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Summary

Who Is the Separatist: Untangling The Dynamics Of Multiple Social Identities In The Intractable Turkish-Kurdish Conflict In Turkey

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The purpose of the current study was to report how citizens of Turkish and Kurdish groups organise their multiple social identities in the national context of Turkey and how they identify themselves as 'us' and belong to the society by political psychology theories.

From the 20th century, many new social movements have emerged as a consequence of changes in the political culture throughout the world. As antecedents and consequences of the continuous issues in all the world, group based protest campaigns and rebellions have risen in the nation states. Identity problems on political right and duties have been pronounced increasingly for the members of disadvantaged social groups to claim social change at the societal level. Apparently, it seems that nation states do not enough provide the needs of people in the 21st-century global world as well as no longer sustain the ideology of nationalism, originated from nation states in 19th centuries of the world. Hence, social scientists have felt the responsibility to produce morally and politically relevant solutions concerning identity problems to achieve a participatory democracy and social cohesion in the society for both nation-state and identity groups. Related to this responsibility, I aimed in this study to understand the associations between perceived religious, secular, ethnic, and national identifications as well as perceived discrimination in the Republic of Turkey. Understanding these relationships may serve as a contribution to achieving participatory democracy in the society where morally appropriate identity politics in the nation states have been established.

In the 21st century, investigating individuals' sense of belonging to society is more crucial than in past centuries given the continuing globalisation movement and the ensuing need to reconsider the meaning of the nation-state. However, society has been considered to refer to a community with many interrelated institutions constructed formally or informally by individuals, though there has not been consensus on the definition of society. Without doubt, individuals do not have a sense of belonging to a society or nation as a separate unit, but more likely as the sum of their own experiences in community which have been gained through the social groups in that society, such as races, citizen groups, religions, languages, cultures, or genders. The present study's aim is also to investigate individuals' adaptive strategies within their self-concept in the intractable Turkish Kurdish conflictual context.

The Present Study

The primary objective of this study was to investigate relations among individuals' multiple identities, especially relations among ethnic, citizens, religious, and secular identifications both of members of the ethnically disadvantaged Kurdish group and of ethnically privileged Turks in the national context of Turkey. First, the aspects of various multiple identities and their relations to perceived discrimination were examined within the groups. Second, the differences between privileged (majority) Turks and the disadvantaged (minority) Kurd ethnic groups regarding the endorsement of different identities were examined in the current study.

Understanding the notion of citizens' identification with the nation state in more depth is another primary concern of the study. Besides, examining the relationship between multiple identities and national identification within Kurdish and Turkish citizens' groups are also included in the study.

Hypothesis of the Study

Differences between Ethnically Advantaged and Disadvantaged Groups:

- Hypothesis 1: Kurds will more strongly identify with their ethnic identity compared to Turks
- Hypothesis 2: Kurds will perceive more collective and individual discrimination than do the Turks.

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Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Domains of Societal Identity for Turkish and Kurdish.

	Patriotism		Civic solidarity		Civic responsibility		Cultural identification	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Turkish (N=109)	4.94	1.45	6.07	.72	5.46	.87	5.41	1.18
Kurdish (N=122)	3.66	1.50	6.00	.75	5.45	1.19	5.69	1.32

- Hypothesis 3: There will be no difference between Kurds and Turks on religious identity in the Turkish national context.
- Hypothesis 4: Kurds will identify less with their nationalistic form of citizens' identity compare to Turks in the domestic context of Turkey.

Relations among ethnic identification, national identification, religious and secular identification, perceived discrimination, and political trust:

- Hypothesis 5: All indicators of ethnic identification will predict all indicators of citizen identification for both Turkish and Kurdish citizen groups

Method

The current study consisted of 224 people from various cities in Turkey. Among this sample, there were 111 men and 113 women. The mean age of participants was 24.55 (SD = 5.80). To conduct ethical data gathering, an Ethics Committee Approval had been obtained from the Middle East Technical University.

Measurement

Societal Identification Scale (SIS)

The scale was developed by Çoymak and Gheorghiu (2007) as a part of Cultural Role of the Political Trust and Political Power on National Identification Project (CRPTP) to measure domains of societal identification: patriotism with 7 items, civic responsibility with 9 items, civic solidarity with 5 items, and cultural identification with 4 items. The domains of the societal identification have sufficient internal consistency; patriotism (Cronbach alpha = .90), civic responsibility (Cronbach alpha = .81), civic solidarity (Cronbach alpha = .64), cultural identification (Cronbach alpha = .73).

Ethnic Identification Scale

Ethnic identification was measured by adopting Phinney and Ong's (2007) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM_R). It was based on the two indicators with five subscales, one of the indicators was the cognitive component of ethnic identification, and the other indicator was the affective components of ethnic identity. For the reliability, the alpha score of exploration, importance to identity, commitment, and public collective self-esteem subscales were .93, .84, .93, and .79 respectively. For the reliability of other subscales, the alpha score of public collective self-esteem and private collective self-esteem subscales were .69 and .81 respectively.

Religious and Secular Identification Scales

Laic (laik) identity was measured with adopted importance of identity subscale of Luhtanen and Crocker's Collective Self-Esteem Scale (1992). it has highly internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .89). Muslim identity was also measured by adopted to the same scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

Religious Identification Scale

Religious identification was measured based on the two indicators with three subscales regarding adapted and extended Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSE). It also showed a high internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .91).

Perceived Discrimination Scale (PDS)

Perceived discrimination was measured based on its two domains, one of the domains was perceived group discrimination with five items, and the other was perceived individual discrimination with four items. While perceived collective discrimination measured how often people perceive discrimination about their ethnic group in some situations, perceived individual discrimination measured how often the individuals are faced with discrimination. Perceived group discrimination and individual discrimination have high internal consistency; Cronbach alphas were .94 and .90 respectively.

Glance at the Results

The Differences between Kurdish and Turkish People

Citizens' Identification of Turkey

Many of the proposed hypotheses were confirmed through ANOVA and SEM. To see whether there is a sig-

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Domains of Ethnic Identity for Turkish and Kurdish.

	Public collective self-esteem		Importance identity		Exploration	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Turkish (N=109)	4.94	1.14	4.59	1.59	4.30	1.71
Kurdish (N=122)	3.92	1.53	5.65	1.11	5.69	1.32

nificant relationship both between Turkish and Kurdish and within these group in terms of their societal (national) identification, a 2(group: Kurdish, Turkish group) X 4 (domains of societal national identification: patriotism, civic responsibility, civic solidarity, cultural identification) mixed-design ANOVA with repeated measure on second factor was conducted.

The sphericity assumption was not met so the Huynh-Feldt correction was applied (Huynh, 1978; Huynh, & Feldt, 1970). Analysis of simple main effects revealed that in general, there was a significant main effect of ethnic group, F (1,228) = 4.30, p < 0.0391, η^2=.02 and it was also a significant main effect of all four indicators of societal identity, F (2.486, 566.811) = 132.203, p < .0001, η^2=.37. Moreover, a significant ethnic groups X indicators of societal identity interaction, F (2.486, 566.811) = 32.338, p < .0001, η^2=.13, qualified this effect. Compare to majority Turkish group (M = 4.94, SD = 1.45), disadvantaged Kurdish group (M = 4.94, SD = 1.45), Kurds had low score on patriotism than Turks, but no differences in all other dimensions of national identification with Turkey such as civic solidarity, civic responsibility, and cultural engagement. Mean and standard deviations for Kurdish and Turkish participants were represented in Table 1.

Ethnic Identification

A 2(group; majority ethnic group and disadvantaged ethnic group) X 3 (indicators of ethnic identification, exploration, importance to identity, and public collective self-esteem) mixed-design ANOVA with repeated measure was performed on second factor in order to examine the differences between majority and disadvantaged (minority) ethnic groups in terms of endorsement of dimensions of ethnic identification and also examine differences among dimensions of ethnic identification within groups. The sphericity assumption was not met so the Huynh-Feldt correction was applied (Huynh, 1978; Huynh, & Feldt, 1970). Analysis of simple main effects revealed that in general, there was a significant main effect of ethnic group, F (1, 227) = 18, p < .001, η^2= .07 and also a significant main effect of all four indicators of ethnic identity, F(1.96, 444.69) = 23.21, p < .001. However, this effect was qualified by a significant group x dimensions of ethnic identity interaction, F (1.96, 445,692) = 66.41, p < .001. Post hoc paired comparisons were made using Tukey's HSD test with p set at .05. The Huynh-Felt corrected mean square error, and degrees of freedom were used in calculating the HSD critical value. As can be seen in Table 2., Turkish participants had higher score on public collective self-esteem (M = 4.94, SD = 1.14) than exploration (M = 4.30, SD = 1.71). On the other hand, Kurdish participants had lower score on public collective self-esteem (M = 3.92, SD = 1.53) than exploration (M = 5.69, SD = 1.32) and importance to identity (M = 5.65, SD = 1.11).

The Turkish group (M = 4.94, SD = 1.14) had higher score on public collective self-esteem than the Kurdish group (M = 3.93, SD = 1.53), while the Kurdish group (M = 5.69, SD = 1.32) had higher score on exploration than the Turkish group (M = 4.30, SD = 1.71). Kurdish group (M = 5.65, SD = 1.16) had also higher score on importance to identity than Turkish group (M = 4.59, SD = 1.59).

Religious and Secular Identification

One-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether there is a significant difference between Kurdish and Turkish participants regarding religious and secular identification. There was not a significant difference between the groups on religious identity, F (1,231) = .125, p < .72; while there was a significant difference between Kurdish and Turkish groups in terms of secular identification, F (1,231) = 9.43, p < .002. Compared to Kurdish people (M = 4.95, SD = 1.66), Turkish people (M = 5.56, SD = 1.29) identified more strongly as secular (laicist).

Perceived Discrimination

A One-way ANOVA was conducted. According to results, there was a significant difference between Turkish and Kurdish people on both the perceived collective discrimination, F (1, 228) = 107.624, p < .0001 and the individual discrimination, F (1, 228) = 130.078, p < .0001. Compare to Kurdish group (M = 3.26, SD = 1.05), Turkish group (M = 1.83, SD = 1.03) had low

score on perceived collective discrimination. Besides, members of the Kurdish ethnic group (M = 2.70, SD = .96) perceived more individual discrimination than Turkish group (M = 1.36, SD = .65).

Path Analysis Among the Variables for Privileged (Turkish) and Disadvantaged (Kurdish) Groups

Although the relative chi-square has been suggested as a global test for congruence between data and the model by several researchers (e.g. Carmines & McIver, 1981; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985), several fit indices were also used to assess the congruence between data and the model. Steiger and Lind's (1980) root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), Bentler and Bonnet's (1980) normative fit index(NFI), Bentler's (1990) comparative fit index(CFI), and Tanaka and Huba's (1985) goodness of fit index (GFI) were used to evaluating the model-data fit. To determine the cutoff score for the adequate model fit, RMSEA below .10, NFI, CFI, GFI greater than .80, and χ^2/sd below five was used (Lance, 2006).

The Predictors of National Identity for Kurds and Turks

For the Turkish group, the results of the analysis indicated that while some of the fit indices were in acceptable range, RMSEA, NFI, CFI, GFI values were .28, .80, .81, and .86 respectively. The path analysis showed that the importance to ethnic identity ($\beta = .27$, $p < .05$) and exploration of ethnic identity ($\beta = .27$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors to the cultural identification for Turkish participants. Besides, the importance to ethnic identity ($\beta = .67$, $p < .001$) was a significant predictor to the patriotism. Also, public collective self-esteem ($\beta = .21$, $p < .05$) was a significant predictor of civic solidarity. Exploration of ethnic identity ($\beta = .36$, $p < .01$) was a significant predictor of civic responsibility.

For Kurdish ethnic groups, the results of the analysis indicated that while the goodness of the fit index was in acceptable range to good fit, other indices (RMSEA = .25, NFI = .71, CFI = .71) and relative chi-square value ($sd = 6$, $\chi^2/sd = 8.34$) was greater than acceptable range. However, the path analysis showed that the importance of ethnic identity ($\beta = .28$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors to the cultural identification Kurdish group. Moreover, while public collective self-esteem ($\beta = .41$, $p < .001$) was a significant and positive predictor of patriotism, different than the Turkish group, the exploration of ethnic identity ($\beta = -.31$, $p < .01$) was a significant and negative predictor of the patriotism level for Kurdish group. Finally, the exploration of ethnic identity ($\beta = .36$, $p < .01$) and public collective self-esteem ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$) were significant predictors to the civic responsibility.

Quick Overview on Discussion

Many results of the current study supported the hypotheses and expectations stemming from Social Identity Model (Çoymak, 2015). The comparisons of domains of ethnic identity may designate that ethnic identification is more salient for disadvantaged groups than majority ethnic groups in Turkey. According to ODT, assimilation or national commitment leads to a distinctiveness threat for disadvantaged groups (Brewer, 2001) and out-group threat leads to an increase in identity salience (e.g. Pickett & Brewer, 2001; Simon, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). By hypothesis 1, the results indicated that compared to Turks, Kurdish people care more about their ethnic identity and strive for exploring their ethnic identity. Political discourses and institutional norms on assimilation or national commitment throughout the history of the Republic of Turkey may lead to an increased perception of threat, and this threat may cause an increase in the salience of ethnic identity for members of disadvantaged ethnic groups.

In a similar vein, Rejection-Identification Model claimed that members of the disadvantaged groups increase their identification with the disadvantaged group to deal with the pain of perceived discrimination (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). Hence, it was also shown that the scores of the endorsement of the ethnic identity were higher on both perceived collective and individual discrimination, as compared to Kurdish group (Hypothesis 2). Thus, high level of perceived discrimination may have also led to an increase in identity salience for Kurdish people. It can be claimed that the politics of the modernization project of the Republican elite on ethnic groups (see detailed discussion, Toprak, 1996; Smith, 2005) may have triggered disidentification from secularism because Kurdish people may satisfy their self-esteem based on their religious identity which is a superordinate identity in public sphere. However, Baysu, Coşkan, and Duman (in press) demonstrated that a strong identification with Muslim identity is associated with positive emotion towards the outgroup, yet a strong Kurdish identity affect the otherwise. Besides, Çoymak (2009) showed that religious identity does not have a role when the issues is associated ethnic identity for Kurdish people. Therefore, more depth research seems to be requiring to understand whether the religious identity can contribute reconciliation of the conflict.

Keane (1998) claimed that civic solidarity had become the breaking point for the future of the societies. Moreover, according to Habermas (2003), civic solidarity can lead to the improvement of the nation states although consensus on human rights is served as an alternative to the civic solidarity for the post-national world. Although there is no systematic observation and empirical evidence about civic solidarity, claims of Keane

(1998) and Habermas (2003) can refer to the importance of civic solidarity as a way of a sense of belonging to the society. Concurrently, the results of the current study showed that in Turkey, the primary concern of belonging to the society as well as reconciliation can be civic solidarity because both Kurdish and Turkish groups had a higher score on civic solidarity than other dimensions of societal identification, namely, civic responsibility, cultural identification, and patriotism (Hypothesis 4). Not surprisingly, the results also indicated that compared to the majority groups; Kurdish participants had a weaker patriotic attachment to the nation. This result might imply that in Turkey, the classical idea of the nationalistic unification may not have been the implication for the attachment with the state. These results are also consistent with Sidanius and Petrocik's (2001), and Verkuyten and Yıldız's (2006) studies, which show that disadvantaged ethnic groups disidentification with the nation, and with the classical idea of national unification is hard to applying multi-ethnic states.