"We don't belong" – a qualitative study of young Kurds, Europeanization and identity in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The Kurds in Turkey are main subjects in an ongoing debate on recognition, identity awareness and ethnic mobilization. Dealing with the Europeanization of minority rights, the thesis aims to highlight the EU's role in contributing to increased recognition of the Kurds as an ethnic group, and what possible effects such a development may have. Particularly the issue of a more prominent identity awareness as a result of the recognition of the Kurds as an ethnic group, is pointed out as one main effect of Europeanization pressure on minority rights in Turkey.

By the collection and analysis of semi-structured interviews pursued with young people of Kurdish origin as well as with experts on the topic, the aim has been to investigate the role of the EU – seen through the conditionality principle, conflict resolution and social learning – and what perceived effects a diminishing EU leverage may have on individuals of minority background.

The analysis suggests that the EU is indeed seen as an important factor leading to increased recognition and thus identity awareness of the Kurds as a group. Even if the sincerity of EU reforms is questioned, the young Kurds display a belief in the EU and subsequent frustration by the standstill of EU reforms. The perceived role and importance of the EU for the individuals has seemingly shrunk, and the analysis further suggests that the increased recognition and subsequent identity awareness is leading to the interviewees seeing themselves between a rock and a hard place – without the belief of further reforms pushed by neither the Turkish government nor the EU. At the same time, polarization, nationalistic tendencies and politicized identities continue to grow.

The conclusion points to the EU's role in pushing for minority rights reform and conflict resolution, seen as valuable for members of minority groups – however questions the pressure for reforms without lasting enforcement mechanisms. By focusing on the implications of this development for the individual Kurd, the hope is to shed light on the development of increased identity awareness and EU pressure or lack of such. The qualitative case study is unable to isolate the effects of the EU on increased identity awareness, and further research on the topic should be conducted.

Chapter 1: Turkey – minority rights and EU accession

"(T)his is a long-term issue. It's the social polarization, and the deepening of identity politics. (...) They [the Kurdish youth] less and less consider themselves as Turkish. They don't feel the ownership, the belonging. They don't feel as belonging to the Turkish Republic" (Aktar 2012 [interview]).

1.0. Introduction

One leg in the West, one in the East. The Republic of Turkey is undoubtedly a country of growing interest, to Europe as well as the rest of the world. Turkey's economy, unique geo-strategic location and its - sometimes controversial - foreign policy choices, are all elements which have made it a country it becomes increasingly necessary to take into consideration. The policy of "zero problems with neighbours", its stance in Libya and its criticisms of Israel are all examples of Turkish appearances on the stage of regional and global politics. The Turkish initiative to help the rebuilding of Somalia is another noteworthy example (Today's Zaman 2012). Turkish public opinion is generally positive when speaking of Turkish enhanced strength in their neighborhood. A great majority seems to think that Turkey may serve as a model for the Middle East (Seufert 2011: 3). Seeing the political development in later years, Turkey has been characterized as a showcase of how one can integrate a "potent Islamic movement" into a secular constitutional democratic framework. Well-known are Turkey's wide-reaching reforms, implemented as part of its drive for a full European Union membership – and claimed to have led to an improvement of the democratic quality in Turkey (Kirisci 2011: 335).

On the other hand, voices are currently speaking up about a Turkey bitterly divided over "…issues of minority and human rights, freedom of speech, and media and academic autonomy" (Turam 2012: 109). Opinions on Turkey's attempts to reach European standards recognize that problems are evident, in particular in the realms of "fundamental freedoms and democratization" (Tokyay 2012). The Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg has uttered concerns with a Turkey "giving precedence to the protection of the state over the protection of human

rights" (Economist 2012). Within the past couple of years, more than one hundred journalists have been arrested, the majority still awaiting trial. The conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdish insurgence group, the PKK, continues with a seemingly endless string of violence. Contradicting official claims that Turkey is indeed democratizing, there is a growing concern amongst international commentators that the government is in fact moving away from its declared democratic aspirations. "Turkey is in many ways moving in a direction which makes it hard to deal with the traditional European values of democracy, gender equality and freedom of speech" (Messerschmidt 2011). Similarly, "despite Turkey's rapid modernization, individuals continue to be prosecuted on the basis of claiming the rights of the Kurds and other minorities and demonstrations are stopped using anti-terrorism laws" (Human Rights Watch 2011). Turkey received only 3 points, a negative development, on the Freedom House index due to the ban on a pro-Kurdish party by the Constitutional Court. Turkey thus remains only a "partly free" society, according to Freedom House (Freedom House Country Report 2010 and 2011). 2010 saw Reporters without Borders ranking Turkey its lowest score in a decade (Albion 2011: 5). "Despite some notable advances in freedom of expression in recent years, the overall trend in Turkey has been negative" (Albion 2011: 4). This shows the flip side of the *lira*.

1.1. "Turkey's march towards Europe"

Ever since the 1923 establishment of the Republic, Turkey has identified itself as part of, and had close connections to, the rest of Europe - being one of the founding members of the Council of Europe and a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE 2007: 155; Örmeci 2011). Although obtaining full European Union membership has been an uttered goal for Turkish policy makers – including the AK Party, which is currently serving its third period in office – actually joining the EU has proven far more difficult (Toktas & Aran 2009: 698). Turkey has been an associate member of the union and its predecessors since 1963, and filed its first formal application for membership in 1987. Turkey achieved candidate status at the 1999 Helsinki summit, and in the following years the Turkish government pursued

various reform packages in controversial areas such as human rights and freedom of expression, aiming at fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria, a requirement for EU accession (Toktas & Aran 2009: 698; Örmeci 2011; Grigoriadis 2008: 35). The EU candidacy was seen as accelerating a democratic reform process in these controversial policy areas (Kirisci 2011: 335). The AKP – in power since 2002 – continued the reform process. Being aware of the minority rights condition for EU membership, Turkey "…embarked on a redefinition of its national interest and identity" (Grigoriadis 2008: 35). This became a difficult project for the military and civil bureaucracy, who knew that such an approach would deprive the bureaucracy of its earlier privileges (Grigoriadis 2008: 35). Still, reform packages were pursued to meet the EU criteria, with achievements in particularly the realms of linguistic freedoms and broadcasting. The confirmation that other languages than Turkish existed in Turkey, was a major breakthrough for EU, and the acceptance of linguistic diversity proved important for Muslim minorities (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 463). In 2004, the EU decided that Turkey did meet the Copenhagen criteriaand the two parties opened accession talks in October 2005 (Kubicek 2005: 361; The Nowegian Helsinki Committee 2007: 1). An observer noted that the reforms undertaken by Turkey would have been "… impossible in the absence of a powerful and highly institutionalized EU anchor in the direction of full membership" (Kubicek 2005: 362). Here, one can see significant developments in the EU-Turkish relationship. The situation currently, however, can hardly be seen as that prosperous.

1.2. Turkey and EU conditionality today

The issue of Turkish EU membership has been widely debated in the last decade. EU conditionality – seen here as entrance criteria to join the EU, was adopted over time during the EU's eastern enlargement (Tocci 2008: 833). For Turkey, to put it simply: "EU conditionality on Turkey is much less effective than it used to be" (Somer 2012 [interview]). The EU can be seen as having lost much of its influence on the transformation process in Turkey - with EU's attempts to warn or interfere not being paid sufficient attention to (Aktar 2009). According to the European Policy Centre, the relationship between Turkey and the EU is in fact in a deadlock (Paul 2011: 1), a trend

which is expected to continue (Abadan-Unat 2012 [interview], Somer 2012 [interview]). No accession chapter has been opened since June 2010, only one out of 35 chapters set up for negotiations has been closed, whereas 18 chapters have been frozen due to veto from France, Cyprus or the entire European Council (Paul 2011: 1). The rush for so-called EU reforms has not lasted, and Turkey can be seen to going back to a so-called "restoration period" (Aktar 2009; Aktar 2012 [interview]). Main obstacles for Turkish EU accession are the Cyprus issue, public and political opinion within the EU and the financial crisis (Economist 2010). Other problems, according to the EU itself, include freedom of expression and the rights of the Kurdish minority (EU Document). The Turks themselves are increasingly tired of the seemingly never-ending accession talks, and polls show that numbers favoring Turkish EU membership are decreasing (Economist 2010)[1]. Some actors within Turkey are also seen to only have paid lip-service to the accession process, wishing to halt the entire process when EU accession would come all too close (Tocci 2008: 887).

A view that the reform process between the EU and Turkey has stopped completely, is not shared by everybody. Yilmaz (2011) claims that developments are still happening, also in controversial areas such as minority rights. Notably, the EU "remains an influential actor in Turkey" (Human Rights Watch 2011). However, the European Commission Report in November 2010 stated that recent reforms have been of "limited scope" (Human Rights Watch 2011). The chief Turkish EU-negotiator, Egemen Bagis, has claimed that the process towards EU membership is more important than the results – however, it is hard to persuade the Turks to go through this process if they have no belief that they will reach their goal of EU membership (Economist 2011). As Aktar (2009) states, "…(a) Turkey not seeing its future in the EU membership will have difficulties to (…) absorb the democratic environment resulting from the EU-inspired reforms". Who, now, would have the most to lose by such a deterioration of Turkish-EU relations? One group would be the Kurdish minority in Turkey – whose restrictions on language, culture and freedom of

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[1] According to Seufert (2011: 5), some 65% of the Turkish population support the Turkish foreign policy program, a number clearly higher than the election results for the ruling AK Party. This underlines the independent popularity of the new foreign policy which includes a progressively critical stance towards the European Union.

expression were improved due to EU-related reforms (Freedom House Report 2010).
In order to continue the assessment of minority rights and the Kurds in the Turkish
context, one needs to identify what definitions of minorities exist, what position the
protection of minorities have in the international arena and whether and why minority
rights are really seen as important for EU accession. Has the EU pressure led to large-
scale developments for the Kurds in the realms of minority rights – and what would be
the impact of a weakening of EU pressure?

1.3. Minority definitions and developments

Defining who a minority group is, has proved to be a complex issue. The reason for
this is that no common definition of what constitutes a national minority exists. One
explanation for the lack of definition is that states are anxious that increased minority
rights will endanger their territorial integrity (Kugelmann 2007: 237-241). The lack of
universally recognized frameworks on the rights of minorities is an important
limitation for the protection and promotion of minority rights. There has, however,
been a number of attempts to define what a minority is. A much-used and cited
definition comes from UN's former Special Rapporteur Francesco Capotorti
(Kugelmann 2007: 237). Here, a minority is *"a group numerically inferior to the rest
of the population in a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being
nationals of the state – posess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing
from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of
solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language"*
(OHCHR 1979)[2].

Under international law, states are obliged to as a minimum to avoid that minorities –
just like any other individual – are being discriminated against. The UN International

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[2] As Capotorti did his work for a Sub-Committee of the UN, his definition is intrinsically linked to the only existing
universally binding text on minority rights protection - the Article 27 of the International Coventant on Civil and Political
Rights (ICCPR). The beneficiaries are persons belonging to "ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities" (Kugelmann 2007:
237). This covenant requires states to protect the human rights of all people living on the territory, without distinction in
regards to e.g. language (HCNM 2010: 19). The covenant is limited in that it leaves it up to the states themselves to define
which, or whether they at all have minorities on their territory (Pejic 1997: 669). Still, the mere existence of such a binding
text has helped preserve minority rights (Kugelmann 2007: 245).

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination[3] is here the most central text, prohibiting states from discriminating between its citizens and thus making the convention relevant for persons belonging to minority groups (Pejic 1997: 675). Particularly for Europe, minorities may also approach the European Court of Human Rights to have their rights ensured (Kugelmann 2007: 250).

1.4. Why should minorities be entitled to "special rights"?

To assess the importance of minority rights, political philosopher Will Kymlicka's liberal theory on minority rights will be used. According to Kymlicka (1995: 2), Western political tradition has been remarkably silent on minority issues. After World War One, the League of Nations led a new approach when speaking of the recognition and protection of minorities (Kugelmann 2007: 235). However, minorities were only guaranteed freedom from oppression and discrimination if protected by a "kin state" (Kymlicka 1995: 2). After the atrocities of World War Two, a more comprehensive approach to minority rights was clearly needed. Liberal forces aimed at providing individuals with basic civil and political rights, which would in turn make group rights such as minority rights, unnecessary. The assumption was that members of minority groups would be protected against prejudice and discrimination, but also that the state would be unable to use ethnicity as criteria for distribution of rights (Kymlicka 1995: 4). Hence, many European societies have developed a so-called "unitary republican citizenship". This implies that all citizens share the same rights – and the unitary model dismisses the use of positive actions targeting special groups in the society, meaning that minority rights would be substituted with general human rights (O'Cinneide 2004: 43-45). According to Kymlicka (1995: 5), however, minority rights and human rights cannot be seen as one category, as human rights cannot give an answer to basic minority rights' questions such as recognition of languages, educational differences and questions of regional autonomy. Because minority groups

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[3] As early as 1966, Article 1(1) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1966 should prohibit "(a)ny distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life" (Meijknecht 2004: 33).

are vulnerable, they may need protection from the majority group when it comes to economic and political decisions, areas where the minorities are often unable to participate fully (Galenkamp 1995: 43). Similarly, unless groups' special experiences and cultural and social contributions are recognized, these groups are unable to be socially equal with the majority (O'Cinneide 2004: 48). This shows the importance of recognition of special rights for groups and calls for the recognition of minority and group rights, including the right of autonomous self-government in applicable situations and extended language rights (O'Cinneide 2004: 48). *"Membership in a culture is qualitatively different from membership in other associations, since our language and culture provide the context within which we make our choices. Loss of cultural membership, therefore, is a profound harm that reduces one's very ability to make meaningful choices. Hence special rights compensate for unequal circumstances"* (Kymlicka 1994: 25).

Kymlicka is criticized for his "jump" from the existence of a separate societal culture (i.e. national minority) to the assumption that its members wish to keep and preserve their particular culture (Galenkamp 1996: 45). Importantly, people's preferences change and shift over time. This contradicts the "difference multiculturalism", where one assumes that ethnic minorities have an unchangable identity which needs to be preserved. According to Barry (2001: 49), one needs to take into consideration the changing attitudes and identities of peoples, also within ethnic minority groups – which creates a dynamic, rather than static, environment. Still, "...(t)here is an increasing global recognition that minority rights are an essential part of human rights" (Rechel 2009: 231). Before moving to the EU and minority rights protection, one should look briefly at international organizations' handling of minority rights, from which the EU has adopted its principles (Sasse 2009: 20).

1.5. The OSCE, the Council of Europe and the United Nations

To demonstrate the organization's focus on minorities, the OSCE established a High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) in 1992 (OSCE/HCNM 2010: 1; Kugelmann 2007: 249). This High Commissioner should be an instrument for conflict prevention, seen in the context of the war in Yugoslavia and the breakup of the Soviet

Union. The High Commissioner identifies a minority as "a group with linguistic, ethnic, or cultural characteristics distinct from the majority and that usually not only seeks to maintain its identity but also tries to give stronger expression to that identity" (UN Pamphlet No. 9: 5). The HCNM, currently Knut Vollebæk, has stated that within certain contexts, the term national minority should refer to all "religious, linguistic and cultural as well as ethnic minorities, regardless of whether these groups are recognized as such by the States where they reside" (FRA 2011: 18). This again reinforces the importance of minority protection as something universal.

For the Council of Europe, the perhaps most important instrument developed regarding minority rights has been the 1995 Framework Convention on National Minorities. This was the first legally binding instrument directly connected with the protection of minorities (Karimova & Deverell 2001: 4). Two problems persist, however. Firstly, the Framework Convention is only legally binding for the 39 Council of Europe member states having signed and ratified the convention. Powerful member states such as France and Turkey have failed to do so, sending dubious signals to the other states. Secondly, as the states were unable to agree on a common definition of what a national minority should be, the Framework Convention solely deals with the *recognized* national minorities, which the states themselves are free to decide who are (Kugelmann 2007: 254)[4]. These challenges highlight the ambiguous nature of minority definitions. Still, the sheer existence of the Framework Convention has contributed to setting minority rights on the agenda.

The United Nations 1992 Declaration on Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities was seen as an important development for and acknowledgement of the special protection of minority rights. Article 1(1) of the declaration states that "States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity" (UN Declaration Article 1). Still, one is also to remember that this declaration is non-binding and that

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[4] This has led to different definitions such as Luxembourg claiming they have no national minorities at all, to Sweden listing five different groups as their national minorities. For some countries, the words minority does not even exist, such as in Macedonia (Council of Europe List of Signatures).

the states themselves are free to define what a national minority constitutes in their particular context (Kugelmann 2007: 244).

1.6. The EU

For the EU, the 1992 Treaty on the European Union marked a shift from an economical to a more politicized union. For the first time, the 1993 Copenhagen criteria noted that recognition of minority rights would be a condition for union membership (Grigoriadis 2008: 34; FRA 2011: 19). The EU also promoted standards in particular fields related to minorities, namely the right to set up minority institutions, the right to use minority languages in front of the courts and the protection of refugees and displaced people (FRA 2011: 19). This focus on minority rights protection is broadly found in EU documents. Looking at the Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty, EU values are "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities" (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 10; FRA 2011: 3). The emphasis on minorities in both the Charter [the Lisbon Treaty] and in the Copenhagen Criteria shows the EU's approach towards minority rights being, at least, increasingly more comprehensive (FRA 2011: 24-25). Importantly, "...the EU has played a paramount role among the international actors influencing domestic minority rights policies" (Rechel 2009: 10).). As seen, minorities are often in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis the states in which they reside, risking discrimination and lacking protection (FRA 2011: 13). It might be natural, then, that when minority rights protection was introduced as a clear requirement within the Copenhagen criteria, minorities in accession states hoped for increased protection.

When it comes to EU pressure on Turkey regarding minority rights, annual EU reports have repeatedly called for an improvement of the treatment of minorities in Turkey (Toktas & Aran 2009: 706). This could be a sign for Turkey's minorities that the European Union would come "to their rescue". The EU pressure regarding minority rights reform became increasingly intense as the process towards EU membership was getting closer for Turkey, and "(p)ressure from the side of the EU in fact led to large-scale reform concerning the recognition of the Kurds" (Kirisci 2011: 336). This

reinforces the importance of EU presence for the Kurds and could imply that the Kurds would have great faith in the EU, believing that the union could strongly influence Turkish minority rights policies.

1.6.1. Criticisms of the EU minority regime

Just as other international bodies have not come up with a comprehensive and common definition, the EU also fails to define what constitutes a minority (FRA 2011: 9). EU law has nothing to say on the decision as to what groups as seen as national minorities – this being solely up to the member states (FRA 2011: 20). Minority protection became a condition for EU membership only after the Copenhagen Criteria. Thus, one can argue that double standards exist within the EU regarding minority rights, with EU demanding more of candidate countries than the existing member states (Yildiz 2011: 7; Sasse 2008: 846-47). This has raised questions as to whether the EU is really committed to minority protection (Toktas & Aran 2009: 706). Claims are made that "(t)he official minority policy (of the EU) reflects confusion in both defining minorities and granting them legal protection" (Yildiz 2011: 30). The minority criterion can therefore be seen as neither consistent nor credible from the side of the EU, but as a vague approach (Sasse 2008: 843; Toktas & Aran 2009: 706-708; Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 9). Still, the minorities themselves may have great faith in the leverage of the EU.

1.6.2. "Otherness"

The above-mentioned EU pressure for recognition of minority groups may have unforeseen consequences. Claims that EU pressure has led to new patterns and extended recognition of minority groups is an interesting, however little debated aspect of EU influence. Such recognition may, however, ultimately lead to the reinforcement of the "otherness" of the minority group. This would imply minority groups becoming both increasingly recognized and also more exposed to discrimination, as it will trigger nationalist reactions (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 20). This may ultimately result in a sharper nationalist discourse. According to Kirisci (2011: 335), both Turkish and Kurdish people currently experience a growing nationalism – sometimes leading to

large-scale protests from the Kurds. As will be further discussed in the following chapters, EU pressure on minority rights may challenge the already existing power structure between different groups in society and may in fact lead to polarization (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 5-20). Looking at the impact of EU pressure on minority rights in Turkey, and its implications for the individual, is at the core of the thesis.

1.7. Research puzzle

The issue of *Europeanization* - here seen as the way the EU pressures for domestic change in accession countries - is clearly interesting. Claims that without a clear guarantee for EU membership - which is presently unheard of - Turkey will be unwilling to embark on the road towards comprehensive reforms, show the importance of Europeanization or lack of such, in particular when speaking of minority rights (Aktar 2009). As a policy area, minority protection can be seen as a topic which "...has been largely ignored in the literature on EU accession (…) In the last two decades, the protection of minorities has received unprecedented attention. For those countries hoping to join the European Union, minority protection has become a key criterion in the accession process" (Rechel 2009: 3). Since the introduction of the Copenhagen Criteria in 1993, EU accession countries are required to have *"stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities"* (EU 1993). When Turkey became an EU candidate country in 1999, space was indeed opened up for advocates of minority rights reform (Kirisci 2011: 339), with EU pressure leading to a de facto recognition of the Kurdish identity and their rights as a minority (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 31). For the Kurds, the perceived value of EU membership has been very high (Tocci 2008: 887). The EU pressure and leverage, however, can be seen to have waned in the later years together with reform stagnation (Aktar 2012 [interview]). What consequences can this development have for the members of minority groups? Have the EU pressure for increased minority rights led to changes in how the Kurds perceive themselves – contributing to a stronger identity? What are potential problems and challenges with EU involvement in this regard? This thesis will focus on the people mostly affected by the policies - the minorities themselves. Being the largest minority in Turkey and having experienced

marginalization in the Turkish society, the Kurds stand out as a natural group to investigate. Although I do not propose to prove that EU pressure in all cases leads to increased identity awareness amongst minority groups, I do attempt to highlight how such a pressure for increased recognition may contribute to and affect identity awareness, and whether this may be problematic if enforcement mechanisms for continued reforms are weakened or disappear altogether. "The EU leverage. For minority rights, or for democratic rights, or for any other modern rights and freedoms, doesn't exist anymore in Turkey. I mean, Europe has nothing to say anymore" (Aktar 2012 [interview]). This suggests an at best decrease in the EU pressure. The research question posed will be:

1.7.1. Research question [1]

Can EU pressure have contributed to a rise in identity awareness amongst young Kurds – and what are possible implications of a decreased EU pressure and an increased Kurdish identity awareness?

Investigating what the perceived implications for the individual of the EU pressure and identity awareness in the field of minority rights, are thus the core focus of this thesis. Interesting is also how the members of minority groups assess their own situation – and by looking at their own demands, one can possibly come up with new suggestions as to what can be done with the rather complicated situation between Turks and Kurds.

1.7.2. Research question [2]

What are the demands of the young Kurds to improve the current situation?

1.8. Outline of the thesis

Much has been written on Turkey and the Europeanization of domestic policies, however little from the perspectives of the people mostly affected by the laws and regulations. By looking at the opinions of people *subject to policies*, one may possibly adopt a new understanding as to the importance, scope and direction of the Europeanization of minority rights in Turkey – and, importantly, what effects it has

had and is still having. Focusing on the implications for the individual, the hope is to be able to say something more general about effects of Europeanization for people belonging to minority groups. The results from qualitative interviews with members of various Kurdish groups and professors in the field may give interesting answers and contribute to further research on the topic.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one provides the reader with a general introduction of the Turkish-EU relations as well as the origins and importance of minority rights protection, before identifying the research puzzle. Chapter two deals with the background of Turkish republicanism and the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Chapter three continues with an assessment of identity awareness and Europeanization theory, with a particular focus on the Europeanization of minority rights. Chapter four deals with research methods, and justifies the choice of qualitative method, case study and semi-structured interviews as a methodological basis for the thesis. Chapter five is comprised of the analysis of interviews pursued with Kurdish trade union members, university students, workers and experts on the topic – highlighting their thoughts and opinions regarding Europeanization and minority rights and growth of the Kurdish identity. The last concluding chapter sums up the findings of the research and suggests areas for further research. Before embarking on the more theoretical aspects of Europeanization, domestic change and identity awareness, it is necessary to get an overview of the background of the Turkish Republic and the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. How did the Turkish identity come about – and what caused the Kurds to protest, both parties engaging in a violent conflict costing at least 30 000 lives?

Chapter 2: "Turkishness" and "Kurdishness"

"Yes, we went back to the village in the summers, despite the repressions. But during those months, my siblings and I were forced to speak Turkish with relatives, neighbours and childhood friends (…) Being unable to speak properly is a reminder of how poor a person's language becomes when it does not get access to its culture" (Can, Mustafa (2005).*"Tett inntil dagene"*. Own translation.)

2.0. Background

The vast Kurdish minority in Turkey is used as the point of departure for this thesis. There are no official surveys made in Turkey about ethnic affiliation, making estimates about the number of individuals belonging to minorities difficult (OSCE Report 2007: 20). However, constituting the single largest minority within Turkey by far, the Kurds are a vital group. Furthermore, the ongoing Kurdish-related PKK insurgency is recognized as Turkey's foremost domestic problem, having resulted in at least 30 000 deaths (International Crisis Group 2011: 1). The insurgency and Kurdish demands for greater autonomy have underlined the importance of the Kurds' presence in Turkey. How did the conflict come about and where do Turkey's minority approaches come from? One should adopt a general understanding of the history of minorities in Turkey and the origins of "Turkishness".

2.1. The Turkish Republic

For centuries, the Ottoman Empire was a powerful agent in world politics, however due to imperialistic politics and nationalistic freedom movements crumbled and ultimately fell. Before collapsing, it had tried to modernize, however with its vast polyglot population, domestic troubles and wars the Ottoman Empire proved unable to face demands for reforms (Kili 1980: 383). The Turkish Republic was founded in 1923 after the War of Independence[5]. Mustafa Kemal [Ataturk – "Father of all Turks"] formed a government from his war-time revolutionary group and ensured the writing of the Turkish Constitution in 1924. He was re-elected president of the Republic in 1927, 1931, and 1935 (Yildiz 2005: 11). Ataturk and his beliefs are generally extremely valued and respected in the Turkish society. After the War of Independence, Kemalist reforms aimed at bringing Turkey up to level with the more advanced states of the world, including the Westernization of the Turkish alphabet and the 1924 abolition of the caliphate (Yildiz 2005: 13). The reforms were directed at "...

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[5] The transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic was a transformation of state however *not* of all the ruling powers. This can be seen in the importance of the group the Young Turks, a group of young revolutionaries seeking to restore the Ottoman parliament and constitution in the late 19th century and ending up as influential actors in the new state (Zurcher 2002: 2). Sections of the Ottoman army led the transition and subsequently ended up with large proportions of the power share in the newly founded republic (Akcam 2004: 23).

strengthening the new central authority, to nation building, to secularization of Turkish state and society, to realizing political participation, and to bringing about changes in the socioeconomic structure of the country" (Kili 1980: 384). The state would be heavily influenced by the military and would look to Europe and the West for ideas and inspiration. Ataturk and his followers aimed at creating a centralized, homogenous, unified state, where all citizens would pursue a single Turkish identity, so-called "Turkishness" (Yildiz 2005: 11). The developments importantly emphasized the liberation of the Turkish state from outside interference (Aydin 1999: 70). The Kemalist principles, Turkey's "foundation", have thus shaped Turkey's attitudes towards the outside world. By emphasizing the single Turkish identity, the principles have also shaped attitudes towards the peoples living within the territory of the Turkish Republic.

2.1.1. Minority policies in the Turkish Republic

Although the breakup of the Ottoman Empire included massive population movements and massacres, the peoples within the borders of Turkey still proved diverse (Grigoriadis 2008: 31). The Ottoman Empire had been characterized along multi-ethnic, -religious and -linguistic lines entailing religious rather than ethnic divisions. The central power identified itself with the Sunni-Muslim-Turkish tradition (Yegen 1999: 557; Kirisci 1997: 114). The Ottoman *millet* system classified peoples in categories of Muslims and non-Muslims, ultimately leading to a hierarchy based on religion where all Muslims resided on top as "first-class" citizens (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 13; Kirisci & Winrow 1997: 11; Icduygu & Soner 2006: 448). Christians and Jews were permitted to create self-governing communities. Still, non-Muslims were widely discriminated (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 14; Icduygu & Soner 2006: 452). All Muslims in the Empire were totalized under one category, where Muslims falling outside the majority Sunni tradition failed to gain recognition and autonomy-like rights for their distinctions. The system was not what one would refer to as a minority policy today, but more of an instrument to govern "the Other" (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 448-450). The Ottoman leadership ultimately tried to create an Ottoman "nation" by developing a more egalitarian citizenship category. These attempts, referred to as

Tanzimat, emphasized political, civil and legal equality. However, the approach failed and the non-Muslim minorities grew *national* identities rather than an Ottoman identity. In the following Turkish context, minority rights became linked to ethnic dismemberment rather than freedom and equality (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 451).

To see how the minority rights regime of the Turkish Republic was founded, one must look at the framework for minority protection still in use by the Turkish authorities: the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. This treaty, which superseded the 1920 Sevres Treaty and established the borders of Turkey (Yildiz 2005: 7), proposed a very narrow definition of "minorities" (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 12; OSCE Report 2007: 19). The name "Turk" was indented to overcome ethno-cultural differences and create non-discrimination in the Turkish state, creating a single-non-ethnic Turkish national identity (Yildiz 2005: 11). The new republic strongly promoted the *universal citizenship* aspect, seeking to overcome the dualism of the Ottoman Empire's first and second class citizens (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 453-454), without granting special group rights (Kymlicka 1995: 4). Two shortcomings hindered the full implementation of this "universal citizenship" concept. Firstly, the non-Muslim minorities were not regarded as "Turks" (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 455). The Lausanne Treaty recognizes specific group rights to some of the non-Muslim groups – namely Greeks, Armenians and Jews (Kaya 2011: 202). These groups were permitted to use their own language and to establish their own educational, social and religious institutions. The Turkish leaders ensured that the non-Muslim minorities' rights would be upheld – but only as long as they did not work against one of Ataturk's most important mantras: the unity of the country. Non-Muslim minorities were still looked upon with suspicion as foreign elements in the new Turkish state. The second limitation of the Lausanne Treaty was that Muslim minorities were not freely allowed to express their distinct characteristics (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 454-455). The Lausanne Treaty – as in the Ottoman Empire - uses religion as a denominator. This implies that large Muslim minority groups are not recognized as minorities, including groups such as Kurds, Alevis and Laz (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 12). This reality still exists, meaning that Muslim groups with another cultural, ethnic or linguistic background are not officially recognized as minorities under Turkish law (OSCE Report 2007: 19). The Ottoman Millet system has in fact

been reproduced with regards to the Muslim minorities of Turkey, superseding the ethno-lingual and sectarian Muslim differences. The Muslim-inclusive notion of nationality in theory guaranteed non-discrimination but also denied the free expression of other ethno-cultural distinctions than the Sunni-Muslim-Turkish. These concepts were reinforced even more after repeated Kurdish rebellions, such as the 1925 Sheikh Sahid rebellion, leading to harsh responses and a more insisting focus on "Turkishness" (Aytar & Cavdar 2010: 7). In time, as Icduygu and Soner (2006: 455) notes, "... the legal-political connotation of "Turk" emerged as a political project in which other (Turkish-Muslim) identities were to be amalgamated". Now, the Turkish attempt to create one "national identity" within a state is in history nothing new[6]. Turkey is often compared with France when it comes to seeking to create a national, homogenous identity. However, the French consolidation of a non-ethnic and non-religious liberal democracy occurred after a popular revolution and centuries of democratization and secularization. The attempt to do the same in Turkey, with a far shorter time span and with the existence of very large minority groups such as the Kurds, has proven to be extremely difficult (Smooha 2002: 429). The so-called Kurdish issue is closely linked to identity, Kemalism, fears of disintegration and the strife for a strong and homogenous Turkish state. The Kurdish issue has been the most acute domestic problem in Turkey for decades, causing severe grief and suffering in Turkey with seemingly never-ending strings of violence – and the mere existence of Kurds has at times been a synonym for separatism (Yildiz 2005: 13). To investigate the Kurdish issue in relation to minority rights, one needs to look at the background of the Kurdish issue and Kurdish claims.

2.2. The Kurds

One group which had a lot to lose from Ataturk's vision of the homogenous nation-state was the largest non-Turkish people of Turkey, the Kurds. The Kurds are a tribal people originating from Northwestern Iran, believed to be the single largest group of people in the world without a state of their own (Yildiz 2005: 4). The Kurds have

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[6] One might recall Massimo D'Azeglio observing "[w]e have made Italy, now we must make Italians" (Byman: 154).

throughout their history been a widely distributed group without being the dominant or largest group in any state. Still, significant groups of Kurds live in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Azerbadijan. Although an independent Kurdish state has never existed, many Kurds have strived for the founding of "Kurdistan" - an area covering parts of all the above-mentioned states (Kirisci & Winrow 1997: 18)[7]. Since the founding of the Turkish Republic, Kurds were subjects to policies of assimilation and so-called "Turkification" (Yildiz 2005: 14).

2.2.1. Assimilation and the rise of Kurdish nationalism

Subsequent Turkish governments have, as seen, excluded non-Muslim minorities and failed to recognize the independent existence of Muslim minorities. Instead, a much used strategy has been one of assimilation (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 457). Assimilation can be seen as a "process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society" (Encyclopedia Britannica). In Turkey, all Muslims were expected to blend in with the overarching Turkish identity and swiftly be incorporated into the Turkish society (Arat 2007: 280). One visible example of assimilation policies and a much-used strategy to undermine the visibility of the Kurdish identity was "re-naming". Here, street names, village names and family names in Kurdish were given new, Turkish names (O'Neill 2004: 77). The Kurds were the primary target of this policy of "Turkification" (Yildiz 2005: 14). Arguably, Bosnians, Circassians and a limited number of Kurds assimilated into the new identity of the republic. Other groups – including a vast number of Kurds – vigorously resisted such assimilation attempts (Kirisci & Winrow 1997: 13). When protests arose, measures to forcefully assimilate these groups were put in place. Resistance from Kurds led to more persistent measures from the government – creating a vicious cycle. A number of uprisings ultimately followed in the young state from 1925, showing the discontent with the new regime (Kirisci & Winrow 1997: 114; Grigoriadis 2008: 31).

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[7] To justify their claims of an independent state, some Kurds look back to the Sevres Treaty of 1920. This treaty envisaged independence for certain minorities in the Ottoman Empire, including the Kurds, and should formalize the division of the Ottoman Empire. The treaty was never ratified, due to resistance from the Ottoman elite and fears in Europe about the growth of the Soviet Union, combined with British reluctance about the ability to find a "suitable" Kurdish leader (Kirisci 1997: 70, Yildiz 2005: 7).

Many Kurds protested against the very foundations on which the new Turkish Republic were formed – seen in a discourse of a western, central, national and secular state. Secularization efforts had culminated in the removal of the caliphate in 1924, this was difficult to accept for many Kurds (Yegen 1999: 559). The Kurdish movement became a symbolic representation of the "old order" of the past, an order which had been abolished by the new ruling parties, and Kurdish uprisings became blended with a religious identity and depicted as old-fashioned and linked to economic backwardness and tribalism (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 457; Yegen 1999: 561).

2.3. The PKK and governmental approaches

Following decades of armed struggle and Kurdish rebellions, Kurdish nationalism became connected to Marxist-leninism in the 1960s. Kurdish separatist groups grew in number during the 1970s, the most important being the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan [PKK], founded in 1978. The PKK became the most ferocious protester against the Turkish state. After fleeing Turkey in the aftermath of the 1980 coup, the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and the rest of the PKK leadership opened training camps in Syria to prepare for future terrorist attacks (Kirisci & Winrow 1997: 127). The first PKK attacks were launched in 1984, and led to a string of violence and counter-violence between the PKK and the governmental forces. Ultimately, this development resulted in the strengthening of a Kurdish national awareness (Kirisci & Winrow 1997: 112). Democratization trends had in the 1950s reduced minority repression to some degree. The political radicalization of the 1970s and the military coup of 1980, however, strongly affected and limited minority rights (Grigoriadis 2008: 31). Once more, forced assimilation was implemented together with the denial of the existence of other groups than the Lausanne-recognized minorities. Kurds were claimed to be "Mountain Turks". The constitutions of 1961 and 1982 both strongly emphasized the "unity of the Turkish state". This unity led to conditioning of other rights and freedoms expressed in the constitutions, such as the freedom of religion, thought and press (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 456). Even if the 1982 constitution on the surface promoted individual freedoms, the numerous conditions limiting the rights of Turkey's minorities were striking (Arat 2007: 6). It reinforced severe restrictions on the Kurds and paved way

for a civil state of emergency in Turkey's south-eastern provinces from 1987 onwards. The Decree 285 in 1987 granted the Governor General the ability to evacuate villages, leading to 3500 villages and three million people being displaced, the vast majority being Kurds (Yildiz 2005: 18). This again led to horrendous human rights abuses in the area. A campaign lasting from 1984 to 1999 sought to disperse Kurdish communities (Yildiz 2005: 10-16)[8]. The Kurdish language was banned, and making statements concerning the recognition of the Kurds was also deemed illegal (Kirisci & Winrow 1997: 112). These developments were met with Kurdish resistance – intensifying the armed struggle (Grigoriadis 2008: 31-32)[9]. Throughout the 1990s the minority situation for the Kurds in Turkey was dire – recognition of minority rights was seen as "surrender to a PKK agenda" and linked to a disintegration of the Turkish state. Minorities were categorized as second-class citizens and as collaborators with foreign interests seeking the partition of the state. The fear of both military and PKK attacks mixed with people displaced forcefully through governmental programs, led many villagers to move to a highly uncertain future in Turkey's urban centres. This again led to an increase of socio-economic problems in the bigger cities and a higher risk of social tension (Kirisci & Winrow 1997: 25; Grigoriadis 2008: 31-34). After 1990, one could notice a liberalizing of certain policies, speeding up after 1999 due to the EU accession process and the arrest of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. The government granted limited linguistic rights to the Kurds, such as broadcasting in Kurdish (Updegraff 2012: 123). Attacks from the PKK, however, continued.

The PKK has had a hard-line strategy in order to create an armed movement, such as securing grass-root support by indoctrination. However, Zeynep Gambetti (2009: 54) claims that the PKK movement has also released several "pacific forces" which are no longer under the direct control of the PKK. Thus, one cannot give the PKK the sole

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[8] This included the infamous village guards, locally recruited villagers founded by the state to counter the PKK. A number of villagers found themselves in a very difficult situation – facing either repressions from the PKK for cooperation with the government or repressions from the government for refusing (Yildiz 2005: 17).

[9] According to Kirisci and Winrow (1997: 132), the main goals for the Turkish government from the 1980s onwards have been to halt the violence, maintain the well-functioning relations with Western powers and other neighbouring states and at the same time keeping economic costs at a minimum. To reach these goals, reforms have been pursued, such as the South-East Anatolia Development Project (GAP), aimed at improving the economy in the heavily Kurdish-populated areas of Turkey's south and south-east (Kirisci & Winrow 1997: 25).

responsibility for having turned the Kurdish struggle into a movement. Firstly, she argues that the process leading to increased legitimacy for Kurdish political parties, in the above-mentioned process particularly growing from 1999 onwards, has led the Kurdish parties and the PKK agendas overlapping less and less - seen in the victories of Kurdish politicians not advocating the traditional PKK agenda. Also, the bonds tied between Kurdish political leaders and Turkish intellectuals and academics have in fact contributed to a weakening of the PKK agenda and a strengthening of peace and reconciliation efforts. According to Updegraff (2012:120), less than one tenth of the Turkish Kurds support the PKK's original secessionist agenda. The support of Kurdish people is vital for PKK's survival, and for instance the decision to release the kidnapped CHP-representative Hüseyin Aygün can be seen as a signal that the PKK would be sensitive to the wishes of the Kurdish people. Can one change the perceptions of the Kurds, Ihsan Yilmaz (2012) claims that it is possible also to change the actions of groups such as the PKK.

2.4. Kurdish identity and "demands"

Importantly, one single identity shared by all Kurdish people does not exist. "Now, if tomorrow there would be an attempt to come to a modus vivendi with the Kurds, there would be great disagreement between those who are established and living here and the others' "over there"" (Abadan-Unat 2012 [interview]). This suggests that, naturally, one set of demands to solve the current conflict is not shared by all Kurds. However, the afore-mentioned assimilation attempts from the Turkish government aiming to create a sense of "Turkishness" have led to fierce responses from many Kurds, strongly advocating their right to express their own identity (Updegraff 2012: 122). Three areas of demands widely believed to be crucial for many Kurds are linguistic, cultural and political demands.

2.4.1 Linguistic demands

"Language is the biggest Kurdish demand because language equals identity" (Kimmelmann 2011). The Kurdish language has been a thorn in the side of the

relationship between the Kurds and Turkish governments[10], with Turkish governments having repeatedly banned the use of Kurdish both in private and in public life. "Subsequent Turkish governments have proved particularly sensitive to the use of the Kurdish language, and thus have used varying prohibitions on Kurdish as a means to subdue the Kurds" (O'Neil 2004: 73). The Turkish language has been seen as the core of "Turkishness", Turkish national feeling and citizenship. Its importance can be seen in for example the "Citizen! Speak Turkish!" campaign of the 1950s (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 459). Also today, the debate on the use of Kurdish is heated. Some claim that the government is acting hypocritical when they allow a limited use of Kurdish – using Prime Minister Erdogan speaking some Kurdish words as an example - while at the same time individuals find themselves in danger if speaking Kurdish (Hayatsever 2012).

2.4.2. Cultural demands

Claims from minority groups may span from independent statehood to joining another state, or aspects regarded as "internal self-determination", where groups claim territorial or cultural autonomy (Wolff 2011: 2). For the majority of Kurds in Turkey, the latter two may be seen as the most viable – and in particular the prospect of cultural autonomy, as there has been a shift from separatism to an increased focus on increased linguistic, cultural and political rights for the Kurds (Tocci 2008: 878). Similarly, "Kurds became more willing to reconsider their secessionist aims only in the context of Turkey's accession process, which promised the extension of rights and freedoms in Turkey" (Tocci 2008: 886). Indeed, the EU accession process before 2005 did see improvements in the field of cultural expression for the Kurds. Rights of the Kurdish language, culture, education and broadcasting were elements improved by the accession process (The Norwegian Helsinki Committee 2007: 1). However, after 2006 investigators identify a worrisome development, concluding in 2007 that "there are still serious shortcomings related to (…) implementing cultural and linguistic rights for Kurds and other minorities" (The Norwegian Helsinki Committee 2007: 2). One

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[10] Although the Kurds do not have one common language, the most spoken Kurdish dialects are usually mutually understandable (Yildiz 2005: 4).

visible example of cultural expressions is the celebration of Newroz. This "feast of spring" was celebrated only by the Kurds in Turkey and was banned altogether by the Turkish governments until the 1990s (Akyol 2012). From 1995 onwards, however, the feast was officially adopted, and Turks, as according to the Newroz tradition, also started jumping over fires. The 2012 celebration proved to be problematic, however, as the pro-Kurdish BDP party wanted to celebrate it on a Sunday rather than on March 21st, the traditional date for Newroz. This resulted in arguments and clashes between the police and BDP supporters, demonstrating that cultural issues are very much on the agenda (Aykol 2012).

2.4.3. Political demands

A core Kurdish demand concerns the continuation of the 10% electoral threshold, the highest in any Council of Europe country. This has remained after the June 2011 elections, although criticized by international organizations and the Turkish civil society (EU Report 2011: 8). The system has particularly disadvantaged pro-Kurdish politicians, who have tried to overcome the obstacle by running in elections as "independent candidates" before uniting as a parliamentary group after the elections. It is problematic, however, as the independent candidates fail to receive regular funding from the state budget (Albion 2011: 3). In April 2011, Turkey's senior electoral body dismissed 12 candidates prior to the general elections. Seven of the candidates originated from the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party, the BDP. The electoral body claimed that these particular candidates were legally unfit to participate in the upcoming general elections (Arsu 2011). Another issue is the closures of Kurdish parties. The pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (the DTP) was banned in December 2009, being the fifth pro-Kurdish party closed by the courts in the last 15 years (Albion 2011: 4). The DTP continues today under another name, the Peace and Democracy Party, the BDP. The BDP demands greater autonomy from the state (Updegraff 2012: 120). When it comes to the EU, it is seen to have had an impact also on the political developments in Turkey. "The direct involvement of the EU became critical in terms of Turkey's democratization in general" (Kirisci 2011: 337). The EU has repeatedly highlighted the importance of bringing the Turkish judicial system up to

line with the standards of the international community (EU Report 2011: 6). The Turkish Constitution's Article 301 – "insulting the Turkish nation" and the Anti-Terrorism laws have provided major obstacles to the Kurds' freedom of expression. Under the wide and vague Anti-Terrorism laws, discussing Kurdish rights of self-determination and interviewing former PKK leaders have been causes for prosecution (Albion 2011: 5). The width of the term "terrorism" worries international organizations, and arrests show the need for amending Turkey's anti-terror legislation (The Norwegian Helsinki Committee 2007: 6). Now, are the Kurdish demands and the Turkish refusal to grant them such rights something special? To assess the legitimacy of the Kurdish claims, one should turn to other states with somehow similar experiences.

2.5. Comparing governmental tactics against separatism

From its outset, the PKK has had a violent agenda, claiming that the only way to avoid repressions of Kurdish people was to establish a Kurdish nation-state. To reach this goal, all means would be used (Gambetti 2009: 55). The extremely challenging situation with separatist minorities makes it natural to compare Turkey's minority approaches to other states which have experienced insurgencies from minorities on their territory. How do governments deal with minority rights when faced with violent separatist rebellions? Turkey, Spain and the United Kingdom are all NATO members with unwanted experiences of violent separatist movements on their territories (Özlen 2009: 170). Prime Minister Erdogan has called out and compared the PKK insurgency to the Basque separatist movement, which has been a common feature among commentators (Yetkin 2011). Similarly to the PKK, both ETA and IRA have sought independence from the state where they have resided. The types of separatist activity in these instances have been ethno-nationalist and separatist groups, motivated by nationalism, ethnicity and/or religion (Transnational Terrorism 2008: 107). Despite their differences, the BDP, the largest Kurdish political party, Sinn Fein, the Irish Republican Party in Northern Ireland, and Sortu, the political wing of the banned Basque Herri Batasuna, have all been said to have connections with the organizations of PKK, IRA and ETA, respectively. These connections have been criticized by the

EU (CORI 2011: 2-3). In 2011 the three political parties met to discuss how they in the best way possible could work with national governments, claiming that drawing on their common experiences would foster further peace and reconciliation (Bowcott 2011). In all three instances, discussions on territorial arrangements have been on the political agenda. Whether territorial arrangements - granting divided communities local autonomy - is fruitful for conflict prevention, has been a source of disagreement between scholars. Claims are made that territorial arrangements in fact induce conflict, whereas other scholars are of the opinion that territorial settlements are necessary for conflict resolution (Wolff 2011: 2). What is clear, however, when granting internal self-determination for groups one should make sure that they participate in decision-making processes (Wolff 2011: 9). The so-called carrot and stick-approach can be used to assess how governments deal with separatist organizations on their territories. "Carrots" are soft-line measures, such as negotiations and implementing the separatists into the political framework. "Sticks" on the other hand, are forceful elements such as repressions and police violence (Transnational Terrorism 2008: 112). Drawing from their past experiences, what approaches have been pursued by the British, Spanish and Turkish governments, and to what extent have they been successful?

2.5.1. Spanish state strategies

The ETA movement grew out of and was strengthened due to repression tactics by the Franco regime. From the beginning, the Spanish strategy was to deny the conflict (Aiarta & Zabalo 2010: 9). A state of emergency was declared in 1968, leading to a vicious circle of violence and repressions (Minority Rights Group International 2008; Transnational Terrorism 2008: 118). After Franco's death, strategies changed, and the Basque region was given autonomy. Still, approaches pursued after the 1978 constitutional law were not sufficient to avoid terrorism activity, as the Basques had not been part of forming the constitution and thus felt it had no legitimacy (Özlen 2009: 179 - 180). Additional problems included lack of investigations of past atrocities and no effective reconciliation processes (Aiartza & Zabalo 2010: 21). Still, the granting of autonomy for the Basque Region together with 16 other regions of Spain was important. Today, Basque is a compulsory subject in certain regions and the

language is continuing to grow (Minority Rights Group International)[11]. Through accommodation approaches – a method of conflict resolution which includes recognition and peaceful coexistence of different groups - the Spanish government has granted the Basques larger self-government (Updegraff 2012: 126). A permanent ceasefire between ETA and the Spanish government was declared in 2011. After ETA's political party Herri Batsuna was banned, its new political wing, Sortu, was to participate in elections (Guardian 2011; ECHR). The Spanish also pursued negotiations with the insurgents. These "carrot approaches" may have proven to be fruitful, as the ETA leadership today is considerably weakened (Özlen 2009: 182).

2.5.2. UK state strategies

The UK has a long history of combating uprisings from Irish nationalists, a conflict which increasingly developed along religious lines between Protestants and Catholics (Transnational Terrorism 2008: 110). The general attitude from the government was to ignore the situation. This ended when people took to the streets in the 1960s, eventually leading to the introduction of direct rule from Westminster in 1971 (Bloomfield, Barnes & Huyse 2003: 89). The IRA pursued from 1980s onwards a "bullet and ballot" strategy, meaning that violent activities were carried out while at the same time IRA's political wing Sinn Fein participated in local elections (Transnational Terrorism 2008: 111). Today, IRA has given up their weapons and Sinn Fein is part of the power sharing executive in Northern Ireland. Sinn Fein claims that there is no armed IRA anymore (BBC 2012). Suggested reasons for the relief of violence in Northern Ireland have been war-weariness due to a military stalemate, shift in British-Irish relations, economic influence of the EU and secret talks between the government and the IRA (Bloomfield, Barnes & Huyse 2003: 90). There has been a combination of demilitarization and the success of Sinn Fein as a political alternative (Transnational Terrorism 2008: 112). Seeing that Sinn Fein participated in peace processes between the British government and the IRA, the importance of a political

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[11] The Spanish government has also had regional arrangements with the French, who to a lesser extent have had problems with ETA on their territory, cooperating to combat separatist activities in the Basque region (Transnational Terrorism 2008: 120; Aiarta & Zabalo 2010: 24).

rather than a military solution and negotiations as a successful "carrot" approach is seen (Transnational Terrorism 2008: 112).

2.5.3. Turkish state strategies

When it comes to Turkey, the DTP - the only Kurdish party represented in parliament - was closed down in 2009 after allegations of connections with the PKK (CORI 2011: 1; Kirisci 2011: 336). The DTP's successor, the BDP, has denounced any connections between the BDP and the PKK (CORI 2011: 3). Claims are however made that the BDP and the PKK have close ties, and that the BDP sees itself as the equivalent to Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland (Barkey 2010). Although the BDP claims to have no separatist agenda, issues between the government and the BDP over PKK cooperation allegations have persisted (CORI 2011: 3-4). There have been problems with politicians allegedly supporting the PKK, such as the Kurdish MP Leyla Zana who was sentenced to 10 years in prison for "spreading militant propaganda" (Reuters 2012). According to Human Rights Watch (2012), individuals are convicted for "support to the PKK" for non-violent speeches and writings. The Turkish state has repeatedly denied any communication with the PKK. Still, tapes leaked to the press in 2011 indicated that secret talks between the PKK and the Turkish state had in fact taken place – indicating that Turkey is using a similar approach as the Spanish and British governments (Sunday Zaman 2011; Hurriyet Daily News 2011).

2.5.4. Comparing governmental approaches

Indeed, similarities between the Basque, the Northern Irish and the Kurdish "issues" exist. PKK, IRA and ETA were formed with a separation from the state in mind (Özlen 2009: 187). The separatist movements have all experienced policies of denial from the states in which they reside as well as periods of emergency rule. Where the British government has tried to deal with the threat of separatist activities mostly by legal developments seeking to limit the powers of the IRA, the Turkish and the Spanish states chose rather to use special and security forces to deal with separatist activities, such as Spanish task forces comparable with the Turkish Village Guard system (Özlen 2009: 180-189). In both the Spanish and the British cases, talks

between the separatists and the state have been successful, where the separatists' political wings have ultimately participated in the states' power sharing structures. This has not yet happened in Turkey, however signs show that the environment for negotiations is changing also in Turkey (Hurriyet Daily News 2011). On the other hand, the devolution in Britain and the regional autonomy in Spain can be seen as contributing to the improvement of the situation in the two EU member states. According to the EU, little progress in devolution of power to local administration has been made in Turkey, meaning that local municipalities are still heavily dependent on central support (EU Report 2011: 10). Furthermore, it can be said that both the IRA and the ETA have enjoyed large regional popular support, which has not been the case with the PKK (Palabeyik 2011). To sum up, one can see that all three governments started out with an extended use of "sticks" – tough measures – towards its secessionist movements. The British and Spanish have granted the areas more local autonomy, in addition to pursuing negotiations with the separatist groups. On the other hand, the Turkish government can be seen as having pursued a military strategy against the PKK since 2009 - ultimately also affecting Kurds without PKK affiliations (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2012). The Turkish authorities thus still has a long way to go before local autonomy and open talks are realities. This leaves the question: how does the Turkish government deal with the issue of the Kurds today?

2.6. Recent Turkish developments

As seen in the introduction chapter, Turkey has undergone large changes within the past decades. Some argue that Turkey moves in a more democratic direction, trying to come to terms with its legacies and become a modern, democratic nation-state in accordance with Western standards. One reason for such a development is the "... clear and compulsory demand by the EU for political and economic structural reform" (Akcam 2004: 2). This has resulted in a number of reforms putting pressure on Turkey, such as political conditions on IMF and World Bank grants. When it comes to dealing with the Kurds, the government introduced a large-scale reform in 2009, named the "Democratic Opening", which should improve the relations with the Kurdish population (Ulusoy 2011). This AKP reform was seen as a promising step, however

the effects of the initiated project have waned (Albion 2011: 2; Human Rights Watch 2012). In the aftermath of the Democratic Opening, it is argued that the government has replaced the extension of minority rights with a much more critical approach, even going as far as banning and jailing people advocating such rights (Sinclair-Webb 2011). Currently, violence in Turkey's southeastern provinces continues combined with polarization in bigger cities throughout the country. According to Human Rights Watch, Turkey's government has failed to prioritize human rights after 2005, and freedom of expression has suffered (Human Rights Watch 2012). This might be connected to the EU-Turkey deadlock (Abadan-Unat 2012 [interview]). Three specific cases can be pointed out to highlight the challenges that Turkey is facing, demonstrating that the Kurdish issue is on the very top of the agenda for the Turkish policy makers: the KCK investigations, the Ergenekon case and the Fetullah Gulen movement.

The Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) is allegedly a PKK-founded umbrella organization for its supporters, and has been looked upon as the "urban wing" of the PKK. The infamous KCK investigation started in 2009 and has resulted in the detainment of hundreds of Kurdish politicians and other people who are accused of being affiliated with the PKK (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2012). The accused are suspected of various crimes, such as membership in a terrorist organization or trying to destroy the integrity of the nation. The KCK investigation has especially hit members of the BDP party, which has led to the BDP accusing the government of suppressing BDP officials (Today's Zaman 2012).

The Ergenekon case also contributes to the somehow complex nature of Turkish politics. This alleged clandestine ultra-nationalist network planning to overthrow the government is said to consist of people from various backgrounds, from the military to the police force and civil society. The Ergenekon network is claimed to be a successor of the so-called "deep state" in Turkey, which consisted of groups seeking political influence by manipulation and even assassinations. More than 300 individuals are awaiting trial in the case and hundreds of military officers have been arrested (Licursi 2012; Albion 2011: 2).

The imam Gulen movement has been connected to the Ergenekon case, demonstrating

the intertwined elements of Turkish politics. Fetullah Gulen, currently residing in the US, is seen as one of Turkey's most powerful political forces. The secretive nature of the movement and the rumours about a power struggle between Erdogan and Gulen himself has brought the Gulen movement on the agenda in Turkey. Critics claim that the movement aims at spreading the role of Islam in Turkey making the country more conservative − with the alleged connections to the Ergenekon trials and the police force shedding doubts about the full independence of Turkish bureaucracy (Bilefsky & Arsu 2012).

One can see that "(t)he non-resolution of the Kurdish issue remains the single greatest obstacle to progress on human rights in Turkey" (Human Rights Watch 2012). The same report notes that little progress regarding Turkish EU membership is made.

2.7. Minority rights and Europeanization

The issue of minority rights has been an important source of disagreement in the negotiations between the EU and Turkey. Turkey's minority regime is not in line with international standards and has been subject to a large number of convictions in the European Court of Human Rights. In theory, the rights of all citizens are protected under the universal framework prohibiting discrimination. In reality, Turkey has pursued repression and assimilation policies towards its minorities (Albion 2011: 8). The EU has put pressure on Turkey to recognize the particularities of minorities within its territory. By responding to the EU pressure, Turkey was seen to be heading towards an adequate system of minority protection, as laid out by the Council of Europe, OSCE and the EU (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 462). When Turkish EU membership did seem like a viable option, Turkish governments pursued reform packages aiming at improving minority rights. The Turkish EU accession process "attributed greater significance to the protection and promotion of cultural, linguistic and religious distinctions of minority peoples" (Icduygu & Soner 2006: 461). So far so good. However, as a New York Times report argues, "...(h)uman rights advocates say that without the viable prospect of European Union membership to motivate restraint, the Turkish government's authoritarian streak is growing unchecked" (Bilefsky 2011). In Turkey, "…evidence suggests that it is the prospect of [EU] membership that acts as a

real catalyst to spur political change" (Kubicek 2005: 364). Seeing that, in Turkey, the revision of minority rights began as *a part of Turkey's goal of EU accession* (Grigoriadis 2008: 24, own emphasis), this would suggest that if the prospect of membership is no longer there, political change will not be seen – having consequences for policy areas such as minority rights. It becomes natural to look at the theory assessing the impact of the EU; Europeanization theory. According to Ulusoy (2009: 376), the "… pressure on Turkey to Europeanize is greater than ever and is now defined as adapting to European norms and governance structures that challenge the centrality of the nation-state and creating (sic) an institutional basis permitting ethnic and religious groups to make their political demands". This naturally points at the concept of minority rights. By looking at Europeanization theory, assessing the impact of EU pressure on minority rights will be possible.

Ch 3. Theory: Identity growth and Europeanization

3.0. Combining EU pressure and identity

Knowing that the focus will be on EU pressure and identity, and after looking at Turkey's minority rights' regime and long road towards EU accession, combining these elements and theorizing relevant concepts becomes a natural next step. Arguably, during times when Turkey saw EU membership as viable, they implemented significant reforms granting extended rights for the Kurds - even if the actual implementation proved to be slow. This degree of acceptance of the Kurds as an ethnic category was new in Turkey (Somer 2008: 229). Recent developments suggest that EU membership is no longer seen as an immediate viable option in Turkey, (Economist 2012; Aktar 2012 [interview]). Seeing that the visibility of the Kurds could be used to in fact exclude the group "if Turkey's integration process with the EU came to a halt" (Somer 2005: 619), what has happened to the Kurdish identity and self-awareness? What effects will the weakened prospect of membership have on the situation for Turkey's minorities? The questions posed are attempts to highlight the potential effects of EU involvement and problematize these effects, focusing on the implications for the individual – here focusing on young Kurds allegedly experiencing

a more prominent ethnic identity (Aktar 2012 [interview]). One needs to look at the categories of ethnic identity and identity growth as well as theorize EU pressure through Europeanization theory – starting with a constructivist approach.

3.1. Constructivism and identity

Constructivism as a theoretical approach has been increasingly used on studies of the EU. According to Checkel, the constructivist turn in studies on the European Union now include factors such as norms and culture (Checkel 2001: 195). This implies giving larger importance to so-called "ideational factors", typical for constructivism, including speeches and identity (Karakoc 2010: 920). The concept of identity has been increasingly debated in the past decades, and has been paid most attention to by constructivist scholars (Legro 2009: 38; Chandra & Laitin 2002: 2). In the case of Turkey, the mere revision of minority rights began as a part of Turkey's goal of EU accession and was based on a constructivist reasoning. This corresponds to the strong normative character of Europeanization and EU pressures, seeking to bring about ideological shifts across borders (Grigoriadis 2008: 24). As this approach deals with states as actors, a fruitful alternative will be the "rule-oriented constructivist approach", introduced by Nicholas Onuf. This approach, importantly, makes ethnic identities actors in the game (Karakoc 2010: 920). It is the ethnic identities' role within the domestic structure which will be discussed in this thesis – which makes the rule-oriented constructivism a good starting point.

3.2. Identity change and growth of ethnic identity

Why this focus on identity? "Because of the coexistence of the state's policy rejecting Kurdish identity and the request of the Kurds to maintain their identity, the Kurdish Question has remained unsolved" (Karakoc 2010: 919). The issue of identity comes up time and time again when investigating the so-called Kurdish issue.

No unified theory exists about identity change, and why and how such an identity change will occur (Legro 2009: 38; Chandra & Laitin 2002: 2). Identity in itself may imply a social category which an individual is able to be a member of (Chandra 2006: 400). Identity may also refer to individuals' collective self-image as a group (Legro

2009: 40). Identity is, importantly, a dymanic concept, and may vary in scope and importance for the individual (Icduygu, Romano & Sirkeci 1999: 995). For this thesis, identity will mean a category a person describes herself as (Chandra & Laitin 2002: 2). What constitutes an ethnic identity is a contested subject, however Horowitz' definition from 1985 is widely used. It identifies an ethnic identity as people possessing a myth of common heritage (Chandra 2006: 402). For the purpose of this study, the Kurds are seen as one ethnic group (Icduygu, Romano & Sirkeci 1999: 994). To investigate a rise of the Kurdish identity and its possible implications, Ashutosh Varshney's (2003) assessment of the growth of ethnic identity will be used. According to Varshney, the creation of a strong state identity is possible, which – not uncontested - can be seen by looking at states such as France and Italy. Such an approach does not always succeed, one reason being minority groups tending to have typically stronger identity than the dominant group. Differences between groups within a state may lead to conflict: "…The issue is not cultural or religious diversity per se, but a relationship of dominance, subordination, and differential worth" (Varshney 2003: 92-93). Such relations are often historically built up. When hierarchies in a state are based on recognition and corresponding lack of recognition, conflicts may occur. Groups start protesting as modernity leads to the decrease of these hierarchies. At the same time, claims for equality rise (Varshney 2003: 92). Ethnic mobilization may occur in states with more than one ethnic identity. When cultural or linguistic cleavages are made, this gives room for mobilization based on identity (Varshny 2003: 93). Speaking of the Kurds in Turkey, these face non-material and material insecurities in areas such as language and culture (Icduygu, Romano & Sirkeci 1999: 998). This should give a firm basis for ethnic mobilization. A distinction between a private identity and a politicized identity here becomes necessary. Through a politicized identity, groups use their differences to claim their distinct rights from the state. Once an ethnic identity has successfully been politicized, it tends to dominate other identities such as religion, class or region (Icduygu, Romano & Sirkeci 1999: 995-998). The governmental repression of the Kurds has led to an approach by the Kurdish nationalists seeking to let all Kurds know of past injustices, in order to build a stronger, Kurdish identity. This implies building a politicized ethnicity (Romano 2006: 111). Thus, with increased

focus on the ethnic aspect and recognition, one would expect this identity to be dominating. The horrors put on the Kurds enabled a national consciousness spreading further than the elite (Romano 2006: 111), implying that the politicized identity would spread out to the more general Kurdish population. To pursue an ethnic mobilization, one initially needs a committed group of individuals (Varshny 2003: 93). Using the PKK as an example, one can see that such a group has existed, implementing rebellions to further mobilize based on ethnicity. The goal of so-called "ethnic entrepeneurs" such as the PKK is to promote an environment of insecurity, which will in turn lead to more politicized identity formation (Icduygu, Romano & Sirkeci 1999: 999). Such a mobilization may also affect the individual. For the individual Kurds, several options on how to approach the issue of identity exist. He or she may accept the Turkish identity and apply this to him or herself. There may also be an acceptance of a civic Turkish identity, where the Kurd thus will see him or herself as a Turkish citizen of Kurdish origin. This corresponds to a more private identity, as opposed to a politicized identity. Thirdly, the Kurd may refuse the Turkish identity, implying a more politicized identity (Icduygu, Romano & Sirkeci 1999: 998). Although you initially did not participate in the mobilization, the very mobilization in itself can form your identity. This, however, depends on the state response (Varshny 2003: 93). As seen in the background chapter, the Turkish state response has included harsh measures and suppressing the Kurdish identity, paving way for insecurities and a subsequent rise of a politicized identity.

How does one link the issues of identity, EU pressure and increased recognition? According to Kizilkan-Kisacik, pressure for recognition of minorities may in fact lead to harsh nationalist responses from the majority group (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 27). She argues that a shift in the societal level in the relationship between the Kurds and the Turks has occurred. The Kurdish identity has become more prominent and visible, with attacks and protests against Kurds have boomed. Recognition of minority groups within Turkey has in fact led to nationalistic Turkish response (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 29). "…[T]he EU reforms and the recent "Democratic Opening" project of the AKP has triggered harsh reactions at the political, societal, and institutional level" (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 28). Analyzing EU's impact on identities through pressuring

for increased recognition becomes central. Has EU pressure contributed to a rise of identity amongst young Kurds? One should focus on the magnitude of EU pressure through Europeanization theory. Because "(i)t is only through analyzing the impact of EU on policies, identities, and beliefs concurrently that the real impact of the EU can be captured" (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 33).

3.3. Europeanization

The EU has been seen as an attractive alternative for several applicant countries, including Turkey (Olsen 2002: 927). Ulusoy (2009: 364) states that "(t)he prospect of EU membership is univocally considered as the main causal factor of the recent progress in Turkey regarding democratic reform". Following this line of thought, Turkey's transformation in the realms of politics may be seen as visible examples of European structural impact on Turkey. Linking Turkey's democratic progress with the prospect of EU membership shows the importance of EU's presence and thus the need for a conceptualization of this impact. Europeanization as a term has been widely discussed within European studies and contains a variety of definitions, making it difficult to grasp. The concept is wide and stretching beyond the mere adoption of legal provisions (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 7). It is broadly agreed, however, that Europeanization constitutes a transfer of what is referred to as "European" to other jurisdictions, beliefs and norms. Signals and pressures from Europe are interpreted and modified through domestic identities and institutions. Europeanization in this sense emphasizes the relations with non-European [here: non-EU] actors (Olsen 2002: 936-37). Europeanization may be used to investigate how international pressure leads to changes in domestic policies (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 6). For this thesis, Europeanization will refer to a process of transformation on the domestic level, particularly in the realms of protection and promotion of minority rights. The adaption of Europeanization "…reflects variations in European pressure as well as domestic motivations and ability to adapt" (Olsen 2002: 936). Turkey, with its history of close relations with Europe and the EU, is an interesting example in this regard. To investigate how Europeanization has possibly affected identities in Turkey, one must proceed to look at EU's influence on the domestic level. Seeing that "Europeanization

conditions profound changes in Turkish politics" (Ulusoy 2009: 377), the domestic level becomes the natural level of analysis when problematizing the impact of the EU in the realms of minority rights and minority recognition in Turkey.

Importantly, one should note that Europeanization is not an uncontested theory and has been criticized for leading to only shallow domestic changes in candidate countries. When studying the effects of Europeanization, there has arguably been a revival of nationalism and ethnic-based identities which may act as a resistance to the whole Europeanization concept (Olsen 2002: 936). Still, the magnitude of the Europeanization pressure should be looked at with the individual in mind.

3.3.1. Effects of Europeanization – conditions required for domestic change

The effects of Europeanization on the domestic scene will be further analyzed by using Borzel and Risse's (2000) conditions assessing *how* Europeanization may lead to domestic political change. Olsen claims that "(t)he domestic effect of Europeanization can be conceptualized as a process of change at the domestic level in which the member states adapt their processes, policies, and institutions to new practices, norms, rules and procedures that emanate from a emergence of a European system of governance" (Borzel & Risse 2000: 6). This process is dependent on two necessary conditions. First, a misfit or inconvenience between the Europeanization process and the domestic process has to exist. This will in turn create so-called adaptional pressures, which are prerequisites for policy change. The adaptional pressure increases the lower the compatibility is between the domestic and the European processes, policies and institutions (Borzel & Risse 2000: 5). The strength of the adaptional pressures depends on the already existing structures in the state – the so-called *goodness of fit* (Grigoriadis 2008: 23). Secondly, institutions or actors able to facilitate the changes and respond to the adaptional pressures need to be present (Borzel & Risse 2000: 2). If domestic structures do not fit with the adaptional pressures, this will often lead to loud reactions from domestic actors and may turn the outcome of the Europeanization process to be not guaranteed (Grigoriadis 2008: 23). Only when the two conditions are in place, one may start to speak of domestic effects of Europeanization.

There are three *degrees of domestic change* showing Europeanization's impact, according to Borzel and Risse. The first notion is *absorption*, where member states are able to incorporate the ideas of Europeanization without significantly changing the already existing legislation. In certain instances, governments will respond to Europeanization pressure and adapt on their own terms, however with adaptions influenced by arrangements already in place in the particular state (Olsen 2002: 935). Such an approach may also be evident in Borzel and Risse's second category: *accommodation*. Here, European pressure is met by adapting existing processes and actually changing them, however importantly without changing essential features or the underlying motivations and conceptions behind the changed policies. This leads to a modest degree of change. The third approach, *transformation,* goes further than the others and can be seen in instances where European policies and processes are being fully adopted. In such cases change is seen as significant (Borzel & Risse 2000: 5-9). Two approaches suggest different effects of Europeanization. For this thesis, emphasis is put on the second approach – the sociological institutionalism, which focuses on the shift of *norms and identities* through EU pressure. It is noteworthy, however, that these approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The first approach, *rationalist institutionalism,* suggests that the abovementioned misfits and the following adaptional pressures provide actors with both new opportunities as well as constraints to achieve their aims. This approach treats actors as rational and goal-oriented (Borzel & Risse 2000: 2-6). When Europeanization occurs, the political opportunity structure changes, followed by a possible redistribution of power at the domestic level, which might lead to domestic change. In the rationalist institutionalism approach, the higher adaptional pressure existing, the more likely it becomes that domestic actors will press for change in order to achieve policy changes. Adaptional pressures of medium scale will lead to domestic transformation in the event of formal institutions being supportive, however the adaption may end up being accommodative or even absorbent (Borzel & Risse 2000: 10). This is connected to Kizilkan-Kisacik's (2010: 8) so-called "policy-Europeanization", where the EU pressures states to comply with EU norms and standards on the domestic policies of the states. Policy areas traditionally under the jurisdiction of the state – such as minority rights – are gradually transferred to the EU

level. The more pressure put on the state, the more they should comply with EU, this approach suggests. A second view on the domestic effects of Europeanization is the *sociological institutionalism* approach. Here, the process of persuasion is in focus. The misfit between Europeanization and domestic norms and identities lead to changes in the domestic structure and the internalization of new norms and identities. Societal "change agents" persuade others to change their norms and identities, and at the same time, a particular political culture exists leading to consensus-building. Through a socialization process, thus, new identities are formed and internalized (Borzel & Risse 2000: 2). Sociological institutionalism makes actors strive to fulfill social expectations. In this sense, Europeanization can be seen as new rules, meanings and norms which in turn have to be incorporated in the domestic structure. This approach argues that if adaptional pressure is high, the domestic response will be inertia – as you cannot simply replace existing norms and identities. Domestic actors, if under heavy pressure to change, will often resist doing so. According to this approach, medium adaption pressure most likely leads to changes in the long run (Borzel & Risse 2000: 8-11). This approach is linked to what Kizilkan-Kisacik (2010: 9) refers to as "societal Europeanization", a process in which beliefs and opinions are subject to Europeanization and actors' preferences are affected by EU norms. Socialization in this way refers to the internalization process leading to norms becoming part of the national identity (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 10). What one can see from both approaches is that a *misfit* is necessary in order for changes to occur. Furthermore, adaptional pressures created by the misfit alone is not sufficient, as there has to be factors enabling – or hindering – the domestic change. Thus, the more adaptional pressure placed on institutions and collective identities, the more one needs socialization or learning pathway to ensure a durable change (Borzel & Risse 2000: 13). The two elements do not have to go hand in hand, as EU pressure may lead to changes on formal rules, without the internalization of norms leading to changes in people's self-perception (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 10). This, however, becomes puzzling. Is it possible that the EU pressure is currently less effective bringing about change on formal rules, whereas it has contributed to an internalization of norms in fact leading to changes in people's self-perception? It is clearly interesting to look at how Turkey

has responded to EU pressures to reform "their illiberal minority politics" (Grigoriadis 2008: 23). Having looked at Europeanization at the domestic level, it is necessary to have a closer look at the notion of Europeanization in the Turkish context, and how the European-level integration plays a significant role in relation to domestic Turkish policies and politics (Ulusoy 2009: 364).

3.4. Europeanization in Turkey

When speaking of EU pressure, Turkey can be seen to be subject to Europeanization due to its legal and institutional ties with the EU, its geographical location and its historical sensitivity to European changes (Ulusoy 2009: 377). The EU hosts a large number of programs and civil society developments in Turkey and other candidate countries (Kubicek 2005: 363). Particularly when speaking of the democratization process, the relationship with EU has been of large importance for Turkey (Oguzlu 2004: 94). As Ulusoy (2009: 377) notes, "…democratization constitutes the essence of Europeanization in Turkey". This is, however, a fairly recent view. During the 1980s and 1990s, when the EU did not openly state the possibility of union membership as a viable option for Turkey, the cost of compliance in particular with regards to the Kurdish minority and the political role of the military were intolerably high for the elites in Turkey, and consequently led to little changes in the Turkish domestic policies. This approach changed in 1999 when Turkey became an EU candidate country (Kubicek 2005: 365; Ulusoy 2009: 364). Seen as a high point in the Turkey-EU relations, Turkey identified accession as a viable option, however only if the state pursued a significant number of large reforms (Kubicek 2005: 365). Turkey obliged itself to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria as well as the resolution of border problems of the International Court of Justice (Ulusoy 2009: 375). Several "harmonization" reform packages included the much-sought for abolition of the death penalty, limiting punishment for insulting state institutions and implementing more liberal provisions for freedom of assembly (Kubicek 2006: 366). These reforms clearly suggest a change in Turkish policies in line of – at a minimum - *accommodation*. After the AKP 2002 election victory further reforms were implemented in areas such as women's rights, trade union rights and minority rights. Significant constitutional changes and reforms

thus occurred at a considerable scale from 1999 to 2004, when the European Commission recommended an introduction of accession negotiations with Turkey (Ulusoy 2009: 375-376).

Turkey's approach also met criticisms. Claims were made that the Turkish reforms were made merely because Turkey "was told to do so", i.e. that the reforms could be short-lived and vulnerable to changes in the event of a new election, and that the government was in fact reluctant to the reforms (Kubicek 2005: 362; Tocci 2008: 886). According to Toktas and Aran (2009: 713), Turkey on one hand tried to meet the Copenhagen criteria for the cultural rights of minorities, but on the other hand also pursued restrictions and barriers to the rights of groups which might in fact have paved way for a forced recognition of minority groups. This would imply that reforms undertaken were not "deep" enough to suffice significant and durable change – reforms thus implemented without changing underlying features and identities, as the sociological institutionalist approach requires. Shortcomings of the reform process could be attributed to the limited nature of the diffusion of European norms, but also bureaucratic inertia and a lack of cooperation with elites (Grigoriadis 2008: 38). Still, one may see that "the EU provided a necessary push for reforms, creating a supportive international environment" (Kubicek 2005: 367). Having seen some of the possible effects of Europeanization in Turkey, one should have a closer look at the EU's role in the specific Kurdish issue.

3.5. EU's effects on conflict resolution: Conditionality and social learning

The EU has been engaged in the conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurds. With Turkey's enlargement process being in a deadlock, however, the EU may no longer have the same leverage on the conflict, as "EU's capacity in conflict resolution is dependent on the enlargement process" (Celik & Rumelili 2006: 221). However, the EU framework did enable the conflict parties to alter their beliefs of their interests in the conflict (Celik & Rumelili 2006: 221). This arguably led to a larger emphasis on cultural rights for the Kurds, and the Europeanization pressure made Turkey start looking at the Kurdish issue as a democratization issue (Celik & Rumelili 2006: 212-213; Tocci 2008: 878).

Two visible elements when speaking of EU mechanisms to foster change in Turkey will be further investigated. The first is the *conditionality principle*. In this, the EU can be seen to have had powerful incentives for domestic change in Turkey. Two types of conditionality may be identified. Firstly, positive conditionality, which implies promises of benefits. In the Turkish case, conditionality would equal EU membership. The Copenhagen criteria is one example of conditionality – or more specifically ex ante conditionality, meaning that certain criteria would have to be fulfilled in order for Turkey to proceed with their membership process (Tocci 2008: 882). The other type, negative conditionality, is identified as punishments – such as sanctions. Conditionality may also have more indirect effects, affecting policy fields linked to conflict resolution, for instance the EU demanding Turkey to abolish the death penalty (Tocci 2008: 883).

The second element is the so-called *social learning* aspect. Here, wider social learning and contact between the EU and conflict parties may change and develop the conflict parties' perceived interests, beliefs and purposes regarding e.g. their views on human rights, identity, sovereignty or democracy (Tocci 2008: 883). The social learning aspect can be promoted by the EU through contact and dialogue with conflict parties. Here, perceived interests and norms are internalized. This connects to Checkel's "socialization", where the end goal of internalization would imply that actors induct themselves into new norms and rules. To reach internalization, one way is through persuasion, seen as a communication process developing new beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Checkel 2007: 4). This can be clearly be linked to the sociological institutionalism, and is an interesting aspect, as it suggests that the EU pressure and presence have been contributing to parties changing their identities. One should also not forget NGOs and civil society, which have triggered learning effects beyond the elite level (Tocci 2008: 891).

3.6. Identity theory and Europeanization – can EU effects be isolated?

Can the proposed ethnic identity growth be explained by Europeanization at all? It is difficult to isolate the effect of the EU on domestic incentives for legal, institutional or behavioral changes, which might lead to an exaggerated view of the effects of the EU

(Sasse 2009: 18). One should be careful to assess domestic preferences coming from Europeanization alone – domestic preferences might come from exogenous factors and not in response to Europeanization per se (Cowles, Caporaso & Risse 2001: 220). It should also be noted that other factors than the EU may have led to changes and an increased identity awareness amongst Kurds in Turkey – such as Abdullah Öcalan's capture in 1999 corresponding with the end of large-scale violence in Turkey's southeastern parts. Also, steps taken by Turgut Özal's presidency in the early 1990s may have contributed to identity growth, together with reforms pursued under the AKP government (Tocci 2008: 878). Still, as Kubicek (2005: 364) notes, evidence from Turkey suggests that the EU membership prospect was what has led to political change. Ulusoy (2009: 364-368), however critical of Europeanization as the only means to explain political transformation in Turkey, still claims that the process of Europeanization does change interactions, and also provides restructuring opportunities for Turkey's many civil society organizations. EU pressure may also have contributed to that moderate Kurds and Turks have gotten a new platform to meet and discuss issues of identity (Tocci 2008: 893). In this way, perceived interests have been altered in the face of EU involvement (Celik & Rumelili 2006: 221). Arguably, through EU's involvement, new patterns of recognition and exclusion of minority rights has been introduced. This has on the one hand led to an extended recognition of minority groups, however may ultimately lead to the reinforcement of the "otherness" of the minority group, leading minority groups to become both increasingly recognized and also more exposed to discrimination (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 6). This interesting aspect will be further looked at in the analysis section. To sum up, the assessment of Europeanization theory and identity awareness suggest how the EU may have changed and brought about new attitudes, beliefs and identities, which may not necessarily be corresponding with formal changes (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 5-6). How is this alleged shift in beliefs and identities for the Kurds due to EU pressure looked upon by the Kurds themselves – and in what ways can such a development be problematic? This should be further investigated in the analysis chapter – however, only after assessing the thesis' methodological considerations in the following methods chapter.

Ch 4. Research methods

4.0 Choice of research methods

Having stated the research question and the theoretical background of Europeanization, minority rights and identity growth, the following section will deal with the choice of research methods. Aspects of the theory used for the research is also of interest with regards to the chosen methods (George & Bennett 2005: 77). The aspects of the theory investigated here, will be the way Europeanization and identity growth can be used to identify and problematize EU pressure. As the opinions of both experts as well as young people of minority background is of interest to the research questions, choosing a research method suited for such investigation is important, in order to gain as much and as clear information as possible. For this research, where the aim is to obtain the personal and detailed opinions from different people, the most appropriate approach seems to be qualitative method.

4.1. Qualitative method

Qualitative method is designed to pursue an exploration of the lives, opinions and actions of people or groups, and is clearly sensitive to the social world. It involves *words* rather than numbers (Chambliss et.al: 223). As Bryman (2008: 366) states, qualitative method is often characterized by an inductive relationship between theory and research, and an interpretivist position - implying an understanding of the social world through interpreting its participants. This differs from quantitative method, mainly taking on a deductive approach. Qualitative method seeks in-depth information – usually using smaller numbers than what is common in quantitative research. The goal is, however, still to make valid inferences – meaning that the qualitative researcher has to be aware of the methodological issues arising from the choice of a qualitative study (King et.al 1994: 229). Qualitative research also has to be careful not to be "theory-less", i.e. that it strives to explain on what theoretical basis it was formed and how the data was gathered leading to the conclusions (Diefenbach 2008: 878). Qualitative research interviews are, together with observation, commonly used methods within qualitative research. The interviews are based on the social interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer. It is important that the interviewer has

significant knowledge of the theme of the interview, in order to be able to ask well-formulated and effective follow-up questions (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 99). How the researcher chooses to define the research question in qualitative method varies in terms of how explicit the question is formed (Bryman 2008: 371). However, conducting interviews will undoubtedly expand the interviewer's knowledge and perspective, and may thus help to develop or change the original notions about the research – another important feature in qualitative research (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 128).

4.1.1. Key features and criticism of qualitative method

Qualitative research has tended to be described as merely what quantitative research is *not,* which fails to lead to new understandings (Bryman 2008: 367). Qualitative method and empirical research has repeatedly been criticized from a methodological perspective. Certain elements should indeed be discussed when choosing a qualitative approach for this research, to conclude whether the choice of this particular method is justified. Initially, the most pressing issue regarding the improving of data quality is to *record* and *report* how the specific data has been generated (King et.al 1994: 23). Reporting, in short, should be done so that the information is available to others wishing to apply the particular methods (King et.al 1994: 23). The researcher is responsible for who gets a larger say in the qualitative study, and what should be included and consequently excluded. This leads to the natural understanding that two researchers would never come up with the exact same results in a qualitative study, as the researcher him/herself is crucial for the making of the research (Diefenbach 2008: 885). Still, as noted, reporting and recording how the data has been gathered secures that a degree of replicability is possible.

A common criticism of qualitative method has been that such research is biased due to the researcher's personal perceptions. Qualitative research, thus, is seen as too subjective (Bryman 2008: 391). Naturally, it has to be taken into account that the researcher has his or her own perspectives, biases and prejudices. The so-called human factor, that the researcher affects the research with own views, is however evident in all research – although it is clear that qualitative research is more prone to subjectiveness (Diefenbach 2008: 875-7). Still, this problem has to be dealt with in all

social science, and the question becomes, rather than removing it, how to *decrease* the subjectiveness as much as possible. Another criticism has involved the often numerous changes of the research question – which in quantitative research may prove to be of large, negative significance. However, as Diefenbach notes, qualitative research is *explorative*. This means that the research question is not always a known factor at the outset of the research, and may change or develop as the research goes on. In this sense, changing the research question becomes a sign of the research progressing, signaling that the researcher has gotten closer to what he or she really wants to investigate (Diefenbach 2008: 877). Whether the collection of the data is really representative, is another question which has attracted attention regarding qualitative method. The researcher may be criticized of merely choosing a sample of his or her own interest. However, in qualitative research, one does not have to select the data "objectively" - only ensure that the subjects selected are appropriate for the investigation. The unit of investigation, thus, is what counts in qualitative research (Diefenbach 2008: 878). When it comes to generalization, the question arises whether a qualitative sample can be generalizable to the rest of the population. This criticism, however, fails to hit its target, as "... the findings of qualitative research are to generalize to theory rather than to population" (Bryman 2008: 391). Some researchers have also claimed that a degree of generalizability is in fact possible, implying a so-called "moderatum generalization" (Bryman 2008: 392). One should, lastly, not forget that also a great number of similarities between quantitative and qualitative research exists, despite the numerous examples highlighting their differences. Bryman (2008: 394-5) identifies both methods as focusing on data reduction, answering research questions, relating data analysis and relevant literature as well as seeking transparency. There are a number of elements which have to be taken into consideration before conducting the actual research. Amongst them, as far as possible to ensure that the research is valid and reliable, that the selection of interviewees has been sampled with caution and that the research is meeting ethical standards, are vital. Before proceeding to the choice of interview as a method, these considerations will be further discussed.

4.2. Validity

How to increase the validity of the research is a central aspect for any researcher. Meaning that we measure what we think we measure, validity is important to maximize the effects of the study (King et.al 1994: 25). One part of this is the so-called *measurement validity*, referring to whether indicators of measurement are measuring what the researcher actually intends to measure (Chambliss & Schutt 2010: 12). Another aspect is *internal validity*. This will occur whenever one can draw a correct conclusion that A leads to B. What causes what is a central focus point for researcher, which leads internal validity to be of great importance to scholars (Chambliss & Schutt 2010: 14).

A related and equally important concept is *generalizability* or external validity. Here, one speaks of the ability to draw general conclusions for a whole group, population or setting. If one draws a sample, for instance, it is possible to generalize results back to the group which the sample was drawn from. However, drawing conclusions from this sample based on other groups, is something a researcher should be careful about (Chambliss & Schutt 2010: 14). As discussed above, generalizability is often problematic when speaking of qualitative method, due to the often small samples and case studies (Bryman 2008: 383). The researcher should keep in mind that the research questions may have alternative explanations than the hypothesis – and that the depended variable may be affected by values outside, which are elements not taken into consideration (King et.al 1994: 222). Such spurious effects are of great importance to minimize as much as possible. Notably, all qualitative researchers do not apply the criterion of validity and reliability to qualitative research, as they are of the opinion that these measures were made mainly for quantitative purposes and are thus not applicable (Bryman 2008: 383).

4.3. Reliability

Having looked at different types of validity, one should proceed to assess *reliability*. If a measure is reliable, it is less affected by what one calls random error. A concept is reliable if the results are consistent and do not change greatly if the circumstances stay the same (Chambliss & Schutt 2010: 96; King et.al 1994: 25). This is not validity – as the results may be the same, but wrong, when they are being measured. This

underlines the importance of obtaining both validity and reliability (Chambliss &
Schutt 2010: 97). By securing a large degree of both validity and reliability, the
researcher can ensure that the research is less error-prone. A common remark has been
that qualitative research is hard to replicate because of its unstructured nature (Bryman
2008: 391). Problems may include that interviewees may die or disappear or that
observations altogether cannot be replicated (King et.al 1994: 26). So-called external
reliability can be hard to obtain in qualitative research, as one cannot freeze the social
setting in which the research has taken place (Bryman 2008: 376). Indeed, ensuring
that the data and analysis is replicable is a key concern for any researcher. Here, the
entire reasoning behind the process and the conclusions should be able to be traced
(King et.al 1994: 26).

4.4. Operationalization

The concepts of the research have to be *conceptualized* and made *measurable*
(Chambliss & Schutt 2010: 73). In order to conceptualize, one needs a clear definition
of what a concept entails. Chambliss and Schutt (2010: 75) states that a concept
contains a "… mental image that summarizes a set of similar observations, feelings, or
ideas". One single concept may, however, entail different meanings. One should keep
in mind that definitions about concepts need to be explicit (Chambliss & Schutt 2010:
75). For this particular thesis, the concepts "minority rights", "identity awareness" and
"Europeanization" are in need of operationalization in order to clarify what the
concepts mean and make it understandable for the interviewees.

4.5. Case study

The research chosen is an example of a case study. A case study is "... an empirical
inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using
multiple sources of evidence" (Noor 2008: 1602). Case studies can be seen as
concerned with how and why things happen and focuses on a particular issue or
feature (Noor 2008: 1602). The following analysis regarding case studies is taken from
George and Bennett's (2005) book on case studies and theory development. The case
study approach is "the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to

develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events" (George & Bennett 2005: 5). A case study implies one well-defined aspect of a historical episode more than a whole historical episode (George & Bennett 2005: 18). The Europeanization of Turkey in regards to minority rights and identity fits well into this framework, as it is one class of events in relation to a historical event – the development and protection of minority rights in Turkey.

4.5.1. Strengths of case studies

Historically, case studies have been categorized as "small-N" studies, contrasting to the statistical "large-N" studies with a large number of observations (George & Bennett 2005: 17). The debate between these two types of studies has been vigorous for decades (King et. al 1994: 4). Case studies may have a number of advantages. Firstly, case studies have high *conceptual validity* which might help the researcher to come up with new hypotheses. Meaning that the measure of the indicators representing the concepts intended to be measured is as correct as possible, is vital (George & Bennet 2005: 72). Many concepts are hard to measure as they may entail different meanings in different contexts. A challenge for the researcher thus becomes to find analytical equivalences to measure the concepts in the best way possible. To consider contextual factors is a natural part of this process – and is comparatively easy to pursue in case studies (George & Bennett 2005: 19). Case studies also have an opportunity to achieve greater internal validity than statistical studies, which often have to pursue "conceptual stretching" or gathering largely different cases. Seeking to clarify concepts, statistical research often continues after a case study has been made (George and Bennett 2005: 19-20). Additionally, case studies are particularly useful in finding, exploring and shaping new hypotheses. If the research does not lead to the expected answers, a whole new theory may have to be identified. The unique use of primary sources makes case studies far more adaptable to new hypotheses than statistical studies which are using already existing data. Case studies also enable researchers to look closer at intertwined variables and how they are connected (George & Bennett 2005: 21).

4.5.2. Possible pitfalls of case studies

One should not forget the possible pitfalls of case studies. When cases are self-selected, there is a chance that the research becomes biased and suffers from systematic error (George & Bennett 2005: 23). If the researcher's subjective biases lead to a selection of his or her favourite hypothesis to explain the outcome, this is a serious pitfall of the research. Importantly, case studies cannot conclude more than tentatively on how much a variable affects the outcome in a case. Case studies have frequently been criticized for entailing too few «degrees of freedom». However, case studies treat variables qualitatively – and where there are different predictions on the causal processes in a case, case studies may reject other possible explanations of a case (George & Bennett 2005: 29-51). Another criticism has been that case studies involve a clear lack of representativeness. It is important, then, to note that case studies do not seek to select "representative" cases and usually do not claim their results to be applicable to other populations (George & Bennett 2005: 30).

4.6. Sampling

Who should be interviewed, is a core concern for any researcher. For this thesis, a method of *purposive sampling* was used. This type of sampling implies that the researcher does the unit selections and that sampling may occur at more than one level (Bryman 2008: 375). The type of sampling is strategic, seeking to interview people whom the researcher believes will be relevant for the research question (Bryman 2008: 458). Importantly, the unit of investigation has to be suitable for the type of problem to be investigated (Diefenbach 2008: 879). Thus, getting the opinions of people who have in fact experienced the events which are the matters of discussion, strengthens the study.

4.7. The interview

After looking at some of the questions and challenges regarding qualitative method, what are the main advantages and disadvantages of using semi-structured interviews? When using qualitative methods, a common approach has been to select a research design using interviews. After all, "...(t)he interview is probably the most widely

employed method in qualitative research" (Bryman 2008: 436). The core focus of qualitative interviews is flexibility. This allows for the asking of follow-up questions to obtain richer and more detailed and personal answers from the interviewees (Bryman 2008: 437). The interview in this way becomes a conversation with a certain degree of structure (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 23). Qualitative interviews emphasize the interviewee's opinions and points of view to a much larger degree than does the quantitative interview. Moving away from the main points of the research is also a possibility and much more appreciated in qualitative research, again reinforcing the focus on flexibility.

There are, however, also certain challenges when conducting interviews in qualitative research methods. The researcher should be careful when framing questions, to avoid these being interpreted as critique. The researcher is evidently in the stronger position during an interview and must be aware of his or her role. The interviewer decides the topic and asks the questions, as well as decides what responses should be in focus (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 52). The interviewer has to be aware of his or her effect on the interviewee and the whole interview situation. The interviewer intervenes and forms the questions and naturally also to some extent the answers given (Diefenbach 2008: 880). The whole interview situation depends on the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee – and to what extent the interviewer is successfully able to create an environment in which the interviewee feels safe to speak his or her mind without obstacles (Kvale 2007: 8). The asymmetry in the interview situation, thus, has to be taken into consideration by the interviewer. In organizations, for instance, the willingness of the powerful members of the organization will to a great extent determine who will be interviewed. In this sense, these central people may be able to form or turn the research in their own fashion. Attention will have to be paid to who the interviewees are and how one can reach people with various thoughts and views on the research topic (Diefenbach 2008: 880). All voices should, importantly, be heard - and it should furthermore not be unclear how the participants for the research have been chosen, going back to the points about reporting how the research is made (Bryman 2008: 392). Another point is that the interviewee may deliberately attempt to mislead the interviewer with his or her answers. One reason for doing so will be if the

questions asked are of sensitive character, making the interviewee wish to answer in a way which will put him or her in a better light than what would have been the case, had the interviewee answered the questions truthfully (Skogerbø 2010; Diefenbach 2008: 880). Thus, the interviewer may end up with answers confirming already existing stereotypes. The researcher should try to avoid such conclusions by examining all statements critically and carefully (Diefenbach 2008: 881).

When speaking of sampling, questions arise regarding the choice and numbers of the sample. Can people who are not randomly sampled be representative? Bryman (2008: 391) claims that qualitative interviews are not preoccupied by being representative for all. Secondly, how many people should be interviewed, is a question which surely will come up in qualitative research. If the number of interviewees is too small, this will raise questions regarding the representativeness of the subjects. Are they trustworthy? According to King et.al (1994: 213), the number of observations necessary depends on the chosen research design. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 129) state that a common number of interviews is somewhere between 10 and 15 – often due to the size of the research and the principle that more interview objects will provide the research with little new knowledge. One approach is to interview until "saturation" is achieved; thus, that more interviews will fail to provide the research with new insights (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 129). Experiments conducted using interviews have suggested that, in fact, around 12 interviews were sufficient to obtain most of the data needed for the further coding and analysis and thus get to a level of theoretical saturation, meaning you reach the level where more interviews would generate similar answers to the results you are getting (Bryman 2008: 462). Diefenbach (2008: 883) refers to quantitative research and claims that qualitative research has no links to the numbers of interviewees and the generalizability of the answers. If, however, interviews with different people generates similar answers, it enables the researcher to cross-check and thus increases the representativeness of the answers. Asking different people the same questions can increase the quality of the data for the interviewer and help the interviewer identify patterns (Diefenbach 2008: 882-3). If the subjects are too few, this will affect the generalizability of the research, and if they are too many, it will interfere with the thoroughness of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 129).

However, according to King et.al (1994: 208), even a small number of cases can sustain causal inference as long as the cases are compared with discipline. In qualitative interviewing, the question of how many interviews are needed, the answer will be "as many as you need to find out what you seek" (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 129). As this must be determined by the researcher him/herself, "... there is no way of determining what number (of interviews) is sufficient" (Diefenbach 2008: 883).

4.7.1 Semi-structured interview

For this thesis, the semi-structured interview will be used. Here, the interviewees are asked using open-ended questions. This is an advantage in cases where the interview object should expand on his/her answers, and obtaining information outside the realms of the original question (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 69). In a semi-structured interview, the researcher has an interview guide, often including a list of questions and topics which should be covered during the interview. Although this allows for greater flexibility and follow-up questions, the pattern should resemble itself from one interview to the next (Bryman 2008: 438). The semi-structured interview may lead to a realisation of new concepts and theories as the interviews go along and the interviewer obtains new information (Skogerbø 2010). Semi-structured interviews may also lead to an increased understanding of social processes, as the researcher is able to ask people questions about a process or a time period leading up to a specific event (Bryman 2008: 388). This will be done in this thesis, by asking people about what has happened with the identity of the Kurds in relation to EU pressure. Critique of semi-structured interviews includes, firstly, the possibility of open-ended questions making coding of the results more difficult (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 73). There has also been criticism regarding researchers deliberately choosing answers and results constituting the best fit to their research question and hypothesis (Pawson 1996: 299). Lack of generalizability has been a concern when speaking of semi-structured interviews. An ethical concern may be that the research question is too open-ended, making it difficult for the researcher to inform adequately about the nature of the research (Bryman 2008: 128).

4.8. Ethical considerations

One of the most vital tasks for the researcher is to take sufficient *ethical considerations*. This implies that when conducting research, one should carefully consider ethical principles – including that participants are informed, not harmed, agree on their participation and that their privacy is not invaded. Furthermore, deception should be avoided by the researcher (Bryman 2008: 118). A central aspect is *confidentiality* (Chambliss & Schutt 2010: 42), implying an obligation to protect the interviewees' privacy (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 90). The anonymity of the research subjects naturally is a part of this (Wood & Bloor 2006: 381). The researcher should also obtain informed consent. A consent form should be made to ensure that the research subjects agree to the terms and conditions of their participation and the general aims of the research and its implications (Chambliss & Schutt 2010: 58; Bryman 2008: 123; Wood & Bloor 2006: 379). For this research, two separate consent forms – one for the young Kurds and one for professors/experts - were made. I presumed that all my research subjects would be literate, and thus pursued written rather than oral consent forms. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2008: 79), ethical considerations have to be taken throughout the interview process and not only during the interview. Moral questions arise during the interviews, and the human interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee will affect the results of the interviews. Ethical issues should thus be considered from the project's outset (Wood & Bloor 2006: 374). Additional elements relevant for this particular research also needs consideration; namely interviewing elite persons, interviewing people with a different culture and choosing an appropriate translator.

4.8.1. Interviewing elite persons

The experts were interviewed in order to get their views on the chosen subject, to see if these corresponded with the answers from the young Kurds. When conducting interviews with experts, new challenges arise. Firstly, elite persons may be difficult to get hold of. Furthermore, the expert or leader usually has a large amount of knowledge regarding the topic – the interviewer should thus strive to be as knowledgeable as possible, in order to «keep track» and understand the jargon used. The elite persons may prepare a sort of «speech» which may be challenging for the interviewer. If the

interviewer, however, proves him/herself as knowledgeable, this will again create respect and contribute to a more equal interview situation (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 158-159).

4.8.2. Interviewing people from a different culture and choosing translator

One has to keep in mind the cultural differences when conducting interviews with people from another cultural background. The interviewer thus has to take time to get to know the culture where the interviews are taking place (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 156). Hopefully, the 7 months I have spent in Turkey in total has made me more sensitive to the cultural differences between Turkey and Norway, in particular when speaking of non-verbal communication. Also, approaching local people prior to the research asking whether the questions were suitable made me more aware of the possible pitfalls the asking of sensitive questions could bring about. Choosing a translator who is both aware of his role as a pure translator and who is sufficiently linguistically skilled, is extremely important (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009: 156). In this instance, a student studying translation at Bogazici University was chosen to be the translator, which turned out to be a good choice. After having set the conditions for the research, one should move to the next chapter – the analysis of the pursued sem-structured interviews.

Ch 5 Analysis

«…if they [the Turkish government] don't ask me for my reasons, I can just do anything. Just throw Molotov cocktails. I could just be a militant» (Efo 2012 [interview]).

5.0. Categories of analysis

I will in this chapter present the results of my findings. I will use the categories of identity awareness and Europeanization pressure discussed in the theory chapter, in particular focusing on the sociological institutionalism approach. I will illustrate the findings with quotations from expert interviews, however mainly emphasizing the reflections of the young Kurds. Thus, subjective opinions and perspectives will be the

main focus of this part of the thesis, as typical for qualitative research. A subsequent comparing of the answers to identify patterns may, importantly, increase the quality of the study as a whole (Diefenbach 2008: 882-8). "EU accession was seen to offer the Kurds their best hope of an end to decades of oppression and violence, of seeing their rights protected and their status secured, and most importantly, the opportunity to […] have a say in their own futures" (Yildiz 2005: 28). With the hope of EU accession now – at least temporarily – gone (Aktar 2012 [interview]; Kirisci 2012 [interview]), how do young Kurds look at their own identities, current situation - and prospects for the future? As the research questions posed - can EU pressure help explain the rise of a Kurdish identity? What are the challenges and possible effects of a risen Kurdish identity – seen through the eyes of the individual? What are the young Kurds demands' needed to be fulfilled to solve the long-lasting conflict? These questions will be further investigated. Young people seemed to me like a natural place to start. Having grown up with the conflict, they are also the future decision-makers of their societies. In times of an "EU deadlock", how do young people assess their own situation? The starting point for this master thesis was to investigate the connection between the decreased EU leverage and the rise of identity amongst young Kurds in Turkey, and how the young Kurds themselves look at this development. Listening to the Kurdish youth might make it possible

a) to focus on the young Kurds' own views on the role of the EU in contributing to increased recognition and increased identity awareness

b) to better identify how EU involvement in minority issues in accession countries can affect and possibly be problematic for *the individual* and

c) to address the Kurdish demands for solving the conflict in light of decreased EU pressure

One should remember that "Turkey's minority regime does not consist only of legal foundations, but also has political, societal and cultural dimensions. It is also about the real-life situations of the minorities of Turkey" (Toktas & Aran 2009: 701). With this in mind, the starting point for the analysis is clear.

5.1 General outline

The first part of the analysis will deal with the more general understanding of the topic of Europeanization of minority rights in Turkey. Are the young Kurds identifying the EU as a factor in changing Turkish governmental policies on minority rights? To what extent is EU pressure seen as contributing to a rise of recognition of the Kurdish identity and a subsequent rise of self-awareness? The second part of the analysis will deal with possible implications of a development with a risen Kurdish identity– as well as what potential problems Europeanization pressure as an example of third party involvement on minority issues can cause. In this section, focus will be given both to the young Kurds and to the professors. Lastly, the analysis will briefly discuss what the young Kurds see as necessary steps towards a solution to the long-lasting conflict, which turned out to be an interesting additional aspect.

5.1.2 Sample

As stated in the research methods chapter, the interviewees were chosen by purposive sampling. In total, 13 semi-structured interviews were conducted. 12 of them were conducted in and around Istanbul in January and February 2012 – with one additional interview held with a young Kurd residing in Copenhagen. Four of the eight young respondents were members of a car manufacturing trade union, two were students and two working in the service sector. The age spanned from around 20 to 35. I have chosen to give the young Kurdish informants new [Kurdish] names, to make the analysis easier to read.

Female: DILARA, GULŞEN, ROBAR

Male: MERDAN, RESWAN, FERHAT, EFO, BIJAR

Furthermore, four professors and one associate professor from Bogazici, Koc and Bahcesehir Universities were interviewed using a separate interview guide.

5.2. Research questions

The research questions set forth were deliberately not completely defined at the outset of the study, in order to give the interviewees the chance to elaborate on the topic themselves, as Bryman (2008: 371) has stated an opportunity for the qualitative researcher. As qualitative method is explorative, a development or even change of the

research question may be a sign that the research is in fact progressing (Diefenbach 2008: 877). In this case, the analysis will focus to a larger degree on the young Kurds' own perceptions than initially planned. Hearing the frustrations from the young Kurds, it became clear that the main focus should lie on their own thoughts on identity, Europeanization and hopes for the future.

5.3. Validity and reliability

Trying to maximize the effects of the study and increase the validity is of vital importance in research (King et.al 1994: 25). The measurement validity of the study is believed to be quite high, as indicators of measurement could be explained thoroughly through the semi-structured interviews. Generalizability is seen as more problematic, dealing with a small sample of 13 respondents. However, the qualitative study and case study as such does not aim for generalizability (George & Bennett 2005: 30), seeking to generalize to theory rather than to the population (Bryman 2008: 391). When speaking of reliability, obtaining external reliability might prove challenging – however, hopefully the procedures followed in the research should be possible to trace and replicate (King et.al 1994: 26). One should also be careful about *reductionist fallacy*, in which incorrect conclusions are drawn from results on a different level of analysis – for example from the individual level to the country level and back (Chambliss & Schutt 2010: 38). For this particular research, it has been important to keep the findings about processes for the individual being kept on the individual level.

5.4. Operationalization

The concepts of "minority rights" "rise of identity" as well as "EU leverage" or "Europeanization" had to be operationalized in order to make them understandable for the interviewees. This challenge often occurs as words and terms might mean different things to different people (Chambliss & Schutt 2010: 73). In general, the term minority rights seemed to be well understood by the respondents, unlike the term Europeanization which had to be re-phrased to "EU pressure", "how the European Union changes Turkish policies" or "influence of the EU on Turkey". The respondents seemed in general well informed about the EU's past pressure on Turkey and the

subsequent Turkish reform process. When it comes to rise of Kurdish identity, it was understood in terms of claims of recognition, linguistic rights and the expression of a separate Kurdish identity as opposed to the Turkish identity.

5.5. RQ1 Do the interviewees themselves identify a rise of Kurdish identity – and do they believe that EU pressure has contributed to this rise?

In order to investigate this first question, what is meant by "rise of identity" has to be defined. Assessing how an individual feels about his or her identity as a *group member* [i.e. ethnic minority] is necessary. If the majority society defines you as part of a certain minority, you will want to participate, argument goes, as lack of such participation will ultimately lead to a loss of your self-respect and dignity (Varshny 2003: 93). Thus, increased recognition of a group will lead to more participation and a stronger feeling of membership in this particular group. This is interesting speaking of the Kurds in Turkey. *"Freedom of expression, freedom of association, for the recognized minorities, it is existing. For the non-recognized, de facto, it's there"* (Abadan-Unat 2012 [interview]). Seeing that it is Europeanization pressure which has led to a de facto recognition of the Kurdish identity and their rights as a minority (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 31), and, similarly, that EU pressure led to large-scale reform for recognition of the Kurds (Kirisci 2011: 336; Somer 2008: 229), a connection between the EU pressure and the re-awakening and visibility of the Kurdish identity might be identified. Knowing that the struggle for the Kurdish identity has a long history, seen from Kurdish rebellions against the Turkish state as early as 1925, EU pressure may still be seen as important for the recognition of the Kurds as an ethnic group, and thus for its members' self-perception. How is this interpreted and understood by the young Kurds interviewed? This part of the analysis will mainly focus on the *sociologist institutionalism approach* of Europeanization theory, underlining the importance of internalization of new norms and identities (Borzel and Risse 2000: 2), when a misfit between the Europeanization pressure and the domestic pressure exists. First, one should thus see whether there is an understanding that such a misfit exists, and then continue to assess whether such an internalization of norms and identities can help explain a rise in the Kurdish identity.

Thus; EU pressure → increased recognition→ increased identity awareness?

5.5.1. Respondents' opinions on EU membership

Pro-EU (5)	Dilara, Robar, Gulsen, Merdan, Ferhat
Anti-EU (2)	Bijar, Efo
Neutral (1)	Reswan

The general view amongst the respondents seemed to reflect this statement: "*Kurdish people. Of course. They believe [in the EU] (...) because Kurdish problem, Turkey has no will to solve this problem, so they [the Kurds] believe maybe that the European Union, when Turkey join the European Union, that the problem could be solved. So they want. They support the European Union*" (Ferhat 2012 [interview]). EU membership was depicted as being a clear advantage for the Kurdish people. The interviewees mainly agreed that the Kurds have seen the EU as highly beneficial (Tocci 2008: 887; Casier 2011: 1), and that "membership in the EU matters" (Cowles & Risse 2001: 221).

However, not all respondents were positive about EU's possible role. "*Because it's an economical union so it's a union of capitalism so I don't want Turkey join that union. But if Turkey join this union, maybe human rights could be better*" (Efo 2012 [interview]). This statement shows that, not surprisingly, not all Kurds are pro-EU. The number of pro-EU Kurds is also shrinking (Casier 2011: 1). However, the EU is still seen as a possible trigger for human rights reforms. To investigate whether the respondents identified a misfit between EU and Turkish policies on minority rights, a condition necessary for Europeanization to be effective, the magnitude of the respondents' belief in the EU was looked at.

5.5.2. Has EU pressure changed Turkish policies regarding the Kurds?

Yes	Ferhat, Efo, Robar, Bijar, Merdan	Areas: the Kurdish issue, headscarf issue, general

		Kurdish rights
Only superficially	Dilara	Areas: Turkey only pursuing superficial changes
No answer	Gulsen, Reswan	

The respondents seem to agree that a misfit exists between the Turkish government and the Europeanization process (Borzel & Risse 2000: 5), albeit disagreeing on the degree of change the EU is able to make. The responses spanned from seeing the EU as only having had superficial impact to the majority seeing the EU impact on Turkey as substantial – corresponding to alternative approaches of Europeanization's leverage on domestic change. Most respondents believed that EU pressure could lead to changes for the Kurds and had done so in the Turkish membership process. It seems, as Borzel and Risse (2000: 13) claim, that the mere prospect of EU membership was seen as a factor enabling change to occur.

5.5.3. Substantial change [transformation/absorption approaches]

"(...) for Kurdish people, I think for us, [EU membership] it's a very good thing. It's a really good thing because if Turkey gets accepted, then they can't really get accepted unless they accept us [Kurds]" (Robar 2012 [interview]).

"The accession process was really beneficial. Because before that, there were just accusations to people, the violations of rights, and people disappeared in custody. And there were the burnings of villages, unidentified murders and so people were afraid to speak for their rights. In this [EU] accession process, Turkey had to take some steps. It became beneficial because the dissidents were able to get a fresh breath, and they started to express their opinions as well, and especially for Kurdish people" (Merdan 2012 [interview]). The interviewees agreed that the EU has had an impact on changes regarding Turkish policies on the Kurds. Most claimed the change had been substantial, suggesting an *absorption approach* for Europeanization in the realms of minority protection in Turkey.

5.5.4. Superficial change [accommodation approach]

"They tried, I think European Union tried to change [Turkish policies], but if you see some European countries and you come back to Turkey, you can see that they tried to do something, and they want to do something, but they never do it really. I mean, they do very good at the very beautiful buildings, but at the inside it's not good (...) If Turkey will be member of the European Union, they [the Turkish government] will not give the right away. Give Kurdish people rights" (Dilara 2012 [interview]). This point can be seen in criticisms of the domestic impact of Europeanization, implying that Turkey's membership might in reality cause little change for the minorities. One of the interviews emphasized limitations on recognition of the Kurds. *"Kurds will continue to combat. In 1990s they didn't give up, regardless of the anonymous murders. Back then, they said there are no Kurdish people. Now, they accept this, but they say Kurds do not have rights, they say that Kurdish language exists but Kurds cannot speak it. [This says something about] the acceptance of Kurds"* (Merdan 2012 [interview]). This would again suggest that the change in the Turkish context has been on a superficial level. Similarly, reforms pursued in the realms of broadcasting have been criticized to not be wide-reaching enough. *"So [the government] just opened this channel for the benefit of the Kurds, but there are almost 60 [Kurdish] words that are banned in the broadcast (...) They are manipulating, they wish to disrupt the language"* (Efo 2012 [interview]). If only *accommodation* would appear in Turkey, reforms would be pursued, however without changing underlying features of the policies and without going deeper than a superficial change (Olsen 2002: 935). However, the majority of the interviews suggested that the young Kurds in general believed that the EU did have considerable effects on Turkish policies regarding the Kurds. Turning to the more specific topic, what are seen as EU effects on the rise of the Kurdish identity?

5.5.6. EU and the growth of Kurdish identity

There are no requirements for EU candidate countries regarding minority rights, except the provision for "respect for and protection of minorities". Without being specific, the EU pressure still tells governments to ensure minority rights (Kizilkan-

Kisacik 2010: 9). *"(Kurdish people) now say, they clearly say "Yes, I am Kurd", (...) I see that some old people are afraid, some old Kurdish people are still afraid. When for example, my grandmother say to me that "don't say you are Kurdish because they can beat you" or something or ask you, but when we talk [to] young people, they are not afraid"* (Dilara 2012 [interview]). According to the interviewees, EU pressure – albeit to a varying degree – has seemingly led to changes in the way the Kurds see their own situation. The main issue emphasized was increased recognition of the Kurds as a group. As mentioned, increased recognition may lead to greater identity awareness (Varshney 2003: 92). The respondents agreed on the EU having contributed to increased recognition of the Kurds as a group.

"In an attempt to push Kurdish people to Western area, [the state] burned the whole villages. The aim was to assimilate them. EU accession process, EU just set up some criteria, and Turkey had to meet these criteria (...). In the accession process, this started to stop. For example, the burning of villages just stopped. And so the tortures in prison they just stopped, that's why socialists and Kurdish people or other dissedents are pro EU membership" (Merdan 2012 [interview]).

A majority of the interviewees were of the opinion that the Kurdish identity was becoming more prominent, caused partly by EU pressure – thus agreeing with Kizilkan-Kisacik (2010: 9) that Europeanization arguably challenges the already existing power structures between the different groups in society, implying that minority groups are becoming increasingly aware of their rights. *"[B]ack 10-15 years, to be able to speak Kurdish, and to be able to say "I am Kurdish", was quite an issue, it could mean that you were a terrorist. But now, these issues started to go away from the pressures from the EU"* (Bijar 2012 [interview]). This reinforces the sense of a strengthened Kurdish identity, with the EU playing an important part.

5.5.7. Other factors leading to strengthened identity awareness

Although most respondents noted that the EU was an important factor regarding the rise of Kurdish identity, other factors have to be taken into consideration. *"When I was in high school, I couldn't say "I'm from Dersim". You know, this is not*

an official name of that city, it's called Tunceli. (...) And now, we are aware of that and people can say "I'm Kurdish. I'm a Kurd". And absolutely this is because of the PKK struggle, PKK against the state. If there is no PKK, many people don't, didn't know, don't know their Kurdish origin" (Efo 2012 [interview]).

This corresponds to Romano (2006: 160), claiming that the PKK both increased the number of Kurds identifying themselves as Kurdish and also led to an easier path for individuals to express their identity. The role of the civil society in promoting Kurdish identity could also be seen as a factor leading to increased identity awareness amongst young Kurds, seen through the presence of NGOs and the civil society in Turkey, triggering learning effects for the general society (Tocci 2008: 891) . The aim of this thesis is, however, not to exclude other factors as contributing to the rise of a Kurdish identity, but to highlight and problematize the possible effects of an EU involvement. The emphasis put on recognition of the Kurds as a group attributed to EU pressure would suggest, as the sociological institutionalism approach points to, that EU pressure might have led to an incorporation of new meanings and norms in the society (Borzel & Risse 2000: 6). This arguably also applies to the rest of the society, the majority of Turks increasingly aware of the "Kurdish difference", an understanding intensified by the Turkish EU integration after 1999 (Somer 2005: 89). In this sense, EU pressure may have led to new acceptance for discussions aiming at redefining the Turkish national identity more inclusively (Grigoriadis 2008: 36) or even de-scrutinizing the whole issue of the Kurds (Kirisci 2011: 338). The interviews reinforced this importance of the EU pressure, underlining that the EU could be influential in changing the situation for the Kurds. According to Yilmaz, the EU's impact on minority rights change in Turkey has been substantial – however has been limited within the later years partly due to decreased credibility of EU conditionality and lack of clarity in minority definitions (Yilmaz, G. 2012: 3-4). In general, the Kurdish respondents seemed to think that the EU had been influential in giving them more space to openly state their identity through pushing for increased recognition of the Kurds as a group. This reflects the stance that the EU has led to an increase of different views on the Kurdish issue and a larger recognition of "Kurdishness" (Kirisci 2011: 345). This notion was also to some extent agreed to by

the professors. *"…[T]here is open discussion on things that were extreme sensitive in the past. And people are beginning to in public proclaim "they are". At least portions of the society, not all, is open to admitting the mixtures"* (Banias 2012 [interview]). It was broadly agreed that the EU pressure had waned in later years, however there was no mentioning of a Kurdish identity turning weaker or less significant due to a decrease in EU leverage. Rather, the respondents seemed to be of the opinion that the Kurdish identity is still rising. This corresponds to the expert interviews, where claims were made that a politization and radicalization of the Kurdish identity is taking place (Somer 2012 [interview]). This creates an interesting, however possibly disturbing puzzle. With the weakened pressure from the EU, what are possible implications of a continuous presence of a strong, Kurdish identity?

5.5.8. The role of the EU in Turkey today – lack of leverage

The membership conditionality has been identified as the by far most powerful "carrot and stick" mechanism for the EU (Celik & Rumelili 2006: 206). As the accession process has come to a halt, political reforms can be seen to have stopped. Tocci (2008: 882) goes as far as saying "… the accession process has not prevented and may have contributed to the slowdown in Turkey's political reforms since 2005". Responses from the interviewed professors suggest that Turkey is not currently taking the EU membership very seriously nor seeing it as a viable option.

"Europe has nothing to say anymore. Because they have lost the power of their leverage by letting politicians like Sarkozy for instance to tell Turkey "whatever you do, you won't become an EU member". And the people think "okay! If it is so, why insist to work?" (Aktar 2012 [interview]). Although positive developments such as improvement of Turkey-France relations after the French presidential elections have been seen (Hurriyet Daily News 2012), the general cool relationship has led to an understanding that EU does not want Turkish membership. This has again diminished public support for both EU accession and for democratic reforms (Somer 2008: 235). For the Kurdish youth, the questions evolved around EU's credibility, here seen as how the respondents looked at EU's current capacity and willingness to pressure (Tocci 2008: 889). Having seen that the young Kurds believed that the EU had

pressured Turkey on the situation of the Kurds, one could possibly assess to what extent the respondents really believe in the EU's current leverage. *"I felt in the beginning, [the development between Turkey and the EU] was very fast. It was very, very fast development, but I think it kind of stopped now. There is nothing really new going on"* (Robar 2012 [interview]).

All the interviewees agreed to that the EU has less leverage on Turkey now than what they did in the previous years. There seemed to be a general frustration about the situation, and furthermore an agreement amongst the respondents that the situation is getting worse. *"Yes, it's getting worse, I think. Since when, I don't know, I don't remember where it's best, so it's always, like very bad"* (Dilara 2012 [interview]). Some of the respondents were also critical of the ambiguous nature of the minority rights' regime and conditionality principle of the EU.

"So, the European Union just calls Turkey to solve its problems, the Kurdish problem and the headscarf problems, and Europe just urges Turkey to use democratic procedures to deal with its problems. But they just, the [AKP] government is just doing exact opposite thing, actually" (Ferhat 2012 [interview]). This underlines the earlier mentioned nature of EU conditionality and that the EU itself has had an ambiguous stance towards minority rights (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 16). The responses from the young Kurds suggest that the EU at the moment lacks leverage. As mentioned in the theory chapter, there are also other factors which should be taken into account when discussing the magnitude of EU involvement on the rise of the Kurdish identity. As Tocci (2008: 881) claims, "[t]he EU could not have determined the resolution [of the Kurdish and the Georgian] conflicts alone". For instance, Kurdish institutes have been established in the West to pressure and spread knowledge about the Kurdish question (Karakoc 2010: 934). In addition, the above-mentioned PKK presence, the history of Kurdish rebellions and the role of the civil society in Turkey should also be noted.

5.8. Challenges of EU lack of leverage and risen identity

Increased identity awareness + decreased pressure $\rightarrow$ decreased rights $\rightarrow$conflict?

"If ascension to the EU also remains a plausible possibility, Kurds in Turkey could reasonably expect increasing protections and recognition of their identity as Kurds,

which would in turn leave fewer Kurds feeling that recourse to arms was necessary or justified" (Romano 2006: 165). The development in the later years, however, shows that EU accession is no longer in sight for Turkey. Recent events and riots in Turkey's western provinces point to a more tense relationship between Kurds and Turks (Ensaroglu & Kurban 2011: 8-9).

"(W)ithout [EU membership] perspective, Turkey won't move. And Europe will have less and less leverage which is the case now, on Turkey's overall transformation" (Aktar 2012 [interview]). Having seen that the respondents identify that the Kurdish identity indeed has risen, and that the EU has played a role in this respect - what can be seen as the challenges of the ethnic identity actually rising, combined with the weakening of EU leverage? Without being directly asked, all the professors recognized increasing problems in the relations between Kurds and Turks. Increasing polarization, discrimination and visibility of the Kurds were elements emphasized. According to Kizilkan-Kisacik (2010: 33), EU pressure has indirectly led to more discriminatory views on the Kurds, as they are now recognized as a group. Importantly, "the acceptance of an ethnic category within a civil discourse can be used for inclusion and equality as well as for exclusion and differentiation" (Somer 2005: 618). Could this be seen in the interviews?

5.8.1. Increased polarization

"An awakening of and politization of Kurdish identity in Turkey cannot be undone in the short term, if ever. Especially the Kurdish youth who came of age at the height of the PKK insurgency seem unlikely to ever assimilate to a Turkish ethnie. On the contrary, they could be expected to harbor radicalized views, derived from the conflict they witnessed around them as they grew up" (Romano 2006: 164). Murat Somer (2012 [interview]) claims that in terms of recognition of the Kurdish issue and the existence of a separate Kurdish identity, Kurds are definitely better off. The recognition of the Kurds has good sides – however also demonstrates a growing antagonism. Now, more young people are stating openly their ethnic background. The Turkish society today can be seen as more differentiated and more polarized, with some places in Turkey seeing an increased ghettoization. This is causing a higher

potential of ethnic conflict. Kirisci (2011: 340-342) also recognizes a growing polarization in the Turkish society after 2006-2007, coinciding with the rise of Turkish nationalism. This he explains by domestic factors such as the increase in PKK attacks, tension with the Kurds in Northern Iraq, however emphasizing that "[the] drift into nationalism and polarization also needs to be seen in light of the deterioration in Turkey-EU relations".

"(…) racism, Turkish – well, how can I describe it? The people being against Kurdish people is increasing (…) If you're Kurdish people from Eastern part of Turkey, you are accused of being potential criminals faithless people, like belonging to a terrorist organization. And they just want to discriminate us" (Reswan 2012 [interview]). This element of polarization was to some extent reflected in the interviews, where the interviewees recognized increased tension between the youth of Kurdish and of Turkish origin.

5.8.2. Discrimination and ethnic identity

Many of the interviewees mentioned discrimination as a factor of their dissatisfaction with Turkish policies. The types of discrimination varied from "Kurds being put into jail more often", to places in Turkey with more racism and the little chance for Kurds to get high positions in workplaces. A special emphasis was put on the afore-mentioned KCK case.

"The freedom of expression in Turkey is quite low. There are many Kurdish, especially of Kurdish origin, in the prison, and these KCK operations, they are […], excuse for getting the Kurdish journalists into the prison" (Ferhat 2012 [interview]).

"Before 1 – 1,5 years there were nothing like KCK. And now, the Kurdish politicians and the Kurdish thinkers are put into prison as if they are members of a terrorist organization. They were just put into jail without any interrogaing, or something. And for example, the right to get education and defend yourself before the court in the mother tongue, it's just overlooked and ignored" (Merdan 2012 [interview]).

"I know still they [the police] are listening my phone, talks, copying my message, my talking. So, if you said something, there are examples. "Bring bread". They said "This is code. You didn't mean this bread. You meant weapons or something like that". It's

ridiculous! And they arrested people because of this situation. They, if they want, they can create the clues, to make a bond between you and KCK. And actually, I don't know what's the KCK, what are they doing. Two months, three years ago, it's impossible that they can arrest so many people in an action" (Efo 2012 [interview]). The interviewees generally emphasized frustration with the police and police actions. More specifically, the situation in the workplace seemed to be a topic of discrimination. As one of the trade union members emphasized: *"Back then, the workers (...) who were attempting getting their rights were accused of being Communist. (...) Now, the employers are just using the same methods for the Kurdish people. "Merdan" is one of the best representatives in this area. But before the elections, there were gossips, rumours, against "Merdan" saying that he is a Communist and a Kurd or Alevi"* (Reswan 2012 [interview]).

When asked about this, Merdan responds: *"I was going for the upper management, but they were advocating, promoting nationalists. Just this discourse. And they were also looking into ethnic or political background of people, and just going for the nationalistic agenda, so the people from particular background could not be in the upper management"* (Merdan 2012 [interview]). The issue of discrimination was repeatedly mentioned in the interviews, and there was no mentioning of the situation improving within the later years.

5.8.3. Assimilated v non-assimilated Kurds

"Today, there are more Kurds living in Istanbul than in any other part of the Kurdish regions. Now, if tomorrow there would be an attempt to come to a modus vivendi with the Kurds, there would be a great disagreement between those who are established and living here and the others "over there" (Abadan-Unat 2012 [interview]).

The interviewees seemed to agree that there is a difference between Kurds who have been assimilated and Kurds who have resisted assimilation. The discussions in the trade union, for instance, found that the people getting jobs in the upper management would be *"Sunni Islam, conservative nationalistic and racist outlook. For example, Kurdish people who share the same opinions [i.e. assimilated Kurds (...) can be in the upper management. (...) If a Kurd was pro them, there's no problem»* (Reswan 2012

[interview]). This corresponds to the feeling of discrimination if you are a Kurd openly stating your ethnic identity. According to Romano (2006:4), in Turkey there is hardly any discrimination against Kurds who assimilate to the dominant – Turkish – culture. All these statements emphasize the young Kurds' feelings of frustration and a sense they are being discriminated against. When feeling frustrated about for instance cultural or linguistic cleavages, this gives room for mobilization based on identity (Varshny 2003: 93), again reinforcing the challenges of a more prominent Kurdish identity.

5.9. RQ2 Kurdish demands

"(S)uggesting minority rights reform in Turkey (...) is a truly difficult task. To suggest the magnitude of the demands a number of factors should be examined, in particular *what the minorities' own demands are*" (Karimova & Deverell 2001: 21, own emphasis). Coming back to Yildiz' quote in the outset of the analysis, do the young Kurds feel like they do have a say in their own futures? What are their demands? EU progress reports have repeatedly called for the recognition of the Kurdish identity by Turkey, focusing on granting Kurds cultural rights (Karakoc 2010: 930). What are the views of the young Kurds?

"(...) people think that it's 40 years for example PKK established, and 40 years people dying, and now it is not enough just to say that you can speak. "Okay, you are Kurdish and can speak Kurdish". Before 30 years or 50 years ago they also speak Kurdish, and they never stopped to speak Kurdish. It is not the point, I think. They have lots of pain and they want to, kind of, payment for that" (Dilara 2012 [interview]). This would suggest that the Kurds have broad demands. Throughout the interviews, it became clear that three core issues stood out. These were increased legal developments, stronger linguistic rights for Kurds and a focus on dialogue between Kurds and the Turkish government.

5.9.1. Increased legal developments

"I think the laws and the government should be changed so it's new (...) People follow laws. We do follow laws. And we think that it's kind of – I think that if a law is saying

that Kurdish people are capable of, are allowed to speak and study in their own language, then the Turkish people will accept it by time" (Robar 2012 [interview]). *"It's not just cultural rights, because they saw that if you get just cultural rights, and if you don't have any effect about economy, in your district, you can't do anything. Also, if [your rights are] not mentioned in constitutional rights, it's also nothing"* (Dilara 2012 [interview]). This demonstrates a desire for increased legal developments, granting the Kurds wider constitutional protections. Emphasis was also put on that such changes would have to be implemented by the government, to avoid changes being only "on the surface".

5.9.2 Language issues

Issues regarding language came up repeatedly in the interviews. *"I can understand my grandparents but my little sister cannot understand them (…) I can speak Kurdish (…) because I spent lots of time with my parents and when was I child there was no television like now. (…) Less people [are] speaking Kurdish. Because they watch TV and they don't speak, and in school they can't speak Kurdish"* (Dilara 2012 [interview]).

Another respondent had recently started using his Kurdish name. *"So, right now I'm in the court actually to get my real [Kurdish] name. Because they said me that, that [X][Kurdish name] was quite difficult to pronounce, and they just gave me [Z] [Turkish name] in the registrar's office. My mother uses the name [X]. I'm having difficulties finding a job for example, because of my name. [The Turkish government] said there is no like Kurdish language. So, it's Turkish. And they also, there is also, there was a fear. Still there is a fear. People want to call their children in Kurdish letters, it's not possible"* (Efo 2012[interview]). When a group insists on keeping its own culture and language, according to Castles (2000: 198), it may in fact turn into a stigma used to justify the inferiority of the minority. However, even if leading to marginalization, giving up the original culture and language will imply losing community solidarity – a vital survival aspect for any group. Thus, the Kurds uphold their demand to use their own language.

5.9.3. Dialogue and reconciliation

Even when the dominant group gives some privileges to the minority, it is extremely difficult to determine what would be a "fair" and sufficient price for the dominant group to pay when it should also take into account past prejudices (Varshny 2003: 93). This can be seen in the Turkish case. It is a tough task to establish what should be fair concessions to give to the Kurds for their past suffering.

"Too many things have happened, and some sort of reconciliation also needs to happen at the societal level, not the military or political. Some sort of truth commission where these things can be accepted, acknowledged and honored. All the past experiences and some of the bitter past experiences, that need to be acknowledged. And move on. And heal. It will take time" (Banias 2012 [interview]). According to Efo, the government *"just continue saying that there is no [Kurdish]. But I was held in for 4 days when they took me to custody for throwing stones. (...) And nobody just says to you "throw stones". For no apparent reason. If I'm throwing stones, well, there must be something wrong, why I'm doing it. So, they never asked me why I was doing it. So they can just generalize the whole situation"* (Efo 2012 [interview]).This seems to be a central aspect of the problem. The Kurdish youth feel frustrated about the current situation and have lost faith in the European Union as a "helping hand". The sociological institutionalism point to that the Kurds might have gotten an increased sense of their own identity partly by EU pressure. The increased sense of identity amongst the Kurds has also contributed to a growing polarization in the Turkish society. The possible effects of this and further suggestions for research on the topic will be discussed in the conclusion chapter.

Ch 6 Conclusion

"Turkey is on the verge of recomposing itself, and trying to define another social contract. (...) [T]he emergence of a very strong ethnic identity and policies relating to this ethnic identity (...) they will get in conflict and violent conflict with other existing identity, that is the Turkish one (...) That means more clashes, and that needs very intelligent engineering, conflict resolution and more democracy to make sure that

those Kurds who feel ostracized and who feel more and more Kurdish, will end up by feeling citizens of Turkey" (Aktar 2012 [interview]).

6.0. Research questions

In the introduction, research questions were presented which through the use of theory and methods should be answered in the best way possible. Looking at the role of EU pressure in Turkey on the individual's identity perceptions has proved to be an interesting, however complicated issue. One has to go all the way back to the formation of the Turkish state to find the answers as to why the state has acted the way it has in the realms of minority rights. The making of the Turkish nation with its mono-identity has shaped the discourse and the attitudes of subsequent Turkish governments. However, even today, *"sub-identities are not supposed to claim their identities"* (Aktar 2012 [interview]). The answers given from the interviewees lead to an understanding that the respondents – both the Kurdish youth and the interviewed professors – have found that the Kurdish identity is indeed rising and becoming more prominent in the Turkish society. To what extent this can be attributed to EU pressure, is difficult to determine, and one has to take into consideration actors such as the PKK, its release of "pacific forces" (Gambetti 2009: 54) and the more "Kurdish-friendly" stance of the AKP (Yilmaz 2012: 4) in addition to the pressure of civil society. This is somewhat reflected in some of the statements from the young Kurds. *"The EU is not in the Kurdish people's agenda. They are just fighting for their own rights for 90 years. It's just a secondary agenda"* (Ferhat 2012 [interview]). Although the interviews cannot reveal whether the EU is seen as the main or only reason for a rise of Kurdish identity, the majority of the respondents did state that the EU had been an important factor in achieving increased recognition for the Kurds as a group. An example of increased recognition is the Turkish mainstream media, having changed considerably when it comes to recognizing the Kurdish ethnicity. This has implied changes in the public discourse (Somer 2005: 592). The recognition of the ethnic group could, as Varshny (2003: 92) suggests, in itself imply increased identity awareness, through a risen desire to participate to uphold self-respect and dignity.

6.1. Theoretical considerations

As the sociological institutionalism suggests, Europeanization and EU pressure should lead to internalization of new norms and identities. Indeed, the EU pressure has led many controversial issues to be dealt with and the EU has had a positive impact on the development of minority rights in Turkey (Yilmaz 2012: 3). In this way, Europeanization can be seen as having contributed to a strengthening of the Kurdish identity – however perhaps not creating *new* identities so much as laying the grounds for a strengthening of an already existing identity. When speaking of norms, one can see that EU ideas and norms trigger organizations in the domestic sphere working for European norms and beliefs (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 9). This would imply a change and internalization of new norms, focusing on more European ideals and standards. The involvement of the EU in minority rights protection is not uncontested; as seen in the outset, the EU lacks standards of dealing with minority right protection, including even defining what a "minority" is (Yilmaz 2012: 4). The EU has been criticized for having an ambiguous minority policy, lacking clear and comprehensive rules and regulations. Still, the respondents seem to have been of the opinion that membership in the EU would matter and that a membership would lead to a difference in their own situation. Here, one can see that the respondents agreed that EU has been important, perhaps in particular for the minorities, who despite the criticisms have had faith in the leverage of the EU. EU pressure may have seen to have led to a more democratic Turkish society focusing on freedom of expression, which in turn has made it easier for Kurds to state their objectives (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 32). This was recognized in the interviews. The respondents all signaled a weakened faith in the EU and the EU leverage, particularly in relation to the so-called Kurdish issue. The general response was that the EU had lost its leverage, also in pushing for minority rights related reforms. The young Kurds seemed frustrated about this development. They also displayed a willingness to continue to "fight" for increased Kurdish minority rights without any EU pressure. *"But Kurds will continue to combat. Maybe they will just pay a lot of things for it"* (Merdan 2012 [interview]). This could suggest that the faith in the EU was not as substantial as claimed; however could also point to a more

prominent Kurdish identity, which makes further Kurdish demands impossible to halt or diminish and which might ultimately lead to further violent conflict. Although acknowledging that the situation for the Kurds has somewhat improved in the last years, the majority of the respondents were still of the opinion that Kurds were being discriminated against in the Turkish society. Changes have indeed happened according to EU demands, however Turkey still fails to meet international standards when speaking of minority rights. The core of their understanding remains intact (Kizilkan-Kisacik 2010: 26). Turkey also sees a growing polarization according to the respondents. According to Somer (2008: 229), reforms pursued by the Turkish government caused by EU pressure gave the Kurds cultural-linguistic rights never seen before in Turkey. The reforms, however, failed to create feelings of "equality" among both Kurdish nationalists and much of the Kurdish population (Somer 2008: 229). It is also argued that the EU's pressure on recognition of Kurdish cultural and linguistic rights led to a nourishing of a nationalist discourse from portions of the Turkish military and nationalistic agents (Karakoc 2010: 934). The interviewees, however, agreed that there were increasingly open discussions on the distinctions between Kurds and Turks. Identity politics has changed considerably within the past couple of decades. Today, issues of identity, minority rights and culture are discussed amongst Kurds and Turks alike. According to Updegraff (2012: 120), previously, even talking about a separate Kurdish identity – or an issue such as minority rights – could have taken one into prison. The reason for this change is partly Kurdish people moving into different regions of Turkey – but also partly because of liberalized policies. These liberalized policies, as have been seen, have been pushed forward by EU reforms. As have been seen, if a growing polarization exists in the Turkish society with weakened EU conditionality and other enforcement mechanisms to pressure Turkey to further reforms, what could be possible solutions for the Kurds?

6.2. What could be solutions?

"...if you ask my opinion, I think, I mean, a reasonable autonomy, would be the very best thing. But it's very difficult because this party [the AK Party], doesn't, I mean they don't want to, they for some time they were in favour of an autonomy. Now, they are

absolutely against it. Became very nationalist" (Abadan-Unat 2012 [interview]). The questions of autonomy also came up repeatedly in the interviews and seemed like an element important for the young Kurds.

Does the mere existence of an ethnic identity create problems for individuals or for the unity of a society? Professor Irene Banias claims, *"I think for the years when Kurdish was not taught or not being allowed, or Kurdish media were not allowed, this led to Turkification of a lot of Kurdish people. I see this as a positive sign, to be a Turkish citizen but also have a cultural identity. That's a plus. That's a richer society rather than being a threat to the security"* (Banias 2012 [interview]). Having dual identities has not proven to diminish a person's well-being. The same can be said on a societal level, where citizens holding such dual identities do not diminish national attachment (Berry 2997: 317). Thus, a society with individuals having more than one identity may be an option in the future.

6.3. Methodological reflections

Hopefully my role as a "fellow student" or "fellow young person" made the informants open even more up to me as an interviewer. The interviewees all seemed relaxed in meeting with another young person who had travelled all the way to their country to hear their stories and listen to them. As noted, case studies can only conclude tentatively on how much a variable affects the outcome in a case (George & Bennett 2005: 25). Still, one might see that the variable Europeanization pressure has had some effect on the outcome of a more prominent Kurdish ethnic identity – and the consequences this has had on the individual might be an interesting starting point for further research on the topic. The small sample of interviewees makes generalization of this very difficult, but hopefully the findings can pave the way for bigger research on the topic. It could be interesting to expand the topic to include more interviews. Talking to people working closely with Kurdish youth to get a broader understanding of the topic of increasing Kurdish identity and decreasing Europeanization would also be of interest. Importantly, one needs to take into account that the informants might be biased, not wanting to share their real opinions and reflections and merely repeating what they believe the researcher wants to hear. The task set out was to explore the

possible linkages between pressures from the EU level and changes in self-perception and identity awareness amongst young Kurds in Turkey. The material examined suggests that to some extent there has been a correlation. However, indicators also shed doubt about the impact of Europeanization pressure on minority rights awareness and understanding. Thus, more research on the topic is needed, preferably with a larger sample of interviewees and a broader spectrum of different sources, for instance organizations working for Kurdish rights and politicians. In addition, as mentioned, one cannot be sure that the Kurdish identity has not risen due to other factors such as the PKK struggle or international acknowledgement of minority rights. This spuriousness is hard to determine – however, the respondents seemed confident in their beliefs that the EU did have an impact on the rise of the Kurdish identity.

6.4. The way forward

"Kurdish identity, as a subject of an unsolved question, keeps alive the perceptions of threats to the permanence of the Turkish state" (Karakoc 2010: 937). Generations of silencing the Kurds have not led to a solution to the conflict – perhaps another way of dealing with the problem is needed. The importance of the Kurdish youth feeling that they have a say, that they are seen, is of vital importance. When even limited rights granted to the Kurds by the government can be seen as having diminished the core PKK support base (Yilmaz 2012), one should believe that granting the Kurds even further rights would be the right way to go. The results from the semi-structured interviews point to factors such as a current lack of leverage of the EU and also a lack of communication between the young Kurds and the Turkish government. The young Kurds are feeling frustrated and that the Turkish government is not taking their opinions into account. The results suggest that the Kurds have obtained a stronger identity. It is difficult to say to what extent this has been made possible due to EU pressure, however this stronger identity is now demanding its position in the Turkish public sphere. Without the feeling of having their own say in their own futures and without enforcement mechanisms such as the conditionality of EU membership, Turkey might very well end up with an even more polarized society that what we see today. A more extensive sample is needed in order to further investigate the

implications of the lack of Europeanization and the rise of the Kurdish identity on Kurdish youth, however this thesis suggests a sense of frustration and hopelessness combined with a strong desire to express their own ethnic identity. What is clear is that this problem will not go away without thoughtful and tactful measures from the government. "*Conflict resolution for this sort of protracted conflicts, takes ages. Takes decades*" (Aktar 2012 [interview]). Hopefully, new approaches will lead to less tension and an increased understanding and appreciation of the finely tuned differences found on Turkey's rich soil.

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