the Kurds between these two years and 2.4% for the national average of Turkey) and the declining mortality rates of the Kurdish population in Turkey.[25]

Table-3. Difference of the Kurdish population in Turkey when compared to the Turkish population and others[26]

	1935	1965	1990	1992	1993	1998	2003
Turks	89.2	90.1	-	85.8	82.7	83.2	82.6
Kurds	9.2	7.6	12.6	12.4	13.0	14.4	14.5
Others	1.6	2.3	-	1.8	4.3	2.4	2.9

"In 1965, the Kurdish-speaking population constituted less than 1% of the population in the western provinces and 5% in the southern provinces. By 2003, the shares of the Kurdish population had reached to 6.2 and 9.5% respectively in these two regions".[27]

According to Mutlu's estimations, the percentages of the Kurdish population in big metropolitan centres increased between 1965 and 1990 as follows, from 3.84 percent to 6.74 percent in Ankara; from 2.77 percent to 8.16 in Istanbul and from 1.04 percent to 6.91 percent in Izmir, respectively.[28]

As Table-1 shows, while the Kurdish population in Turkey was roughly 3 million in 1965, it increased to 7 million in 1990 and as a percentage of the total population of Turkey, it increased from 9.98 to 12.60. Both figures indicate that the Kurdish population in Turkey grew by 124.94 percent during this 25-year period, while the non-Kurdish population of the country increased by 73.02

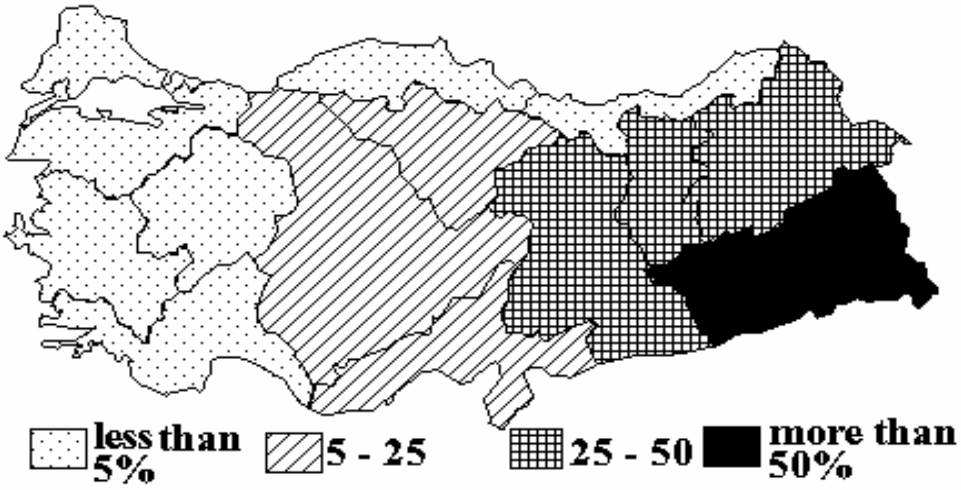
[25] İsmet Koç et al., *Demographic Differentials and Demographic Integration of Turkish and Kurdish Population in Turkey*, in "Population Research and Policy Review", Vol. 27, 2008, no. 4, p. 449.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 449

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 450.

[28] Servet Mutlu, *op. cit.*

percent. However, it should be noted that urbanization gained momentum and accelerated in Turkey after the 1980s. The Kurdish population, also influenced both by the attraction of cities and the push factor of terrorism, began migrating to urban areas from the 1980s onwards.[29]



Map-7. Kurdish population – 1993 according to Sirkeci.[30]

DISCUSSION AND EFFECTS OF THE KURDISH SPREAD ON THE CURRENT KURDISH ISSUE IN TURKEY

The most important incident in the last hundred years that enabled the Kurds to concentrate and form a majority in eastern Anatolia was the exile of the Armenians from the region in 1915.[31] The fact that this outcome benefits the

[29] Rebecca Lucas, *Taking to the streets: the Kurdistan Workers' Party and the urbanization of insurgency*, in "Small Wars & Insurgencies", Vol. 31, 2020, No. 1, pp. 61-86. For further information, see: Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kurds and the City*, Joyce Blau, *L'éternelle chez les Kurdes*, Paris, Institut Kurde de Paris, 2013.

[30] İbrahim Sirkeci, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

[31] Hans Lukas Kieser, *Iskalanmış Barış Doğu Vilayetleri'nde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet 1839-1938* [The squandered peace. Missionaries, ethnicity and the state in the eastern provinces of Turkey 1839–1938)], translated by Atilla Dirim, İstanbul, İletişim Publication, 2013, p. 272, 277-8, 283, 303.

Kurds indicates that the cause may be related to the same actor.[32] This exile fundamentally changed the fate of Anatolia in demographic, economic and political terms. First, the demographic situation changed significantly in two respects. Firstly, the exile of the Armenians enabled the Kurds who were in pending statehood to settle these places. This process occurred sequentially. The Kurds that were in the rural areas settled in towns, districts and city centers; the nomads filled empty rural regions and, finally, the Kurds that lived as nomads on the Iranian side found empty spaces to continue their nomadic way of life by passing over to the Turkish side. These developments led to a further increase in the Kurdish population on the Anatolian plateau in comparison with the three other countries. This quantitative increase would also produce some qualitative problems in the future.

The expulsion of the Armenians from eastern Anatolia, which was populated by a relatively urbanized, educated, prosperous and artisan people embracing urban culture, caused this region to regress economically and socially in such a way that it could not recover again.[33] The Kurdish population, which occupied the traditional places of the Armenians, did not have their social capital, and some of them were still adapting to the settled way of life from a nomadic lifestyle. Even though the Kurds seized the property and land left by the Armenians[34], instead of running this economic capital, they just managed to consume it. As a result, the national wealth and human resources accumulated in hundreds of years in this region were wasted. The worsening of eastern Anatolia's economy in such a degree resulted in the Kurds, who had settled here, causing a social problem after a while, which finally evolved into an ethnic problem.

Politically, however, as a natural result of the first two circumstances, in eastern Turkey, a Kurdish issue emerged.[35] If the Armenians had not been exiled, the Kurds would not have been able to achieve the majority in this region.[36] If the

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[32] Hikmet Öksüz, İsmail Köse, *ABD Yüksek Komiseri Amiral Bristol'un Rapor ve Savaş Günlüklerinde Ermeni Meselesi* (1919-1927) [The Armenian Question in the Reports and War Diaries of the U.S. High Commissioner Admiral Bristol (1919–1927)], Trabzon, Karadeniz Technical University Publishing, 2015, p. 113, 268, 272.

[33] Uğur Ümit Üngör, *Modern Türkiye'nin İnşası Doğu Anadolu'da Ulus, Devlet ve Şiddet (1913-1950)* [The Making of Modern Turkey Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, (1913–1950)], İstanbul, İletişim Publication, 2016, p. 46, 63.

[34] Hans Lukas Kieser, *op. cit.*, p. 40, 198-9, 465, 513.

[35] Zeynep Gambebtti, Joost Jongerden, *Kurdish issue in Turkey*, London, Routledge, 2015, *passim*.

[36] Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914) Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri* [Ottoman

Armenians had not been exiled, the economic situation of the Kurds in the east would not have been so bad. Finally, if these bad experiences had not taken place, Turkey would not have been able to experience a Kurdish problem. As it happens around the world, the dominating central planning has constantly produced problems in Turkey, as well. Instead, a controlled liberal and free market approach is the greatest solution for ethnic problems. Indeed, while the strict management of central planning of the Young-Turks and the new Republic of Turkey regarding the Kurds largely became unsuccessful[37], urbanization alone, carried out in a highly improvised way, provided much more successful integration and social integration of the Kurds, which the central planning was unable to do.

On the one hand, this experience points to the cost and incapacity of an intentional and centralized assimilationist policy; on the other, it strongly points out that a spontaneous, democratic and liberal economic-political process is full of costless and more tangible results. Therefore, while America is able to integrate ethnic groups, France cannot.[38] While America, Canada and especially the northern European countries represent the successful group in this regard, France, as well as Russia and many of the centralized states such as China and Turkey, can be added to the category that fails to integrate different ethnic groups.[39] Because the first one is based on democracy, liberalism, free market, spontaneity and volunteerism in social and economic relations; the second one demonstrates an approach based on anti-democratic, oppressive, centralist, planning and obligatory tendencies. Similarly, the first model tries to integrate the ethnic groups; the second model tries to reshape them. Yet social integration and coexistence are possible without reshaping ethnicities, and the richer social life precisely exists in this second place.

CONCLUSIONS

The Kurds are one of the nomadic and/or semi-nomadic peoples of the

Population 1830–1914. Demographic and Social Characteristics], İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Publication, 2003, p. 91-96.

[37] Uğur Ümit Üngör, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-339.

[38] Robert A. Levine, *Assimilating Immigrants. Why America Can and France Cannot*, Occasional Paper, RAND-Initiated Research, 2004. www.rand.org, (Accessed on: 02. 06. 2024), pp. 1-13.

[39] Soner Çağaptay, *Türkiye'de İslam, Laiklik ve Milliyetçilik Türk Kimdir?* [Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?], translated by Özgür Bircan, İstanbul, Bilgi University Publication, 2009, pp. 17-19, 23-28.

Middle East, like the Baluches, Pashtuns and Berbers. Nevertheless, due to their geostrategic position, they are one of the most prominent ethnic groups in contemporary international relations. Although Kurds are known as an Iranian-origin people, today they are a people that rather lives outside Iran.

Because the Kurds live on the junction connecting the three continents, they have to spread to a wider area as compared to the other nomads in the Middle East. Roughly 25 percent of the Kurdish population lives in Iran today, their historical homelands. The remaining 75 percent of the population is scattered in the neighboring countries such as Turkey, Iraq and Syria, in the region outside of their historical motherland.

There is only one way for Turkey to overcome all these problems. It has been seen in the historical processes that hard military interventions, centralized political structures and uniform cultural approaches are not a solution. Therefore, even if it is integrated with other methods, the solution is a democratic, multicultural and decentralized approach beginning from the cultural field to the administrative one. Spain and England in the west, Iran and Indonesia in the east were able to solve these problems mostly through such methods. Otherwise, these problems will continue to haunt Turkey for many years to come.

Iraq's attempts to resolve ethnic issues through violence resulted in the establishment of a de facto Kurdish state in Northern Iraq. Currently, this entity lacks nothing but recognition by world powers, including the United Nations and neighboring states. A similar situation is unfolding today in northern Syria. Fighting terrorism is categorized differently; attempting to suppress ethnic issues through violence is synonymous with forcing communities to establish states in the long term to secure humane living. Every ethnic group, community, religious belief, and class has the right to live in humane ways, even at minimal levels, within each nation-state. Modern nation-states are political structures where this public satisfaction can be upheld, beyond ethnic, religious, and racial mandates. Nation-states in the Middle East, including Turkey, should provide and preserve this public satisfaction for ethnic, religious, and class diversity.

At first glance, Turkey can indeed turn these intense waves of migration, which may appear negative as a "Kurdish invasion" or "demographic Kurdification," into opportunities from multiple perspectives. Firstly, migrations from east to west and from rural to urban areas can be viewed as a fresh infusion of labour into economic production sectors. Secondly, these migrations can enhance competition and social dynamics in western cities. Thirdly, the different perspectives on life, the world, and the environment

brought by migrants themselves can lead to the development of diverse and more productive trends in technical, intellectual, and artistic fields. Fourthly, this population, as educated Kurds with Western modern and urban values, could serve as a facilitator for communication and collaboration with Kurds in eastern regions of the Turkish Republic in the future. Fifthly, this population could play a mediating and pioneering role in Turkey's communication and collaboration processes with Kurdish representatives in neighbouring countries and the Kurdish diaspora abroad. Sixthly and finally, these migrations and migrants could not only alleviate Turkey's Kurdish issue domestically but also strengthen collaborations with neighbouring countries and sensitive European countries on this matter. As previously mentioned, the fundamental dynamic Turkey will need in order to activate all these potentials is observable and measurable realistic democratization.

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