

The Label Terrorist

PKK in Turkey

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how the 'terrorist' label affects those that are labelled by this designation, particularly with reference on a subsequent choice to use violence in the context of an ethno-nationalist conflict. Drawing on the PKK as a case study, the study asks: what effect did the labelling of the PKK as a 'terrorist organisation' by the Turkish government have on the use of violence by Kurds in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict? The invocation of the label terrorist in any conflict often means both the labeller and the labelled are predisposed to use violence. This study argues that this process of labelling leads the labeller and the labelled to frame one another as an existential threat. To date, the effects of using the label 'terrorist' in an ethno-nationalist conflict context remain relatively understudied in both social and political sciences.

The period under analysis extends from 1992 to 2015, corresponding to the period during which the Turkish government continuously designated the PKK as 'terrorist'. In conflict discourse, belligerents use demeaning labels against each other to gather support, legitimacy or simply to increase combatants' morale. The study argues that the label terrorist is a constituent element of the conflict. The Turkish government uses the label terrorist as a tool to securitise the Kurdish-Turkish ethno-nationalist conflict. The Turkish government's labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' places the Kurdish issue in the broader framework of securitisation, a theory in International Relations. While securitising the Kurdish issue has bestowed more powers to the Turkish government to combat violence described as 'terrorist', the resolution of the

ethno-nationalist conflict became increasingly more complex leading to protracted waves of violence.

Analysing data collected through semi-structured qualitative interviews with Kurds from Turkey, the study reveals that the impact of the label terrorist is far more complex than previously assumed in the existing academic literature. The specific effects of the label terrorist on any given conflict, however, are the subject of an empirical question to be settled through rigorous research. Drawing on the Labelling Theory of Deviance fathered by Howard S. Becker and complemented by discourse analysis, this study finds that the application of the label terrorist against the PKK increases the perception of victimization among its wider Kurdish community. Secondly, the research demonstrates that the invocation of the label terrorist against the PKK places the group's actors and sympathizers in a situation that makes it harder for them to engage in peaceful means of resolving the conflict. The interplay between these two consequential effects of victimisation and political exclusion leads to the conclusion that there is an indirect relationship between designating an ethno-nationalist armed group 'terrorist' and the choice to use violence.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Amnesty International
AKIN	American Kurdish Information Network (USA)
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi or AK Partisi (Justice and Development Party) (Turkey)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (USA)
DDKD	Devrimci Demokratik Kultur Dernekleri
DDKO	Devrimci Dogu Kultur Ocaklari (Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths) (Turkey)
DEHAP	Demokratik Halkin Partisi (Democratic People's Party) (Turkey)
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ERNK	Eniye Rizgariye Navata Kurdistan (Kurdistan National Liberation Front) (PKK)
HDP	The People's Democratic Party (<i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</i>)
HPG	Hezen Parastina Gel (Peoples Defence Force) (PKK)
HRK	Hazen Rizgariya Kurdistan (Kurdistan Freedom Brigades) (PKK)
ICP	Iraqi Communist Party
IGC	Iraqi Governing Council
IKF	Iraqi Kurdistan Front
IMK	Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (Iraq)

ABBREVIATIONS

ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
KADEK	Kurdistan Azadi Demokrasi Kongire (Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress) (PKK)
KCK	Koma Civaken Kurdistan (Kurdistan Communities Union) (PKK)
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party (Iraq)
KDPI	Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran
KDPT	Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey
KDSP	Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party (PCDK) (Iraq)
KGK	Kongra-Gel (Kurdistan People's Congress) (PKK)
KHRP	Kurdish Human Rights Project (UK)
KIU	Kurdistan Islamic Union (Iraq)
KKK	Koma Komalen Kurdistan (KCK) (PKK)
KNC	Kurdistan National Congress (KNK)
KNC	Kurdish National Congress of North America
KNK	Kongra Netewiya Kurdistan (Kurdistan National Congress)
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
PJAK	Parti Jiyani Azadi Kurdistan (Kurdistan Free Life Party) (Iran)
PKDW	Parlamana Kurdistane Li Derveyi Welat (Kurdistan Parliament in Exile)
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party) (Turkey)
PSK	Kurdistan Socialist Party (Turkey)
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (Iraq)
PYD	Partiya Yekita ya Demokratik (Democratic Union Party)

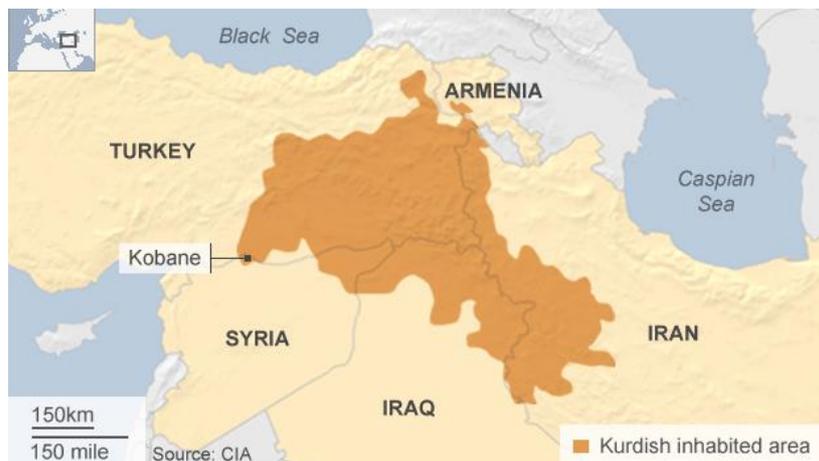
ABBREVIATIONS

TMY	Terorle Mucadele Yasasi (Anti-Terrorism Law) (Turkey/2006)
TSK	Turk Silahlı Kuvvetleri (Turkish Armed Forces)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

INTRODUCTION

The enduring problem we face is not how to eliminate differences and opposition from international relations, but how to end violence (Gross, 1966). Indeed, political violence in its various forms remains a formidable challenge facing international relations. Political violence, loosely labelled ‘terrorist’, plays a significant role in the world of politics today. It has become a major concern for many governments and the object of considerable international cooperation among them.

Kurds in the Middle East are arguably one of the largest ethnic groups in the world without an independent state (Yildiz, 2005, p. 4). Geographically connected, historical ‘Greater Kurdistan’ [See Appendix 4] is divided into four parts within four sovereign states: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria (See Appendix 4 and BBC, 2016 Illustrative Map 1).



(Illustrative Map1: Greater Kurdistan)

The Kurds’ struggle to preserve their ethnic identity and to create an independent state(s) has been the trigger of ethno-nationalist conflicts in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria for over a century. From the early 1990s (M. Gunter, 2007, pp. 7-9), the

Turkish government begun using the label 'terrorist' to describe violent Kurdish groups in Turkey – most notably to describe the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK). The PKK has also been designated a 'terrorist group' by the United States as well as several European and Middle Eastern states (M. Gunter, 2004, p. 207). However, these states have intermittingly listed/de-listed the group off their lists of terrorist organisations due to internal and external political and security considerations (BBC, 2008).

This research examines the effects of labelling the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK)¹ as a terrorist organisation by the Turkish government within the context of the violent ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey. To appreciate the relationship between using the label 'terrorist' in an ethno-nationalist conflict context and the choice to use violence by those labelled, the thesis frames its arguments within two main theoretical frameworks: the labelling theory of deviance, which examines the research topic from a socio-criminological point of view; and the Copenhagen School securitisation theory which examines the mechanisms of securitising certain issues often political. The theoretical framework and empirical analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews conducted with Kurds from Turkey inform the arguments and inferences made by this study.

¹ PKK has changed its name over time to avoid the label terrorist. It has also created splinter groups to avoid the stigma and legal repercussions of being label terrorist. However, changing its name has not been successful – so far. See (Saeed, 2017)

1. Aim and Relevance

Taking the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK)² as the main case study of this thesis, the aim is to examine the effects of the label ‘terrorist’ on the choice of using violence by the Kurds in the ethno-nationalist Turkish-Kurdish conflict. The period under analysis extends from 1992 to 2015, corresponding to the period during which the Turkish government continuously designated the PKK as ‘terrorist’ (Gazete, 2015)³. The Turkish government instrumentalisation of the label ‘terrorist’ against the PKK during this period makes it ideal for studying the effects of the label on the Kurdish community in Turkey.

Since 1984, the Turkish government has been engaged in a war against the PKK to end the separatist ethno-nationalist violence in Turkey (Ünal, 2012, p. 8). The PKK claims that their violent struggle against the Turkish government is intended to protect Kurdish ethnic rights and identity. Whereas the Turkish government claims that its war against the PKK and other Kurdish armed groups aims to protect the security of the Turkish people and preserve the unity of the Turkish republic (Türk Demokrasi Vakfı., 1996).

In the early 1990s, the Turkish government began using the label ‘terrorist’ to describe the PKK, its affiliates, and other Kurdish armed groups (Gazete, 2015). The Turkish government accuses the PKK of killing thousands of innocent civilians inside and outside Turkey. The PKK has also been designated as a ‘terrorist group’ by the United States, the EU member states, and other states (Casier, 2010a, pp. 2-3). The

² Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan loosely translated into English as “Kurdistan Workers Party”.

³ English version: https://www.egm.gov.tr/EN/Pages/national_legislation.aspx

designation of the PKK as a 'terrorist' group, however, was justified differently by each state (Boon-Kuo, L., B., & Sullivan, 2015b, pp. 118-120). The designation of Kurdish armed and political groups as "terrorist" transforms the rules of political and armed engagement in the ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey. While the designation is against groups like the PKK and KCK, the implications of labelling an ethno-nationalist armed group "terrorist" usually goes beyond the intended target (Bhatia, 2008, p. 15). This study explores the effects of using the label 'terrorist' against the PKK on the wider Kurdish community in Turkey.

An examination of the effects of the label terrorist on those labelled, in an ethno-nationalist conflict context, not only attempts to answer the main question of this thesis but also sheds light on other issues relevant to this study. Although not directly addressed by this study, issues related to the criminological aspects which are linked to the labelling theory and the political aspects linked to the securitisation theory are raised. The hypothesis of this study is discussed within the framework of the labelling theory which presumes that terrorism is a deviant act – a crime. This presumption brings a whole set of ontological and epistemological theories which are designed to study deviance, the power of labels, stigma and mass stigma, and the interactions between the labelled and the labeller (H. S. Becker, 1991).

This study contends that the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' transformed the Kurdish issue from an internal ethnic conflict to an existential threat with an international dimension. The Turkish government designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' [1992-2015] transformed this 'existential' threat into an international terrorist issue. The Turkish government designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' coincided with the

Global War On Terror (GWOT) declared by the United States in the early 1990s (Jackson, 2005, p. 81). Although the international dimension of the effects of designation is not part of the current study, it is argued that the historical and contextual relevance of the designation adds to how both Kurds and Turks perceive the designation of the PKK as a 'terrorist group'. The aim of the internationalising the designation was to de-li

While each theory offers useful tools to understand the effects of labelling deviant acts and the mechanisms of securitising political issues, the combination of the two theories offers better insights into the effects of the label "terrorist" on the labelled in an ethnic conflict context. The aim and relevance of this thesis are directly linked to its theoretical framework design which reflects the political and criminological power of the label "terrorist". The ethnic nature of the PKK case study showcases the validity of the research main question, hypothesis, and the inferences and findings made by this study.

The PKK case study will be situated in the existing relevant academic literature to highlight the importance of the research questions and the issues raised. The study will offer analytical inferences informed by the empirical evidence collected through qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with the Kurds from Turkey. The aim of this study is to answer the main question concerning the effects of the Turkish government labelling the PKK 'terrorist' on the Kurds' choice in using violence.

2. Questions and Issues

The Kurdish issue will be contextualized within the Turkish government's narrative that the PKK is a terrorist organization, which represents an existential threat to the republic of Turkey. The Turkish government uses this narrative as part of the justification to deploy military forces in Kurdish majority cities and to decree special laws to counter PKK's 'terrorist' attacks. Commentators and human rights groups accuse Turkey of using the designation of the PKK and other Kurdish groups as 'terrorist' to deny Kurds their ethnic rights and suppress Kurdish separatist aspirations (Yildiz & Kurdish Human Rights Project., 2005). The interplay of political violence, ethnic conflict, terrorism, and securitization inspires the central question of this study:

“What effect did the labelling of the PKK as a ‘terrorist organisation’ by the Turkish government have on the use of violence by Kurds in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict?”

To answer this question, other peripheral questions had to be answered first. What is terrorism and who is terrorist? The haunting definitional conundrum of terrorism has been the preoccupation of researchers all over the world. The theoretical framework of this study places special importance on who is doing the defining and who applies the labels deviant, terrorist, etc. Therefore, this study does focus on what terrorism is; but rather assigns special importance to who defines acts as 'terrorist'.

In this study participants were asked to define terrorism. The respondents not only gave answers that defined terrorism within their social worlds, but also attempted to

express their perception about 'who is really the terrorist' within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict. The questions addressed in this study are designed to provoke the interview participants to express their perceptions to help answer the main question of the study. The questions and follow-up questions such as "How do you define terrorism? And What is terrorism?" also provoke answers about how the wider Kurdish community in Turkey perceives the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist'. It is argued here that the designation of the PKK as a terrorist group influences the choice individuals from the Kurdish community in Turkey to join the PKK.

The Kurdish interview participants were asked 'what events led to label the PKK a 'terrorist' organization by Turkey and many Western countries?' The question elicited a variety of answers including denial, conspiracy theories, justification, and condemnation. These answers contributed in measuring the effects of the label 'terrorist' on the wider Kurdish community using the theoretical framework of the Labelling Theory. Another research question is: 'How do you perceive the designation of PKK as a 'terrorist' group?' The interview participants gave answers expressing their discourses of rejecting the labelling, counter-labelling, indifference, no-answer, offended, etc. The semi-structured interviews conducted with a selection of Kurds from Turkey produced a wealth of qualitative data which has been analysed in Chapter Four.

Issues raised by the thesis include the possible effects of the label 'terrorist' on political engagement, conflict transformation, and conflict resolution. The designation of groups as 'terrorist' is meant to isolate listed groups and stigmatize and

delegitimize designated groups with the aim to end political violence (Boon-Kuo et al., 2015b, p. 32). This study argues that such designation can have adverse effects on conflicts when the stigma cast shadows beyond the intended group – namely – stigmatizing the wider (supportive) community. In ethno-nationalist conflict contexts, inter-ethnic relations tend to be sensitive and fraught with stigmatizing name-calling (Wimmer, 2004, p. 29). Although this study does not address conflict resolution directly, the issues of labelling, terrorism, mass stigma, ethnic conflicts, and securitisation/de-securitisation are relevant to its hypothesis and the arguments made.

The questions surrounding audiences in ethnic conflicts are further discussed in Chapters One and Four. The labelling and securitisation are only successfully applied when both the securitising/labelling actor is powerful and legitimate enough to convince the majority of the audience(s) – ideally all audiences. In ethno-political conflicts, communities (audiences) are usually divided which makes securing acceptance of labelling and/or securitisation hard to achieve. In Chapters One and Four, this study argues that the designation of armed groups representative of an audience cause cannot be achieved easily and can, under certain circumstances, produce inter-communal friction and counter-labelling.

The theoretical interdisciplinary combination of criminology and International Relations makes it inevitable to encounter issues raised by each discipline in the fields of terrorism studies, criminal behaviour, collective action, governmental security policies, ethnic conflicts, control, and other topics. While this study does not directly address these questions in great length, the relevant discussions and

assertions made in these fields are explored throughout the chapters of this research.

3. The Power of Labels

Labels and identities are closely linked. Some of these labels are assigned by ourselves and others might be assigned by the society (black, white, Christian, poor, Kurdish, Arab, Chinese, etc.) (Moncrieffe & Eyben, 2007, p. 2). Labels are powerful tools to signal different aspects of our identities. We construct our social world using labels. While labels might be efficient in helpful to understand our social worlds, labelling processes are dynamic and political. Therefore, labels can cause unintended consequences. In certain scenarios, labelling may shift or sustain power relations triggering social prejudice (Moncrieffe & Eyben, 2007, p. 177).

Juha Vuori explores the power of labels in communist China, arguing that: “the frames through which social movements are presented can have significant effects, and the frame of national security is a powerful one in China” (Juha Vuori, 2011, p. 189). The empirical case study examined by Juha A. Vuori explores how the use of security frames [labels] has influenced the identity of [protestors] social mobilisation in China. The regime in China assigns certain images and labels (revisionists, running dogs of capitalism, counterrevolutionary) to those it views as its enemies (ibid: 198).

‘Terrorist’ is one of the most powerful and stigmatising labels an individual or group can be called. The label terrorist is so powerful that there is no consensus on the

international level what constitutes a terrorist act. In other words, there is a definitional crisis. The definitional conundrum of the label 'terrorist' has inspired extensive research that has produced hundreds of definitions for the label 'terrorist' (Schmid, 2011). Terrorism is not a central theme to this study, however, the political, security, and stigmatising power of the label terrorist sits at its core.

Political violence labelled 'terrorist' existed long before al-Qaida attacked the Twin towers in New York on 11 September 2001. However, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent Global War on Terror led by the US government made the term 'terrorist' becomes widely used to target all kinds of actors and groups throughout the world (Chagankerian, 2013). The images of the attack against most powerful country in the world in which around 3,000 people were killed produced widespread feeling of insecurity and suspicion in the United States of America and across the world. Terrorism tops the list of most pressing issues in governments' agendas. To question governments policies of countering terrorism has thus become controversial and 'sensitive' (Bartolucci, 2010, p. 120). Critical terrorism studies, however, puts the notion of the label 'terrorist' under critical analysis to better understand the consequences of its use' (ibid: 121).

Staun argues that, "denoting a person or an organisation 'terrorist' is far from being an innocent affair" (Staun, 2010, p. 410). The Turkish and Moroccan governments, for example, have been using the term 'terrorist to refer to their political opponents and regional adversaries as delegitimising tool. Labels such as terrorist, war criminal, serial killer, etc. provoke emotions. When governments use such emotional words, it becomes easier for the labelling actors to manipulate how the audiences perceive

the 'terrorist' group. The invocation of the label 'terrorist' affects the ability of the audience to rationally analyse the designated group. Therefore, the label 'terrorist' and the terrorist rhetoric are effective tools to delegitimise political opponents. The labelling of the other as 'terrorist' creates a 'binary opposition' and an 'othering discourse' (Bartolucci, 2010, p. 123). Jenkins argues that by labelling an actor 'terrorist', the labelling actor makes a 'moral judgment' about the characteristics of the labelled (Jenkins, 1980, p. 1). Tomis Kapitan describes this process as 'speaker oriented bias', which implies "a reference to the speaker's point of view, so that, for practical purposes, 'terrorism' is coextensive with the phrase 'terrorism against us'. In this way, it behaves much like the phrase 'the enemy'" (Kapitan, 2003, p. 4). The power of the label, in this case, is a combination of othering and moral judgement. In the case of this study, the Turkish government designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' has the effect of othering not only the PKK but also the Kurdish community in Turkey. Empirical evidence in Chapter Four reveals that the labelling of the PKK is perceived by the Kurdish community as a moral judgement against Kurds in Turkey by the dominant [ruling] ethnic Turkish majority.

This study examines the unintended securitisation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey using the label 'terrorist' as its lens. The argument is proposed that the securitisation of the Kurdish identity leads to the construction of an ontological insecurity for the Kurdish community in Turkey. In support, Stuart Croft argues that "the securitization of identity leads to the securitization of subjectivity – the intensified search for and/or attribution of a single, stable identity, 'regardless of its actual existence'" (Croft, 2012, p. 73). The designation of the PKK as a terrorist group has created 'critical situations' which Giddens defines as: "circumstances of a radical disjuncture of unpredictable

kind which affect substantial numbers of individuals, situations that threaten or destroy the certitudes of institutionalised routines” (Giddens, 1984, p. 61). The study argues that the certitudes of institutionalised Kurdish political, cultural, and economic routines have been threatened after the designation of the PKK as a terrorist group. The stigmatising power of the label terrorist in the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict in Turkey is demonstrated throughout this research and supported by the empirical evidence presented and analysed in Chapter Four.

The power of the label ‘terrorist’ in the Kurdish-Turkish ethnic conflict context is revealed by its effects on the perceptions of security, victimisation, and political exclusion experienced by the Kurds interviewed for this study. The stigmatising power of the label ‘terrorist’ applied against the PKK has arguably led to the unintended securitisation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey; which in turn, further victimised a disenfranchised ethnic community – namely – the Kurds in Turkey. Thus, it is argued that the inter-ethnic identity relations have been strained by the designation of one ethnic group’s actions as ‘terrorist’ by the dominant [Turkish] ethnic group.

To summarise, the power of the labelling using the term ‘terrorist’ is manifested in its diverse ways of deployment as a delegitimising, stigmatising, securitising, defence, and political tool within conflicts. While the label ‘terrorist’ helps governments cut through the ‘red-tape’ of checks and balances in exercising powers, the consequences of using the label ‘terrorist’ in ethnic conflicts can exacerbates the existential threat posed by a referent subject to a referent object. In the case study of

this research, the power of the label ‘terrorist’ is examined to better understand its [adverse] effects on the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict in Turkey.

4. Labelling Literature

PKK, as a pro-Marxist Kurdish separatist party, was officially established during its founding congress in 1978 by a group of six housemates in a village affiliated to Diyarbakir⁴ (Özcan, 2006, p. 73). PKK launched its first attack against the Turkish police and Gendarmerie bases in Şemdinli, Hakkâri Province and Eruh, Siirt Province on the 15th of August 1984. Kurds later called the offensive the “29th Revolt”. The “28th Revolt” had taken place in 1937 to 1938 in Dersim province. The Turkish government was able to end the 28th Revolt in less than six months – the longest of the 28 revolts (ibid). The 29th Revolt, however, sparked a destructive 15-year war (1984-1999) followed by protracted waves of violence between PKK fighters and the Turkish security forces. From the early 1990s, the Turkish government labelled PKK a terrorist organisation. As of 2002, the EU, UK, and the U.S.A designated PKK an international terrorist organisation (Casier, 2010a, p. 393).

The label terrorist became an integral part of the Turkish government’s ‘Law-fare’ against the Kurdish insurgency led by the PKK. Boon-Kuo et al. (2015) contend that:

“Very few prosecutions for ‘terrorism’ have concerned actions resulting in the loss of life or injury and have instead systematically treated expressions of Kurdish identity as manifestations of the PKK. The use of terrorist organisation prosecutions to repress and depoliticise

⁴ Diyarbakir is regarded as the capital of North Kurdistan (Kurdish cities in Turkey).

Kurdish civil society has been a distinctive and systematic feature of the conflict, in recent years.” (Boon-Kuo et al., 2015b, p. 118)

The research conducted by (Boon-Kuo et al., 2015b) reveals that the designation of the PKK as a terrorist organisation goes beyond the intended group. The Kurdish community in Turkey feels as if its identity is accused of terrorism and constantly under siege. This finding supports the hypothesis that the designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ limits the political engagement of the Kurdish community in Turkey. Consequently, existing research literature helps demonstrate that Kurds are left with fewer political choices after the designation of PKK as a ‘terrorist’ group was applied.

Researchers and commentators often attempt to examine one side of the story of labelling – namely – the labelled. It is argued in this study that the focus on the labelled only neither gives a comprehensive understanding of labelling nor of terrorism as a phenomenon. As Howard S. Becker argues, the problem is:

“theoretical. We can construct workable definitions either of actions people might commit or of particular categories of deviance as the world (especially, but not only, the authorities) defines them. But we cannot make the two coincide completely, because they do not do so theoretically. They belong to two distinct, though overlapping, systems of collective action. One consists of the people who cooperate to produce the act in action. The other consists of the people who cooperate in the drama of morality by which “wrongdoing” is discovered and dealt with, whether that procedure is formal and legal or quite informal”. (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 212)

Deviance is a collective action. People act with an eye on the responses of others involved in that action. The labelling theory in its simplest form insists that we look at all the people involved in any episode of alleged deviance (H. S. Becker, 1991). The

PKK designation as a terrorist group needs to be understood within its larger ethnic conflict context which involves the Turkish government as the labeller.

The existing literature on the effects of labelling an ethnic group 'terrorist' focuses primarily on three areas of research: political discourse, legal aspects of designation, and effects of designation on conflict management and transformation. André Barrinha (Barrinha, 2011) has examined the discursive aspects of using the label 'terrorist' by the Turkish government against PKK between 2007-2008. Barrinha argues that there is a correlation between Turkey-PKK violence escalation and the increased usage of the label terrorist in Turkish government political discourse (ibid: 163). Although Barrinha focuses on Ole Wæver's layered discursive structure, he articulates his argument within the concept of labelling highlighting how the usage of the label terrorist dictates not only the limits of the conflict but also the strategies which can be used (ibid: 164). André Barrinha argues that the designation of the ethnic conflict in Turkey as a war against terrorists "puts conflict on the edge of the political". As he puts it:

"the terrorist label should be seen as part of a larger discursive structure, in which the process of labelling stays in-between a constellation of key political terms and the definition of particular policies, all of which are intersubjectively constructed and reproduced. As a consequence, it is possible to contextualise this particular label within a larger political discourse, as well as to understand the long-term consequences of constantly using the terrorist label in the political debate" (Barrinha, 2011, p. 176).

Designating the other as 'terrorist' insinuates that the PKK should be destroyed rather than kept as a political rival/opposition entity. However, examples like the Omagh bombing show that in conflict resolution the label terrorist is replaceable

(ibid: 176). Barrinha's research (Barrinha, 2011, p. 176) frames Turkish political discourse's normalisation of using the label terrorist against PKK as part of the larger Ole Wæver's discursive structure. He contends that using the label terrorist against PKK "was not particularly helpful when trying to find an appropriate solution to the conflict" (ibid). Barrinha's research (Barrinha, 2011) sheds light on important aspects of the effects of labelling the PKK. Yet, unlike the current study, he focuses on the relationship between government discourse and government policies towards the Kurdish issue in Turkey.

Michael Toomey and Benedict E. Singleton (Toomey, 2014) investigate the effects of the label terrorist on non-state actors. They argue that the application of the label "terrorist" to one of the parties in a given conflict politically delegitimises opponents, and paves the way for the use of extreme measures to deal with them (Toomey, 2014, p. 190). Toomey and Singleton have examined the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Hamas as their primary case studies. Their main conclusion is that in the post-9/11 world, successful designation of a non-state opponent as a terrorist permits the use of excessive force (Toomey, 2014, p. 195). The designation of opponents as terrorists therefore becomes a powerful political tool in the hands of state actors, regardless of the justification for its use. Toomey and Singleton (Toomey, 2014) research overlaps with Barrinha's research (Barrinha, 2011) in terms of discourse impact on government policies, however, Toomey and Singleton distinctly focus on the usage of the label terrorist as a weapon to intimidate and/or eliminate opponents regardless of the legitimacy behind applying the label. In the current study, Toomey and Singleton's work is categorised under government securitisation of a given conflict using the label terrorist. While Toomey and Singleton

examine the label terrorist as a powerful tool readily available at the disposal of governments, this study looks beyond the instrumentalisation of the label terrorist to understand the effects of the label on the choice of using violence by the labelled.

Michael Bhatia narrates a story about the Moro Islamic Liberation of Mindanao (MILF) where the Mayor of Davao City called on the President of Philippine to label MILF a terrorist organisation because it has caused the deaths of thousands. Eid Kabalu, a MILF spokesman, responded “government is closing its door to the peace process and [intends to] pursue a military solution” which will result in a “bloodier war” (Bhatia, 2008, p. 5). The reaction of the MILF spokesperson indicates that the group views designation as an act of war rather than as political rhetoric. The MILF handling of potential designation reinforces the argument of this study that labelling a group ‘terrorist’ is an integral part of the conflict and its resolution.

This study is a timely attempt to fill a research gap in the existing literature – namely – examining the effects of the label ‘terrorist’ on the choice to use violence by the wider Kurdish community in Turkey. The combination of the Copenhagen School Securitization Theory and the Labelling Theory of Deviance as a theoretical framework to analyse empirical data help inform the inferences made by this study. This theoretical combination adds to the existing literature on the securitisation and labelling theories.

Hans-Peter van den Broek argues that the radical Left-Wing Nationalists in the Basque Country use counter-labels to redefine the enemy and themselves. The process of self-relabelling and counter-labelling is used justify using violence for

political ends (Broek, 2015, p. 1). Broek contends that the Basque Country case study appears to:

“refute the classic labelling theory: radical Nationalists did not see themselves as fanatics or delinquents, let alone as Fascists, nor did they behave according to the labels that their political adversaries tagged them with.” (Broek, 2015, p. 11)

The Basque case study, according Broek, shows that the ETA activists of street violence did not experience “devalued identity”. While they were annoyed because of the labels (criminals and fascists) assigned to them, they derived pride from these labels because they reinforced their image of revolutionaries (ibid). Broek’s findings demonstrate how designated groups react to labels like ‘terrorist’, ‘criminal’, and ‘Fascist’ by counter-labelling the opponent or/and deriving pride from these labels. However, the successful application of the label is governed by the power and legitimacy balance. For example; the PKK labels the Turkish government ‘terrorist’, ‘criminal’, fascist’, ‘racist’, etc. These labels are not successfully applied against the Turkish government because of the power and legitimacy imbalance between the Turkish government and the PKK. Geof Wood argues that:

“Labelling refers to a relationship of power in that the labels of some are more easily imposed on people and situations than those of others. It is therefore an act of politics involving conflict as well as authority.” (G. Wood, 1985, p. 347)

The politics and effects of opponents labelling each other in a conflict context certainly vary from one case study to another. The Basque Country case study examined by Broek shows how the Left-Wing Nationalists adapted to the labels by re-defining themselves and counter-labelling their opponents to justify violence for

political ends. Broek's research (Broek, 2015), however, does not examine the effects of these labels on the Left-Wing Nationalists supportive community in the Basque Country.

The existing literature exemplified by (Barrinha, 2011), (Toomey, 2014), (Broek, 2015) and others show that the focus of investigation has mainly been on the effects of the label terrorist on governments' security policies, legal aspects, political discourse in conflicts, and conflict transformation/resolution. While shedding light on these aspects, this study does not set out to answer questions on securitisation mechanisms or conflict resolution. Instead, it is focused on answering the main question concerning the effects of the label terrorist on the choice to use violence in an ethnic conflict context. It seems evident that the Turkish government has instrumentalized the label terrorist to securitise the Kurdish issue. Instrumentalisation of the label terrorist in this context has effects on the identity of the Kurdish ethnic minority in Turkey and consequently, as argued here, on the choice to use violence.

5. Research Limitations

The study focuses on addressing the main question of the thesis: 'What effect did the labelling of the PKK as a 'terrorist organisation' by the Turkish government have on the use of violence by Kurds in the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict?' There are, however, research limitations related to access to empirical data, security, methodological shortcomings, as well as time and space.

Labelling the PKK as a terrorist group by the Turkish government has an immediate effect on conflict transformation and conflict resolution. Examples in ethnic conflict resolution reveal that the label 'terrorist' must be displaced to open the space for the resolution of a conflict (Barrinha, 2011, p. 176). The Turkish government uses the Penal Code and counterterrorism laws to address association and non-violent forms of political activities. The wide-ranging net of counterterrorism law as stipulated by the Turkish Anti-Terror Act⁵ makes political engagement in any peace process for Kurds almost impossible. The Turkish government has repeatedly stated that it will not meet with the PKK or any party which has not publically denounced the PKK as terrorists (Yildiz & Breau, 2010, p. 231). The designation of the PKK contributed to the failure in reaching a lasting peace agreement in Turkey despite the many bi/unilateral ceasefires (Boon-Kuo et al., 2015b, p. 121). As the International State Crime Initiative concludes:

“the ban of the PKK amplifies the key barriers to addressing the root causes and consequences of the conflict ... the designation of the PKK as a terrorist organisation has undermined the PKK's political status and eroded confidence building measures and stalled periodic negotiations... the contemporary period of mass prosecutions of the Kurds in Turkey should be understood as part of the listing dynamic, structuring and hindering negotiations for peace.” (Ibid: 139).

The study explores the effects of the label 'terrorist' on conflict transformation and conflict resolution within the boundaries of its hypothesis. The scope of the current research is confined to how, if at all, the label 'terrorist' limits political venues of engagement leaving Kurds with few options other than violence.

⁵ Anti-Terror Act (Act No. 3713/1991) (Turkey), Article. 1 (1).

The Labelling Theory, in its simplest form, focuses attention on all the people involved in any deviant act – including terrorism (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 183). There are two main sides involved in the process of committing, defining, discovering, and labelling an act deviant [terrorist]. One side produces the act in question. The other includes those who cooperate in the drama of morality to discover deviant acts and deal with them legally (ibid: 185). This research thesis focuses on the effects of the label ‘terrorist’ on the labelled – the actor who is accused of committing the act [terrorism]. The Labelling Theory of Deviance emphasizes the logical interdependence of acts and judgements made by those powerful enough to enforce them (ibid: 186). Therefore, those who are powerful enough [usually the state] should be studied as well to fully understand how the deviant act under question came to being.

While this study recognises the importance of the labeller, it does not set out to examine the effects of the label ‘terrorist’ on the labeller nor the mechanism by which the label was produced. Researchers, like (Barrinha, 2011), have examined the effects of the label terrorist on the labeller – in their case studies the state is the main labeller. The scope of this study is focused on the effects the label ‘terrorist’ has on the choice of Kurds to use violence in the Kurdish-Turkish ethnic conflict. The inferences made by this research are supported by the empirical data examining perceptions of Kurds in Turkey including their perception of what constitutes a terrorist act.

The links between theories of securitisation/criminalisation (deviance) and the methods of evidence gathering are venues of further future research. The application

of hypotheses derived from theories of nationalism (modernists' emphasis on blocked upward mobility, status recognition for example) or more clearly specified sub-research questions based on the inductive approach would require consideration of class / gender / urban-rural cleavages, variables as important parts of the explanation of potential or actual radicalisation among Kurds. One of the limitations of the sampling method [snowballing] that it potentially excludes Kurds that were not supportive of the PKK (for example, Kurds assimilated into the Turkish nationalist identity or 'village guards' victims of PKK). Future research on Kurds from such backgrounds would produce further nuances in the interpretation of the impact labelling has on the wider Kurdish community in Turkey.

As previously noted, there is no internationally accepted definition of terrorism (Goodwin, 2006, p. 2027). The definition of the label terrorist has been an area of debates among politicians and academics. The very idea of who is defined as terrorist is central to the theoretical and hypothetical discussions of this study. There are hundreds of legal, academic, and political definitions of terrorism (Schmid, 2011). The study explores how the Turkish government and Kurds in Turkey dispute what constitute a terrorist act. However, the exact definition of 'terrorism' does not fall within the scope of this study. Instead the argument is made that the stigmatising power of the label 'terrorist' produces the effects under study notwithstanding the exact definition of the label. The power of the label terrorist is of such effect that once successfully applied, the consequences leave little space to debate the definition of terrorism. Therefore, the definitional conundrum of terrorism will not be addressed in the current study.

Media is increasingly playing an important role in transmitting governments' narratives to the public (Norris, 2003). The role of the media in the labelling process and mass stigma is a relevant issue here. Media, a primary mechanism of naming and transmitting names to the public, needs to be critically examined, especially when naming occurs within a broader environment of war and conflict (Bhatia, 2008, p. 6). In political science, commentators argue that certain labels are used to manipulate public and international opinion (Paletz & Schmid, 1992). The Turkish media played a noticeable role in successfully applying the label terrorist against PKK. Yet, however important the role of the media in labelling the PKK 'terrorist' and spreading mass stigma against the wider Kurdish community in Turkey, it does not fall within the scope this research thesis. This limitation is to be ascribed to time and word limitations of the current research project.

Since 1991, the PKK has moved through phases of both structural and in branding transformations (Saeed, 2017). One important aspect is how the PKK attempted to change its name to evade the consequences of designation both in Turkey and internationally. This helps demonstrate that the PKK is experiencing the impact of the label especially at the international level. These transformations and branding changes, however, do not fall within the scope of this thesis because its focus is on the labelled – namely – the wider Kurdish community in Turkey.

The Kurdish issue in Turkey is a sensitive topic. The designation of the PKK as a 'terrorist' group makes many Kurds reluctant to talk about it either publically or to researchers. The author took an extremely cautious approach in choosing locations, interviewees, always considering the safety of both the researcher and the

participants. Security and safety limitations obviously impact the research design and sampling techniques. The limitations of the research design are discussed in Chapter Two: Methodological Framework.

6. Organisation

The central theme of this thesis is the effects of the label terrorist on the choice to use violence in an ethnic conflict context. The study begins by situating the research question within the general context of each of the research settings. The **introduction** outlines the aims and relevance of this research. The labelling theory of deviance in criminology inspires its hypothesis. However, the political nature of the label 'terrorist' and the mechanisms of government designation justifies the incorporation of the Copenhagen School Securitisation Theory into the theoretical structure of this study. The Introduction showcases the theoretical and empirical importance of the study's hypothesis.

The introduction presents the main question is presented along with other questions and issues raised by the study. The multidisciplinary nature of this study results in a set of questions within the disciplines of criminology and international relations. Although these questions are not directly answered by the study, they are explored and examined in different parts to complement arguments made in the study. The main question cannot be addressed without presenting the interview questions asked during the field research phase of this study. The field research questions are outlined in the introduction to explain where they fit into the overall hypothesis and arguments made throughout.

The power of the label terrorist is briefly discussed in the Introduction to highlight the relationship between labels and identities. Labels are also important for how people construct their social realities – and consequently – their ontological security. In a sub-section entitled ‘The Power of Labels’, the securitisation of identities [labels] in the Chinese case study is compared to the designation of the PKK as a ‘terrorist’ group by the Turkish government. Here the argument is made that inter-ethnic identity relations and the ontological security of Kurds in Turkey has been strained because of the designation of PKK as a ‘terrorist’ group.

Existing literature on labelling and securitisation is summarized and critically examined. Thus the the arguments and hypothesis made by other researchers are explored to help situate the study’s main question within existing literature. Although literature from the fields of criminology, international relations, and ethnic studies are discussed, the study focuses on critically reviewing the literature directly relevant to the hypothesis set out in this study.

While Chapter Three discusses the history of the Kurds in the Middle East and the significance of the PKK case study, the literature review sub-section in the Introduction places the PKK armed struggle in the historical background of the 28 Kurdish revolts in Turkey. We see that historians frame the PKK armed struggle in Turkey as part of Kurdish attempts to gain self-control. Historians consider the PKK rise and armed struggle against the Turkish state as the 29th Revolt. They argue that the Kurdish-Turkish ethnic conflict in Turkey has been transformed into an existential threat following the Turkish government’s designation of the PKK as a ‘terrorist’

group. The ethnic, political, and security aspects of the existing literature are also reviewed.

There are questions and aspects relevant to this research which have not been addressed in this study. The limitations of the research are outlined and explained and their impact on the inferences and deductions are explored. The identification of these limitations underscores suggestions made in Chapter Five for future research and how to overcome the limitations identified in this study.

Chapter One examines the theoretical implications of using the label terrorist on the labelled [group/community] in an ethnic conflict context. This chapter explores the main theoretical framework of the study which combines two theories from different disciplines: the Copenhagen School Securitization Theory and the Labelling Theory of Deviance. 'Labelling and Securitisation' are central issues to the arguments of this study. The chapter begins by reviewing the origins of the labelling theory of deviance in criminology. The theory originated in the 1960s in the United States amid political and cultural conflict and has challenged the role of government agencies and social processes in the creation of deviance. It dominated the theoretical and methodological perspectives of research from the late 1960s to early 1980s (Ray, 2014, p. 7). The pioneers of the labelling theory offered theoretical alternatives to our understanding of deviance as a combination of a [deviant] act, moral judgment, and social control/order. The theory's focus has been on actions deemed deviant/criminal or mental illness – mostly addressed within the justice or psychiatric systems.

In Chapter One the label 'terrorist' is explained as a security speech act charged with political rhetoric. The dominant political aspect of the label sets it apart from labels, such as criminal or murderer, addressed by the pioneers of the labelling. Furthermore, the ethnic dimension of the PKK case study transforms the power of the label from political to ethno-political. The Copenhagen School Securitisation Theory has also been integrated into the theoretical framework to help better understand the effects of the label terrorist on the choice of using violence by Kurds in the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict.

The Copenhagen School Securitisation Theory basic unit of measurement is "security is a speech act" (Balzacq, 2011, p. 1). This study adopts the securitization theory argument that language is not only representational but also part of the conflict in Turkey. The labelling of the PKK and other Kurdish political groups as terrorist serves as part of the Turkish government attempt to securitise the Kurdish issue in Turkey. This chapter also explores how Turkey securitised the Kurdish issue and the reasons why. The Kurdish issue in Turkey was securitised during the early 1980s when the Turkish government labelled PKK a "separatist" group – an existential threat to the unity of the republic. The chapter further reviews the development of securitising the Kurdish issue in Turkey and how the securitization process evolved and adapted to the effective popularity of the label 'terrorist' after the horrific terrorist attacks of the 9/11 in the United States.

An alternative theoretical framework is offered which combines the interactionist theory of deviance and the Copenhagen securitisation theory to help resolve the seemingly technical problem of understanding the effects of the label terrorist on the

labelled. The relationship between securitisation and labelling in the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict context is explored and the difference between labelling in criminology, psychology, and in political contexts is examined. Chapter One concludes with a theoretical analysis of how labelling and securitisation play a role in driving the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict dynamics of peace and violence.

Chapter Two describes, through qualitative techniques, how the Kurds in Turkey perceive and react to the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist'. The nature of the effects the label terrorist has on the wider Kurdish community is examined and how the selected sample of interviewees responded to questions about their perception are presented. Attention is given to explaining and justifying the theoretical and practical considerations of the methodological techniques used for data collection and analysis. The main data collection technique employed is qualitative semi-structured interviews with Kurdish respondents from Turkey in an effort to survey their understanding of the label 'terrorist', their perception of designating PKK a "terrorist" group, and to ask their views about the PKK being designated as "terrorist". Interview data was transcribed, coded, probed, and further coded to help formulate logical discourse analysis.

The methodological design of the study takes into consideration the theoretical combination of the Labelling Theory of Deviance and the Copenhagen School Securitisation Theory. The main questions and follow up questions were employed in an effort to survey the perceptions of Kurds as the 'labelled' and in turn their perceptions of the 'labeller'. Furthermore, the questionnaire surveyed the ways in

which interviewees expressed their perceptions of the whole securitisation process of the PKK and Kurdish identity in Turkey.

The chapter also reviews ethical considerations relevant to the methodological design and how the study has addressed these ethical issues. It is acknowledged that ethical issues arose prior to conducting the research thesis, at the beginning of the research, during data collection, during data analysis, in the presentation of data, and in publishing the findings. The researcher reflected on his role as an outsider to the participants; assessed what should/not be disclosed; establishing supportive and respectful relationships without stereotyping or using language that could antagonise participants (Weis & Fine, 2000). It is important to consider how to be sensitive to the vulnerable Kurdish community within Turkey while also acknowledging the imbalanced power relations in Turkey and avoiding putting participants at risk.

The methodological framework and the research design used for data collection and analysis is set out. Qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own ... nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own. (Denzin and Lincoln 2011:6). However, Denzin and Lincoln describe qualitative research as:

“a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field-notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to self...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (2011: 3)

Qualitative techniques employed in collecting the data help capture the nuances of perception relevant to ethnic victimisation, identity grievances, and political exclusion and disenfranchisement.

This chapter sets out the guidelines of data analysis adopted in this study – which are primarily based on discourse analysis techniques. Discourse analysis is loosely defined as the analysis of language beyond the sentence. This contrasts with types of analysis more typical of modern linguistics, which are chiefly concerned with the study of grammar, the study of smaller bits of language, such as sounds (phonetics and phonology), parts of words (morphology), meaning (semantics), and the order of words in sentences (syntax). Discourse analysts study larger chunks of language as they flow together (Bryman, 2004, p. 370). Chapter Two concludes with an outline of how the empirically supported evidence is presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six respectively.

Chapter Three presents the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK), the main case study of this research, as part of the wider Kurdish issue in the Middle East. The importance of the PKK case study is evident in its representative versus non-representative character as depicted by the Kurds in Turkey and the Turkish government. The chapter explores existing literature on Kurds in the Middle East, the origins of Kurdish rebellions in Turkey, the representational debate of the PKK versus Kurds in Turkey, the Solution Process [Çözüm Süreci], the labelling of PKK as a ‘terrorist’ group, and how the PKK case study fits into the study’s overall theoretical framework.

The transnational nature of the Kurdish issue is examined as well as how it reflects heavily on the mechanisms of designation using the label 'terrorist' and the effects of political designation in ethnic conflicts. Kurds are one of the largest ethnic groups in the world without an independent state. The Kurdish struggle for Independence and autonomy to protect their ethnic rights is cross-border and the source of ethnic conflicts in neighbouring Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

An exploration of the roots of the PKK violent campaign against the Turkish government and Kurds who the PKK deems as 'collaborators' is included. The PKK made itself public eight months after its formation, on 31 July 1979, through an attack on a parliamentary member, Mehmet Celal Bucak. This was an attempt by the PKK to attract the attention of the Kurdish population and gain their support. The PKK uses violence as a way of communication and harnessing support among the wider Kurdish society. To reach its goals, the PKK sent its selected members to Palestinian camps to receive military training and later establish its own military camps. The PKK then declared the foundation of its first guerrilla army, named the People's Liberation Army of Kurdistan (ARGK), through very sensational simultaneous attacks on two gendarmerie stations on 15 August 1984 in the Semdinli and Eruh districts of Turkey.

The historical and political background of the Solution Process [Çözüm Süreci] in Turkey which was announced by President Erdogan in 2012 is reviewed. Existing literature and the interview data reveal that the Turkish media and Turkish government spokespersons chose not to describe the PKK as 'terrorist' during the period of the Solution Process [Çözüm Süreci]. In Chapter Four, the significance of

the label terrorist within the Turkish-Kurdish context and the conscience de/securitisation of the Kurdish issue by the Turkish government are discussed.

The argument is made that the labelling of the PKK 'terrorist' as case study helps showcase the theoretical and empirical relevance of the main research question in the thesis. The transnational and ethnic aspects of the Kurdish issue in Turkey necessitates careful usage of the label terrorist in the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict given that the designation of the PKK as a 'terrorist' group cast heavy shadows on the success of any peace process in Turkey.

Chapter Four examines the empirical evidence collected through the qualitative interviews to answer the main research question: 'What are the effects of the Turkish government labelling the PKK as 'terrorist' on the choice of using violence by Kurds in the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict?' Here the qualitative empirical data is analysed through discourse analysis, which helps identify key findings and draw empirically informed inferences – within the theoretical framework of this study. The findings are categorised into preliminary codes and initial themes based on the discourse analysis of the empirical data collected through the semi-structured interviews with Kurds from Turkey. Five sub-themes are identified from the discourses of the interview participants: 1- Recognition of Deviance 2- Shifting Blame 3- Supportive Community 4- Justifying Violence 5- Perception of the Label Terrorist. These sub-themes were further categorised into two main thematic groups "Main Themes", which analytically encompass most of the notions identified in the stages of coding and analysis of the interview data. The main themes are victimisation and justification of violence.

The empirical evidence reveals that the interview participants have recognised that terrorism is a deviant act. Yet, there is a consistent pattern among the respondents towards shifting the blame of the violent situation in Turkey against the Turkish government. Almost all participants view the PKK as the only representative of the Kurdish community in Turkey and in some cases, in the Middle East. The majority of interviewees voiced concern and anger when asked about their perception of the designation of the PKK as a terrorist group. Furthermore, many respondents attempted to justify the PKK's violence against the Turkish government citing ethnic, political, and security grievances.

The justification of political violence is the linking thread among the five categories. Together the participants represent a sample of the wider Kurdish community in Turkey. The empirical evidence illustrates that the application of the terrorist label against PKK increases the sense of victimization among its wider Kurdish community. Participants drew on their perceived sense of [ethnic] victimisation as justification for the PKK's violent struggle in Turkey. The importance and interpretation of each category and the reasoning behind the deductions made by this study are discussed in detail.

The ways in which the invocation of the label terrorist against the PKK caused the unintended effect of political exclusion are also explored. The terrorist label against PKK places the group's actors and sympathizers in a situation that makes it harder for them to engage in peaceful means of resolving the conflict. A significant number of respondents perceived that "PKK defends our rights" "PKK defends Kurds only"

“PKK wants freedom for Kurds”. These statements manifest political exclusion. Respondents voiced concern that there is no one in the Turkish government who represents their interests. For them, only the PKK represents the Kurdish struggle for ethnic and cultural rights. The data is examined in greater detail to demonstrate the link between political exclusion and the designation of an ethnic armed group ‘terrorist’ – in this case, the PKK in Turkey.

The effects of the label terrorist on the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict are two-fold: firstly, the increased sense of victimisation among the Kurdish wider community in Turkey may contribute to increasing the recruitment of Kurds joining the PKK armed struggle and increase financial support for the PKK; and secondly, the invocation of the label terrorist against PKK places the group’s actors and sympathizers in a legal and political situation that makes it harder for them to engage in peaceful means of resolving the conflict. The interplay between these two consequential effects of victimisation and political exclusion led to the conclusion that there is an indirect relationship between the designation of the PKK as a ‘terrorist’ group and the choice to use violence by the wider Kurdish community in Turkey.

The chapter concludes with ideas and research questions for future studies in the field of labelling, securitisation, and designation policies. For example, comparative research taking case studies from other parts of the world is recommended to compliment the findings of the current study. The media role in hyping and mitigating the effects of labelling and mass stigma is another area of recommended research. Lastly, the effects labelling communities and geographic areas has on the behaviour

of the dominant group within an ethnic conflict context is another area recommended for future research.

Chapter Five discusses the implications of the study's findings for policy in Turkey and the policy generalisations which can be made for other conflicts in the world. The existing literature on ethnic conflicts reveals there is limited academic literature focused on assessing the feasibility and impact of labelling armed groups 'terrorist'. This study concludes that the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' has produced the unintended consequence of securitising the Kurdish identity in Turkey which in turn, potentially complicates conflict resolution and potentially results in an increase in the number of Kurdish recruits joining the PKK.

The theoretical framework employed in this study is not commonly applied by researchers or government bodies. The recommendation is made that the theoretical model used in this study should be encouraged to help create a holistic approach in designing and evaluating designation policies in ethnic conflict settings – specifically when the designation involves the label 'terrorist'. It is also recommended that further studies on the topics of labelling and securitisation in ethnic conflicts should be conducted to generate empirical evidence that helps design more effective security policies.

Recommendations, and suggestions for future research are made that will assist in the design and implementation of better policies to reduce violence, effectively manage the ethnic conflict, and eventually help resolve the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict in Turkey.

Chapter Six concludes that there is an indirect relationship between designating the PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish government and the choice to use violence by the Kurdish community in Turkey. It also infers that the Turkish government's securitisation of the PKK as an existential 'terrorist' threat goes far beyond the intended target. The securitisation of the PKK, as discussed in Chapter Four, contributes to the securitisation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey; which in turn produces perceptions of victimisation and political exclusions. The perceptions of victimisation and political exclusions, as demonstrated by the empirical evidence, contribute to the justification of violence by the Kurdish community.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

1- Introduction

This study hypothesizes that the designation of the PKK as a 'terrorist group' increases the sense of victimization among members of the Kurdish community in Turkey and places the group's actors, supporters, and sympathizers in a situation that makes it harder for them to engage in peaceful means of resolving the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. The interplay between these two consequential effects of victimisation and political exclusion suggest an indirect relationship between designating an ethnic armed group 'terrorist' and the subsequent choice to use violence. Howard S. Becker, best known for his book 'Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance' (H. S. Becker, 1963), has commented:

"It seems to me that the relevance of "labelling" to this case is obvious. 'Terrorist' is a bad name that people and organizations bestow on one another and the real usefulness of the idea will be in seeing how they do it, what the results of such efforts are, etc. In other words, as we sociologists like to say, it's an empirical question." (Appendix 2: 19 June 2015)

The goal of this study is to examine empirically the effects of the label 'terrorist' on the labelled. Taking the PKK as the main case study, this study sets out to answer its main question: **What effect did the labelling of the PKK as a 'terrorist organisation' by the Turkish government have on the use of violence by Kurds**

in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict? To answer this question, the study employs an interdisciplinary combination of two theories from International Relations (IR) and Criminology. On the one hand, the Copenhagen School securitisation theory offers a theoretical framework to discuss the Turkish government's securitisation of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict using the label terrorist. On the other, the labelling theory of deviance frames the discussions on the effects of designating the PKK 'terrorist' on the choice of Kurds to use violence in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

The theoretical framework not only informs the hypothesis of this study and frames the analysis and discussions of the data, but also links the two theories of labelling and securitisation as a unified theoretical model. The combined theoretical framework is designed to offer increased understanding of the potential effects the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' and the securitisation of the Kurdish community in Turkey can produce. While the two theories appear to make similar arguments on issues of discourse, power, social realities, and other issues, they differ in the way they examine and interpret acts of labelling and securitisation. The theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the processes of labelling and securitisation belong to different fields of study; and consequently, explain social interactions differently.

This chapter critically examines each theory placing the PKK case study within the theoretical model of each separately. Later, the two theories are juxtaposed to identify the similarities between the two theories in relation to the topic of the current study. The different theoretical perspectives offered by the labelling and securitisation theories enrich the analysis and discussions of this study. Theoretical

assessment of the implications of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' has for the Kurdish community in Turkey and their subsequent choice to use violence is offered within a discussion that critically identifies their strengths and limitations.

2- Copenhagen School Securitization Theory

Securitisation in its simplest form means making something a security issue. Within the traditional military-political understanding of security it means survival. In other words, it comprises an existential threat to a referent object (Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998, p. 21). For states, existential threats are not necessarily related to ontological security threats. Anything that challenges sovereignty, legitimacy, or governing authority could pose an existential threat to the state. Security in International Relations is different from social security, which is more about entitlement and justice (ibid 21-22). Wæver argues that "security is a speech act" (Wæver, 1995, p. 55). This study argues that the label "terrorist" is not only used as a criminal label to enforce shame and punishment, but also as a political tool to securitise the ethnic conflict in Turkey. The Copenhagen School Securitisation Theory examines how discourses are used to transform a variety of issues into threats often described as existential.

Security in international relations is deeply embedded in power politics. Therefore, it is important to define securitisation. Thierry Balzacq defines this concept as:

"An articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilized by a securitizing actor, who

works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions), about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the securitizing actor's reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customized policy must be undertaken immediately to block its development" (Balzacq, 2011, p. 3)

According to Balzacq, securitisation theory has three core assumptions: 1) the centrality of the audience; 2) the co-dependency of agency and context; and 3) the structuring force of practices and tools (ibid). One of the important elements of 'successful securitisation' is acceptance by the audience (Balzacq, 2011, p. 61). Balzacq argues that philosophical and sociological approaches define the audience differently. While the philosophical approach conceives audience as a "formal-given-category, which is often poised in receptive mode", the sociological approach conceives audience as "the mutual constitution of securitizing actors and audiences" (Balzacq, 2011, p. 2). This study adopts the sociological approach of conceiving audience which is constituted by the Turkish government as the securitising actor and the Kurdish community as the audience.

In the PKK case study, the question arises concerning which audience is doing the accepting: the Kurdish audience, the Turkish audience, or all the citizens of Turkey. Ideally, all the citizens of Turkey would achieve acceptance. However, in an ethno-nationalist conflict context communities from different ethnic backgrounds tend to be divided on issues of stigmatisation and legitimacy of violence (Wimmer, 2004). Consequently, this study contends that the audience in the PKK case study consists of the majority ethnic Turkish citizens of Turkey.

Buzan *et al* argue that to securitise an issue means moving it beyond normal politics or even make it above politics (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 23). They also claim that security is an extreme phase of politicisation. The relationship between securitisation and politicisation, however, does not mean that the state is the only securitising actor. There are cases where social entities securitise certain issues as existential threats. There are other scenarios where an existential threat is against collective identities such as religions, nations, or ethnicities (ibid: 24). Homosexuality, religious conversion, and assimilation into dominant ethnic groups are a few examples.

The PKK case study is a typical example of securitisation where the Turkish government makes the ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey an existential threat to be eliminated. To achieve successful securitisation, the Turkish government has securitised the PKK using several labels since 1984 when the PKK launched its violent insurgency against the Turkish government. However, labels like 'separatist', 'traitors', 'foreign agents', *Kafir*,⁶ and 'criminal' are different from the label 'terrorist' both politically and legally (FAZLIOGLU, 2013, p. 561). The main difference can be seen in the extremely demonising and delegitimising power of the label 'terrorist'. It is such a powerful label that 'terrorist' is a popular term among many governments across the world to describe internal and external enemies (Jackson, 2005).

By designating the PKK as 'terrorist', the Turkish government has removed the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict from the sphere of politics to the sphere of existential security threats (Ünal, 2012, pp. 55-57). The Turkish government's justification for transforming the conflict from an ethno-political conflict to an

⁶ *Kafir* is an Arabic word which means *infidel* – a very stigmatising label.

existential conflict is two-fold: firstly, it claims that the PKK is an existential threat to the unity and power of the Turkish nation/state. Secondly, the PKK threatens the safety of the Turkish people and their survival (Criss, 2008, p. 19). The government's justifications confirm the previously mentioned theoretical assertions made by Buzan and others (Buzan et al., 1998) and Balzacq (Balzacq, 2011).

Turkish (ethnic) nationalism is perceived by the Kurds as a form of repression against the Kurdish identity in Turkey (Yildiz, 2005). There is evidence that the Kurdish ethnic minority in Turkey has securitised the attempts by the Turkish state to assimilate Kurds into the Turkish identity under the banner of Turkish nationalism (Yegen, 2007, p. 140). Kurdish armed groups in Turkey, such as the PKK, consider *Turkification* as an existential threat. Inter-ethnic identity securitisation and counter-securitisation feed the violent Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey. The politics of labelling and counter-labelling in an ethno-nationalist conflict context adds one more layer of complexity to the whole process of securitisation. For the Turkish government to de-legitimise the PKK, it needs to convince the audiences of the conflict that the PKK is an existential threat; and at the same time, maintain its impartiality as the 'protector' of its citizens.

Jonathan Githens-Mazer (Githens-Mazer, 2012, p. 560) critically explores how the securitisation of Islamist terrorism post-9/11 led to the unintended securitisation of Muslim culture and consequently Muslim communities in the West. Therefore, we see an increasing number of politicians and media outlets associating issues, such as wearing Hijab and arranged marriage, usually related to immigration, with terrorism. He argues:

“This is the essence of the ‘securitization’ of Islam, literally labelling Islam as a potential existential threat to the security of western, and in this case British, society, and subsequently suspending legal, social, and political norms to justify this exceptional treatment, by the apparatus of the state, of Islamic faith, belief, and practice and Islamically inspired political engagement.” (Githens-Mazer, 2012, p. 560)

Existing literature reveals that the unintended securitisation of collective identities could possibly yield counterproductive results. Instead of eliminating the security threat, the [unintended] securitisation of collective identities could exacerbate the threat by generating further grievances and victimisation (Broek, 2015, p. 12). The increased perception of victimisation in a given society could under certain circumstances generate security threats. The securitization of collective identity has an immediate impact on the everyday life of the securitized. In support of this view, Stuart Croft concludes:

“Understanding securitization as a process, rather than as an event, allows an analysis of the ways in which securitization affects the identity of the securitizer, as well as that of the securitized. Although a speech act (or a series) by a government leader is crucially important, not least in legitimizing a securitizing move, it is not sufficient just to focus on that level. Securitization means real changes in the lives and life chances of people in their everyday being.” (Croft, 2012, p. 244)

Baker-Beall examines the securitisation of immigrants in the European Union (EU). He argues that the EU counter-terrorism policy is based on mistrust and fear of the ‘migrant other’ (Baker-Beall, 2009, p. 188). By adopting theoretical arguments from scholars such as Foucault, Campbell (1992), Milliken (1999), and Spencer (2008), Baker-Beall advocates for the concept of ‘above individual discourse participant’

which constructs the 'terrorist other' as a threat to the globalised, 'open' society of the EU (ibid: p. 194). According to Baker-Beall, even before the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York, the EU's internal security policy constructed immigrants as the 'other' – a potential threat to the European society and European identity (ibid). He argues that the European security strategy adopts this discursive construction by maintaining that the EU is part of 'increasingly open borders in which the internal and external aspects of security are indissolubly linked' (European Council 2001: 1 cited in, Baker-Beall, 2009, p. 195). The EU security strategy constructs those who commit acts of terrorism as 'undermin[ing] the openness and tolerance of our societies' (ibid).

Baker-Beall concludes that the adoption of these discursive constructions by the EU security strategy has the implicit effect of conflating the 'migrant other' with the threat of terrorism (Baker-Beall, 2009). Moreover, these policy narratives about the threat of the 'migrant other' portray migrants as 'in need of control in order to prevent the possibility of future terrorist attacks' (ibid). The main argument made by Baker-Beall is that the discursive construction of EU counter-terrorism policy conflates the threat of the 'migrant other' with terrorism which leads to the securitisation of asylum and migration policies (Baker-Beall, 2009, p. 203). Baker-Beall's research offers a new conceptualisation of securitisation which differs from the traditional concept of creating special measures for existential threats. His conceptualisation of securitisation concerns the "introduction of mundane policies and practices, technologies of security that in this case result in normalising the statistical majority and abnormalising the migrants" (ibid). Securitisation comes in different forms using different discursive tools within different contexts. The effects of securitisation on a

specific case can only be accurately identified through an empirically informed research analysis. The case of the 'migrant other' examined by Baker-Beall (Baker-Beall, 2009) reveals how securitisation can affect both the securitising actor [shaping policies and political rhetoric] and disenfranchise migrants and asylum seekers.

This study focuses on how securitization and stigmatization of the Kurdish identity in Turkey affect the Kurds' choice to use violence in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. It is noted throughout that the precise effects of the designation on the labelled is a matter that should be settled by rigorous research and empirical evidence. The empirical evidence, as seen in Chapter Four, suggests that the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' has unintentionally securitised the Kurdish community in Turkey.

Here it is argued that the securitisation of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict has been successful since 1984 despite several attempts to launch a peace process. There has been no serious attempt by the Turkish government to de-securitise the Turkish-Kurdish conflict thus far. However, a few interview participants in this study pointed out that they have perceived a decreased usage of the label 'terrorist' against the PKK by the Turkish government and the Turkish news media since the early months of the 2012 Solution Process [*Çözüm Süreci*]. Furthermore, the designation of the PKK has not only been successful inside Turkey but also outside the country. For example, as of 2002 the United States, European Union, and the United Kingdom listed the PKK as a terrorist organisation (Casier, 2010b, p. 1). Thus, the international designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' has emboldened the Turkish government's securitisation of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict

(Casier, 2010b, p. 11) (Boon-Kuo, L., B., & Sullivan, 2015a, p. 120). By designating the PKK as terrorist, the Turkish government has managed to delegitimise the PKK on both local and international levels. Consequently, the use of the 'terrorist' label might be an effective tool in delegitimizing political opponents but it also has the consequence of exacerbating their grievances which in the long term can have dramatic consequences for the whole society.

The securitisation theory of international relations provides a suitable framework to examine the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' within the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict context. The securitisation theory examines how a security threat is produced by a securitising actor(s) using discourse to prompt an audience to accept that a referent subject is an existential threat to a referent object (Wæver, 1995). The PKK case study fits into the theoretical model of securitisation. The Turkish government uses the discourse of 'terrorism' to frame the PKK [referent subject] as posing an existential threat to the Turkish state [referent object]. This study makes the argument based on empirical data that the labelling of the PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish government has led to the securitisation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey. Thus, the securitisation of the Kurdish identity has implications for both the security of Turkey and the peaceful resolution of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

3- Labelling Theory

This study adopts the labelling theory of deviance in criminology to examine the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist'. In labelling theory, terrorism would be

considered a deviant act. Scholars from the field of criminology argue that “terrorism is a form of crime in all essential aspects” (Clarke & Newman, 2006, p. i). The labelling theory of deviance has been part of the literature of sociology for several decades now. Yet, there remains a need for further empirical testing of the theory in the field of deviance studies. While Restivo, Lanier, (Restivo & Lanier, 2013) and other scholars employed the labelling theoretical framework to examine delinquency, Barrinha and others (Barrinha, 2011) applied and modified the labelling framework to appreciate the different ways the labelling affects the labelled and the labeller.

The early proponents of labelling theory presented their statements as a perspectives rather than “a scientific falsifiable empirical hypotheses” to explain deviance (Farrington & Murray, 2014, p. 1). The ‘labelling theory’ does not offer an etiological explanation of deviance (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 178). However, the aim was to enlarge the area of study to include other actors as part of the explanation – namely – those officially in charge of defining deviance (ibid: p. 180). Labelling theory is particularly concerned with two questions: ‘why are some people labelled deviant while others are not?’ and ‘what are the effects of labelling on future behaviour?’ (Farrington & Murray, 2014, p. 1).

Becker contends that there is a logical independence of acts and judgements (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 186). Thus, labelling theory draws a distinct line between the labelled and the labeller. There is overlap and interaction between the labelled and the labeller, yet the two sides do not coincide theoretically (ibid: p. 185). Becker prefers to name the labelling approach an *Interactionist Theory* rather than Labelling Theory. Interactionist theories of deviance pay attention to how social actors define

each other and their environments. The process of interaction between the labeller and the labelled is considered a drama of moral rhetoric to define deviant acts and deviant actors. The labelling theory of deviance takes this drama as an object of study. It focuses on those powerful enough, usually governments, who can successfully define certain actions as deviant (ibid: p. 186). Becker explains the Interactionist Theory of Deviance as:

“In its simplest form, the theory insists that we look at all the people involved in any episode of alleged deviance. When we do, we discover that these activities require the overt or tacit cooperation of many people and groups to occur as they do.” (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 183)

He argues that labelling theory highlights how labelling an actor deviant (criminal) can have an effect on the labelled in such a way that makes it harder for her/him to go about everyday life. A classic example of such an effect is when a criminal record makes it harder for the ‘labelled’ to resume normal life even after serving his or her sentence. Consequently, the labelled could be driven to the margins of society and eventually become a ‘career deviant’ (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 179). Becker concedes, however, that the extent and nature of such effects can only be fully appreciated through empirical research into specific cases rather than by making theoretical assumptions. The labelling theory, he argues, has an important theoretical contribution: different audiences define acts differently. As he puts it, “the difference in definition, in the label applied to the act, makes a difference in what everyone, audiences and actors alike, do subsequently” (ibid: p. 179-180).

Labelling theory views deviance as collective action. People act with an eye on what others are doing – actors constantly attempt to fit and adjust in their society. As

Becker explains, the process of adjusting and fitting is collective action (ibid: p. 182). His conception of adjusting and fitting does not necessarily mean this process is peaceful. It could well mean to some that "since the police will probably look *here*, I will put the bomb *there*, as well as ... since the police are going to look, I guess I won't make any bombs at all ..." (ibid).

However, the labelling theory has its fair share of critics. From a criminological perspective, Wellford analyses the labelling theory of deviance based on questioning its assumptions. He examines Schrag's nine assumptions of the labelling theory (Wellford, 1975, pp. 332-333) encompassing: 1) No act is inherently criminal; 2) Criminal definitions are enforced in the interest of the powerful; 3) A person does not become a criminal by violation of the law but only by the designation of criminality by those powerful enough; 4) Due to the fact that everyone conforms and deviates, people should not be dichotomized into criminal and non-criminal categories; 5) The act of "getting caught" begins the labelling process; 6) The "getting caught" and decision-making in the criminal justice system are a function of the offender as opposed to the offense characteristics; 7) Age, socioeconomic class, and race are the major offender characteristics that establish patterns of differential criminal justice decision-making; 8) The criminal justice system is established on a freewill perspective that allows for the condemnation and rejection of the identified offender; and, 9) Labelling is a process of identification with a deviant image and subculture, and could possibly lead to "rejection of the rejectors" (ibid: p. 333) (Schrag, 1971, pp. 89-91).

Wellford critically juxtaposes the assumptions and hypotheses of labelling theory as presented by Schrag with existing criminological and social science empirical evidence. He contends that the assumptions made by the labelling theory “are at significant variance with the data as we now understand it, or are not crucial to the labelling perspective” (Wellford, 1975, p. 343). While he accepts the general assumption made that labels are assigned and may affect behaviour, Wellford argues that existing empirical evidence fails to support the theory’s assumption that “labels are differentially distributed, and that differential labelling affects behaviour...” (ibid).

Bob Fine (Fine, 1977) examines labelling theory as a critical theory of deviance claiming in the process to make a radical departure from positivism. Fine critically reviews the theory by first identifying three “hidden” theoretical discourses: “(i) a theory about the causation of deviance; (ii) a theory about the identification of deviance; (iii) a theory about the nature or constitution of deviance.” (ibid: p. 166). Fine criticises labelling theory for not offering a convincing etiological explanation of deviance. He contends that the theory exacerbates deviance instead of suppressing it. He argues that the labelling theory represents a counter-argument to the “more established view that deviance is caused by antecedent psychological or social structural factors and that the effect of labelling is one of repression and deterrence” (ibid: p. 167). Fine also criticises labelling theory for confusing the assumptions of “error might occur during labelling” and “error is endemic to labelling [of deviance]” (ibid: p. 170). Likewise, Fine points out that labelling theory denies the objective existence of deviance, the possibility of a causal analysis of deviance, and the possibility of any discrepancy between real deviance and its labelling (ibid: p. 174).

The modern world increasingly moves us in the direction of discrete modes of control shaped by the control of the definitions and labels applied to situations and people. Consequently, we exert control by accusing individuals and groups of deviant acts of various kinds (Georgoulas, 2012, p. 273). While this study considers the usage of the label 'terrorist' as a form of social control affecting individuals and groups, it does not examine the case study of the PKK through the lens of social control theory.

The theoretical importance of the labelling theory has been achieved through demonstrating that "the difference in definition, in the label applied to the act, makes a difference in what everyone, audiences and actors alike, does subsequently" (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 180). One of the aims of this research is to examine whether the label 'terrorist' places the Kurdish community in circumstances which make it harder for them to continue the normal routines of everyday life or provoke certain elements of the Kurdish community to abnormal actions. For example, does the Kurdish community feel under pressure to apologise for what the PKK is doing? Do Kurds in Turkey have less chances to be employed by security and government institutions after the designation of the PKK [racial profiling]? While this study does not set out to answer these questions, these rhetorical questions are posed to illustrate the possible consequences and reactions to mass stigma in an ethnic conflict context.

This study maintains that the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' has effects on the labelled. In the case of the PKK in Turkey, the labelled includes not only the PKK but also the wider supportive Kurdish community in Turkey –the main subject of this research. By including all parties involved in the labelling process, labelling theory

serves as the theoretical tool to examine the possible effects of the label 'terrorist' on the choice of the Kurds in Turkey to use violence. By employing labelling theory, the study attempts to answer its main question: 'What effect did the labelling of the PKK as a 'terrorist organisation' by the Turkish government have on the use of violence by Kurds in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict?'

As previously contended, the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' has securitised the Kurdish identity within the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict context. However important definitions are in the labelling theory, the main focus of this study is not whether the PKK are terrorists but rather the focus is on the effects of labelling PKK as 'terrorist' on the choice of Kurds to use violence in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict context. Two perspectives relevant to the labelling theory are examined: the stigmatisation and the victimisation of the Kurds in Turkey as a result of securitising the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict using the label 'terrorist'. The victimisation perspective emphasises factors that affect the lives of the labelled. For example, the securitised identity [Kurdish] find their employment opportunities in governmental and security posts restricted, their political engagement will be restricted, and democratic channels of dissent will be blocked, and, consequently, the labelled [Kurds in Turkey] further experience victimisation by the hands of the labeller [the Turkish government]. The Kurds are therefore more likely to turn to groups in the margins of society [like the PKK] and eventually become involved both directly or indirectly, in career 'deviance' [ethno-nationalist violence] against the state.

The victimisation perspective of labelling is also evident in the functionality of labelling for policymakers. Policymakers, willingly or unconsciously, attempt to shape reality according to their ideology and interests. To effectively handle the [existential] threats policymakers are faced with a particular policy of binary labels designed to categorize target-groups: for example, separatist versus unionist, terrorist versus good citizen, democratic and violent youth, etc. Although the policy may be questioned, the labels rarely are. Broek reasons that “Policy makers perceive reality through the prism of the typology (i.e., the labels) they use, design, and execute policy accordingly; hence, this policy tends to reproduce the very situation the typology refers to” (Broek, 2015, p. 4). It is argued here that the categorisation of the Turkish identity as the ‘good citizen’ versus the Kurdish identity as the ‘separatist’ and/or ‘terrorist’ exacerbates the perception of victimisation among Kurds in Turkey.

Lastly is the attribute of *stigma* – a Greek term which was used to describe bodily signs marked to signify that a person is a slave, a criminal, a traitor, a terrorist, ... etc. (Goffman, 1974, p. 1). The label ‘terrorist’ has a very strong stigmatising power that once applied successfully; the labelled represents the worst image in the eyes of his social world. The label terrorist in this sense is defined as a stigma which refers “to an attribute that is deeply discrediting” (ibid: p. 3). The labelling of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ by the Turkish government stigmatises not only the group but also the ideals and aspirations for which it fights. Subsequently, the stigma attached to the label ‘terrorist’ is also attached to the PKK-supportive Kurdish community in Turkey. The discrediting effect of the label ‘terrorist’ as an identity stigma adds another dimension to the labelling effects of the term ‘terrorist’ within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

In order to better understand the relationship between labelling, the choice to use violence, and the justification to use violence by the Kurdish community, this study examines empirically the effects of the label terrorist on the interviewees' perceptions of victimisation, the way they justify violence, and how stigmatisation affects their social practices within the context of the conflict in Turkey. The analysis and discussions in Chapter Four are framed by the combined labelling and securitisation theoretical framework.

4- Theoretical Relationship between Securitization and Labelling

The previous discussion reveals the complementary relationship between the securitisation theory and labelling theory relevant to the context of this study. While securitisation theory is the process of making a referent subject an existential threat to a referent object (Balzacq, 2011, p. 3), labelling theory is the process of defining an act as deviant. The labelling theory examines the mechanisms and implications of defining acts described as 'deviant' (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 186). Thus, within the labelling theory framework, acts and reactions to acts are considered two separate fields of study despite the intricate overlap between the two. In the PKK case study, the Turkish government defines the PKK as 'terrorist' and consequently has securitised the conflict as an existential threat to the Turkish state. By designating the PKK 'terrorist', the government has turned political rhetoric into a powerful "Lawfare" which runs in parallel with the Turkish Army military warfare against the PKK.

The securitisation theory focuses on three core elements: the centrality of the audience, the co-dependency of agency and context, and the structuring force of practices and tools (Balzacq, 2011, p. 61). The securitisation theory considers the audience an essential part of any successful securitisation process. In other words, a successful securitisation of an issue only results when the audience accepts that a referent subject is an existential threat for the referent object [normally the securitizer] (ibid: p. 2). Labelling theory focuses on the audience in a different way. The labeller, normally powerful enough to make moral and legal judgements concerning which acts are considered deviant or not, must secure acceptance of the label by the [majority] of the audience in order to successfully apply of the label 'deviant' to an act (Wellford, 1975, p. 332). In the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict, a tension exists because the Turkish and Kurdish audiences define actions [violence] differently. Ethnic Turks define the Turkish government's military campaign to end the PKK insurgency as self-defence against a separatist existential threat. However, the Kurdish audience in Turkey defines the PKK's armed struggle against the Turkish government as self-defence against the existential threat of Turkification of the Kurdish identity.

Labelling theory frames discussions about how the definition of the [deviant] label makes a difference in the actions the labeller and the labelled audiences take subsequently (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 180). In other words, the label affects the subsequent actions and reactions of the labelled and the labeller. Labelling theory helps shed light on how labelling an actor(s) as 'deviant' can have potentially adverse effects on the labelled. For example, the labelled may now have a criminal

record which prevents her/him from re-integrating into society, getting a job, and functioning in everyday life – consequently, under certain circumstances, the labelled may revert to deviancy as a way of life [career deviant] (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 179).

The securitisation theory, similarly, contends that the securitisation of an act/actor as an existential threat usually constitutes a trade-off that comes at a price. The securitisation of an act/issue confers the securitising actor exceptional powers to eliminate the threat or stop its development using means beyond the limits of politics. Similar to the labelling of acts as ‘deviant’, under certain circumstances the securitisation of an act/issue could produce adverse results. For example, the securitisation of the Islamist terrorist threat post the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the U.S.A and the 7/7 London bombings have produced the unintended securitisation of Muslim identity in the United States of America (Croft, 2012, p. 244). The securitisation of collective identities often amplifies perceived victimisation in multi-ethnic multi-faith minority/majority communities.

The two theories of securitisation and labelling examine different aspects in the drama of moral and legal judgements made by those who are powerful enough to do so. The theoretical complementary relationship between labelling and securitisation theories is obvious in the PKK case. This study asserts that the securitisation of the PKK using the label ‘terrorist’ has led to the unintended securitisation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey. Further, it contends that the designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ prevents the PKK-supportive Kurdish community in Turkey from engaging in any peaceful political resolution of the conflict [above politics effect]. The empirical evidence offered in chapter four suggests that the Turkish government’s

securitisation of the PKK as a 'terrorist' existential threat increases the sense of victimisation among Kurds in Turkey. Consequently, the empirical data highlights that the Kurdish audience in Turkey rejects the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' and this supports the argument made in this study that there is a wider PKK-supportive Kurdish community in Turkey.

5- Labelling PKK 'Terrorist'

'Terrorist' is arguably the most stigmatising and powerful label a society could attach to a person or a group based on its perception of their acts (Brian, 2013, p. 1). The cliché, "one man's terrorist, is another man's freedom fighter," focuses attention on the subjectivity in the application of the label 'terrorist'. Empirical evidence in Chapter Four reveals that a Kurdish man's 'freedom' fighter is a Turkish man's 'terrorist'. The application of the label 'terrorist' in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict is highly contested between the two audiences. The label 'terrorist', in this case, is a constituent part of the conflict.

5.1.1 Terrorism

The term terrorism was first used in 1795. It referred to acts of intimidation by a government against its people – 'terrorism from above'. The term derives from French revolutionary statesman Maximilien de Robespierre's 1785-1794 Reign of Terror during the early years of the French Revolution (Volkan, 1997, p. 8). Historically, terrorism from above [governments] has far exceeded, in the sheer

number of its victims, any other form of terror. Thus, for example, the twentieth century has witnessed horrific examples such as the Holocaust and Stalin's purges.

To be labelled terrorist in the 21st century is to occupy an extremely deviant status in any state's eyes. As Bhatia points out, "To name is to identify an object, remove it from the unknown, and then assign to it a set of characteristics, motives, values and behaviours" (Bhatia, 2008, pp. 4-5). Individuals and groups use labels to identify themselves and the *other* in political discourse. For any audience, names are much like analogies, they help define the nature of a situation. However, the actual ability to name, and to have that name accepted by an audience, is an expression of power. It is; however, the authority of the name-giver which will determine if these names/labels will be applied successfully (ibid). The Turkish government has the authority and legitimacy required to impose labels such as 'terrorist' on any local individual/group it deems dangerous to its national security. The effects of designation in ethnic conflicts raises many questions not only about the feasibility of designation but also about the effects of the label 'terrorist' on conflict transformation and eventually conflict resolution.

Since the horrific attacks of the 9/11 against the United States, terrorism has taken a central stage in social and political sciences studies. Social and political scientists, psychologists, and criminologists have carried out thousands of empirical research projects with the aim to understand the phenomenon of terrorism (Martin & Kushner, 2011). These research projects produced a massive amount of literature not only explaining what is terrorism, but also arguing for what is not. One approach has been to categorise terrorism by identifying the motivations and aims behind terrorist acts

(Hoffman, 2006, p. 40). For example, religious terrorism, environmental groups' terrorism, anti-abortion terrorism, ethnic terrorism, sectarian terrorism, narco-terrorism, separatist terrorism, ...etc. This study will focus on the loosely defined violence labelled "ethnic terrorism"; while at the same time, examining the effects of the label "terrorist" on the wider Kurdish community in Turkey.

Since the end of the First World War (WWI), the Kurdish ethnic "minority" in the Middle East has been occupying central attention in International Relations. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the early 19th century, the Kurds became minority groups within four countries: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Since then, there has been a transnational Kurdish political awakening to revive Kurdish ethnic nationalism (Klein, 2011, p. 16). From the First Gulf War of Iraq in 1991 onwards, the Kurdish issue began to occupy central stage in the geopolitics of the Middle East because of the transformative political changes which have taken place in Iraq and Syria (Ünver, 2016, p. 66) (M. Gunter, 2007, p. 137). The toppling of the Ba'ath regime of Saddam in Iraq and the civil war in Syria gave rise to Kurdish sub-state actors who became part of the forces shaping the future of these two countries.

This transnational nature of the Kurdish issue explains why there are inconsistent policies of designating different Kurdish groups by their respective governments and other governments in the world. While the PKK is labelled "terrorist" in Turkey, the very same group enjoyed support in neighbouring Syria and Iraq. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of Iraq does not designate the PKK as a 'terrorist' group. The PKK has camps on the Iraqi side of the Turkish-Iraqi borders and has recently opened offices in Sinjar north of Mosul (Thornton, 2015). The inconsistent

policies of designating Kurdish political and armed groups in the Middle East also reflect the ethno-political nature of the Kurdish issue. This study argues that the labelling of the PKK is an integral part of the Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflict. There is a relationship between politics, conflict management, and the policies of designation pursued by the Turkish government.

The subjectivity of defining and applying the label 'terrorist' is evident in existing literature. Silke (Silke, 2004, p. 3) argues that terrorism is "like pornography, the sense is that while I might not be able to define it for you, I still know it when I see it". Adam Roberts (A. Roberts, 2005, p. 102) highlights the tension that terrorism is easier to condemn than to define. These contentions are not much different from Shafritz, Gibbons, and Scott's conclusion about the label 'terrorist' in the early 1990s that "it is unlikely that any definition will ever be generally agreed upon" (Shafritz, Gibbons, & Scott, 1991, p. ix). Hoffman, however; suggests that terrorism is "vague and imprecise", mainly for two reasons: its changing nature over time and the modern media, which attempts to present complex ideas (news) in the shortest possible airtime or print-space (Hoffman, 2006, p. 1).

The debates about developing a comprehensive definition of terrorism remains active among scholars, however; no consensus has yet been reached. Furthermore, it seems that some prominent scholars in the field of terrorism research have begun to give up on the idea of reaching a comprehensive definition. As Schmid and Crelinsten (Schmid & Crelinsten, 1993, p. 7) succinctly put it, "Terrorism is the peacetime equivalent of a war crime". Their perspective draws attention to the shift from pursuing a one-size-fits-all definition to more practical and legalistic definition or

as Lt. Col. Vought, U.S. Army (Ret) and Lt. Col. Fraser, Jr., U.S. Army called it, "a working definition" (Schmid et al., 1988, p. 3). However, critics of the 'working definition' argue that it might exclude some forms of violence and coercion (such as attacks on the military, hijackings for escape, attacks against members of the armed forces who have laid down their arms, and the destruction of property) currently labelled terrorist (Schmid & Crelinsten, 1993, p. 12). The rules of war prohibit not only violence against captives but also hostage-taking as well as most other atrocities committed by terrorists. The United Nations, for example, defines terrorism as,

“[It is] any action, in addition to actions already specified by the existing conventions on aspects of terrorism, the Geneva Conventions and the Security Council Resolution 1566 (2004), that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants [presumably soldiers rendered hors de combat by sickness or wounds or capture], where the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act” (United Nations, 2005; Session 52).

The Department of State in the U.S.A., however, has established a different definition which stipulates that "[terrorism is] the premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine state agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (US Department of State, 2001).

The list of terrorism definitions can be never-ending and as a result it makes no sense to repeat Schmid and Jongman's quest in the 1980s for a comprehensive definition of terrorism. A comprehensive definition is not an end by itself but rather it

is one of the means to create an international consensus on what constitutes terrorism. This, in turn, would shape the mechanisms and policies for how to deal with it legally at the international level, most probably within the UN framework. Therefore, the necessity for reaching a comprehensive definition lies in the international context (Herik & Schrijver, 2013, pp. 6-7).

One of the most striking aspects of the study of terrorism is that there is no commonly agreed definition of terrorism (Charlile, 2007, p. 3). Scholars have come up with their own definitions of the term but it has been impossible to reach a consensus internationally (Schmid & Jongman, 2005). Because of the lack of common understanding of terrorism, it is often challenging to identify the phenomenon and question some actors' use of the term objectively. Consequently, governments and political actors tend to [ab]use the word 'terrorism' to describe different acts of political violence and political dissent. The terrorist rhetoric is thus appreciated for its discursive value and the impact it can have on the audience. Jenkins, for example, states that "some governments are prone to label as terrorism all violent acts committed by their political opponents" (Jenkins, 1980, p. 1).

Cyndi Banks and James Baker argue that "terrorism is better understood if it is situated within its particular political, social, and economic contexts" (Banks & Baker, 2016, p. 361). The PKK designation as a 'terrorist' group by the Turkish government and several other countries should therefore be understood within its historical, social, and economic contexts. In the PKK case study, the application of the label 'terrorist' goes far beyond the PKK group. Empirical evidence provided in Chapter Four reveals that the label terrorist affects the perceptions of Kurds in Turkey as

equal citizens with the right to political participation. The international definitional crisis of the label 'terrorist' makes it an elastic tool in the hands of some governments – especially but not restricted to states ruled by autocratic or diminished democratic systems. For example, using counterterrorism laws, the Turkish government has recently arrested two Kurdish Members of the Turkish Parliament who are the co-chairs of the People's Democratic Party (HDP)⁷ [*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*] Figen Yüksekdağ and Selahattin Demirtaş. The Turkish government accuses the two Kurdish MPs of propaganda for the banned 'terrorist' Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) (Dwibhashyam, 2016).

5.1.2 Ethnic Terrorism

Ethnic identity provides a natural basis for group formation (Landa, 1994, p. 5). It is easier to distinguish insiders from outsiders in an ethnic group. The ability to distinguish and recognize individuals based on ethnicity [insiders/outside] promotes reputation building. The imperatives of evolutionary biology, survival, and reproduction make it rational for members of an ethnic group to value the wellbeing of even remote kinsfolk over the genetically distinct members of unrelated groups. In some cases, the selfish gene can also serve as reciprocal altruist (Dawkins, 1976, p. 53).

Ethnic violence is a constituent part of many violent conflicts across the world. It has been the subject of many research studies attempting to examine the root causes and implications of ethnic violence. Ethnic conflicts tend to be protracted and

⁷ The main Kurdish political party in Turkey.

severely violent resulting in the world's worst massacres (Byman, 2002, p. 34). Ethnic identity, racism, and ethnic conflicts have been around for centuries (Alubo, 2006, p. 19). An ethnic group should be studied as a phenomenon that defies time and space. Alina Pöge offers the following definition:

“An ethnic group or ethnicity is a socially defined category of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural or national experience. Membership of an ethnic group tends to be defined by a shared cultural heritage, ancestry, origin myth, history, homeland, language and/or dialect, symbolic systems such as religion, mythology and ritual, cuisine, dressing style, physical appearance, etc.” (Queloz, Brossard, Bütikofer, Meyer-Bisch, & Pittet, 2005, p. 26)

For decades, ethno-nationalist conflicts are the root cause of most of the mass political violence across the world (Wiberg & Scherrer, 1999, p. 41). The Balkans wars, South Sudan, PKK in Turkey, ETA, IRA and FARC are all examples of ethnically motivated conflicts. These ethno-nationalist conflicts are often described by the involved states as ‘terrorism’ and by the ethnic armed groups as ‘war crimes’ (Vanhanen, 1999, p. 270). The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, the Irgun in Palestine, the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey, the Provisional Irish Army (PIRA) in Northern Ireland, and the Basque separatist group Euskada ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain are often cited as examples of ethnic groups described as ‘terrorist’. Arguably, ethnic terrorism represents a serious challenge for the state because conventional counterterrorism measures may create wider support for the insurgency or the separatist movement. Daniel Byman identifies several traits of ethnic terrorism, arguing that:

“ethnic terrorists often seek to influence their own constituencies more than the country as a whole. Ethnic terrorists frequently seek to foster

communal identity, in contrast to an identity proposed by the state. Ethnic terrorists often target potential intermediaries, who might otherwise compromise on identity issues. A secondary goal of the attacks is to create a climate of fear among a rival group's population.” (Byman, 1998, p. 149)

Unlike other terrorist groups, ethnic terrorists focus on forging a distinct ethnic identity and fostering ethnic mobilization (Wimmer, 2004, p. 29). To resist an identity imposed by the state, ethnic terrorists focus on fostering their distinct ethnic identity. They seek this through different means including terrorist activities. The underlying aims for using terrorist violence include bringing an ethnic society together because of government or rival ethnic groups' retaliation, the persecution draws attention to their cause, increasing the number of recruits, and to put pressure on the rival [majority] ethnic group by creating a climate of fear. This fear can cause 'voluntary' emigration and ethnic homogenization (Byman, 1998, p. 150). Consequently, the group goal is to change a nation's demographics to the advantage of ethnic radicals.

Byman (1998) argues that ethnic terrorism is significantly different from religious terrorism. While ethnic terrorists are nation-centric, religious terrorists are far less nationalistic. Religious extremists blame national identity for artificially dividing members of the faith. Ethnic terrorists are often exclusive to members of the race. Religious terrorist groups, however, are far more open to converts, unless the religious community in question is bounded. The Alawites in Syria, Jews, and other groups are examples of bounded religious groups behaving like ethnic groups (ibid: p. 151).

The majority of ethnic conflicts involve militias which are not well trained, like an army for example, to differentiate between a combatant and non-combatant. In addition, fighters who are involved in the conflict are often not full-time fighters: a Rwandan Hutu farmer may murder his Tutsi neighbour then return to his field. Is he a combatant or a non-combatant? (Byman, 2002, p. 152) If an ethnic group suspects that its mobilized neighbouring rival ethnic group will strike, are these pre-emptively murdered victims combatants or non-combatants? These questions cast doubt on the assumption that ethnic terrorists target non-combatants. A terrorist striking in the United States can easily distinguish between combatants (police and military forces) and non-combatants (everyone else). An ethnic terrorist in Sri Lanka lacks such clarity when choosing targets (ibid: p. 153).

The arguments made by (Byman, 1998) (Byman, 2002) (Wimmer, 2004) focus on the nature of ethnic violence labelled 'terrorist' and the differences between ethnic terrorist and other types of terrorism. In the case of the PKK, the group faces fewer difficulties in differentiating between combatants [the Turkish security forces] and non-combatants [civilians]. The Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict is between the state and the PKK – a group which claims to represent the Kurdish ethnic community in Turkey. For the PKK, the notion of combatant and innocent, however, seems blurred. The PKK targets Turkish security forces, Kurdish collaborators [PKK labels them traitors], civil servants [judges and prosecutors], and in some cases foreign tourists with the aim to harm the Turkish state's economy (Ünal, 2012, p. 118).

This study neither argues for or against whether the PKK has committed violent acts often described as 'terrorist'; rather it asks whether the application of the label terrorist in this ethno-nationalist conflict context has effects on the choice of Kurds in Turkey to adopt violence. The empirical evidence in Chapter Four points out that labelling PKK 'terrorist' as an effective deterrent policy is questionable. The argument is made that the application of the label 'terrorist' against the PKK could prompt Kurds to adopt violence.

5.1.3 The PKK Case Study

The PKK was founded by a meeting of Abdullah Öcalan and his associates in Diyarbakir, Turkey on 27 November 1978. This meeting, which is known as the First Congress of the PKK, issued the Statement of Foundation in which the PKK called for the liberation of Kurds in Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq, and for the formation of "Greater Kurdistan" (Mitchel Roth & Sever, 2007, p. 904). In this statement, the PKK declared its intention to adopt Mao's "Protracted War Strategy" and Marxist–Leninist ideology. Mao's protracted war strategy promotes the guerrilla phase as a transitional period of the struggle during which insurgents can build a regular army to win the war through conventional warfare (Singh, 2013, p. 572). Mao's strategy associates 'political progress' with victory – political progress in this sense means popular support from the population (ibid: p. 573).

The PKK carried out its first attack on 31 July 1979 assassinating a parliamentary member, Mehmet Celal Bucak – eight months after its foundation (Nadir Gergina, Durub, & Çetinc, 2014, p. 220). The assassination was PKK's declaration of guerrilla

war against the Turkish state. Initially, the PKK sent its selected members to Palestinian camps for training on guerrilla fighting techniques. Later, it established camps in the Bekaa Valley in Syria to train PKK new recruits (ibid). After simultaneous attacks on two gendarmerie stations on 15 August 1984 in the Şemdinli and Eruh districts of Turkey, the PKK announced the foundation of its first guerrilla army “the People’s Liberation Army of Kurdistan” (ARGK) (ibid). The armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state continues to destabilise Turkey and the region.

The Kurdish question in Turkey has been a source of domestic instability since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Although there had been Kurdish revolts during the Ottoman era too, the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict intensified with the nation-building process of the new republic (M. M. Gunter, 1990, p. 58). The forefathers of the Turkish Republic largely ignored identities based on religion and ethnicity. The new republic focused on civic Turkish-ness excluding ethnic and religious identities from representation in the public sphere (Ergil, 2000). Despite the exclusion, the Kurdish identity continued to exist in the daily and social lives of the people. During the 1960s, leftists and youth movements took leadership of the Kurdish movements in Turkey from the traditional elites (Ergil, 2000, p. 126). The leadership shift paved the way for new ‘revolutionary’ forces to reignite Kurdish aspirations for an independent state.

Since the PKK’s first attack in 1984, the Turkish government policy has been to criminalise separatist movements responding to them using security and military tactics (Ünal, 2012). Cases of PKK members and guerrilla fighters were treated as a

subcategory of organized crimes, which are already subject to special investigative methods, such as the interception of telecommunication, employment of undercover agents, technical surveillance methods, etc. In addition, all cases of organized criminality were tried before specialized provincial assize courts that find their basis of jurisdiction and competence under (Article 250) of the Criminal Procedure Code.⁸

The Turkish legislation regarding terrorism and terrorist offences dates back to 1991, in response to the activities of separatist 'terrorist' organizations in Turkey. Law 3713 on the Fight against Terrorism has since been subject to many amendments and partial annulments of the Constitutional Court. The latest major amendment was accomplished in 2006, changing the definition of many terrorist and terrorism-related offences, as well as introducing new investigative measures regarding the prosecution of suspected terrorists. The financing of terrorist activities has been criminalized as a separate offence under Article (8) of the Law on Fight Against Terrorism. Such activities are tracked according to a Law and a Regulation regarding suspicious transactions, applied to banks and financial institutions in order to track any criminal activity or money-laundering. Although all kinds of national and international terrorist activities fall under the scope of the anti-terrorism legislation of Turkey, the focus remains on separatist activities (Gazete, 2015).

The Turkish government's justification to designate the PKK and its supporters as 'terrorist' appears as if intentionally does not include the dichotomy of means/ends traditionally used to explain political violence labelled terrorist. This could be attributed to the ethno-nationalist nature of the conflict. Karaosmanoglu contends,

⁸ Resmî Gazete, Sayı : 29461, 31 Ağustos 2015 PAZARTESİ
<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2015/08/20150831-1.htm>

“war is waged by political collectivises (state and non-state actors) pursuing political goals ... the true aim of warfare is to fulfil the political purpose” (Karaosmanoglu, 2008, p. 68). This is true for both parties of the conflict in Turkey. However, the Turkish government frames the “terrorist” tactic of the PKK’s [ethno-nationalist] political violence as an extremist ideology which should be persecuted under counter-terrorism laws. The PKK’s leftist (socialist/communist) ideology has evolved and some experts even claim it has taken new directions over the last four decades (Saeed, 2017).

The labelling of the PKK as a ‘terrorist’ group reflects an evolution in the process of securitising the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict using the labels ‘separatist’ and ‘terrorist’. The designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ is a statement by the Turkish government that the PKK is not a legitimate political group and does not defend a legitimate cause – therefore, it should be eliminated.

6- Conclusion

Chapter One explores the theoretical framework of this study with the aim of situating the hypothesis and main research question within its theoretical context. A combination of the Copenhagen School securitisation theory and the labelling theory of deviance [criminology] frames the discussions and inferences made by this study. This chapter explores each theory separately focusing on the relevance, importance, and the definition of terrorism; and then how each theory has been employed to help make sense [analyse] the empirical data.

Chapter One

The chapter further examines the theoretical relationship between labelling and securitisation as well as the relevance of the two theories to the hypothesis and the questions raised by this study. It is argued that definitions are relevant to the labelling theory of deviance and the Copenhagen School securitisation theory. Therefore, Chapter One considers the origins of the label 'terrorist', definitions of terrorism, the implications, and the theoretical importance of the label within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. The conclusion reviews how and why the PKK has been labelled 'terrorist' by the Turkish government.

The next chapter will explain how evidence has been collected to test whether the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' has effects on the choice of Kurds to adopt violence in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

Chapter Two: Methodological Framework

This chapter provides the theoretical and practical considerations for the methods and research design used for data collection and the analysis in this study. The chapter is divided into three main sections: firstly, selection sites, researcher reflexivity, and ethics; secondly, data collection through interviews; and thirdly, data analysis and presentation of evidence. The chapter sets out how the study examines whether the labelling of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ had effects on the Kurds’ choice in Turkey to adopt violence in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. A discussion of the of qualitative methods employed in this study to explore how Kurds perceive the designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ and how they rationalise violence in the ethno-nationalist Turkish-Kurdish conflict are offered.

Empirical evidence was collected through interviews conducted with Kurds from Turkey. These interviews focused on how Kurds from Turkey perceive the designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ by the Turkish government within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. The nature of the semi-structured interviewing technique allows the researcher to ask follow up questions to better understand the nuances of the effects of the label ‘terrorist’ on the wider Kurdish community in Turkey. During my interviews, emphasis was placed on how Kurds in Turkey view the PKK as a group and how the Kurdish community understands the PKK’s violent ‘struggle’ in Turkey.

The design of the methodological framework of this study recognises the sensitivity of researching the Kurdish issue in Turkey especially the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist'. The author experienced a heightened atmosphere of racism, security, and mistrust prevalent in Turkey during the period this research was conducted (March 2015-July 2017). The securitisation of the Kurdish community in Turkey left many Kurds feeling they were under surveillance and this had the impact of making them distrustful of any research efforts into their situation. Given this context, researcher reflexivity and the ethical considerations of fieldwork are critical to this study.

1- Introduction

The methodological framework taken in this study adopts a qualitative research approach. Roller and Lavrakas note that qualitative research aims to collect data from which "useful knowledge" can be derived (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015, p. Loc 413 of 10602 Kindle ed.). Qualitative research is difficult to define. Arguably, it has no theory that is distinctly its own nor does qualitative research have a well-defined set of methods or practices that are entirely its own (Denzin & Lincoln, 2016, p. 6). Yet, Denzin and Lincoln illustrate its contributions as a method in their definition of qualitative research as:

"a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field-notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to self...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2016, p. 3)

Flick argues that qualitative research is a naturalistic, interpretive approach concerned with taking the views of research participants as a starting point – in other words, exploring the topic under study from the interior (Flick, 2009, p. 11). Qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, is concerned with words and meanings rather than numbers, scope or trends. The key features in a qualitative research design are the ‘what’, ‘why’, and ‘how’ of the phenomenon under study as opposed to ‘how many’ in quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 6). There are three distinct features of qualitative research: firstly, there is an inductive relationship between theory and research so that theory is formed out of the research. Secondly, qualitative research is interpretivist in contrast to scientific quantitative research. Qualitative research explores the social world through the lens of people and the meanings they give to the phenomenon studied. Thirdly, qualitative research is a constructivist ontological position which contends that the social world is a construct of human interactions rather than a separate phenomenon (Bryman, 2016, pp. 266-267).

There are several benefits to the author’s decision to employ qualitative research methods for this study. The qualitative research approach aims to provide an in-depth and interpreted understanding of how research participants experience their social and material world[s]. It uses non-standardised adaptable methods for collecting data sensitive to the social context of the study. The detailed data generated by using qualitative methods allow for more precise analysis taking into consideration the uniqueness of each participant in the study. The qualitative approach also allows the discovery of emergent categories and theories during the analysis and presentation of evidence stage. The empirical evidence collected

through the qualitative research approach tends to include detailed descriptions of the topic under study, situated in the views expressed by its participants. Finally, the qualitative research approach is a reflexive approach where the researcher's role is acknowledged and included as important element of the study (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton, & Ormston, 2014, p. 4).

The qualitative approach is particularly useful in the development of new theories emerging out of the collection and analysis of data. However, it is equally useful in testing existing theories (Silverman, 1997). In this study, the qualitative approach helps test both the labelling theory of deviance and the Copenhagen School securitisation theory using the PKK as the main case study. The combination of these two theories within the design of the theoretical framework provides a new approach to the analysis that increases our understanding of the effects of the label 'terrorist' on the wider PKK-supportive Kurdish community in Turkey within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. The hope is that this approach will lay the groundwork to develop a theory capable of examining the effects of securitisation by designation on the choice of adopting violence by the wider supportive community in ethno-nationalist conflict contexts.

The qualitative approach, however, is not flawless. Critics of the qualitative research approach claim that it is too subjective in some cases (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). Critics, often those who favour the quantitative research approach, argue that due to the open-ended way of conducting qualitative research, researcher[s] unsystematically decide what is significant and important without telling us much about why one area was chosen as the focus over another (Bryman, 2016, p. 284).

Critics argue that the tendency of qualitative research to be too subjective makes it more difficult to replicate a qualitative study. They contend that the methodology of collecting data using [unstructured] qualitative methods depends largely on the researcher's ingenuity – which makes it hard to replicate. In other words, the researcher him or herself is the instrument of collecting data compared to quantitative methods where surveys for example are relied upon (ibid). These criticisms are mostly applicable in ethnographic qualitative studies where researchers “record what strikes them as significant” (ibid: p. 284).

Another criticism of the qualitative approach to research is the problem of generalisation (Yin, 2016, p. 217). Critics argue that due to the limited number of ethnographic observations or unstructured interviews conducted for a study, it is more difficult to draw generalisations which could apply to other case studies. For example, such critics would ask, ‘is it possible to generalise based on the 26 semi-structured interviews conducted in the current study?’ The answer is of course, “no”. Yet, the outcome of qualitative research studies is often helpful in generalising to theorise rather than to make generalisations about the population under study. As Bryman puts it: “...it is the quality of theoretical inferences that are made out of qualitative data that are crucial to the assessment of generalisation.” (Bryman, 2016, p. 285). In defence of the generalisability of the qualitative approach, Williams argues that “... a researcher will often draw comparisons with findings by other researchers relating to comparable groups.” (Williams, 2000, p. 213)

Qualitative research is accused of a lack of transparency (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). Critics argue that it is less clear what the researcher did exactly and how its

conclusions were reached (Bryman, 2016, p. 285). To illustrate the point, critics juxtapose the detailed accounts of sampling used in quantitative research with the ambiguous methods of sampling in qualitative research; for example, the ambiguity of the procedures for choosing ethnographic or unstructured interview participants (ibid). The critique of lack of transparency goes beyond the methods used in data collection. Critics also argue that the process of analysing qualitative data is not transparent. In qualitative research, the researcher does not usually provide detailed accounts of what he/she was doing during the analysis or how the study's conclusions were drawn (ibid).

In deciding the methodological design of this study the criticisms directed at the qualitative research approach have been taken seriously. Thus, an attempt has been made to mitigate the subjectivity of the qualitative research methods through two main factors: firstly, the formulation of the research question [problem] was developed by contextualising it within existing and relevant literature. Secondly, the use of semi-structured interviews helped reduce the open-ended nature of the questions asked and the answers provided by the interview participants.

The replicability of this study is not an issue. Semi-structured interviews are easier to replicate by contrast to ethnographic accounts or open-ended interviews techniques (Aurini, Heath, & Howells, 2016). The claim that qualitative data is of an unstructured nature which lends itself to the researcher's biases has been mitigated through systematic coding and analysis of the empirical data. As such, empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews were transcribed, initially coded into

broad themes, sub-themes, and from these, inferences informed by the theoretical framework were drawn.

The issue of generalisation in qualitative research has been addressed by drawing comparisons with previously conducted studies and by suggesting future research into similar cases where inferences made by the current study might be replicable. In the PKK case study, generalisations can be drawn through examining cases of securitisation in religious and sectarian settings such the securitisation of the Arab Sunnis identity in Iraq using the label 'terrorist'. This study has cited comparable cases of the effects of securitisation by labelling – for example – the case of securitising the Islamic identity in the UK after the 7/7 bombings of London (Croft, 2012).

Lastly, according to Bryman (Bryman, 2016, pp. 284-285), lack of transparency is also levelled against the qualitative approach. In acknowledgment, questions about “what the researcher did” and “how the researcher arrived at the study’s conclusions” (ibid: p. 285) are answered in this study by offering detailed accounts of what the researcher did during the collection of empirical data [Chapter Two] and how the empirical data analysis was conducted and resulted in the inferences made [Chapter Four].

2- Selected Sites and Timeframe

A number of sites in different countries were selected for interviews; however, Turkey was chosen as the main site for the selection of interview participants. Turkey

was selected rather than other countries for several reasons. Firstly, the study is focused on how Kurds in Turkey perceive the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist'. Therefore, it is important to gather 'first-hand' perceptions of the designation. This is not to say that Kurdish perceptions from outside Turkey are less important but rather, that Kurds inside Turkey perceive and experience the effects in different ways than those outside. It is hoped that a greater understanding of the way Kurds perceive and react to the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' will better inform the findings and enable their application to similar violent ethno-political groups such as the Kurdistan Free Life Party (PIJAK), the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI), The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), etc.

The main site for conducting the interviews was southern Turkey – or as the Kurds call it, *Bakurê Kurdistanê* 'North Kurdistan'. Southern Turkey was chosen for a couple of reasons: 1- This study is interested in examining the securitisation and labelling effects of the label 'terrorist' on the Kurdish community within Turkey which historically inhabit the southern parts of Turkey known as *Bakurê Kurdistanê* among Kurds. Chapter Three provides detailed accounts of who the Kurds are and which geographical areas they inhabit. 2- PKK's political and violent activities are mainly concentrated in the majority Kurdish areas of southern Turkey. Consequently, the Turkish Army and security services are mainly active in these Kurdish majority cities. In other words, the impact of securitisation and labelling on the Kurdish community within Turkey theoretically would be most evident in *Bakurê Kurdistanê*.

Eighteen of the twenty-six interviews were conducted with people from cities in the southern parts of Turkey. For safety reasons, however, the interviews were

conducted either through safe electronic means [Phone, Skype, Viber, FaceTime, Signal, etc.] or in areas outside the southern parts of Turkey where the security of the researcher and the interview participants was reasonably guaranteed. Eight interviews were conducted in countries other than Turkey [UK-London, Belgium-Brussels, and Jordan-Amman], all Kurds from the southern parts of Turkey who either have left Turkey recently due to safety concerns or those who happened to be abroad during the interview phase of this study. The lack of security concerns during the interviews allowed for some more relaxed and longer semi-structured interviews with Kurds from Bakurê Kurdistanê to better understand Kurdish perceptions of the Turkish government labelling the PKK 'terrorist' within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

The in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted between 10th March 2015 and 31st July 2015. This period witnessed heightened security concerns in the Middle East region because of the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the on-going civil war in Syria. The failed state of Syria gave birth to several local militias competing to control large swathes of land in Syria – amongst them, the PYD which is accused by the Turkish government to be a surrogate of the PKK. The involvement of the Turkish security in the fight against ISIL coincided⁹ with targeting PKK locations in Iraq, Syria,¹⁰ and on the borders with Iran. Moreover, the PKK considered the Turkish government's targeting of its camps in Iraq and Syria as the end of the Solution Process announced in 2012. Thus, the PKK armed wing

⁹ HuffPost (2015): http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mustafa-akyol/erdogan-isis-pkk_b_7897510.html

¹⁰ BBC (2015): <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-33663005>

People's Defence Forces (HPG) released a statement saying, 'The ceasefire has lost its meaning with the intense air bombardments that have been carried out'.¹¹

The Turkish government military campaign against the PKK in the southern cities of Turkey and the neighbouring states of Iraq and Syria was accompanied by intensive political discourse describing the PKK as a 'terrorist' organisation equating it with al-Qaida and ISIL.¹² The period during which the interviews were conducted further witnessed heightened political discourse in Turkey whereby the Turkish government accused the HDP of having ties with the PKK.¹³ The Kurdish issue in Turkey was under the spotlight of securitisation.

3- Reflexivity, Role of the Researcher and, Ethics

The securitisation of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict as an existential 'terrorist' threat after 1992 by the Turkish, European Union, and the U.S.A. governments has made Kurds view the research conducted by foreigners on the PKK sceptically. Given their scepticism, discussion of reflexivity and self-awareness is of paramount importance.

More than forty years ago, prominent sociologists Howard S. Becker (1928–) and Alvin Gouldner (1920–1980) debated the role of values and politics in taking sides in research (Bryman, 2004, p. 518). Becker argued that it is not possible to conduct

¹¹ Hurriyet Daily News (2015): <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/pkk-announces-ceasefire-has-lost-its-meaning-after-turkish-army-airstrikes.aspx?pageID=238&nID=85952&NewsCatID=338>

¹² BBC (2015): <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-33668230>

¹³ Middle East Eye (2015): <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/erdogan-calls-pro-kurdish-party-sever-ties-pkk-2124965517>

research away from the influences of our opinions and sympathies. He reasoned that social scientists often do research within a hierarchal binary framework [police/criminal, managers/workers, teachers/students, etc.]. In his view, it is difficult not to take sides within the context of such binary hierarchal relationships. Based on Becker's research into the sociology of deviance, he determined that researchers are inclined to sympathise with the weaker party of the binary hierarchal relationship – namely – the criminal, worker, student, etc. In cases of deviance, Becker argued, the higher group [governments, police, etc.] accuse researchers of bias because they are giving credibility/empowering the outcasts of society. He attributes this phenomenon to the deeply rooted monopoly of the higher class over credibility in a given society (H. Becker, 1967).

Gouldner (Gouldner, 1968) challenged Becker's arguments, saying that Becker exaggerated the inclination and inevitability of researchers to take sides while conducting their research. He contended that when a researcher takes the point of view of a particular group in society seriously it does not necessarily mean that the researcher sympathises with one side over the other. In support of Gouldner's view, Liebling suggests that the virtues of taking the views of both sides is best revealed when the researcher does not incur "too much wrath on either side" (Liebling, 2001). The Becker-Gouldner debate reveals the complexity of impartiality in examining the effects of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish government on the Kurdish choice to adopt violence. Working from a reflexive point of view, the researcher invoked the question about whether the PKK and its wider supportive community are victims or perpetrators? The aim and context of the current study does not give answer to this question. The study does not aim to prove or disprove whether the

PKK/Kurds are victims or perpetrators; instead, it aims to better understand whether the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' has effects on the choice of Kurds to adopt violence in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

Qualitative research places the researcher in the centre of the data collection process, ultimately, the researcher becomes the instrument of data gathering. While the guidelines of qualitative research might assist the researcher to consider certain aspects during the in-depth interviews, these are accessories for the researcher(s) only (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015, pp. 434-457 of 10602 Kindle ed). The close interaction between the researcher and the interview participants provides in-depth understanding of the topic under study. Yet, this very close interaction raises concerns about the researcher's ability to collect and interpret data in an unbiased manner (ibid: Loc 457 of 10602). To mitigate the effects of close interactions with the interview participants in this study, the researcher took notes after each interview to account for any fieldwork bias [See Appendix 3]. These notes were reviewed during the time of transcription and later again during the process of analysis to ensure accurate and unbiased interpretation of data.

Another consideration was the interview participant-researcher relationship. In the 'research space' [where the participant and the researcher conduct the interview], there is a set of power dynamics governing this space. On the one side, the researcher controls what questions are asked and on the other, the participant controls what data are provided or withheld (ibid). This power negotiation has implications for the integrity of any study (Kvale, 2006). The possible effects of such power tensions within the research space were mitigated through the research

design by using semi-structured in-depth interviews enabling the participants not only to answer the questions but also to propose new questions and elaborate on topics they believed relevant to the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' and the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. Moreover, the researcher used his skills in active listening, attention to details, open-mindedness, patience, and analytical abilities to build rapport with the interview participants. The researcher was perceptive and self-aware during the process of conducting the semi-structured interviews for this study.

A few participants gave answers to questions and follow-up questions such as "I do not know". The role of the researcher is crucial here concerning whether or not to register an "I do not know" answer. In the current study, the researcher opted for registering the participant's "I do not know" answer to accurately reflect the participant's position on the issue of the PKK designation as 'terrorist' by the Turkish government.

The role of the interviewer is crucial to the process of conducting fieldwork and analysing the data. The main concern with respect to the interviewer is his or her tendency to bias the information gathered (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015, p. Loc 1607 of 10602 Kindle ed). Such bias can occur for different reasons including the interviewer's gender, race, age, ethnicity, personal beliefs, stereotyping, presumptions, and education. These characteristics have impact on the researcher's ability to accurately gather and interpret data as well as on the participants' responses to the questions. In the current study, the researcher strived to establish a positive relationship [rapport] with participants by being approachable, asking

thoughtful questions, listening carefully, and knowing when to be silent in order to give participants enough time to speak. Interviewer bias can potentially be prompted by gender, ethnicity, stereotypes, and other “unconscious bias” triggers. The researcher ensured that he was conscious of such effects by staying focused on the aims of the study regardless of any personal presumptions or opinions towards the Kurdish issue in the Middle East. David White argues that “...based on empirical evidence that consciously creating an ‘implementation intentions plan’ (telling ourselves what we intend to achieve) can train us to recognise certain situations and to consciously behave differently in them” (White, 2014). The *Implementation Intentions Plan* is different from a *Goal Intentions Plan*, which is an abstract concept – for example, “I will exercise more’ compared with ‘I’ll go for a 30-minute walk when I get home” (ibid). This means people can train themselves to mitigate the effects of bias on habits [research]. For further reading on unconscious bias and mitigation techniques read (Beattie, 2013), (Thuraisingham & Lehmacher, 2013), and (Ross, 2014).

The security of the researcher and the interview participants were important considerations in the design and implementation of this study. Given the sensitivity of the research area and the topic under examination, anonymity was granted to all the interview participants to minimise the risks of harm. The researcher ensured the research was carried out in an ethical, accurate and safe manner. The use of qualitative methods is intended to allow for a bottom-up approach to be taken, giving voice to Kurds who might previously not had the chance to express their perceptions concerning the designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’.

The researcher took all the precautions available at the time of conducting the interviews, such as following the rules and regulations in Turkey, meeting participants in safe spaces, travelling using public transportation services, and making sure that the data gathered was securely coded to protect the anonymity of the participants, all designed to guarantee the security of the participants and the interviewer. The Kurdish issue is a sensitive topic which provokes nationalist and ethnic feelings in Turkey. To reflect on the experiences of doing research in a heightened environment of ethno-political tension, the researcher reviewed the data collected in parallel with the notes [Reflexive Journal] taken during conducting the interviews. Upon the researcher's return to the UK, careful reading of the data gathered alongside the reflexive notes taken during the data-gathering process helped the researcher mitigate the effects of the heightened security environment in Turkey on the interpretation of data.

Further to this, all data gathered as part of this study has been stored securely and will be kept secured for three years after the completion of the study, and then disposed of in the appropriate way. All transcripts have been anonymised, while the entire research process has adhered to the rules as outlined by the University of Exeter's School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HuSS) Ethics Committee, and approval for the research to commence being granted in 2015 [See Appendix 1].

4- Interviews

Data collected through in-depth interviews, a qualitative research technique, provides rich descriptions and appropriations of the social worlds of the research

participants' (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 178). Interviews are in essence a form of structured conversation to understand people's views (Arthur, 2012). The role of the researcher in generating data while conducting in-depth interviews has been a topic of academic debate. Kvale and Brinkman suggest that: "knowledge is understood as buried metal and the interviewer is a miner who unearths the valuable metal" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 54). This view sees knowledge of the research participants as pre-existing. Another view presented by Kvale and Brinkman asserts that "The interviewer-traveller, in line with the original Latin meaning of *conversation* as 'wandering together with', walks along with the local inhabitants, asking questions and encouraging them to tell their own stories of their lived world ..." (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 48). Despite the debates concerning knowledge generated by interactions between the interviewer and the interviewee, the data generated through interviews conducted for this study hold value beyond the context of the immediate interview interaction. Interviews are a valuable technique to understand other people's experiences of their world (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 180).

The researcher conducted twenty-six semi-structured interviews with Kurds from Turkey. The interviews were carried out in a relaxed manner with a set of guideline questions revolving around the themes of Kurds in Turkey, terrorism, labelling PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish and other governments, and the Kurds' perceptions of designating PKK 'terrorist'. Participants had the opportunity to engage with the questions, criticise them, ask questions of their own, as well as to make further comments they saw as important.

The majority of interviews [18 out of 26 or 69%] were conducted with Kurds from the southern parts of Turkey, or as Kurdish people call it 'North Kurdistan'. Participants are Kurds who lived and experienced the political atmosphere and impacts of designating the PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish government. Additionally, a number of Kurds from Turkey on short personal/business trips to the European Union [London, Brussels, and Stockholm] were interviewed outside Turkey. These interviews were carried out either face-to-face or via secure electronic means [Skype, FaceTime, Viber, and WhatsApp].

There are several reasons for choosing the semi-structured interview technique to empirically test the theoretical hypothesis of this study. The semi-structured interview technique provides clear guidelines for the interviewer, gives time to prepare questions, grants interview participants the freedom to express their views and perceptions, and results in reliable and comparable qualitative data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The key strength of semi-structured interviews lays in the flexibility of designing and refining interview guides, as well as in conducting the interviews themselves (Humphrey & Lee, 2004, p. 340). In contrast to the limitations of the quantitative research technique of surveying the perceptions of a small number of participants, the flexibility of the semi-structured interviews ensures that qualitative data of the perceptions of the Kurds about labelling PKK 'terrorist' can be obtained.

Prior to constructing the interview questions, existing literature on the effects of securitisation and labelling was reviewed to better understand the common questions asked by other researchers and help inform new questions for the current study. The types of questions asked in the semi-structured interviews are equally

important to the quality and validity of the empirical data collected (Wolcott, 2009). Spradley argues that any unstructured research questions should include three types of questions: 1) descriptive questions prompting interview participants to provide data about their activities; 2) structural questions aimed at revealing how interview participants organise their knowledge and; 3) contrast questions granting participants the opportunity to discuss the perceptions and meaning of given situations in their social world (Spradley, 1979).

In-depth interview techniques for collecting data have, however, been criticised from three epistemological angle points: positivism, emotionalism, and constructionism. Firstly, interview data is structured as if it represents objective and precise accounts of the topic under study. Critics argue that this presumes that knowledge exists and should be understood in a certain way. Secondly, critics claim that data generated by in-depth interviews are often presented romantically and uncritically as the true representation of participants' social life without acknowledging the context and the role of the interviewer. Thirdly, although it is true that in-depth interviews produce accurate explanatory data, the interview itself is recognised as part of the topic under research. In other words, critics argue that interviews present reality as the data generated from interviews only (Silverman 2011: p. 185. cited in (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 182)).

While the criticisms levelled against qualitative in-depth interviewing techniques are valid in certain instances of research, this study takes the view that interviews are an effective technique to help us understand how Kurds perceive and construct their views and reactions to labelling and securitisation within the context of the Turkish-

Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. This is primarily because the qualitative technique of semi-structured interviews offers a microscopic view which is needed to test the hypothesis of this study.

5- Selection of Interviewees

When designing the methodological framework of this study, three questions relevant to selecting interviewees arose: 1- How large should the sample be? The answer here is mainly determined by two factors: time and cost. This study is a doctoral research study with limited time and financial resources. Therefore, the sample size of 26 interviewees falls within the limitations of the current study. However, it is worthwhile to note that a large sample size does not necessarily guarantee greater accuracy of the inferences made by a research study. Sample size is one variable among several others in any research project (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p. 74). 2- Who should be interviewed? Should selected participants be chosen from among those designated 'terrorist', namely, PKK members or those who are directly affected by the designation, the wider Kurdish community in Turkey? In light of the ethical and legal limitations on interviewing individuals/groups designated 'terrorist' and the aim of the current study, interviews were conducted with individuals from the wider Kurdish community in Turkey. 3- Is the population chosen from heterogeneous or homogenous communities? Despite the fact that all interview participants are Kurds from Turkey [ethnically homogenous], the sample was heterogeneous in other ways. The interviewees were from different parts of Turkey where the effects of designating the PKK 'terrorist' are experienced differently and each participant holds a different political view towards the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-

nationalist conflict. Thus, the levels of assimilation/rejection of Turkish-ness varied from one participant to another. The homogenous ethnic nature of the Kurdish population, however, meant that the sample did not need to be large (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 189).

The participants for this study were selected through snowball sampling [convenience sampling] which effectively relies on interview participants nominating other 'suitable' people to take part in the study. This approach is particularly useful in researching sensitive topics such as drug abuse or underground political protest movements (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 129). The researcher contacted a small group of Kurds from Turkey who fit the selection criteria and then asked their assistance to establish contact with other Kurds.

However, there are two concerns with the snowball sampling technique: firstly, participants who nominate each other may well discuss the research responses among themselves which can introduce bias into the research. Secondly, the sample might not be representative of the population (Bryman, 2016, p. 102). To mitigate the potential introduction of bias into the research, the nominated potential participants were employed by the researcher as connections to find other interview participants. This helped distance the new participants from those who had already been interviewed. Whether the sample frame is representative of the population [Kurds] or not is directly relevant to the current research. External validity and the ability to generalise are not as important in qualitative research as in quantitative. Qualitative research is more guided by theoretical sampling than by quantitative sampling (ibid).

In the context of the current study where access to interview participants was not easy (partly because of security concerns for the researcher and the participants), the adoption of snowball sampling facilitated access to participants who might otherwise have not have felt comfortable taking part in academic research without a referral from someone who already has participated in the research. To further mitigate the effect of potential bias, the initial group of Kurds approached to participate in the study was diverse from different cities in southern Turkey.

Out of the twenty-six interview participants, nine were women. Interviews with Kurdish females allowed expression of women's perceptions of securitising the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict by designating the PKK as 'terrorist'. It is important to note that historically, Kurdish women have played a major part in the political and guerrilla life of Kurdish society in Turkey. It should also be pointed out that the PKK has a significant number of Kurdish female fighters. On the political side, Figen Yüksekdağ is the current co-chair of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) – the largest Kurdish political party in Turkey. She was member of the Turkish Parliament although her membership was revoked by the court following a six-year prison sentence for distributing PKK 'terrorist' propaganda.¹⁴

¹⁴ al-Jazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/hdp-leader-figen-yuksekdag-loses-seat-parliament-170222074518464.html>

6- Guidelines of Data Analysis

6.1 Types of Data

The qualitative semi-structured interviews method of collecting empirical evidence employed in this study has generated a detailed account [data] of how the interview participants perceive the designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’. Where permission was granted, I voice-recorded the interviews digitally before transcribing them. Where permission was not granted to digitally record the interview, detailed notes of the interview were carefully written. All notes of the interviews were reviewed and double checked within hours of conducting the interviews. Several interview participants refused to have their voice recorded digitally for security concerns. I listened to each interview recording at least three times in order to ensure accuracy. By listening to the recordings and reading the transcript at the same time, I was able to double-check the accuracy of the transcripts making sure that I paused in cases of inaudible or peculiar comments made by the interview participants. Taking great care to accurately transcribe the semi-structured interviews helped me to become more familiar with the data.

6.2 Discourse Analysis

Discourse is “spoken or written communication between people, especially serious discussion of a particular subject”.¹⁵ Here the term discourse is taken to mean a group of statements which provide a language to represent knowledge about

¹⁵ Collins Dictionary: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/discourse>

a particular topic (Hall & Gieben, 1992, p. 291). In this study, discourse means the way the Turkish government constructs the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict and the war with the PKK. By constructing the PKK as a terrorist existential threat, the Turkish government limits the other ways the PKK and the conflict can be constructed. In other words, the construction of the PKK and the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict as an existential threat limits the construction of the conflict as a political issue to be resolved by political means. Discourse analysis is a method used within different areas of research. It cannot, however, be applied to all kinds of theoretical frameworks because discourse analysis approaches are complete packages encapsulating theoretical and methodological aspects of research (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 3). The discourse analysis package includes four elements: (1) the philosophical understanding of the role of language in the construction of the world; (2) theoretical models; (3) methodological guidelines concerning how to conduct research on a particular topic; and lastly (4) the techniques of analysis (ibid).

Jørgensen and Philips recommended that different discourse analysis packages be created combining the elements from different discourse analytical perspectives and non-discourse analytical perspectives to construct different forms of knowledge about a topic so they can produce a broader understanding of the phenomenon under study (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 4). In order to construct a coherent framework, it is therefore crucial to appreciate the philosophical, theoretical and methodological differences and similarities among the approaches of discourse analysis (ibid).

According to Jørgensen and Philips, there are three social constructionist approaches of discourse analysis all with roots in French post-structuralist theory.

The three approaches are:

- *Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory*, a post-structuralist theory which posits that discourse constructs the social world using meaning. Meaning, however, is linked to language which is always evolving and changing; therefore, meaning can never be permanently fixed. Discourse, according to this theory, is in a constant state of transformation through interacting with discourses. The theory calls this interaction of discourses a *discursive struggle*. In other words, discourses are in a permanent struggle to fix the meanings of language according to their understanding of the social world (ibid: p. 6).

- *Critical discourse analysis* focuses on the role of discourse in constructing the social world. In contrast to Laclau and Mouffe, critical discourse analysis posits that discourse is but one aspect among many in any social practice. Discourse analysis, according to this approach, is “the investigation of change. Concrete language use always draws on earlier discursive structures as language users build on already established meanings ... it is by combining elements from different discourses that concrete language use can change the individual discourses and thereby, also, the social and cultural world” (ibid: p. 7).

- *Discursive psychology* examines specific instances of language used in social interaction. In contrast to critical discourse analysis, discursive psychology studies how people exchange discourses to create and negotiate their social worlds and identities; and the consequences of this exchange. Jørgensen and Phillips define discursive psychology as, “an approach to social psychology that has developed a type of discourse analysis in order to explore the ways in which people’s selves, thoughts and emotions are formed and transformed through social interaction and to cast light on the role of these processes in social and cultural reproduction and change” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 7). To compare, discursive psychology views individuals as both products and producers of discourse certain contexts of interaction; while Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory views individuals as subjects of discourse (ibid).

Language, which is the raw material of discourse analysis, is not merely a medium through which information about individuals and their behaviour or constructs about the social world are exchanged. By generating discourse, language constitutes the social world, social identities, and social relations. Consequently, changes in discourse affects the way we perceive our social worlds. The argument made here is that discourse changes and reproduces social reality (ibid: p. 9).

Discourse analysis is a perspective in social sciences which encapsulates methodological and conceptual elements. Discourse analysis offers an alternative perspective in which traditional research methodologies are usually embedded (L. A. Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 3). As Potter notes:

“[Discourse analysis has an analytic commitment to studying discourse as texts and talk in social practices. That is, the focus is not on language as an abstract entity such as a lexicon and set of grammatical rules (in linguistics), a system of differences (in structuralism), a set of rules for transforming statements (in Foucauldian genealogies). Instead, it is the medium for interaction; analysis of discourse becomes, then, analysis of what people do.” (Potter, 1996, p. 146)

The main analytical framework used by this study to analyse the semi-structured interviews with Kurds in Turkey is discourse analysis. Discourse in its simplest form is the way of talking about and understanding the world or specific aspects of the world. Discourse analysis is the study of structured language utterances people use to engage in different domains of social life – for example – political discourses, medical discourses, etc. In other words, discourse analysis is the study of language at use. Jørgensen and Phillips define language as: “... a ‘machine’ that generates, and as a result constitutes, the social world” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 9). Discourse analysis can be used to analyse written, spoken, signed language, or any form of semiotic significance. Within the context of this study, discourse analysis served as a useful tool in providing insights to better understand the perceptions and reactions of Kurds to the labelling of PKK as ‘terrorist’ and the securitisation of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. A distinctive character of discourse analysis is that it constantly looks for patterns in language use. Thus, discourse analysis was employed to analyse the data generated from the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews with Kurds from Turkey.

Discourse theory treats all objects as meaningful and investigates the way in which social practices articulate the discourses that construct social reality (Bloom, 1994, p. 24). Discourse is part of the interpretive methods of social inquiry which focus on

examining and explaining how discourses socially construct identities (Feyerabend, 1975). Since discourse frames and limits ideologies, it illustrates how political/social reality can be manipulated by groups to enhance/erode the image they wish to portray of their identity (Burnham, 2004). Discourse reveals that social institutions talk about specific areas of social life in certain ways to define, describe, limit and delimit what is possible to say and how it should be talked about (Dijk, 2008). By examining this discourse, it becomes possible to understand a group or an organisation. The implications of designating the PKK as 'terrorist' for the Kurds can only be understood through the systematic analysis of discourses produced by the Kurdish community in Turkey. Only by familiarising him or herself with the discourse of the Kurdish society in Turkey, can the researcher begin to understand the effects of the label terrorist on the choice of Kurds to adopt violence in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

6.3 Foucauldian Approach of Discourse Analysis

In contrast to other discourse analytical approaches, for Foucault, discourse consists of several statements which he calls 'discursive formation'. These statements, which refer to the same object, are related to each other and consequently fit together in a pattern (Hall & Gieben, 1992, p. 291). Foucault posits discourse as: "A group of statements which provides a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment ... Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But ... since all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do – our

conduct – all practices have discursive aspect” (Hall & Gieben, 1992, p. 291).

Foucault defines discourse as:

“We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation [...Discourse] is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined. Discourse in this sense is not an ideal, timeless form [...] it is, from beginning to end, historical – a fragment of history [...] posing its own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality” (Foucault, 1972, p. 117).

For Foucault language is actively structuring perceptions of reality and as such, it consequently structures reality itself (Foucault, 1973). Hull and Gieben argue that discourse is the construction of knowledge through language. Yet, discourse is produced by the practice of producing meaning – “discursive practice”. Consequently, all social activities have a discursive aspect because all social practices have meaning. In this sense, discourse is part of and influences social practices (Hall & Gieben, 1992, p. 291). The Foucauldian perspective would argue then that the discourse of the Turkish government towards the PKK and the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict is reflected in practice – *i.e.* in how the Turkish government acts towards the Kurds.

To Foucault discourse is based on three main arguments: firstly, discourse can be produced by different people in different institutional settings such as hospitals, families, prisons, governments, ...etc. The coherence of the discourse is not conditioned by its source whether an institution or a speaker; rather “discourse constructs positions from which alone it makes sense” (Hall & Gieben, 1992, p. 292). In other words, whoever deploys the discourse becomes the subject of the

discourse. To illustrate Hall & Gieben's position – we may not believe that the PKK is a 'terrorist' group; however, if we use the discourse of terrorism when talking about the PKK, we will find ourselves speaking from a position that holds the PKK terrorist in one way or another. To Foucault the process of describing a statement, "... does not consist in analysing the relations between the author and what he [*sic*] says ...; but as if he is to be the subject of it [the statement]" (Foucault, 1972, pp. 95-96). Secondly, discourse is open to other discourses. It borrows elements from other discourses incorporating them into its own meanings. For example, the discourse of the nationality identity Turkish, which legally encompasses all the ethnic and religious communities in Turkey, draws on elements from the Turkish ethnic identity. Past discourses are part of present discourses of the Turkish nation and security of the people. Thirdly, a system of dispersion is a group of different statements in a discursive formation linked by systematic differences and relationships (Hall & Gieben, 1992, p. 292). Foucault argues that, "whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever ... one can define a regularity ... [then] we will say ... that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*" (Foucault, 1972, p. 38). To illustrate, the statements of separatism and terrorism, as existential threats for the Turkish government fall into discursive formations in a Foucauldian system of dispersion. The discourses are different, yet, they share similarities in their securitisation aspects.

Foucault developed a theory of power/knowledge. Similar to discourse, power is manifested in different social actions. Power is not necessarily oppressive. It could also be productive. For Foucault, power constitutes discourse, knowledge, bodies and subjectivities (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 13). As Foucault notes:

“What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119)

Power provides space for the social to construct its world. Power produces our social worlds, creates objects which are separated from each other and conditions their individual characteristics and relationships (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 13). For example, ‘terrorism’ became an area with its own institutions (*e.g.* counterterrorism units, forces, surveillance, etc.), subjects (*e.g.* ‘terrorists’, ‘terrorist groups’, ‘terrorism sponsoring states’ etc.) and practices, (*e.g.* ‘de-radicalisation’). Foucault argues that power is always accompanied by knowledge because power and knowledge presuppose one another (Foucault, 1977).

The closely connected concepts of power and knowledge in the Foucauldian sense have implications for his conception of truth. Foucault argues that truth is not universally accessible because it is impossible to talk from a position outside discourse. Foucauldian ‘truth’ is a system of procedures for the production, regulation and dissemination of statements (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 14). Consequently, ‘Truth effects’ are created within discourses. Foucault argues that ‘truth’ is invested in, and produced by, different systems of power (*ibid*). Yet, truth is unattainable according to Foucault. Therefore, it would be more practical to investigate how the effects of truth are created in discourses, rather than examining what is ‘true’ or ‘false’. Foucault notes that the focus should be on analysing the

process of constructing discourse to understand the ways discourses give the impression that they represent true or false pictures of reality (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 14).

To summarise, Foucault argues that discourses are ways of representing a topic or a subject using language. These discourses present meaningful knowledge about that subject or topic. This discourse-constructed knowledge empowers and limits social practices, and therefore has consequences and effects in our social worlds. Discourses are not limited to a subject or a class, but rather behave like power in that they circulate and are always contested. For Foucault, “the question of whether discourse is true or false is less important than whether it is effective in practice” (Hall & Gieben, 1992, p. 295). Consequently, when discourse is effective in our social worlds, it regulates power relations creating a ‘regime of truth’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

The Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis applies to the discourses of the Kurds interviewed for this study and to the PKK case study within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. The concepts of knowledge, truth [what is terrorist, legitimate, political, Turkish, etc.], and power [sovereignty, monopoly over using violence, national identity, nation unity, etc.] are deeply embedded in the politics of power. This study examines two main discourses in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict: firstly, the Turkish government discourse of securitisation and secondly, the Kurdish community discourse of ethnic victimisation and their ‘resistance’ to the stigma associated with the label ‘terrorist’. Both discourses circulate and compete to represent the true or false pictures of reality in the conflict.

Since truth is unattainable according to Foucault, this research sets out to investigate how the effects of truth [terrorist] are created in discourses to influence social reality [the politics of conflict and resolution].

6.4 Coding Data

Strauss argues that learning how to code well is essential for researchers using qualitative research techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 27). However, coding is only one way of analysing qualitative data – not the only way. A code in qualitative research is usually a word or a phrase which captures significant meaning (Grbich, 2013, p. 183). Coding is the critical link between data collection and the interpretation of their meaning (Atkinson, 2001). Qualitative research has evolved into a multidisciplinary research technique covering topics from social sciences to art. However, researchers should be pragmatic about which method to use in their research. Sometimes words better inform a research question; at other times, numbers do (Saldaña, 2011, p. Loc 204 of 8715 Kindle ed.). In qualitative analysis, Vogt (Vogt, 2014, p. 13) argues that codes are constructs generated by researchers to make sense of data by attributing interpreted meaning to participants' utterances for post-interview pattern detection, categorisation, theory building, and other analytical purposes.

In the current study, all primary data collected from the semi-structured interviews with Kurds were analytically organised after careful reading and re-reading, line-by-line, categorically coding the data into themes and sub-themes [themes which were already identified ahead of the interviews and during the fieldwork process as well as

themes that emerged from the data]. Coding helps link different segments or themes in the data to an overarching concept or set of concepts, bringing these “fragments together to create categories of data that we define as having some common property or element” (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003, p. 27).

An index containing 12 categories and eight sub-categories was assembled based on patterns arising from the on-going research. By the time all the data had been fully analysed, the index had expanded to contain eighteen categories and twenty-five sub-categories. Of course, not all of these categories were of direct relevance and consequently several categories were not included in the analysis. The main focus was on statements containing the terms: “terrorism”, “citizenship”, “PKK”, “struggle”, “freedom”, “criminal”, “nation”, “ethnic”, “Kurdistan”, “violence”, “identity”, etc.

Delamont and Atkinson recommend that data should be further interrogated and examined systematically after it has been coded in order to generate meaning (Delamont & Atkinson, 2011). Data generated from the semi-structured interviews was grouped into categories [initial themes] so that they could be better mapped, easily read and compared as well as thematically organised and accessible. Furthermore, data sets were grouped into sub-themes allowing for further probing of data and more meaningful comprehension of the material. There were instances of data not fitting into any code or theme/sub-theme, and this data is as much important as the data that could be coded. By the time the process of coding, comparing, cross-examining patterns, themes, contradictions, and paradoxes was complete, the task of drawing some generalisations or theorisations from the data began. Given

that this study mainly focused on the case study of the PKK in Turkey, the data and inferences made by the study are most applicable to this group. This is not to say however, that the data cannot be used more widely beyond the PKK as a broader movement, nor indeed to other ethnic armed groups across the globe. Case studies can generate contextually sensitive data which could be applicable to broader areas of research (Cooper, 2012, p. 171).

During the writing stage of this study, the initial, sub-themes, and main themes were re-examined once again to extract representative statements – the re-examination of the empirical data helps the researcher re-visit what the participants said and how their perceptions and expressions related to the research question. During the process of the data re-examination, the researcher sought to identify any evidence that challenged or cast doubt on the study's findings, or that suggested new connections among the different themes/sub-themes. This enhanced the researcher's understanding of the data and allowed for a further period of reflection on the main themes, sub-themes, and findings of the research.

The semi-structured interviews followed by discourse analysis have allowed for an in-depth understanding of how PKK-supportive Kurds and the wider Kurdish community in Turkey construct their social world and make sense of everyday life around them within the context of a securitised ethno-nationalist conflict. As Mason states:

“Through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions,

discourses, or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate” (May, 2002, p. 1).

Discussions of ethical and methodological issues surrounding research on a sensitive topic such as this highlight the importance of researcher reflexivity – a concept that remains key throughout. As well as the importance of reflexivity and reflection, discussions of case studies, data collection and analysis contain the practical and theoretical considerations that inform analysis of whether the securitisation of the ethno-nationalist Turkish-Kurdish conflict by labelling the PKK ‘terrorist’ affects the choice of Kurds to use violence in that context.

7- Presentation of Evidence

The study presents the empirical evidence by stating what the research thesis is about – namely – what is the main question of the thesis and why this question [problem] was chosen in the first place. The research question, then, is placed within the context of existing literature on labelling and securitisation using the label terrorist – particularly – within the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict context. Moreover, the study’s main question is situated within the theoretical framework to help us explain its impact. The process of producing the empirical evidence is outlined identifying the source of data supporting inferences made by this study, the sample interviewed, and how it was interviewed.

The arguments made by this study are presented in logical order starting from the research question, the collection of evidence, the theoretical frameworks, and its implications for policy, to the conclusions drawn. The study concludes by offering

recommendations for future research. The findings of this study have implications for policy. Thus, Chapter Five examines the implications of securitising an ethno-nationalist conflict using the label 'terrorist' on conflict management policies and the ways policymakers can mitigate such effects.

8- Conclusions

Chapter Two has provided a detailed account of the methodological framework for this study. Having adopted a qualitative research approach to produce empirical evidence, this chapter has outlined the stages and methods employed to collect and analyse the data generated through semi-structured interviews with Kurds from Turkey. Finally, the chapter critiqued the methods employed to collect and analyse data produced by this study.

Having established the theoretical foundation in Chapter One and the methods used in Chapter Two, Chapter Three will situate the study's hypothesis within the historical context of the Kurdish issue in Turkey and the Middle East.

Chapter Three: The PKK Case Study

Situated in the heart of Asia, historical 'Greater Kurdistan', which is approximately the size of France, occupies the backbone of the Middle East stretching over vast swathes of land from the Black Sea and the Iranian plateau to the steppes of Mesopotamia. Historical Kurdistan forms large parts of today's Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Yet, the Kurds have managed over the decades to preserve their identity, language, culture, and history distinguishing themselves from the Turks, Persians, and Arabs (Bios, 1966, p. 1). Even though Kurds are a majority in the mountainous areas of the Middle East, Kurds have been reduced to minority status in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria in the aftermath of the II World War. It is often said that Kurds are the largest nation in the world without an independent state. There are approximately 25-28 million Kurds in the world (M. Gunter, 2004, p. xxvii). The struggle of many Kurdish groups to achieve statehood has been a source of conflict and instability in these four states.

This study examines the effects of securitising the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict through labelling the PKK 'terrorist' on the Kurds' decision to adopt violence. Chapter Three situates the hypothesis and findings of the current study in the context of the wider Kurdish issue in the Middle East. Moreover, this chapter positions the main question of the thesis within the ethno-nationalist Turkish-Kurdish conflict context and the associated political environment impacting citizenship and ethnic identity of the Kurdish community in Turkey. This chapter reviews the historical, political, and ethnic aspects of the PKK as a Kurdish armed group with the

aim of contextualising the arguments and inferences made by the current study. This study posits that the designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ produces the unintended effect of securitising the Kurdish identity in Turkey and consequently increases the sense of victimisation and political alienation among Kurds Turkey. The PKK has been chosen as case study for the current study to demonstrate the effects of labelling the PKK ‘terrorist’ on the Kurd’s choice to adopt violence.

1- Introduction

In order to contextualise the PKK case study within the wider Kurdish context, this chapter explores the Kurds’ geographical frontiers of historical Greater Kurdistan, the current nation-state borders, Kurdish identity, culture, and political parties. The Kurdish struggle for statehood within the states they inhabit has been dominating the politics of the Middle East for over a century. The PKK is often cited as an ethnically driven armed group fighting for statehood, independence, and resistance to assimilation into the Turkish Republic. Despite being a ‘Turkish’-Kurdish separatist movement, the group has managed to forge cross-border relations with other groups and governments in the region setting up training camps in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq.

The identity of the PKK as a Kurdish ethnic political movement helped the group export its political ideology to other Kurdish groups in Syria and Iraq. The PKK has armed fighters in camps located on the border area inside Iraq, in Sinjar city north of Mosul, in Syria under the Democratic Union Party [*Partiya Yekîtiya Demokratî*] (PYD) banner, and on the border with Iran in cooperation with the PIJAK. Moreover, the Turkish government accuses the HDP, which is the largest Kurdish political party in

Turkey, of spreading PKK's 'terrorist' propaganda. In November 2016,¹⁶ Figen Yüksekdağ and Selahattin Demirtaş, co-chairs of the HDP, along with another 11 HDP Members of Parliament were arrested on terror charges related to the PKK and "denigrating the Turkish nation, the Turkish Republic and the institutions of the state".¹⁷

The historically contested geographical frontiers of 'Greater Kurdistan' inside Turkey, the cross-border protracted ethno-nationalist Turkish-Kurdish conflict, and the tragic number of casualties caused by the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish government since 1984 reveal the complexity of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. The securitisation of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict using the label 'terrorist' has implications for Kurdish identity and citizenship in Turkey as well as for conflict management and conflict transformation. By situating the current study within the wider Kurdish context, we can have a better understanding of the effects securitisation and labelling have on the Kurdish community and the ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey. Moreover, it is crucial for this study to shed light on the interwoven relationship between the Kurdish identity in the Middle East [macro] and the individual local [micro] Kurdish armed and/or political movements in the Middle East.

It is important to mention that in the aftermath of the World War I, the Kurds in the Middle East were promised the right to self-determination and consequently an independent Kurdish state in the Articles of the Sèvres Treaty signed in 1920

¹⁶ Daily Sabah: <https://www.dailysabah.com/legislation/2017/02/21/turkish-parliament-strips-hdp-co-chair-figen-yuksekdag-of-mp-status>

¹⁷ Hurriyet Daily News: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/eu-criticizes-measures-against-hdp-co-chairs-.aspx?PageID=238&NID=110081&NewsCatID=338>

between the Allied Powers and the Ottoman Empire. Section 3 (Article 62-64) of the treaty stipulated that:

“a Commission sitting at Constantinople ... shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia, as defined in Article 27, II (2) and (3)”.
(Jwaideh, 2006, p. 131)

The Treaty of Sèvres was a historical moment for Kurds which could have changed the map of the Middle East forever. However, the Treaty was superseded by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 which modified the Treaty of Sèvres so that the Ottoman part of Kurdistan became divided among four states: Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and the Soviet Union. The Kurdistan part of Iran remained intact. The Treaty of Lausanne separated Kurdish parts from each other (Sheyholislami, 2011, p. 51).

Bozarslan argues that the Kurdish conflict has been the deadliest struggle in the Middle East since the 1920s, second only to the inter-state wars such as the war between Iraq and Iran (Bozarslan, 2004, p. 22). While there was a period of *tranquillity* after the collapse of the Mahabad Republic in 1946, the 1961 rebellion of Mullah Mustafa Barzani against the government in Baghdad lasted almost continuously until his defeat in 1975. In the same year, another Kurdish rebellion begun in Iraqi Kurdistan lasting until 1991 (ibid). The central governments' counterattacks forced Kurdish rebels outside the urban city centres. Kurdish rebels adapted through adopting guerrilla fighting techniques (ibid:23). The modus operandi of guerrilla fighting is a characteristic among almost all the Kurdish armed groups

fighting against their central governments in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran (Romano & Gurses, 2014). As part of the central governments' measures to discredit, delegitimise Kurdish rebel groups, and gather internal support from their main audience(s), different labels were attached to these Kurdish groups by their respective governments. Among the most popular labels used were 'separatists, Devil's Party (KDPI), Law-breakers (KDP/PUK), terrorists (PKK, KCK, and PJAK)' [For detailed information about these descriptions and labels, see: (Mitchel Roth & Sever, 2007), (Romano & Gurses, 2014), (Stansfield, 2016), (Tejel, 2009)].

While Kurdish groups were referred to by derogatory terms in Iran, Syria, and Iraq, the label terrorist was applied to the Kurdish political and armed groups systematically and continuously since 1992 only in Turkey. Hence, this study takes the PKK and the Kurdish issue in Turkey as its main case study.

2- Kurds in the Middle East

It is important to provide an account of Kurdish historical roots as narrated by scholars and Kurds themselves because nationalist discourse usually tend to historicise the nation (Sheyholislami, 2011, p. 47). The origin of the Kurds is a topic of debate; however, some scholars believe that Kurds are the descendants of various Indo-European tribes that settled in the Middle East as early as 4,000 years ago. Kurds claim to be the descendants of the Medes who helped overthrow the Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C. The Kurds also believe their origins go back to the myths involving King Solomon, jinn, and other magical agents (M. Gunter, 2004, p. xxxi). Yildiz argues that Kurds inhabited their land 'Greater Kurdistan' for so long that

there are no strict 'beginnings' for Kurdish history. Kurds descended from different tribes such as the Guti, Kurti, Mede, Mard, Carduchi, Gordyene, Adianbene, Zila and Khaldi, and the migration of Indo-European tribes to the Zagros mountain region some more than 4,000 years ago. Kurdish society is clan-based encompassing over 800 clans (Yildiz, 2004, p. 7).

During the time of the Islamic Caliphate conquest of Mesopotamia in the seventh century AD, Muslim scholars called the nomadic people who inhabited the Zagros mountain region *Kurds*. The term 'Kurdistan' which means 'the land of the Kurds' was first used by the Turkish Seljuk prince Saandjar in the twelfth century when he created a province named "Kurdistan". The Kurdistan province he created was in the Kurdistan area of today's Iran. In the sixteenth century the term 'Kurdistan' became commonly used to refer to areas inhabited by Kurds (ibid).

The geographical frontiers of historical Kurdistan have shifted over the centuries; however, the land of the Kurds still stretches over the mountainous region that spreads across the area where the borders of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey meet (علي 2008, p. 723). There are small Kurdish-populated areas just inside the Armenian and Azerbaijani borders with Turkey and Iran respectively which are sometimes described as parts of Kurdistan by some scholars (Yildiz, 2004, p. 7). Historical 'Greater Kurdistan' has no established borders. Thus, different organisations, groups, and individuals make varying claims to the ownership of the territory of 'Kurdistan'. Turkey denies that Kurdistan has ever existed, while Iran and Iraq dispute the size of territory historical Kurdistan occupies inside their countries, and Syria denies that historical Kurdistan extends to its territory (ibid: p. 8).

David McDowall contends that there is an old chronic tension between the central governments in the Middle East and societies which inhabit the fringes beyond the reach of the central governments (McDowall, D 1992, p. 10). Categorising the Middle East communities into desert and mountain dwellers, McDowall argues that mountain people in the Middle East [such as with Maronites and Druzes, Kurds and Afghans] have been far harder to tame than Bedouin inhabiting the desert (ibid). The tension continues between the central governments wishing to extend their control to the furthest possible area and the people who inhabit areas on the fringes trying to avoid government interference (ibid). This tension developed into conflicts when the ambitions of a governor or tribal chief disturbed peace. However, the desert and mountain dwellers of the Middle East preferred to maintain peace to keep trade going (ibid).

2.1 Kurds in Iran

There are 7 to 9 million Kurdish people in Iran (Yildiz & Tayşi, 2007, p. 2). The Kurdish community in Iran is often described as 'understudied' because researchers cannot gain access to the Kurds there due to the closed nature of the Iranian state. Interestingly, the term 'Kurdistan' was first used in the twelfth century in today's Iran when Saandjar, the Saljuk prince, named a province Kurdistan which has been historically inhabited by the Kurds. Kurds inhabit the mountainous region in western Iran stretching from the Turkish and Iraqi borders in the west to Lake Urmieh in the north-east (ibid).

Similar to the other Kurdish populations in the Middle East, the relationship between the Iranian Kurds and the central government in Tehran has historically been and continues to be fraught with tension (ibid: p.6). After the First World War, Reza Shah sought to homogenise the Iranian population by the incorporation of opportunistic tribal chiefs, defeating the rebels, and forcing the large nomadic tribes to settle (McDowall, D 1992, p. 17). During the Second World War, Iran was almost fragmented when the Soviet and British troops invaded the western parts of modern Iran to prevent Reza Shah from supporting Nazi Germany. Supported by the Soviets, the Azerbaijanis and the Kurds of north-west Iran led by the KDPI declared independent republics in December 1945 (ibid). To contextualise the declaration of the first independent Kurdish republic in modern history, it is important to briefly review the 10 goals of the KDPI listed in its foundation papers – in August 1945 (علي 2008, pp. 772-773):

- 1- Kurdish language should become an official language in education, administration, and courtrooms.
- 2- Autonomous rule within the state of Iran.
- 3- Employees in the Kurdish inhabited areas should be ethnic Kurds.
- 4- Protection of farmers' rights in Kurdistan.
- 5- Development of agriculture, trade, and carpentry.
- 6- Democratisation of Iran
- 7- Supporting the democratisation of Kurdistan and the protection of human rights regardless of human beings' religious or political beliefs.
- 8- Development of health and cultural services in Kurdistan.
- 9- Taxes collected in Kurdistan should be spent on the Kurdistan region. Only 30% of taxes should go to the treasury of the central government of Iran.
- 10-Supporting the rights of other ethnic nations in Iran

The short-lived Kurdish republic of Mahabad was unable to incorporate the Kurdish towns of Saqqiz, Sanandaj and Kermanshah because it failed to attract the tribes outside Mahabad to the nationalist cause. Kurdish tribal leaders were reluctant to join the new republic because they did not want to jeopardize their relationship with Tehran. Consequently, Mahabad fell to the Iranian forces right after the Soviets withdrew from Iran in December 1946 (ibid).

Kurds consider the Republic of Mahabad as a defining moment in their history. Mahabad, after all, is the only Kurdish independent state ever declared in modern history. Kurdish ethnic nationalism went underground after the fall of Mahabad. In the aftermath of the Mahabad Republic's collapse, the Iranian government prosecuted Kurds in Iran (McDowall, D 1992, p. 18). In the late 1960s, the KDPI launched insurgent attacks against the Iranian forces from inside the Iraqi territory. However, the Iranian government was able to bring the area under control and expel the KDPI from the adjacent areas (ibid).

The Kurds perceived the downfall of the Shah in 1979 as an opportunity to negotiate a new relationship with Tehran. However, the new Islamic Republic of Iran viewed Kurdish political parties as an existential threat. In 1979, President Ayatollah Khomeini launched a holy war against the Kurds labelling the KDPI as the "devil's party"; a label which is as much stigmatising as the label 'terrorist' within the Islamic context (Langanger, S. 2005, p. 168). By the time the Iran-Iraq war had started, the KDPI offered its participation along with Iranian troops in the fight against Iraq if the Iranian government accepted the Kurdish demands for autonomy. The KDPI offer was ignored and the military campaign continued against Kurdish political groups in

Iran forcing the KDPI to retreat to Iraqi territory and eventually to locate their headquarters there in 1983. Effectively, the KDPI was reduced to launching cross-border attacks after nightfall, when the Iranian army's ability to maintain control became weaker (ibid).

The Iranian government has always rejected Kurdish requests for autonomy because of the danger that self-rule for the Kurds would open the door for other minorities to make similar demands. Moreover, the ideological foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran was built upon the unity of the Islamic community which conflicts with the notion of granting an ethnic group special rights (McDowall, D. 1992, p. 18).

The end of the Iraq-Iran War came on August 8th, 1988 and this made Iran stronger than ever in the war against Kurds. The war was followed by the assassination of the General Secretary of the KDPI in Vienna, Dr. Abd al-Rahman Qasimlu, less than a year after the end of the war. The Qasimlu's assassination was in turn followed by the assassination of his successor Dr. Sadiq Sharafkandi in Berlin on September 17. Iranian Kurds accuse the Iranian government of assassinating the KDPI's leaders 1992 (Langanger, S. 2005, p. 169).

In the late 1990s, the PJAK (Party of Free Life of Kurdistan) was formed as a peaceful student-based human rights movement. The group initially wanted to defend Kurdish identity and culture and to resist the Iranian government's attempts at assimilation. The group was soon targeted by the Iranian authorities forcing its members to flee across the Iraqi borders into the Kandil mountains area where the

PKK camps are located (ibid: p. 173). The PKK later decided to organize its Iranian members in a separate party and the PJAK was founded in 2004. The PJAK is effectively an off-shoot of the PKK (Bengio, 2017, p. 36). To show its support for the PKK, on February 16, 2007 (the anniversary of Abdullah Ocalan's capture), large demonstrations were held in Iranian Kurdistan (M. Gunter, 2007, p. 134). The demonstrations resulted in three deaths and hundreds of detentions. These events served as a reminder to the Iranian authorities that they still had a volatile Kurdish problem.

The Iranian government continues to ban all the Kurdish political parties and lists the PJAK as a terrorist group. The KDPI remains the main Kurdish political party covertly active inside Iran with headquarters in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and the Kurdish controlled areas of Syria (Rojava). The Barzani (tribe) assistance and cooperation with the Iranian Kurds in the formation and rule of Mahabad exemplifies the strong cross border ethno-political ties among the Kurdish communities in the Middle East (Yildiz & Tayşi, 2007, p. 64).

2.2 Kurds in Syria

Kurds are the largest minority in Syria (M. Gunter, 2003, p. xxxix). There are approximately two million Kurds in Syria who made up about 10% per cent of the overall pre-war population (Catar, S. 2005, p. 112). The main Kurdish areas are located along the border with Turkey and the borders of Northern Iraq [Kurdistan region]. The Kurds are not only the largest minority in Syria but also the only minority with a territorial defined base. There are no official statistics concerning how many

Kurds there are in Syria because Syrian law denies their existence (Ismet Chériff Vanly 1992, p. 114). The Syrian Constitution implies that all citizens of Syria are Arabs by calling the country the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition to the Kurdish speaking community, there are Arabic speaking Syrians of Kurdish descent who have been “Arabised”. Kurds in Syria, like their counterparts in the other three states of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey, have been targeted by the central governmental to weaken their Kurdish identity in favour of the state’s or the ethnic majority’s identity (ibid).

Jordi Tejel argues that ethnicity was not a predominant issue for the Kurdish populations before the creation of the new states in the Middle East (Tejel, 2009, p. 3). The importance of Kurdish ethnic identity increased over time according in response to the political and religious changes in the region. For example, Kurds focused more on their religious identity than their ethnic identity during the Islamic Caliphate which at some point was led by the famous Kurdish leader Saladin.

Despite the Syrian government’s oppression of the Kurdish minority in Syria, Kurds managed to organise themselves politically following the First and Second World Wars. The Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria (KDPS) was founded in 1957 by a group of Kurdish intellectuals with considerable support from peasants and workers with the aim of securing Kurdish linguistic and cultural rights. The KDPS was never legally recognized by the Syrian government and some twenty of its leaders were arrested in the 1960s (Ismet Chériff Vanly 1992, p. 118).

Syrian targeting of Kurds during the 1960s continued. After the failure of union with Nasser's Egypt, Syria for the first time was proclaimed the Syrian Arab Republic

under the provisional constitution of 1961 (ibid). In 1962, the government announced a special decree (No. 93) to conduct a population census for the province of Jazira only. The census resulted in categorising approximately 120,000 Kurds in Jazira as foreigners who were defined as living illegally in Jazira. This was followed by a mass media campaign against the Kurds under the slogan: “save Arabism in Jazira” (ibid: p. 119). The anti-Kurdish Baathist attitude of the Syrian regime continued to manifest itself through the policies of marginalisation, displacement, and denial of Kurdish existence.

In the 1980s, the Baathist regime in Syria became involved in the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey by establishing contacts with the outlawed PKK group. The Syrian regime’s interest in putting pressure on the Turkish government was due to disputes and tensions over historical borders and resources. There was a historical border dispute between Turkey and Syria concerning the transfer of sovereignty from the Sanjak of Alexandretta in 1939 during the French Mandate to the benefit of Turkey. In addition, the Syrian regime felt threatened because of the Turkish dams on the Euphrates which reduced Syria’s share of water (Tejel, 2009, p. 75). The two issues were raised when the Turkish government proposed the sharing of the Euphrates’ waters in exchange for recognition of its borders with Syria. The Syrian regime rejected the proposal to integrate the border issue with the negotiations for water shares. Instead, the Syrian regime opted for putting pressure on Turkey by allowing the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to establish camps inside Syria, from which the PKK launched military operations against the Turkish army (ibid). The cooperation of the Asad regime with the PKK gave the group a chance to establish

permanent contacts in northern Syria during the 1980s and 1990s. These contacts developed into a *de facto* merger between the PKK and the PYD in Rojava today.

The cross-border tribal nature of the Kurdish communities in the Middle East explains the militant engagement of local tribes in the ranks of the PKK and the Peshmerga in Iraq (M. M. Gunter, 2014). There are certain clans such as the Hasenan and Miran tribes – split between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq – which have sent dozens of their members to the PKK and the Peshmerga. The Miran tribe, for example, abandoned Barzani's KDP to support the PKK, while other tribes continued to send fighters to both organizations. The conflicts between the central governments of Syria and Turkey and the Kurdish communities gave these tribes the chance to defy international frontiers by strengthening interstate networks of tribal solidarity (Tejel, 2009, p. 76).

This summary of the cultural and political history of the Kurds in Syria reveals the complexity of the political relationship among the Kurds themselves on the one hand and between the Kurds and their respective governments on the other. The Kurdish identity has endured countless attempts by the Syria regime to erode it – unsuccessfully. The reaction of the Kurdish communities has been to fight back in order to preserve their ethnic identity.

2.3 Kurds in Iraq

The Kurds in Iraq have existed in an almost constant state of revolt against the rule of the central government in Baghdad ever since Great Britain declared Iraq an

independent state. According to the Sykes–Picot Agreement of World War I, Iraq was carved out of the former Ottoman provinces of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra (M. Gunter, 2007, p. 11). Since then, the Kurdish community in Iraq has suffered from different forms of oppression by the central government in Baghdad (Ismet Sherif Vanly 1993, p. 139). The fear of the Kurds separating from the states in which they live drives the central governments of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran to oppress Kurdish communities (ibid). Gareth Stansfield argues that “at the core of the marginalization of the Kurds in Iraq is the simple fact that they identify themselves primarily as being “Kurdish” and then, maybe, “Iraqi” and certainly not “Arab” (Anderson & Stansfield, 2008, p. 155). Yildiz explores how the Kurdish dream of independence is perceived by the central governments of the four states where historical ‘Greater Kurdistan’ lays. He also explores the effects of the repressive measures taken by these states against their Kurdish communities noting that:

“the dream of an independent Kurdistan is not universally perceived in the same way. Some regard it as a dream, perhaps realisable in generations to come, but unfeasible for the moment. Others regard the right to self-determination as a fundamental right guaranteed inter alia by the UN Charter. It is little surprise that anti-secessionist measures taken by some states have had a tendency to alienate Kurds, fuelling a radicalism which might not otherwise carry itself with such fervour” (Yildiz, 2004, p. 2)

In Iraq, however, Kurds enjoy greater influence over the politics and stability of the country than any other Kurdish community in the region. The Kurds in Iraq constitute a larger proportion of the population than they do in Turkey, Syria, and Iran (M. Gunter, 2007, p. 12). Consequently, they represent an effective larger mass in Iraq than elsewhere. The Iraqi government under the former President Saddam Hussein has always considered the issue of Kurdish separatism as an existential threat to the

unity of Iraq. In addition, the Kurdistan region of Iraq is home to large swathes of fertile lands and contains a wealth of natural resources such as oil and gas. Consequently, the separation of Kurds would represent a significant and critical weakening of the Iraqi economy. Therefore, the Kurdish ambitions of separation created an irreconcilable struggle between Iraq and its Kurdish minority (ibid).

Under the mandate from the League of Nations to rule Iraq, the British approached a local Kurdish leader named Sheikh Mahmud Barzinji of Sulaymaniya. They wanted him to become the governor of Mosul province. While he was not able to unite Kurds under his leadership, Sheikh Mahmud almost immediately proclaimed himself the “King of Kurdistan,” (M. Gunter, 2007, p. 12). He rejected British rule, and held secret meetings with the Turks. The British forces stationed in Iraq were able to successfully put down several of Sheikh Mahmud’s uprisings during the 1920s (ibid).

Sheikh Mahmud was finally defeated in 1931. Mulla Mustafa Barzani began to emerge as a Kurdish leader after the defeat of Sheikh Mahmud. Barzani’s power resides in their religious authority as Naqshbandi sheikhs and their fighting abilities. For over fifty years, Barzani fought a guerrilla war against the Iraqi government to protect Kurds’ rights of self-determination (ibid: p. 13). Barzani was the spiritual leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) which was founded on August 16, 1946. Despite his inherent religious conservatism and tribal background, he was able to lead an ethno-political movement with the aim to secure an independent state for the Kurds. He was exiled to the Soviet Union (1947–1958) by the Iraqi government. However, he was able to negotiate the March Manifesto of 1970, which granted Kurds autonomous rule. It was the first ever negotiated autonomous rule granted to

any Kurdish population in the Middle East. Due to internal conflicts, weak commitments towards the Kurds in Iraq from foreign powers, and lack of effective weapons, Barzani was defeated by the Iraqi government's forces in the 1974 war campaign. He and the KDP were forced into exile (Yildiz, 2004, pp. 20-21). After the defeat of 1974, his son, Massoud Barzani, emerged as the new leader of the KDP. In Sulaimanyiah, Talabani established his Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) on June 1, 1975. The two parties had alternated between cooperation and bloody conflict for decades until forming the unified Kurdistan Regional government in 2005 (M. Gunter, 2007, p. 36).

The Kurds in Iraq have come a long way in terms of governance, security, political maturity, and the protection of their ethnic rights compared to other Kurdish communities in the region. Due to its status of semi-independence, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) represents a model of the independence project for Kurds in the Middle East. The Kurdish semi-independent region of Iraq occupies a central geopolitical spot where the KDP, KDPI, KDPS, PJAK, and the PKK cross paths. The historical relationships of the Kurdish parties in the KRI with Iran, Turkey, Syria, Baghdad, and other Kurdish armed and political groups confirms the cross-border regional dimension of the Kurdish issue in the Middle East.

The Turkish government has maintained relations with the Kurdish parties in Iraq since the early 1990s despite differences over issues related to the PKK and the Iraqi Kurds' separatist aspirations (Yildiz, 2004, p. 78). Ankara's relations with the two main Iraqi Kurdish political parties is complicated. While the PKK has established bases in the KRI, Kurdish political parties have felt pressured to help the

Turkish government in its targeting of the PKK in order to maintain relations with Ankara. In 1992, the Peshmerga of both parties participated in a joint military operation with Turkish troops to expel around 5000 PKK fighters out of the border area with Turkey. (ibid: p. 79). Turkey has always opposed the establishment of Kurdish autonomous regions in neighbouring Syria and Iran. However, the Turkish government helped the KRG thrive economically after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by sending its companies to invest in the KRI, by facilitating banking for the KRG, and building an oil pipeline to export Kurdish oil. The cooperation between the KRG and the Turkish government attracted criticism from the PKK and its affiliates; however, their concerns did not develop beyond rhetoric.¹⁸

Despite the excellent relationships between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Regional government (KRG), the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' by the Turkish government is not applicable in the KRI. The PKK has political headquarters, bases, and training camps in the KRI. This discussion reveals the complexity of designating the PKK 'terrorist' within the context of the wider Kurdish issue in the Middle East.

2.4 Kurds in Turkey

In the 16th century, most of the areas inhabited by Kurds fell under the Ottoman rule and the remainder stayed under Persian rule (M. Gunter, 2004, p. xxix). The ruler of the last semi-independent Kurdish emirate of Botan surrendered to the Ottomans in 1847. He was exiled three years later to Crete in 1850 (ibid). Scholars trace Kurdish

¹⁸ Al-Monitor (2017): <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/01/kurdistan-civil-war-iraq-krq-sulaimaniya-pkk-mosul-kurds.html>

nationalism to four historical events: (1) Sheikh Ubeydullah's unsuccessful revolt in 1880 marked the first indication of modern Kurdish nationalism led by sheiks and prominent religious figures; (2) the Hamidiye Light Cavalry Regiments' impact on the Kurdish community under the Ottoman rule; (3) the impact of the World War I on the Middle East region and the new map proposed by the Sèvres Treaty 1920; and finally, (4) the new realities of the World War I and the Treaty of Lausanne 1923 (Olson, 1989, p. 1).

Wadie Jwaideh maintains that it is almost impossible to discuss Kurdish history without examining the effects the 1908 Young Turk revolution had on the Kurdish ethnic community in Turkey (Jwaideh, 2006, p. 102). The revolution was led by the Committee of Union Progress (CUP) whose members were men from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. They shared, however, an admiration of Western institutions and the hatred of Sultan-Caliph Abdul Hamid II. Kurds were among the founding members of the CUP. In 1895, many members of the CUP were arrested and prosecuted by the Ottoman authorities and later sent into exile (ibid). In 1908, the Young Turk revolution promised constitutional reforms as well as the formation of a representative government. A handful of well-educated sons of Kurdish *aghas* had engaged in creating political clubs taking advantage of the promises made by the Young Turk revolution (M. Gunter, 2004, p. xxix). However, Ottoman authorities intervened to stop such activities after sensing the beginnings of separatist movements in such initiatives. By 1914, the World War I set aside any Kurdish political aspirations (ibid).

In 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk created the Turkish Republic with the promise that the Kurds would be guaranteed a degree of autonomy and ethnic rights (Yildiz, 2004, p. 82). The multinational Ottoman Empire with its Sultan, who is also formally the Caliph – the spiritual leader of all Muslims, was replaced by a secular Republic. The new Turkish Republic launched a radical programme of secularisation to homogenise the people of the Republic. The aim of the new Turkish Republic was to build an indivisible state based on one language and one people (ibid). The Kemalist project laid the foundations for systematic government policies to suppress the south-east Turkey's Kurdish population. These policies involved a campaign to force mass displacement of Kurds and the destruction of their villages. The campaign of displacement lasted for almost 20 years (ibid).

The establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 prompted dynamic developments and at the same time attracted reactions against the political changes. The ruling civil and military elites often challenged the new changes affecting power structures in the new Republic (Fend, W. 2015, p. 52). The Young Turks (1908-1918) aimed for a policy of cultural and educational unification; in contrast, the “Kemalist” Republic wanted to enforce the Turkish identity as an exclusive national identity based on secular principles. The Kemalist Republic denies the existence of the Kurdish identity in the new Turkish Republic (ibid).

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Atatürk's government launched a programme of 'Turkification' to eradicate non-Turkish allegiances and purify the Turkish culture. The Kurds became its primary target because of the cultural, language, and political geographical base of the Kurds in southern Turkey. Breaking up the Kurdish

community in Turkey was to be achieved through restrictive legislation and state-sponsored violence (Yildiz, 2005, p. 14). These anti-minority repressive policies are still pursued by the Turkish government today.

The introduction of multi-party democratic system in 1945 resulted in the election of a liberal government formed by the Democratic Party in 1950. The 1950 elections which brought the Democratic Party to power in Turkey and the introduction of the multi-party democratic system in Turkey was an important step forward for Kurds. The southern Kurdish area of Turkey [Kurdistan] was the main stronghold of the party. Moreover, the new democratically elected government reduced the violent campaigns against the Kurds; and Kurdish leaders were allowed to return home (Kendal 1993, p. 63). The Islamic influence made a comeback during this period. Turkish politics subsequently turned into a struggle of influence between the Islamic elements and secular elements who sought to achieve greater integration with Western culture (Yildiz, 2005, p. 14).

However, Atatürk's repressive policies lived on. In 1950, the Turkish government passed the Press Law which embarked on renaming Kurdish places into Turkish names (Kendal 1993, pp. 75-76). The anti-Kurdish culture and language policies remained in place despite the introduction of a new liberal constitution in 1961. In the following years, the Southeast of Turkey, inhabited by the Kurds, witnessed economic underdevelopment and high levels of illiteracy and poverty among the Kurds (Yildiz, 2005, p. 14). In the decade before the rise of the PKK in the late 1970s, an extremist leftist group, the Eastern Revolutionary Cultural Hearth (DDKO) was founded in 1969 by Kurdish intellectuals in Ankara. This was followed by the

formation of the Rizgari (liberation) group which was founded in the early 1970s (Ünal, 2012, p. 7).

The military coup of September 1980 in Turkey, which was facilitated by the clashes between nationalists and communists, signalled the start of a one-party era under Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (ibid). Founded in 1978, the PKK took the lead in defending the socio-economic and political rights of the Kurds after the 1980 military coup.

3- The PKK

A Kurdish university student named Abdullah Ocalan founded the Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan (PKK) in Ankara in 1978, a Marxist group seeking to establish an independent state (Frelick, B. 1993, p. 241). Nonetheless, the idea of the PKK was developed in 1973 around a student association at the University of Ankara called 'Ankara Revolutionary Students' Association (ADYOD) (Ünal, 2012, pp. 6-7). The PKK character and ideology have evolved over the last three decades from this Marxist ideological group into an ethnic armed group calling for 'Radical Democracy'; which is, in essence, a form of democratic confederal system (Akkaya & Jongerden, 2012, p. 2). Radical democracy represents an ideological departure from the Marxist understanding of radical political thought which sought to achieve politics beyond the state, the party, and political subjectivity beyond class (ibid).

The military coup of 1980 in Turkey prompted the PKK to seek shelter in Syria, where it had established training camps for the newly founded military wing called

the Kurdistan Popular Liberation Army (ARGK) (Metelits, 2010, p. 133). The PKK fighters used bases in Syria and northern Iraq to stage attacks against the Turkish army inside Turkey (ibid). Right after the move to Syria, the PKK held its first congress at the Lebanese-Syrian border. In 1982, the PKK held its second congress in which the PKK declared its political ideology and strategy (Metelits, 2010, p. 133). Its political program was Maoist which includes three stages: strategic defence, balance of forces, and a strategic attack period (ibid). The strategic defence involved armed propaganda activities against Kurdish collaborators with the Turkish. The balance of forces meant creating “liberated” zones from which the PKK could operate. The strategic attack period is the call for a full-scale uprising against the Turkish government in south-eastern Turkey (ibid).

On 15 August 1984, the PKK began its violent ‘uprising’ against the Turkish state which has so far claimed the lives of over 40,000 people (Jain, 2016, p. 7). In August 1984, the PKK targeted government representatives and selected state forces as well as Kurdish civilians who volunteered to become ‘village guards’ (Ünal, 2012, p. 8). The PKK’s intensive military campaign against the Turkish government targets continued until 1994 when the Turkish government was successful in driving the PKK fighters out of many cities and villages (ibid). However, the PKK continued its sporadic hit-and-run attacks until 1999 when Ocalan was captured by the Turkish government. From September 1999 to 2004, the PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire (ibid: p. 9). During this period of ceasefire, the PKK went through transformative changes both politically and ideologically. In 2002, the PKK dissolved itself to become the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (KADEK). In 2003 KADEK dissolved to become People’s Congress of Kurdistan (KONGRA-GEL). By

2005, the PKK was re-instated to resume the violent campaign against the Turkish forces (ibid).

During this protracted period of violent conflict, the PKK has also attempted to reach a political solution with the Turkish government where Kurdish ethnic and political rights are protected and consequently, end the war. However, the PKK's unilateral ceasefires and proposals for peace negotiations were often ignored and dismissed by the Turkish government as signs of PKK weakness (M. Gunter, 2013, p. 102).

The PKK, as an ethnic political group with Marxist roots, was able to survive the extreme political upheavals in Turkey and the region. From the literature reviewed in this study, it is evident that the PKK has a wide supportive Kurdish community both from inside and outside Turkey. In the Kurdish context of Turkey, the designation of the PKK as a 'terrorist' group will only hinder local and external efforts to reach peace (Boon-Kuo et al., 2015a, p. 141 & 143).

4- The Peace Process

Despite the violent political and ideological characteristics of the PKK already discussed in this chapter, the group has made several attempts to start peace negotiations with the Turkish government (M. Gunter, 2013, p. 102). However, most of the attempts to hold peace negotiations with the Turkish government have failed. Nevertheless, in March 1993 the former Turkish President Turgut Ozal came very close to accepting one of the PKK's offers of ceasefire for negotiations. Unfortunately, Ozal's sudden death on 17 April 1993 ended the initiative and the

president's death was followed by intensive fighting between the PKK and government forces (ibid).

The negotiations of the Turkish-Kurdish peace process, later called the 'Solution Process' *Çözüm Süreci*, was first announced by President Erdogan on 28 December 2012.¹⁹ During the period of negotiations in 2013 and 2014, the Kurds demanded that the Turkish government release KCK (PKK) activists, improve Ocalan's prison conditions, allow for the Kurdish-language to be used in education, and lower the 10-percent electoral threshold allocated for Kurds. In response, the government announced a reform package, which, among others, allowed education in Kurdish private schools (M. Gunter, 2014, p. 19).

Abdullah Öcalan, founder of the PKK, led the Turkey-PKK negotiations of the peace process from his prison cell in Imrali island. The HDP co-chair Demirtaş gave an interview on July 28, 2015 explaining that the government's refusal to provide legal guarantees for safe withdrawal by PKK guerrillas and construction of military fortresses caused the cease-fire in Turkey to end. The last peace process was publically launched during Nevruz in Diyarbakir in 2013, when a letter by Öcalan was read out, which stated, "The era of armed struggle has ended" (Jain, 2016, p. 12). However, the civil war in Syria and the rise of ISIL have changed the geopolitics of the Middle East irreversibly granting the Kurds in Syria, led by the PKK-affiliated PYD, *de facto* semi-autonomous rule over large swathes of land historically claimed

¹⁹ NTV 2012: <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/imrali-ile-gorusemeler-devam-ediyor, Uk JEMkW0mVHnYwARYmnw? ref=infinite>

by Kurds as part of 'Greater Kurdistan'. Practically, the peace process collapsed in 2015.²⁰

The peace process in Turkey reveals two important aspects related to this study: firstly, the Turkish government is willing to negotiate and accept the PKK as a legitimate political player and as representative of the Kurdish community in Turkey; and secondly, the label 'terrorist' became part of the peace process in that it was used as a leverage – bargaining chip – in the negotiations. In addition, a few of the interview participants noted that during the peace process negotiations, the Turkish government officials and major media outlets refrained from referring to the PKK as 'terrorist'. While participant perceptions of the decrease in the usage of the label 'terrorist' is not empirically verifiable, the discourses produced by the interviewees help demonstrate the importance and power of the label.

5- Conclusion

This chapter placed the PKK as a Kurdish political armed group within the frontiers of historical 'Greater Kurdistan', the borders drawn during and after World War I (Sykes-Picot Agreement), and the historical borders of the Sèvres and Lausanne Treaties. In addition, this chapter provides a brief historical overview of the Kurds in the Middle East with the aim of better understanding the effects of securitising the Kurdish community within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. Chapter Three reveals that there is a wider Kurdish issue in the Middle East, in each of the four countries [Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria], which has been a source

²⁰ Financial Times (2016): <https://www.ft.com/content/9f06f0cc-1b85-11e6-b286-cddde55ca122>

of tension between the central governments and the Kurdish communities in each of these countries. This historical overview of the Kurds in Turkey, as well as of the significant Kurdish populations in the other three states, also reveals that the states in question have pursued policies which are not reflective of the demands of Kurdish society (Yildiz & Tayşi, 2007, p. 8). Equally, the ability of the PKK to survive, evolve, and adapt both inside and outside Turkey proves that there continues to exist a significant PKK-supportive Kurdish community inside as well as outside Turkey. This supportive community not only provides recruits and financial support, but also forms a basis of populist legitimacy for the PKK.

It has also been demonstrated that the Turkish-Kurdish armed ethno-nationalist conflict, led by the PKK, continues to represent the biggest destabilising factor for Turkey. Equally, the Turkish government's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency security policies against the PKK have, so far, failed in ending the Kurdish armed insurgency and reducing violence in the southeast. The longevity and resilience of the PKK as an organisation for over three decades made the group part of the recent Kurdish political history in Turkey. In other words, the Kurdish struggle in Turkey for the recognition of ethnic rights became associated with the PKK. The historical overview of the PKK in this chapter supports the arguments and findings of the current study that the PKK is representative of large segments of the Kurdish community in Turkey.

Having established the theoretical implications of labelling the PKK as 'terrorist', the methods to observe it, and after situating the hypothesis of this study within the

context of the Kurdish issue in the Middle East, the study will now examine evidence of the effects of labelling on the case study itself (Chapter Four).

Chapter Four: Discourse Analysis and Findings

1- Introduction

This study examines the effects of labelling the PKK ‘terrorist’ on the Kurds’ choice to adopt violence in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey. This chapter analyses this question through the philosophical (ontological and epistemological) premises concerning the role of language (discourse) within the social and political construction of security and the theoretical models of labelling and securitisation. It also explores the impact of the methodological guidelines adopted in this study to collect empirical qualitative evidence on the inferences drawn, and the specific technique(s) adopted for data analysis. It utilises all these elements of the study to formulate informed, reliable, and empirically supported inferences.

Discourse analysis is a social constructionist approach about our understanding of culture and society, and it is employed here to analyse the empirical data collected through 26 in-depth semi-structured interviews. The Foucauldian approach of discourse analysis makes certain assumptions about language, identity, and power – assumptions which are discussed differently by several constructionist approaches.²¹

²¹ For further reading on other constructionist approaches, see: (Foucault, 1967), (Gordon, 1980), (Burr, 2015), and (Gergen, 2015).

Data interpretation is framed through a combination of the labelling theory of deviance and the Copenhagen School securitisation theory (see Chapter One). While the data collected through semi-structured interviews is specific to the present case study, the theoretical model of labelling and securitisation in ethno-nationalist conflicts is applicable beyond the case study itself.

2- Researching the Effects of Labelling the PKK Terrorist

The main question in this study focuses on the effects of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' on the choice to use violence by Kurds in Turkey. It is hypothesized that the designation of the PKK as a 'terrorist' organisation by the Turkish government securitises the Kurdish identity in Turkey which in turn increases the sense of victimisation among members of the Kurdish community in that country. It also places the group's actors, supporters, and sympathisers in a situation that makes it harder for them to participate in any peaceful means of resolving the ethno-nationalist conflict. It is therefore argued that there is an indirect relationship between consequential effects of securitising the Kurdish identity, ethnic victimisation, and political alienation and the Kurds' choice to adopt violence in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

The research question was developed based on the propositions made by the labelling theory of deviance often associated with Howard S. Becker (H. S. Becker, 1963) and on the Copenhagen School securitisation theory of International Relations. Becker argues that when a label is applied to an actor, it affects what the labeller, the labelled, and the audience(s) do subsequently (H. S. Becker, 1991, p.

180). Moreover, the labelling theory examines how labelling an actor as ‘deviant’ places the actor in circumstances that prevents him or her from continuing the normal routines of everyday life – for example – when a criminal record makes it harder for a person to find a job which could, under certain circumstances, give rise to that person to be more inclined to develop a deviant career (ibid: p. 179). Labelling the PKK as ‘terrorist’ under the circumstances of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict, situates the PKK case study squarely into the theoretical model of labelling as proposed by Becker. In addition, the definition of the label ‘terrorist’ has been a topic of debate for many decades and has often been associated with the cliché “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter”.²² The labelling theory of deviance becomes a tool to help us understand the effects of labelling on the labelled, the labeller, and the audiences involved. Labelling theory was discussed in detail in Chapter One.

The labelling of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ occurred within a political and security context reflecting the Turkish government’s narrative that the PKK serves as an existential threat to the legitimacy and existence of the Turkish nation. The PKK, as a separatist ethnic group, was perceived as an existential threat to the Turkish government well before the designation of the group as ‘terrorist’. However, the Turkish government’s discourse was based on the threat to the unity of the Turkish Republic rather than the existence and security of the Turkish people. By designating the PKK as ‘terrorist’ in the early 1990s, the Turkish government securitised the PKK and consequently the Turkish-Kurdish conflict as existential threats to the security of the Turkish people. The securitisation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ and the securitisation of

²² The Atlantic (2012): <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/05/is-one-mans-terrorist-another-mans-freedom-fighter/257245/>

the Kurdish identity, as argued in this study, have implications for any peaceful means of resolving the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. The securitisation of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict also increases the political alienation of Kurds in Turkey. In other words, as argued in Chapter One, the securitisation of the ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey moves the conflict beyond politics inevitably into ethnically-driven political violence.

The securitisation of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict through labelling the PKK as 'terrorist' falls within the realm of the Copenhagen School securitisation theory, which in its simplest form means "making something a security issue". The securitisation theory in International Relations, by contrast to social security, is deeply embedded in power politics (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 21). As discussed in Chapter One, the theory focuses on the centrality of audience, the co-dependency of agency and context, and the structuring force of practices and tools (Balzacq, 2011, p. 61). Both the labelling theory and securitisation theory of deviance focus on the labelling actor, the labelled, and the audiences – albeit in different ways and within different philosophical frameworks. The similarities and differences of the two theories have informed the formulation of this study's main research question.

The discourse analysis approach helps answer the main research question of this study by framing the discussions and analyses of the data collected through my interviews with Kurds from Turkey within the theoretical frameworks of securitisation and labelling.

3- Interpretation of Data

A code is usually a word or a phrase which captures meaning significant for the topic under study. Coding qualitative data is one method of discourse analysis. Coding is the immediate link between empirical data collection and the interpretation of their meanings (Atkinson, 2001). The subject of this study revolves around the concepts of terrorism, terrorist, ethnic, conflict, politics, resolution, victimisation, violence, justification, community, labels, securitisation, and other concepts. The qualitative nature of the study's theoretical and methodological design makes it practical to code according to thematic phrases and sentences to capture the 'significant meanings' relevant to the current research. Hence, coding of the data was accomplished in four stages: in the first stage, careful reading of the semi-structured interviews' transcripts identified common themes and concepts. The data was categorised into thirty-four categories and eight sub-categories. The second stage involved organising the word-based categories into five initial themes [phrases and sentences]. For example, the study organised phrases and sentences that share the same theme but differ in their ways of expressing such a theme. Stage three narrowed down the thematic categories into five sub-themes, which will be discussed in detail in this chapter [1.2.]. Lastly, stage four grouped the sub-themes into two main themes from which the inferences and findings of this study are drawn.

The analysis and discussion of the empirical evidence in this study are not solely based on the process of categorisations and thematic classifications of data; but are also based on the significant meanings captured in the discourses of Kurds from Turkey. The categorisation and classification of interview data have been analysed

and discussed using the Foucauldian discourse analysis approach. Therefore, this discussion takes into consideration the discursive effects of discourses in constructing knowledge and the relationship between discourse and power. In other words, there is a focus on the effects of discourses on the social practices of Kurds within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. It is through the systematic and comprehensive understanding of the discursive effects on the case study that we can answer the main question of this study and test the hypothesis of this research.

1.1. Preliminary Coding

After careful and accurate transcription of the semi-structured interviews with Kurds from Turkey, the researcher carried out the first reading of the transcribed interview data to identify significant meanings relevant to the current study and the common themes among these significant meanings. The empirical data was examined with the aim of identifying nodal points, master signifiers, and myths, which form main themes in the organisation of discourse; the coupling of themes with [significant] meaning; notions of identity: group formation and identity representation; and the notions of conflict in analysis: antagonism and hegemony (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, pp. 49-50).

Based on the first reading, thirty-four categories are identified: (1) terrorism; (2) civilians; (3) the state; (4) protection; (5) freedom; (6) rights; (7) self-defence; (8) political; (9) Turks versus Kurds; (10) justify; (11) violence; (12) freedom-fighters; (13) frustrated; (14) angry; (15) noble; (16) independence; (17) feel bad; (18) brave

[PKK]; (19) unarmed; (20) discrimination; (21) war crime; (22) war; (23) economic interests; (24) threat; (25) citizens [equal]; (26) [the Kurds] “us and them” [the Turks]; (26) sad; (27) offended; (28) [personally] targeted; (29) struggle; (30) ethics; (31) PKK means Kurds; (32) illegal; (33) Mistakes [PKK targeting civilians]; and (34) conspiracy.

While codes are arguably constructs generated by the researcher (Vogt, 2014, p. 13), the 34 codes were not generated arbitrarily. The criteria for identifying these 34 categories (codes) were based on the significance assigned to these utterances by the interview participants within their discourses while answering the interview questions; and the significance of these utterances to this study’s main research question and hypothesis. These codes capture ‘truths’ which are significant to the interview participants and which help the participants to construct their social worlds within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict context. In other words, the utterances categorised under the codes of the preliminary coding have effects on the interview participants’ practical social lives. These codes together create discursive formations to produce the Kurdish community’s discourses towards labelling the PKK ‘terrorist’ and the securitisation of the ethno-nationalist conflict.

The word ‘terrorism’ emerges as a central theme throughout the analysis. It both limits and regulates the meaning and legitimacy of ‘violence’ from the interview participant’s point of view. The participants used the words ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorist’ to describe their ‘truths’ about the Turkish government’s actions against the PKK and the Kurdish community; and to reject the Turkish government’s ‘truth’ that the PKK

armed struggle is 'terrorist' violence. The concept of terrorism, in this sense, represents the Foucauldian duality of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

Another significant meaning is in the themes, the 'unarmed' and the 'civilian'. About 90% of the interview participants used the word 'civilian' and/or 'unarmed' to describe the victims of terrorism and to describe Kurds who have been targeted by the Turkish government in Turkey. The notion of civilian, however, is not always clearly defined in the context of ethnic conflicts because many of the fighters involved in ethnic conflicts are not full-time fighters. To illustrate, a Rwandan Hutu may leave his farm during the evening to attack a Tutsi neighbour but returns during the day to work in the field. Is he a civilian or not? (Byman, 1998, p. 153). While the notion of 'civilian' is more clearly defined in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict given that the conflict is between the Turkish regular army and the PKK guerrilla fighters, the notion of 'civilian' becomes blurred in some cases where, for example, the PKK guerrilla fighters are disguised in civilian clothes during launching their [hit-and-run] attacks. The significance interviewees assign to the notions of 'civilian' and 'unarmed' in relation to terrorism implies that discourses about what is terrorism and who is 'terrorist' are competing to establish their truths. In this case, the discourses of the Turkish government and the Kurds interviewed for this study are competing to establish whether the PKK is 'terrorist'.

The interview participants mentioned the notion of the 'state' in different contexts including the state as an authority, representative of legitimacy, illegitimate state, governance, racist, and state's terrorism. The different significant meanings of the state in the interview data reflect the disproportionate power exercised by the state in

the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. While contesting the legitimacy and power of the state, the Kurdish participants demonstrated that their perception of the state is linked mainly to power. In other words, they view the state as the main powerful player, which grants or denies citizen rights. The participants recognise the politics of power within the ethno-nationalist conflict. This recognition in some cases shaped the discourses of several participants towards why the PKK is labelled 'terrorist'.

The notion of 'protection' has a significant meaning for the Kurdish participants. The coded notion of 'protection' signifies different meanings including the Turkish government's responsibility to protect Kurds as citizens in contrast to the Turkish government's alleged attacks against Kurdish civilians; the description of the PKK as the only force responsible for the 'protection' of Kurds in Turkey; the collective responsibility of the Kurds in Turkey to preserve Kurdish identity and culture. Thus, the notion of protection has significant meaning for how the interviewees construct their social worlds of security.

'Freedom' is another word which has significant meaning for the interview participants. The Kurds in this study cited freedoms to use Kurdish language, education in their mother-tongue, freedom to cultural expressions, freedom to political formation, etc. as the main reasons for [ethnic] victimisation in Turkey. They also described members of the PKK as 'freedom fighters'. For the participants, the word 'freedom' defines the Kurdish discourse and defies the Turkish government's discourse on freedoms and who defend freedoms.

As with the previous notion of 'freedom', the term 'rights' emerged throughout the majority of the interview transcripts. The participants associated the words 'right/rights' with the notion of 'freedom,' hence, rights have a different significant meaning for them. Participants used the word 'right/s' to describe the right to equal citizenship, right to speak Kurdish language as a language recognised by the state, right to self-governance, right to self-determination, and right to political freedom of congregation. The significance participants assigned to the word 'right' is related to other utterances such as 'freedom' and 'protection' which makes it a possible element of a discursive formation. Thus, discursive formations are developed in the initial, sub, and main themes.

The notion of 'self-defence' also emerged as thematic across the empirical data from the interviews. On the one hand, the participants used the notion of 'self-defence' to justify the ethno-nationalist conflict between Kurds and the Turkish state; and on the other, to justify the violent campaign led by the PKK against the Turkish government since 1984. The notion of 'self-defence' was used by the participants against the Turkification of Kurdish identity, the military campaign led by the Turkish government in areas inhabited by the Kurds, and against labelling the Kurds (PKK) as 'terrorist'. The notion of 'self-defence' signifies a denial of terrorist acts as well as a justification of violent acts described by the Turkish government as 'terrorist'.

The majority of the participants focused on the notion of 'political' as both a legitimising and delegitimising qualifier. They assigned significant meaning to the word 'political' when explaining why the PKK was labelled 'terrorist' by the Turkish government and many other governments. At the same time, the word 'political' was

used to describe the PKK as a legitimate political player in Turkey rather than merely a 'terrorist' 'Marxist' group.

The notion of 'us versus them' was also part of the participants' discourses. The interviewees who used 'us versus them' to describe certain social interactions assigned 'us' to the Kurds and 'them' to the Turks and the Turkish government. While the researcher and author is cognisant that the interviews are investigating a question within an ethno-nationalist conflict context, the notion of 'us versus them' holds significant meaning for the overall discourses produced by the participants. It demonstrates how the Kurdish participants construct their binary view of 'us' versus 'them' and constitutes a significant part of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

The word 'justify' was mentioned by a few participants to explain how the label 'terrorist' helps the Turkish government to justify its violence against the Kurds and how the oppressive actions of the Turkish government justifies the PKK's violence against the Turkish state and its collaborators. Here, the minimal usage of the word 'justify' by the participants' is attributed to the negative connotation it carries – to justify is to condone wrongdoing.²³

'Violence' is another notion which emerged throughout the interviews. Again, there is violence on both sides of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. The significant meaning attached to the notion of violence is related to legitimate and illegitimate violence. The majority of participants described the PKK's violence as

²³ The author notes that during the piloting of the interview questions, interview participants were reluctant to answer questions like: 'does this [...] justify the PKK violence?' 'Is it justifiable for the PKK to target Kurdish civilians collaborating with the Turkish government?'

legitimate, although there was admission of 'mistakes' committed by the PKK. However, they consistently described the Turkish violence carried out by the government forces as illegitimate because it is directed against the Kurdish civilians, their identity, and culture.

Almost all the participants used the phrase 'freedom-fighters' to describe the PKK and those who are part of the 'struggle' to protect the Kurdish people. It is closely linked to the notion of 'freedom/s' discussed earlier in this chapter. However, the participants assigned significance to the phrase 'freedom-fighters' to show support for the PKK and to reject the designation of the group as 'terrorist' by the Turkish government.

'Frustrated', 'angry', 'sad', and 'feel bad' were used interchangeably to describe their feelings towards the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' by the Turkish government. The significant meaning participants assign to the notions 'frustrated', 'feel bad', 'sad', and 'angry' is an aspect of the discourses produced by the wider Kurdish community in Turkey towards the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. Thus, the expressed notions of frustration and anger towards the politics of the conflict reflect the participants' sense of victimisation.

Another notion of significant meaning for the participants was their description of the PKK as 'brave'. The word 'brave' and the previous notion of 'freedom-fighters' are part of a discursive formation within the discourses of the participants to denote support for the PKK and their actions. While these codes describe the same notion

of support, they do so in different ways assigning significance to different discursive meanings.

The notion of political and ethnic 'discrimination' emerged as a thematic notion throughout the interviews. In their discourses, interviewees focused on the notion of 'discrimination' to assign significant meaning to their perceptions of designating the PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish government. Participants used the word 'discrimination' to express political alienation, for example, participants cited underrepresentation in the Turkish government as a form of ethnic discrimination.

The interview participants used the words 'war', 'war crimes', 'struggle', and 'illegal' to describe violent actions committed by the PKK and the Turkish government. When asked about the number of people killed by the PKK, around 65% of the interviewees answered: it is 'war'. However, participants responded to questions and follow-up questions concerning the number of Kurds killed by the Turkish forces by describing the violence as 'war crimes'.

'Citizenship' and 'identity' are two other concepts interviewees mentioned in their discourses to highlight the significant meaning of national and ethnic identities to their perception of the Turkish government's actions towards the Kurdish community in Turkey. The participants used the words 'citizen and citizenship' to formulate their discourses on equal citizenship and discrimination based on ethnic identity. The notion of 'citizenship' emerged in the empirical data within the contexts of equality, justice, and identity discourses.

To describe their perceptions of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish government, participants used the term 'targeted' in sentences like "I feel personally targeted" and "the Kurds are targeted by ...". The interviewees attached significant meaning to the term 'targeted' within their discourses about personal perceptions and their perceptions as an ethnic group. This is also another way of expressing victimisation on the personal and collective levels.

The notion describing the PKK as an integral part of the Kurdish people emerged in most of the interview data. The empirical data reveals that the phrase 'PKK means Kurds' is a term of significant meaning for the participants. Approximately, 72% of the participants described the PKK as the only representative of the Kurdish community in Turkey. Furthermore, participants used the notion of 'PKK means Kurds' to describe in detail how labelling the PKK 'terrorist' is meant to demonise and stigmatise the Kurdish community in Turkey. The participants expressed through discursive formations how they [as individuals and as members of the Kurdish community] perceive the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist'. Hence, the notion of 'PKK means Kurds' has been coded as a term of significant meaning to the participants.

'Mistakes' was a term used by over 70% of the interview participants to describe violent acts committed by the PKK against Turkish state representatives, security forces, and Kurdish civilians whom the PKK accused of collaborating with the Turkish authorities. In contrast to the interviewee descriptions of the Turkish government's violent actions against Kurds as 'war crimes', participants described the PKK's violent actions [murders, executions, bombings, etc.] as 'mistakes'.

Depending on the context, the significance attached to the meaning of 'mistakes' can be interpreted within the context of the interview discourses in one of the following ways: either as justification of violence against the 'other', or as an expression demonstrating strong support for the PKK, or as a denial of committing crimes based on the shared [Kurdish] identity. In the sub-themes section, the terms and concepts discussed here will be situated within the immediate and larger context of the discourses to help gain better interpretation of the data collected.

Lastly, the term 'conspiracy' was mentioned by over 50% of the interview participants to explain why the PKK caused the death of thousands of people over the last three decades. The participants assigned significant meaning to conspiracy by the Turkish government to implicate the PKK in killing civilians. To prove the importance of the notion 'conspiracy', interviewees narrated stories about 'recent' revelations implicating the Turkish secret service in mass murders blamed on the PKK many years ago. Another conspiracy discourse presented by the participants is related to a wider international conspiracy to prevent the PKK from establishing its 'radical democracy' project which theoretically changes the system of governance in the Middle East. The significant meaning participants' attached to the term 'conspiracy' within the context of their discourses is evident.

The preliminary coding process represents the first reading and interpretation of the empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews with Kurds from Turkey. Through rigorous and careful reading of the transcripts and the preliminary notions identified in the interviews, the author was able to identify what Foucault describes as 'discursive formations'. The discursive notions are grouped under related patterns

to help interpret the data thematically. The process of coding, interpretation, and making inferences is carried out within the theoretical and methodological frameworks of this study. These discursive formations are discussed in the next section “Initial Themes”.

1.2. Initial Themes

During preliminary coding, concepts of significant meaning for the interview participants and the main question of this study were identified. These notions, terms, and concepts define the discourses of the participants and how they construct their social worlds within the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict context. To group the discursive formations of the participant discourses under thematic patterns, further coding and interpretation was needed. Before the second stage of coding [Initial Themes] begins, it is important to note that discourse is inherently difficult to establish fully because it is always in conflict with other discourses that define social reality.

Another consideration in the analysis of empirical the data within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish e ethno-nationalist conflict is social antagonism – this occurs when different identities mutually exclude each other (Laclau, 1990, p. 17). A man can be an ethnic Kurd and a Turkish citizen at the same time. However, antagonism occurs when identities come into conflict. For example, when a Turkish Kurd is asked to serve in the army to fight against his fellow Kurds in the PKK, the relationship between the two identities [Turkish citizen] and [ethnic Kurd] becomes antagonistic. The two identities make conflicting demands concerning the protection of the ‘nation’

against an existential threat, yet inevitably, one blocks the other. Laclau argues that “[t]he individual discourses, which constitute each of the identities, are part of each other’s field of discursivity, and, when an antagonism occurs, everything the individual discourse has excluded threatens to undermine the discourse’s existence and fixity of meaning” (Laclau, 1990, p. 17 cited in Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, pp. 47-48).

Groups are not socially predetermined; rather they are constituted in discourse. Groups are formed when there is representation *i.e.* when someone talks about or on behalf of a group. Representation occurs is when a someone can be represented by an authorised person when he or she is physically absent (Laclau, 1993, p. 289). To illustrate, all Turkish citizens cannot be present in the parliament to discuss political and economic issues, and that is why representatives are elected by the citizens to be present on their behalf because they [Turkish citizens] cannot be present themselves. Ideally, the representative should represent the will of the group. However, groups are never objective because groups are “created through contingent constructions of equivalence among different elements” (Laclau, 1993, p. 289). This means that groups and representatives are created simultaneously not consecutively. In other words, it is not until someone speaks of or on behalf of another, that a group is created (ibid).

During stage two, the 34 categories identified in the preliminary coding were grouped under eight thematic patterns, and constitute larger ‘discursive formations’ in the Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis. The eight initial themes encompass the terms and notions with significant meaning to the discourses of the participants. The

aim of this stage of analysis is to narrow down the utterances and phrases which describe the effects of discursive formations on the interview participants' social worlds. In other words, the aim is to understand how labelling the PKK 'terrorist' affects the way Kurdish participants construct their social practices and worlds. As part of this study, it is important to appreciate just how the Kurdish community define their political situation within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. I.W. Thomas explains the psychoanalysis of how people define their situations before any self-determined act of behaviour:

“Preliminary to any self-determined act of behaviour there is always a state of examination and deliberation which we may call the definition of the situation. And actually not only concrete acts are dependent on the definition of the situation, but gradually a whole life-policy and the personality of the individual him(her)self follow from a series of such definitions” (Thomas, 1967, p. 41)

The first initial theme is **identifying violence as wrong**, in the labelling theory sense, and as an extreme form of politics, in the sense of securitisation theory. The analysis of the participant discourses reveals that terms used by the interviewees like 'terrorism, political, violence, war, threat, and illegal' share a thematic pattern. Participants used these terms within the context of their discourses to describe binary notions such as (right and wrong), (violent and peaceful), (war and peace), etc. The participants' identification of violence as 'wrong' is essential to the discussions of findings later in this chapter because it is important for the participants to be able to rationalise their perceptions within the discourses shaping their social worlds.

The participants' identification of 'terrorism' as deviant has implications for justifying violence, which is discussed in detail within the sub and main themes of this chapter. To illustrate, a researcher will find it hard to make inferences about interviewees' perceptions of reality when their perceptions of reality are not rational – such is the case in the perceptions of patients in mental hospitals whose reality-testing equipment is inadequate (H. S. Becker, 1963, p. 183).

The second initial theme is **identities**. The preliminary codes have identified concepts such as 'Turks versus Kurds [us versus them], PKK means Kurds, PKK [is Kurdish]. These concepts, which represent significant meanings in the discourses of the participants, denote the presence of two identities which are presented in the discourses as antagonistic to each other. The interview participants used these notions of identity as a key signifier in their discourses of describing aspects of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. Identities and identifiers are important tools for people to achieve *differentiation* and *integration* in the Freudian sense.²⁴ The interview participants used '*they*' to refer to Turks and the Turkish government interchangeably throughout their discourses in the interviews; and '*us*' to refer to Kurds. It is important to note here that individual participants used '*us*' to speak as representatives of the group.

The third initial theme is **ethnic rights**. The concepts of 'protection, rights, self-defence, independence, discrimination] identified in the preliminary coding reveal that the participants are aware of their ethnic identity in the construction of their social worlds. In contrast to their national identity as Turkish, the participants

²⁴ For further reading, see: (Volkan, 1997) and (Freud, 1975)

assigned significant meaning to their ethnic identity within their discourses. The discourses of protection of ethnic identity against Turkification, language and political rights, the justification of war as 'self-defence' against existential threat of Turkification, right to self-determination, and perceived Turkish discrimination against Kurds in Turkey are discursive formations which denote participants' awareness of their identity constructed within the ethno-nationalist conflict context.

In relation to the fourth initial theme, **justifications of violence**, it is imperative to note that the participant discourses do not explicitly support violence against the Turkish ethnic majority. However, the interviewees expressed support for the PKK despite the recognition of its violent nature. Moreover, the recognition was not associated with condemnation. Instead, participants used concepts such as, 'mistakes' to describe PKK's murders of civilians and foreign tourists and 'war' to justify the number of civilians killed in the conflict. For example, one participant answered a question about the high number of civilian casualties in the conflict saying, "It is a war ... people die in wars". Other participants used 'civilian versus armed' to explain why it is 'justifiable' for the PKK to attack Turkish forces. Lastly, more than half of the participants narrated stories about how the Turkish government has used its security secret service to kill civilians and then blame these murders on the PKK. These discourses entail denial and blame-shifting. The identification of 'shifting blame' within the discourses of the Kurdish interviewees is important, as it allows a greater understanding of concepts such as 'support' and 'justification', as well as the implications of 'shifting blame' for policymaking. Fatić and Bulatović argue that, "Once this social function of shifting blame and delimiting the bounds of one's role in the disturbingly intimate relationship that underlies murder and extermination

has reached its exhaustion point, the future becomes open for the communities caught in the mental and moral impasse created by the crimes and their consequences” (FATIĆ & BULATOVIĆ, 2012, p. 50).

The fifth initial theme is **perception of the label terrorist**. Participants were asked: ‘how do you perceive the designation of the PKK as a ‘terrorist group’?’ The participants’ answers to the main question as well as to follow-up questions revolved around the concepts of ‘sad, offended, bad, angry, and frustrated’. The feelings and perceptions of the Kurdish interviewees demonstrate that they associate their identities with the identity of the PKK. This aligns with the concepts of identity association ‘PKK means Kurds’, which was present in the participant discourses. The perceptions of the participants towards the designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ support the argument made in Chapter One that the designation produces the unintended consequence of securitising the Kurdish identity in Turkey. The relationship between the designation of the PKK as ‘terrorist’, the perception of the interview participants, and the inferences made on the securitisation of the Kurdish identity are discussed further in the analysis section of this chapter.

The sixth initial theme is **discrimination**. Throughout the discourses of the participants, there is an implied sense of discrimination in the language used to describe ‘freedom’ to speak the Kurdish language, ‘rights’, citizenship, and ‘Turks versus Kurds’. In their discourses on the labelling of the PKK ‘terrorist’, several interviewees used the term ‘exclusion’ to describe perceived discrimination. The significance participants assign to the concepts of ‘discriminate’ and ‘discrimination’

is framed within the discourses of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict and participants perceive discrimination as victims in their socially [constructed] worlds.

The seventh initial theme is **myths**. Over 50% of the participants cited conspiracy narratives to support their discourses on how and why the PKK is labelled 'terrorist' by the Turkish government and other governments in the world. These narratives demonise the Turkish government as the perpetrator of mass murders of not only Kurds but also civilian Turks whose murders are blamed on the PKK. The significance interviewees attach to the myths and reality of conspiracy discourses falls within prejudice against the other. In support, Volkan points out that, "Prejudice serves to differentiate one group from another; it helps people retain their group identity, which, in turn, supports their individual identity" (Volkan, 1997, p. 113)

The eighth initial theme is **victimisation**. The terms 'victims' and 'victimisation' have significant meaning for the participants because they serve to identify with the victimised group [the Kurds], rationalise the conflict, and justify political violence. In their discourses responding to the interview questions, participants used concepts such as 'we are *victims*', 'we are not treated *equally*', 'they [Turks] call us [Kurds] *terrorist* to *justify* their *violence*', 'they [Turks] label PKK *terrorist* but they mean Kurds', 'we fight to *defend* our *rights*', etc. The concept of victimisation represents an overarching thematic code encompassing many notions of significant meaning for the interviewees within their discourses on the labelling of PKK 'terrorist'; and the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

After identifying the initial themes of the interview data, the next step is to group the initial themes into larger discursive formations that share certain patterns of significant meanings for the Kurdish interview participants.

1.3. Sub-themes

The discourse analysis in this study has identified five sub-themes within the data collected from the discourses from the interviews conducted. The interpretation of the empirical data collected from the interviews reflects what the participants perceive as having significant meaning for them within the context of the topic under examination. In the Foucauldian sense, the discourse analysis of this study identifies different statements in the data which fit together in patterns [discursive formations] that construct the social reality of the interview participants (Foucault, 1973). The five sub-themes are the main discursive formations defining the social reality of the Kurdish participants in relation to the designation of the PKK 'terrorist' within the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict context.

a) Recognition of Deviance

The participants were first asked: 'what is terrorism?' The aim of the question and the follow-up questions was to collect data on how Kurds in Turkey perceive acts of violence labelled 'terrorist'. The respondents assigned significant meaning to different terms describing 'terrorism'. These different terms are defined by the interviewee's individual perceptions of their social worlds. All the Kurdish interview participants defined the same topic but employed different terms.

For example, participant Y#8 described terrorism as “rein of fear”. This description of terrorism was followed by another statement from the participant, “Turkey would have labelled PKK terrorist anyway whether there was violence or not...” Recognition of terrorist violence as a deviant, bad, evil, or socially unacceptable act is evident in the discourse of the participant. Participant B#9 defined terrorism as, “Terrorism is an act of war crime against civilians, children, and old people”. When asked whether the PKK is terrorist according to his definition, his response was “Turkey labels Kurds terrorist because it denies our existence. Turks call us *Turks of the mountains*”. While participant B#9 recognises terrorism as wrong, criminal, and evil, he clearly has in mind another actor other than the PKK.

Instances of participants recognising political violence as wrong and deviant, are consistent throughout the discourses revealed by the interviews. However, these descriptions, which contain concepts of significant meaning to the interviewees, describe the same topic from positions that make sense only to the participant. In this case, each participant defined terrorism from the position he or she perceives and interacts with the Turkish-Kurdish conflict within his or her social world.

The recognition of terrorist violence as deviant and illegitimate by all the interview participants suggests that the participants from the Kurdish community share certain perceptions about their constructed social realities. However, they experience different effects of the discourses associated with violence labelled terrorist. To illustrate, the labelling of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ can cause the destruction and killing of civilians in Kurdish villages during the Turkish government’s military operations

against the PKK. The participant, in this case, would describe terrorism as ‘killing civilians and destroying their homes’. Participant D#11 defined terrorism as “Terrorism is killing your own people because of political, religious, or ethnic reasons. It is killing civilians because of politics”. At the same time, labelling the PKK as ‘terrorist’ can result in the disbanding of certain Kurdish political parties accused of supporting the PKK by the Turkish government. From his or her social reality, the participant would describe terrorism as participant K#8 did: “Terrorism is action which prevents others’ rights”.

Becker argues that deviance involves, “the imposition of definitions – of situations, acts, and people – by those powerful enough or sufficiently legitimised to be able to do so” (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 207). While the act of violence/terrorism is recognised as deviant by the interview participants, their discourses contest the definition of what constitutes terrorist violence and why. The participants’ definitions of terrorism present a different discourse from, and in some cases one that conflicts with, the Turkish government’s. Recognition of deviance is also indicative of justifying violence deemed legitimate, in self-defence, or inevitable by those who share the same identity of the defining party. For example, participant Y#8 described terrorism as “rein of fear”. This description of terrorism was followed by “whatever PKK did is nothing compared to what Turks did”.

To conclude, recognition of deviance, a pattern consistently evident in the interviews, falls under the larger thematic concept of justifying violence which will be discussed in the detail within the main themes of the discourse analysis.

b) Shifting Blame

Over 60% of the interview participants attempted to shift the blame away from the PKK when asked by the researcher: 'why do you think the PKK is labelled terrorist?' Y#9 for example responded, "PKK uses violence because it had no other way to stop the Turkish oppression. PKK killed civilians because the Turkish army used them as human shields". Participant R#9 explained, "PKK committed mistakes but not terrorism. The intention is not to kill civilian people. PKK wants to defend itself". While participant R#11 responded by calling Turks 'terrorists', "I lived in North Kurdistan (southern Turkey) for several years when I was a teenager. I saw how terrorist Turks treat our people". Another participant K#10 answered the question: "Turkish state killed 1000s of innocent civilians". Shifting blame to avoid responsibility and demonise the other [ethnic group] is a common practice in ethnic conflicts (Scherrer, 2003, p. 72). It also implies justifying violence and the conflict to protect the [ethnic] group's existence, identity, culture, etc.

Interviewees for this study employed different positions to shift or deny blame. For instance, participant K#11 stated, "Each family has a member of PKK. PKK is all of us". The author's interpretation of this interviewee's statement is 'the PKK represents all Kurds. Therefore, it cannot be terrorist'. In his or her support for the PKK, interviewee K#10 said: "PKK is a humanity and liberation movement. PKK saved Yezidis and Kobane". While this statement is listed under 'supportive community', the statement implies that the PKK as the saviour of the oppressed Yezidis and the defender of the Kurds in Kobane cannot be 'terrorist'. Over 30% of the interview participants chose to reject the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' or answer with "I do

not know". Two participants, however, attributed the labelling to the nature of the violent conflict. As demonstrated in the words of Y#10 "PKK was labelled terrorist because of violence in the south of Turkey".

Shifting blame, rejecting the label terrorist, and denial of wrongdoing has been identified as a consistent theme throughout the data collected based on the qualitative interviews conducted with the Kurds from Turkey. The thematic notions, concepts, and patterns of shifting blame identified in the interviews data are categorised under the larger thematic concept of 'justifying violence'.

c) Supportive Community

The concept of support has been expressed in the discourses of the participants by using different terms and notions. The interviewees used positive and supportive discursive formations such as, "freedom-fighters, PKK fights for Kurdish rights, PKK defends us, PKK made sacrifices, PKK does not hate Turks, PKK only defends Kurds, PKK believes in Kurdish future, PKK represents us all, PKK is our only supporter, ... etc." While these supportive concepts and discursive formations overlap with categorisations (codes), the statements appear to express the interviewees' explicit support for the PKK, each from his or her constructed social world within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict.

The participant data derived from snowball sampling from within the Kurdish community in Turkey, illustrate that support to the PKK can be interpreted under two thematic patterns: firstly, the thematic pattern of **victimisation**. Interviewees expressed support for the PKK because it defends Kurds [who have been victimised by the Turkish government]. For example, in response to the research question: 'Why has the PKK been labelled 'terrorist' by the Turkish government and other governments?', participant Y#12 stated, "Turkish government sent guerrilla to kill innocent people. PKK made sacrifices. PKK want freedom". Participant B#9 responded, "PKK defends Kurds only. PKK should be called freedom fighters". Secondly, the thematic pattern of **identity support**. Analysing data from the participant discourses, the respondents assigned significant meaning to the identity of the PKK as Kurdish. The discursive formations identified in the interview data reveal that the terms 'Kurds and Kurdish' are part of a thematic pattern in the supportive statements made by the interviewees.

The analysis of the data collected through interviews with the Kurds reveal that the notion of victimisation was consistently associated with the concept of ethnic identity throughout the discourses shared by the participants.

d) Justifying Violence

The analysis of the interview data reveals that the notion of justifying violence is the thematic thread linking the previous three sub-themes of recognition of deviance, shifting blame, and the supportive [Kurdish] community. The discourses of the participants assigned significant meaning to the notions of justifying, denying,

rationalising, and rejecting the labelling for the PKK as ‘terrorist’ by the Turkish government and other governments. The participants’ support for the PKK, as discussed in the previous sub-theme, is associated with the concept of a victimised Kurdish identity. Respondents justified the conflict, the PKK’s actions, and their support for the PKK by citing instances of victimisations that represent significant meaning for the interviewees. For example, participant D#11 defined terrorism as “Terrorism is killing your own people for political, religious, or ethnic reasons” implying that the PKK is not terrorist; but rather the Turkish government is ‘terrorist’. Participant D#9 responds to the question ‘Why in your opinion have thousands of people been killed in the conflict?’ by saying, “We are enemies [Kurds and Turks]. Kurds fight against dictators”. While participant K#8 states, “We have to support PKK. PKK is defending our rights and defends us”.

The analysis and data interpretation suggest that the overarching theme of justifying violence encompasses many of the terms, notions, and concepts present in the discourses of the participants. The justification of violence revealed in the participant discourses, representing a sample from the Kurdish community in Turkey, theoretically affects the practices of the participants within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. Moreover, when an audience justifies violence within the context of an ethno-nationalist conflict, there are implications for conflict transformation and conflict resolution – which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

e) Perceptions of the Label Terrorist

The interview participants used terms such as “frustrated, angry, bad, sad, offended, and targeted” to signify their perceptions towards both labelling the PKK ‘terrorist’ and their interpretation of the labelling. The concepts of rejection, downplaying, denial, and counter-labelling were expressed by the participants to describe their perceptions/reactions towards the Turkish government’s labelling of the PKK as ‘terrorist’. The following examples from the interviewee discourses illustrate: C#8 “I will never accept someone calling PKK terrorist. It makes me angry.”, D#9 stated, “I feel sad and offended”, whereas K#10 noted, “Long live PKK”, and R#11 observed, “I feel angry when I hear other states calling PKK terrorist. I don’t feel angry when Turkish state calls PKK terrorist. It means nothing to me”.

The participants’ interpretation of labelling the PKK ‘terrorist’ reveals that they associate the designation with their individual and ethnic group identities. As illustrated by respondents K#12, “I feel offended.. as if someone is calling me terrorist”; similarly, D#12, “I perceive the label terrorist as a statement from Turkey: we shall give you no rights”; moreover K#11, “I feel uncomfortable that PKK is labelled terrorist. Turks say PKK is terrorist but their aim is to call Kurds terrorist to justify their hatred”; equally K#9, “I feel bad that PKK is called terrorist. When Turks say PKK is terrorist they mean Kurds are terrorist”; and R#9, “I feel as if Kurds are demonised by the world. No one wants us to have an independent state”.

The terms and notions [frustrated, angry, bad, sad, offended, and targeted], which have significant meaning within the discourses of the participants, express perceptions towards the label terrorist within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. On the one hand, the interview participants rejected and

denied the labelling of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ because it represents the victimised self of the Kurds as a collective identity and the defender of Kurds against the abuser [the Turkish government]. On the other hand, the designation of the PKK as terrorist was perceived by the participants as collective stigmatisation of the Kurdish identity. This concept supports the theoretical arguments made in Chapter One concerning the unintended securitisation of the Kurdish identity by labelling the PKK ‘terrorist’. The participant perceptions of the label ‘terrorist’ are placed under the main thematic pattern of ‘victimisation’.

1.4. Main Themes

The interpretation of data by coding and the analysis of the discursive formations identified in the interviews’ data were categorized into five sub-themes [recognition of violence, shifting blame, supportive community, justifying violence, and perceptions of the label terrorist]. These five sub-themes are further categorized, through the processes of coding and interpretation, into two main themes: **victimisation** and **justification of violence**. These encompass the notions and concepts identified in the data resulting from interviews with Kurds from Turkey. This does not mean, however, that the discussions and analysis conducted in the preliminary coding, initial themes, and sub-themes are excluded. Instead, the different stages of coding and analysis together represent the interpretation of the discourses produced by the interview participants in this study.

a) Victimisation

The concept of victimisation was expressed throughout the interview data using different terms and notions signifying the importance of this concept for the participants. The concept of victimisation is manifested in the discursive formations recognising deviance. For example, Y#10 described terrorism as “Terrorism is violence exceeding limits of legitimacy”. The analysis of participant’s discourses reveals that Y#10 perceives the Turkish government’s acts against Kurds in Turkey as illegitimate and a form of victimisation. R#10 defines terrorism as, “Terrorism for me is war against the unarmed. Those who are weak and poor”, thus R#10 constructs the actions of the Turkish government as a form of victimisation against the ‘unarmed, weak, and poor [Kurds]’ within his/her social world. Interview participant R#11 defines terrorism from within his/her position: “I think states are terrorists. They use excessive force against villagers and farmers to achieve political gains”. R#11’s definition of terrorism encapsulates different notions including the notion of victimisation.

The concept of victimisation is also manifested in the discursive formations of shifting blame. To illustrate, interview participant Y#8 responded to the research question on causalities in the ethno-nationalist conflict between the PKK and the Turkish government, “Whatever PKK did is nothing compared to what Turks did to us”. While there is more than one concept in this discursive formation, the concept of victimisation is evident in the second part of the sentence. Participant Y#8 described how he/she rationalises the causalities of the violent ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey within his/her constructed social reality. Interviewee Y#11 explains, “Turkish government labels PKK terrorist because PKK defends Kurdish rights”. Again, the

implied notion of victimisation by the Turkish government that 'Kurds are deprived of their rights' is evident in the discursive formations produced by this participant.

Interview participant R#11, however, produced multi-layered discursive formations of significant meaning for the participant: "PKK took up arms to defend our people. They don't kill the innocent. Turkish government calls PKK terrorist because (Turks) they are racist". R#11 mentioned two notions of victimisation: firstly, the reference that Kurds are under attack and the PKK is defending them; secondly, that the Turkish government adopts racist policies against the Kurds – who are Turkish citizens. While the notions and concepts produced by R#11 are also overlapping with other notions [such as justifying violence], the concept of victimisation is obviously of significant meaning to this participant.

In addition, the concept of victimisation is manifested in the discursive formations of supportive Kurdish community. To express perceptions of victimisation while showing support to the PKK, interview participant D#9 said, "PKK fights for protecting Kurdish human rights". The discourse of interviewee D#9 implies that in Turkey, Kurdish human rights are violated or at least not protected. This participant assigns significant meaning to the concept of victimisation citing human rights abuses/violations which required the PKK to intervene militarily. Another example is interview participant K#9, who stated "PKK stood up to defend Kurds" implying that Kurds were [the victims] under attack. The analysis of the discourses produced by the interview participants reveals that by expressing support for the PKK, participants implied that firstly, the PKK act as the representative of the Kurds; and secondly, the show of support for the PKK and defends the Kurds in Turkey who are victims.

Interview participants embedded the concept of victimisation as a form of justifying violence. While the justification of violence as a main theme will be discussed in the next section (b), it is worthwhile citing some examples from the interview transcripts to illustrate how participants used the concept victimisation to justify violence. Interviewee D#8 responded to a follow-up research question ‘reportedly, there is a high number of casualties in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict, why do you think this is the case?’, with the statement, “We have the right to carry arms to self-defence. Kurds do not kill innocent people”. The implication projected by the respondent is that ‘Kurds were the victims of an attack not the attackers, hence, the notion of *self-defence* is invoked’. Another example is the argument made by participant K#12. In order to justify the conflict and the existence of the PKK as an armed group, K#12 stated: “We shall not accept to lay arms down until we have all our rights. I do not like violence .. but I support PKK”. The discursive formation “our rights” within the discourse of participant K#12 implies that Kurds are not enjoying their [ethnic, political, economic, etc.] rights. It is a form of victimisation, which has been consistently identified throughout this study’s data collected from the interviews with Kurds from Turkey.

Analysis of the discursive formations produced by the interview participants to describe their perceptions of the PKK being labelled ‘terrorist’ reveals that the concept of victimisation has significant meaning for the interviewees. To illustrate, participant Y#8 responded to the research question ‘how do you perceive labelling the PKK ‘terrorist’ by the Turkish government and other governments?’ with the statement “The label terrorist means nothing to me. PKK fights against fascist state

of Turkey". The second part of the response by participant Y#8 implies victimisation, arguably through the description of the Turkish government as 'Fascist'.

The analysis of the data/discursive formations produced by the interview participants reveals that throughout the five sub-themes of the discourse analysis, participants assigned significant meaning to the concept of victimisation. The interpretation of the interview data leads to the conclusion that victimisation is one of the main thematic concepts in the discourses of the participants and represents significant meaning for the Kurdish participants within their social worlds.

b) Justification Violence

Discourse can be a medium for cognitive functions, such as, affiliation, solidarity, resistance, coordination, cooperation, and so on (Dijk, 2014, p. 224). Participants' discourses are ways of communicating knowledge and information about their perceptions towards events in their social realities and the impact these events have on their social practices. The second main thematic concept revealed through the author's analysis of the interview data is the justification of violence. Akin to the overarching concept of victimisation discussed previously in this chapter, the concept of 'justification of violence' has been identified as a thematic thread running throughout the discourses of the interview participants. There are different examples in the discursive formations produced by the participants and identified through

preliminary coding, initial themes, and the sub-themes illustrating the justification of violence concept. Interview statements by participant C#8 about why the PKK is engaged in an armed conflict against the Turkish government illustrates how the concept of justifying violence is revealed in the data analysis. C#8 stated, “PKK stood up to Turkish hegemony and arrogance. This is why Turkish state calls PKK terrorist. PKK fights because it had to fight for rights...” Interview participant C#8 assigns significant meaning to the discursive formation “[PKK] had to fight” – C#8 justifies violence as the only way to reclaim rights of the Kurds.

Interview participants Y#8 and Y#9 produced the following discourses to answer the research question: ‘why is the PKK is labelled terrorist by the Turkish government?’. Y#8 answered, “I never heard that PKK attacked anyone because they are Turks”. Y#9 stated, “PKK uses violence because it had no other way to stop the Turkish oppression. PKK killed civilians because Turkish army used them as human shields”. The justification of violence concept is the linking theme between the two discourses offered by participants Y#8 and Y#9. While each uses different terms that has significant meaning to the participant him(her)self, both see the justification of using violence as the only/best way to protect Kurds by the PKK [which represents] Kurds.

Interviewee R#9 stated, “PKK committed mistakes but not terrorism. The intention is not to kill civil people. PKK wants to defend itself” and interviewee K#8 said, “PKK was forced to mountain to fight”. These examples illustrate how the interview participants used different terms, notions, and discursive formations to justify or rationalise why the PKK carried and/or is carrying out violent acts described as ‘terrorist’ by the Turkish government.

The justification of violence as a main thematic concept produced by the different stages of coding in this discourse analysis also reveals that the participants' justification of the PKK's violence is almost always juxtaposed with the 'unjustified, illegitimate, excessively violence, racist, etc.' violence committed by the Turkish government against the Kurds and the PKK. The rationalisation of the PKK's violence by the interview participants implies that violence committed by the 'them' justifies violence by 'us'. It also implies that 'us', the Kurds, have a higher moral ground. This is illustrated by statements such as "PKK attack military and security only. PKK does not kill randomly" (Participant Y#11) and "It (PKK) does not attack Turks because of who they are. It never did. It attacks them because of what they did to Kurds" (Participant B#9).

The coding of the qualitative data and the discourse analysis have demonstrated throughout that the concept of 'justification of violence' is a major thematic concept that holds significant meaning for the interview participants within their social realities. In the analysis section of this chapter, the effects of the main thematic concepts on the discursive and social practices of the participants are considered. In addition, the analysis identifies other consequential effects unaccounted for explicitly by the discourses of the interview participants – such as the securitisation of the Kurdish identity as an unintended consequence of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish government.

4- Analysis

The discursive effects of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish government on the social practices of the interview participants can be analytically examined using the frameworks of labelling and securitisation theories. The coding and discussion of the qualitative data, collected through the semi-structured interviews with Kurds from Turkey, reveal that there are two major themes under which the 34 preliminary codes, eight initial themes, and five sub-themes fall. These two main themes are victimisation and justification of violence.

The empirical evidence identified in the discourses of the interview participants reveals that the notion of victimisation holds significant meaning to the interviewees – all of whom are Kurds from Turkey. The interview participants used the notion of victimisation to formulate their discourses of recognising deviance, shifting blame, supporting the PKK, justifying conflict and violence, and perceptions of the label terrorist within the Turkish-Kurdish conflict context. The discourse of victimisation in the Foucauldian sense, affects the perceptions and social practices of the Kurdish interviewees within their social realities of conflict and peace – being Kurds and Turkish citizens at the same time. While discourses shape and restructure social reality, they are also reflections of power (im)balances in social realities. The discourse analysis of the interview's data indicate that the interview participants perceive the concept of victimisation as a driver as well as a justification to become involved in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. This involvement manifests itself in the support of the PKK as the protector of the Kurds in Turkey as opposed to the [enemy] Turkish government.

The ethnic nature of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict in Turkey does not capture the whole picture. The discussion in Chapter Three illustrates that the Kurdish issue stretches far beyond the borders of Turkey and far back in time before the foundation of the Turkish Republic. The interview participants expressed in their discourses the concept of victimisation and struggle to 'self-defence' as a cross-border concept. Interviewee K#10 described the PKK as "[it] is a humanity and liberation movement. PKK saved Yezidis and Kobane" and interviewee D#8, said: "The world does not believe the PKK is terrorist. Kobane was liberated by PKK, USA, and the EU fighters". There is a collective perception of victimisation among the interview participants which predetermine certain consequential conclusions about their social realities. Consequential conclusions, such as those construed by the interviewees arguing that Kurds are victims in all the four parts of Greater Kurdistan over time and space; therefore lead to their conclusion that the struggle for self-defence and survival is almost inevitable.

The victimisation narratives, identified in the discourses of the interview participants, indicate that the participants agree with the PKK's narratives that it is representative of the Kurdish community in Turkey and that it is in a violent struggle with the Turkish government to protect Kurdish rights. In the Foucauldian approach of discourse analysis, this is described as discourse-constructed knowledge. This discourse-constructed knowledge of victimisation empowers and limits social practices, and therefore has consequences and effects in the Kurdish participants' social worlds. Discourse is not limited to a subject or a class, but rather behaves like power in that it circulates and is always contested. In this case, the discourse of victimisation

contradicts the Turkish government discourse of fighting an existential war [as a victim] against the PKK. The PKK's narrative, which is adopted by the interview participants, restructures social reality and imposes its own discourses to construct realities that conform with its aims.

Interpreting the qualitative data from the interviews produces different types of discourses and counter-discourses describing the different concepts and themes identified in the discourse analysis. The focus of this analysis is on the potential effects of discourse on the social practices of the interview participants. One of the potential effects that victimisation discourses may have on the interview participants' social practices within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict is to support the PKK as the only representative of the Kurdish community in Turkey.

The other overarching thematic concept identified in the discourse analysis is justification of violence by the interview participants as, 'self-defence, forced to fight, denial, shifting blame, justifying the targeting of military and security personnel, ...etc.'. The justification of violence, as identified by different terms and concepts in the discourses of the participants, has potential effects on the social realities of the participants [as a sample from the Kurdish community Turkey]. The first effect is that participants accept violence as a legitimate tool to defend the Kurdish community against a perceived/real threat. The second potential effect is that the interview participants support violence against the government because they view the government as the "other". These effects have serious implications for the notions of law, citizenship, and identity. The third potential effect is the possibility of joining the violent conflict as active members. In other words, those who justify the PKK's

violence against the Turkish government security forces and against the 'non-innocent' are more inclined to join the conflict than those who do not justify the PKK's violence. The conclusions arrived at here are hypothetical, yet, they are theoretically and empirically informed by the qualitative data collected through the interviews with Kurdish interview participants from Turkey.

After the analysis of the data, the preliminary coding, initial coding, sub-themes, and the main themes, three major notions of significant meaning for the interview participants emerged: victimisation, justification of violence, securitisation of the Kurdish identity. While the first two notions of victimisation and justification of violence are clearly seen in the terms and discursive formations used by the participants, the notion of securitising the Kurdish identity is an informed conclusion produced by the current analysis.

The empirical evidence demonstrates that the interview participants perceive the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' by the Turkish government as a form of securitising the Kurdish identity in Turkey and this finding is evident from the interview data. For example, interviewee B#12 responded to the research question 'how do you perceive the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' by the Turkish government?' by saying: "I feel personally targeted". While Y#9 responded with, "The label terrorist demonises Kurds. Labelling PKK terrorist means criminalisation of Kurdish people". Another respondent B#11 said: "I feel offended". It is evident from the discourses of the interview participants that the labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' is perceived as labelling the Kurds as such and consequently labelling the Kurdish identity in Turkey. The effects of securitising collective identities, such as ethnic or sectarian identities,

are discussed in Chapter One in the securitisation theory section. However, it is important to note here that the discourses identified in the interview data reveal that participants assign significant meaning to the notion of 'us' as good versus 'them' as evil that has a perpetuating effect in ethnic conflicts (Wimmer, 2004, pp. 248-249). Thus, it is argued that the interview participants use the notion of 'us versus them'²⁵ as a counter-labelling mechanism to reject the perceived securitisation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey.

Becker cites a classic example illustrating that a criminal record makes it harder for the 'labelled' to resume normal life even after serving his or her sentence. Consequently, the labelled might be driven into the margins of society and eventually become a 'career deviant' (H. S. Becker, 1991, p. 179). The securitisation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey blocks the normal participation of Kurds in political life and constantly depicts Kurds as the enemy. The interview data in the current study confirms similar perceptions of the effects of being labelled expressed by the interviewees. Consequently, it can be inferred that the securitisation of the Kurdish identity can, under certain circumstances, drive larger numbers of individuals from the Kurdish community in Turkey to the margins of Turkish society; and eventually toward adopting violence. In other words, the securitisation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey can increase the number of Kurdish recruits joining the PKK.

²⁵ In the interview participants' discourse, *them* is often associated with negative and stigmatising labels.

5- Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis of this study, informed by existing literature and the theoretical models of the labelling and securitisation theories, argues that the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' by the Turkish government increases the sense of victimisation among the Kurdish community in Turkey and places the group's members and sympathisers into a situation where they cannot engage in the peaceful process of conflict transformation and eventually resolution. This research has asked the question: 'what are the effects of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' on the choice to use violence by Kurds in Turkey?'

The discourse analysis of the interview data conducted with a selection of Kurds from Turkey reveal several findings. The first is that the interview participants perceive the concept of victimisation as a driver and justification for individual Kurds to become involved in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. This involvement manifests itself in the support of the PKK as the protector of the Kurds in Turkey as opposed to the [enemy] Turkish government.

Participants constructed discourses that suggest a collective perception of victimisation among the interview participants that predetermine drawing certain consequential conclusions about their social realities. Consequential conclusions, such as 'Kurds are victims in all the four parts of Greater Kurdistan over time and space'; therefore, the struggle to self-defence and survival is almost inevitable.

The evidence produced by discourse analysis indicates that the interview participants contest the Turkish government discourse of fighting an existential war [as a victim] against the PKK. The PKK's narrative, which evidently has been adopted by the interview participants, restructure the social reality of the ethno-nationalist conflict and imposes its own discourses that redefine their concepts of victimisation, war, terrorism, identity, and violence.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that the participants have accepted violence as a legitimate tool to defend the Kurdish community against a perceived/real threat. Participants support violence against the government because they view the government as the other. The data suggest that individuals from the Kurdish community might join the violent conflict as active members. In other words, those who justify the PKK's violence against the Turkish government security forces and against the 'non-innocent' are more inclined to join the conflict than those who do not justify the PKK's violence.

The discourse analysis finds that the securitisation of the Kurdish identity can, under certain circumstances, drive larger numbers of individuals from the Kurdish community in Turkey to the margins of the Turkish society; and eventually to adopt violence. In other words, the securitisation of the Kurdish identity in Turkey can increase the number of Kurdish recruits joining the PKK.

6- Suggestions for Future Research

The examination of the effects of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' by the Turkish government on the choice of Kurds to adopt violence within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict reveals the multi-layered theoretical, methodological, and conceptual complexities of this research question. To support the conclusions drawn in this study, it would be helpful to compare the PKK case study to other groups who have been labelled terrorists. Additionally, the effects of the media on the attitudes of the PKK or other labelled groups could be an area of investigation that could bring further insight to this analysis. A third focus of study that could add insight is one that examines the effects on how nations, populations and individuals behave toward groups or countries they have labelled as terrorist or as a source of terrorists. How does this labelling, for example, shape foreign and domestic policy responses to the group or nation?

Another area for future research can offer more extensive and accurate analysis of larger samples of empirical data sets through employing the triangulation of discourse, cognition, and society (Dijk, 2014, p. 13). In this triangulation process, discourse is defined as a "form of social interaction in society and at the same time as the expression and reproduction of social cognition" (ibid). This multidisciplinary approach of research analysis accommodates the social, political, and cultural aspects of discourse as well as the subjectivity of individuals in producing and reproducing social structure (ibid: p. 12). This approach would offer a multidisciplinary research design to help us better understand how Kurds perceive and react to the Turkish government labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist', how the

Turkish community perceives and reacts to the labelling, and how the political level perceives, interacts, and reacts to the labelling of the PKK and the consequential securitisation of the Kurdish community in Turkey. Given more time and resources as well as the ability to safely interview greater numbers of participants from Turkey, this approach would add depth to the subject.

Future research could examine militants' biographies and explore interviewees' critical junctures to gain further insights into what exactly generates support and activism among the wider PKK's Kurdish supportive community.

Another future research avenue is to examine whether the discursive formations generated from interviews' empirical data are products of the 'terrorist label' as opposed to the ideological conditioning of the PKK (via Ocalan's emancipatory theory). Discursive formations may reveal individuals' perceptions of their social worlds. However, such claim could forfeit any analysis of political, social, economic factors (alone or in combination) that may shape construction of values, ideas regarding the conflict.

Another question for future research: 'Is the terrorist labelling merely a legal and rhetorical tactic in a wider conflict between Turkish government and militant Kurds? And whether securitisation was an unintended consequence of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' or labelling the PKK 'terrorist' was arguably a consequence of securitisation, a form of instrumental counter-extremist strategy?'

Future research can also answer this potential research question: 'How has Turkish labelling evolved since 2001 or since the rise of Erdogan and the shift towards post-Kemalist authoritarianism?'

Chapter Five: Implications for Policy

1- Introduction

Political violence in Turkey is neither new nor restricted to the Kurdish issue or the PKK. Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey has experienced different types of political violence ranging from Marxist-Leninist violent movements, leftist students, nationalist groups, religiously inspired groups, to separatist movements (Ünal, 2012, pp. 2-3). Most of these groups vanished over time due to changes in Turkey's democratic outlook, the demise of communism, and globalisation.

The Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict has, however, persisted due to its cross-border ethno-nationalist nature. For Turkey, the PKK represents the thorny face of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. The early beginnings of the PKK go back to 1973-1975 when the group established its ideological ground work recruiting core cadre (ibid: p. 8). From 1984 until 1994, the PKK was engaged in intensive military confrontations with the Turkish army which had inflicted heavy losses on both sides and a staggering number of civilian deaths. In 1994 and 1995, the Turkish army declared that the PKK had been defeated after large scale counterinsurgency operations in the southern parts of Turkey and across the borders with Iraq. PKK guerrilla fighters continued their attacks, albeit with lower intensity and on a much smaller scale (ibid). In 1998, Abdullah Ocalan, was expelled from Syria – the Syrian

government expelled him after military threats from the Turkish government. In 1999, Ocalan was arrested by the Turkish government and sentenced to death although subsequently the death sentence was reduced to life imprisonment (ibid). From 2002 onwards, the PKK resumed its attacks against the Turkish government security forces and government representatives mainly in the Kurdish majority south east of Turkey (ibid).

The Turkish government responded to the violent attacks of the PKK by deploying large numbers of Turkish troops and security personnel in the southeast, and by arming the 'Village Guards'. Village Guards are Kurdish locals who 'volunteer' to work for the government to protect their villages against the PKK (Hurley, 2016, p. 38). The counterinsurgency operations in the Kurdish majority areas became notorious for extremely high casualty rates, extra-judicial killings, torture of civilians and the destruction of Kurdish villages (Yildiz, 2005, p. 105).

During this time, Kurds were facing the dual dilemma of being unable to stay out of the armed conflict that was devastating their communities and also unable to avoid the Turkish military response to the PKK (ibid). Kurdish communities in the southeast of Turkey had to prove their loyalty to the state by joining the Village Guard system which is accused of violence, corruption, and human rights abuses against Kurds (Yildiz, 2005, p. 105). When villagers fail to bring volunteers for the Guard, the Turkish government view them as PKK sympathizers. At the same time, those who join the Village Guard force are deemed traitors *Jash*²⁶ by the PKK. Village Guards

²⁶ *Jash*, which means mule in English, is a derogatory term used by Kurds to describe traitors.

and their families are targeted by PKK fighters and Kurdish villagers are placed in a lose-lose situation.

An essential question is: 'why has Turkey failed in breaking down the barriers to reconciliation with the Kurdish community in the Southeast?' There are two main barriers: firstly, the Turkish government refuses to grant Kurds constitutional recognition and full realization of Kurdish cultural rights; and secondly, the Turkish government, the security institutions, and sections of the judiciary and civil service associate the public Kurdish expression of ethnic differences with militant demands for secession (Yildiz, 2005, p. 115). These two barriers to recognizing the legitimacy of Kurdish grievances contributes, as this study has demonstrated, to increasing the sense of victimisation among the Kurdish community in Turkey and have influenced the policies of the Turkish government to address the ethno-nationalist conflict on the basis that 'there is no Kurdish problem in Turkey, only a terrorist problem' (ibid).

Consequently, the Turkish government has adopted security approaches such as counterterrorism and counterinsurgency to end the ethno-nationalist conflict in the Southeast of Turkey. The security approach taken to tackle the Kurdish issue in Turkey has led to the inevitable securitisation of the Kurdish ethnic identity. The Turkish government has classified all Kurdish expressions of dissatisfaction with the state as either supporting terrorism or inciting separatism (Yildiz, 2005, p. 116).

It is important to mention that there is a wealth of existing literature on comparable cases of securitisation, labelling, de-legitimation, and counterterrorism strategies. There is well-developed literature examples on the instrumental de-legitimation

strategies in cases such as Northern Ireland (Hillyard, 1993); Israel/Palestine (Chomsky, Junkerman, & Masakazu, 2011), (Chomsky, 2013), (Pappé, 2006), (Pappé, Chomsky, & Barat, 2010), (Finkelstein, 2011b), (Finkelstein, 2011a); Sri Lanka and LTTE (M. Roberts, 2009).

Conclusions drawn in this study reveal that exclusive reliance by the Turkish government on security measures to address the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey is ineffective and may produce, under certain circumstances, counterproductive and adverse results. In other words, the security approach to end the PKK is failing in reducing violence. The securitisation of the Kurdish community has failed to curb the number of new recruits or the support the PKK enjoys among the wider Kurdish community. The Turkish government policies of managing the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict have so far failed to produce peace. The conclusions drawn from this research study have implications for the development of policies focused on conflict management and conflict resolution.

2- Implications and Recommendations for Policy

The PKK, as an armed ethno-nationalist, separatist, and 'terrorist' group, represents a major challenge for policymakers in the Turkish government and security forces. The policy implications listed below are not intended as a comprehensive or mutually exclusive list. They are intended to generate informed ideas that will help shift attention from the current focus on securitisation policies, mass stigma, and security-oriented solutions towards the creation of policies that inform a better understanding of the Kurdish issue and conflict in Turkey. A better understanding of the Kurdish

issue will help create policies designed to reduce ethno-nationalist violence. Ideally, the aim of the central government is to transfer the ethno-nationalist conflict from an armed conflict into a political conflict; such a transformation usually leads to the resolution of the conflict through peaceful political negotiations. The following policy implications and recommendations are informed by the conclusions drawn from this study. While they are specific for the PKK case study in Turkey, they can be generalised to other ethnic or sectarian conflicts elsewhere.

- *Development of new policies to address the Kurdish issue*

As demonstrated in the introduction to this chapter, the Turkish government approach to the threat of the PKK and the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict is neither producing peace nor reducing violence. To the contrary, ethno-nationalist violence in Turkey has increased over the years (Nadir Gergina et al., 2014, p. 82). The empirical evidence produced by this study through interviewing Kurds from Turkey reveals the extent of the impact the label 'terrorist' has on the Kurdish community in Turkey. The designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' by the Turkish government, as part of its security approach to address the ethno-nationalist conflict only increases the sense of victimisation and political exclusion among members of the Kurdish community. The implications of these two consequential effects for policymaking are significant. Informed by the findings of this study, it is argued that the Turkish government's policies of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' and the securitisation of the Kurdish community should be replaced with empirically informed policies aimed at accommodating the Kurdish community in Turkey.

The political ideology of the Turkish republic is based on the principle that ‘the nation is a melting pot’ of all ethnicities, religions, and sects (Alexander, Brenner, & Krause, 2008). This political ideology cultivates institutionalised exclusion of diversity in the state. This study recommends a comprehensive review of existing laws and the constitution concerning the recognition of ethnic cultural rights. In order to prepare the ground for peace, the Turkish government should recognise the existence of the unique identity of Kurds in Turkey. Such constitutional reforms will end the perceived/real institutionalised discrimination against the Kurdish community. Kurds constitute approximately 18% of the Turkish population, yet, they are not permitted to receive an education in the Kurdish language (Yildiz, 2005). A new policy towards Kurdish cultural rights should include the recognition of Kurdish language as the second language of Turkey. It is important to note here that these recommendations are not suggested as conditions to peace. Instead, it is recommended that the Turkish government take these steps to win the hearts and minds of its Kurdish [citizens] community. Moreover, the targeting of Kurdish political parties by the Turkish government must cease to allow for the Kurdish issue to be pulled off ‘the edge of the political’. The Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict can only be resolved through a political peace process. The current security measures pursued by the Turkish government has failed to secure peace for the people of Turkey and is unlikely to do so in the future.

- *De-securitisation of the Kurdish community in Turkey*

One of the main findings of this research is that the labelling of the PKK as ‘terrorist’ has led to the unintended securitisation of the Kurdish community in Turkey (See

Chapters One and Four). The designation of the PKK as a 'terrorist group' has resulted in granting the Turkish government exceptional powers to address the existential threat of terrorism, has dramatically delegitimised the PKK in the eyes of the dominant ethnic majority audience (Turks), and has crippled the PKK's activities around the world. However, the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' has securitised the Kurdish community in Turkey. The interview data reveal that members of the Kurdish community perceive the label as directed against the Kurds in Turkey rather than against only the PKK. All the participants responded that the PKK is representative of the Kurdish community and the Kurds' struggle to preserve their cultural and ethnic identity.

Therefore, it is recommended here that the Turkish government take steps to de-securitise the Kurdish community by taking the PKK off the terror list. This, of course, does not mean tolerating any violent or criminal acts the PKK may commit. Instead, the Turkish government can address security threats posed by the PKK through existing defence legal frameworks and terminologies. The de-securitisation of the Kurdish community in Turkey by de-labelling the PKK will serve to demonstrate the commitment of the Turkish government to peace. As previously mentioned in the study, the interview participants repeatedly stated that the Turkish government and its official TV channels managed to avoid calling the PKK terrorist during the time of the peace negotiations between 2003-2015. Therefore it can be assumed that the Turkish government is aware of the power the label 'terrorist' has on the perceptions of both members of the PKK and members of the Kurdish community in Turkey. The de-securitisation of the Kurdish community in Turkey should become a multi-stage policy designed to re-integrate the Kurdish community into the society by building

bridges of confidence. It is important that the Turkish citizens of Kurdish background believe that the government trusts them rather than as being perceived as trouble-makers or even 'terrorists'.

- *Stigma of the label 'terrorist' in ethnic conflicts*

The Turkish government's labelling of the PKK as 'terrorist' is perceived as targeting of the Kurdish ethnic community in Turkey. The Kurds who participated in the interviews responded to the question: 'why do you think the PKK is labelled terrorist by the Turkish government?' Participant D#10 responded, "Turks call us terrorists to justify their discrimination". Participants did not perceive the stigma to be representative of the Turkish government only, but also as a stigma attached to Kurds by ethnic Turkish ruling majority.

- *Rule of Law versus criminalisation of violent acts as security strategy*

Rule of Law and counterterrorism measures carry some risk of violating basic human rights, lead to ethnic profiling, and infringe on freedoms. There are concerns, particularly from a human rights perspective, that certain counterterrorism measures target specific individuals or groups on the basis that they are particularly 'at risk' of violent extremism.²⁷ Such an approach can be discriminatory and stigmatizes the Kurdish community in Turkey. It is critical that the Turkish government strictly monitor the human rights compliance of policies adopted to both criminalise acts under the rule of law framework and counter violent extremism framework. Identifying and addressing the inconsistency between criminalising violent acts under the rule of law

²⁷ HRC report on Preventing and countering violent extremism a human rights assessment - Ben Emmerson - (2016): <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Terrorism/Pages/Annual.aspx>

framework versus criminalisation of violent acts as a security strategy is therefore recommended by this thesis.

The policies of designation using the label 'terrorist' in ethno-nationalist conflict contexts are therefore not recommended. This study instead recommends that the label 'terrorist' no longer be part of the Turkish government's discourse on the ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey. Instead, the focus should be on the rule of law and the terminology associated with human rights. While this study recognises the serious security threat that the PKK represents for Turkey, the implications and recommendations suggested here are designed to offer alternative approaches to win the Kurdish community back as citizens of the Turkish Republic, to reduce violence, and guide the conflict towards resolution. The Turkish government policies should work to avoid the mass stigmatization of the Kurdish community in Turkey.

These implications and recommendations identified by this study apply to the PKK case study within the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict in Turkey. However, the study also recommends that policymakers avoid the securitisation of identity-based conflicts, such as ethnic or sectarian conflicts, using the label 'terrorist'. While the perks offered by the label in terms of exceptional access to raw power may seem irresistible, the consequences of using the label 'terrorist' as a securitising tool in an ethno-nationalist conflict context outweigh any perceived benefits.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

Despite the rise of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Turkish government views the PKK as its main security (existential) threat. The Kurdish-Turkish ethno-nationalist conflict, which has been active for over three decades, has reportedly claimed the lives of approximately 40,000 people up until 2016.²⁸ The Turkish government adopted different approaches, throughout the three decades of the conflict, to end the PKK threat. However, these approaches have focused mainly on military and intelligence led operations with the aim to neutralise PKK's political leaders and guerrilla fighters. The 2012 solution process [*Çözüm Süreci*] initiative had promised peace for all Turkish people. However, the initiative collapsed for several internal and external reasons which are outside the scope of this study. The rise of ISIL, the civil war in Syria, and the fact that Kurds in the Middle East are spearheading the Global War on Terror in Syria and Iraq have granted the Kurds a historical chance to impose *de facto* governing body over large swathes of land considered by the Kurds as parts of 'Greater Kurdistan'. The Turkish government involvement in the war against ISIL in Syria and Iraq is driven mainly by its fears that the PKK can establish new bases in the region, recruit more fighters, and eventually become a greater threat to the Turkish republic. The Turkish government labels the PKK a 'terrorist' group and frames its military operations in southern Turkey and inside Syria and Iraq as part of the Global War on Terror. The PKK, according to the Turkish government, represents an existential 'terrorist' threat and consequently should be eliminated.

²⁸ BBC (2016): <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-20971100>

The purpose of this study has been to examine the effects of the label 'terrorist' on the Kurds' choice to use violence in the ethno-nationalist Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Drawing on the labelling theory of deviance and the Copenhagen School securitisation theory; and complemented by discourse analysis of the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with Kurds from Turkey, this study illustrates that firstly, the application of the label terrorist against the PKK increases perceptions of victimization among members of the Kurdish community in Turkey; and secondly, that the appeal to use the label terrorist against the PKK places the group's actors and sympathizers in a situation that makes it harder for them to engage in peaceful means of resolving the ethno-nationalist conflict. The combined effect of victimisation and political exclusion leads to the conclusion that there is an indirect relationship between designating the PKK 'terrorist' and the Kurds' choice to use violence.

The literature on labelling the PKK 'terrorist' is limited. Existing literature on labelling, listing, and the international designation of the PKK as a 'terrorist group' mainly focuses on the political discursive practices of the Turkish government towards the PKK and the impact of designation on conflict transformation towards resolution. Barrinha, for example, employs Ole Wæver's layered discursive structure to examine the political discursive practices and consequences of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' within the context of the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict (Barrinha, 2011). Barrinha's research concludes that labelling the PKK terrorist puts the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict on the edge of the political (Barrinha, 2011, p. 176). The application of Ole Wæver's model led Barrinha to conclude that Turkey's

designation of the PKK both legally and in political discourse has been 'normalised' (2007-2008), "leading to a generally aggressive tone of discussion that was not particularly helpful when trying to find an appropriate solution to the conflict" (ibid). Equally, Boon-Kuo and others studied the impact of designation and listing terrorist groups on the process of peace-building and the impact of conflict management on conflict transformation – taking the PKK as one of their research main case studies (Boon-Kuo et al., 2015a). Their research concludes, "... global terrorist listing regimes have enabled the adoption of counterinsurgency strategies that justify the targeting of whole populations in order to delegitimise and incapacitate non-state armed actors" (ibid: p. 143). They also have critically assessed how the labelling of the PKK has permitted the suppression of political and ethnic rights through military offensives, targeted killings, mass incarcerations and prosecutions undertaken in the name of counterterrorism. In contrast, this study's focus is on the effects of the consequences detailed in Barrinha, Boon-Kuo and others' research on the Kurds' choice to adopt violence. This study is an attempt to fill a literature gap identified by this research – namely – that using the label terrorist in ethno-nationalist conflict contexts can, under certain circumstances, lead to or increase levels of violence.

Through situating the PKK case study in the Middle East historical Kurdish contexts, this research places the Kurdish issue in its wider regional context offering greater understanding of the politics and power of Kurdish ethno-nationalist identity in the Middle East. The historical overview of Kurds in the Middle East contextualises the arguments made by this study regarding issues linked to Kurdish narratives of independence, victimisation, identity, and historical frontiers of 'Greater Kurdistan'. Furthermore, the historical overview provides background to the historical

development of Kurdish identity, nationalism, and political aspirations. The examination of the PKK and Kurdish historical background in Turkey demonstrates that the PKK's discourse, as an armed political movement, is addressed and intended to affect the Kurds in Turkey. Empirical evidence collected by this study demonstrates that the interview participant discourses of victimisation, political exclusion, and ethno-political identities were framed within narratives related to the PKK as representative of the Kurdish community's grievances and political demands.

The concepts of labelling and securitisation have been central to this study. It has been argued that the Turkish government labelling the PKK 'terrorist' has led to the unintended consequence of securitising the Kurdish identity in Turkey. The securitisation of the Kurdish identity includes two main arguments: firstly, the PKK is representative of the Kurdish community in Turkey; and secondly, the implications of labelling the PKK 'terrorist' are directly affecting the Kurdish community in Turkey. In the context of this research, securitisation has been defined as "[a]n articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilized by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions), about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the securitizing actor's reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customized policy must be undertaken immediately to block its development" (Balzacq, 2011, p. 3). The empirical evidence, discussed in Chapter Four, reveals that all the interview participants appear to consider the PKK as representative of the Kurds in Turkey and the struggle to

preserve their ethnic identity and political and cultural rights. Consequently, the interviewees produced discourses describing their perceptions of labelling PKK 'terrorist' within their social realities and how labelling the PKK as 'terrorist' affects their social practices.

Prior to 1992, Turkish governments have framed the Kurdish separatist movement, led by the PKK, as an existential threat to the territorial integrity of Turkey. By labelling the PKK 'terrorist', the Turkish government has 'upgraded' the threat level from a 'separatist existential threat' to 'a terrorist existential threat'. It was argued in Chapter One that the stigmatising and de-legitimising power of the label terrorist granted the Turkish government exceptional powers inside and outside Turkey to address the PKK's existential threat. However, the labelling of the PKK has also led to the unintended securitisation of the Kurdish community in Turkey. The securitisation of the Kurdish community with the aim to end the support bases of the PKK inside Turkey has arguably driven individuals from the Kurdish community to the margins of society. The perceived victimisation and political exclusion of the Kurdish community was reflected in the discourses produced by the interviewees describing their social realities.

The concept of labelling and power remains important throughout the study. In the sociology of deviance, there is an inherent relationship between labelling and power. Those who are powerful and legitimate enough impose labels on others (H. S. Becker, 1963, pp. 204-205). The discursive power of the label 'terrorist' has been evident in how the interview participants expressed their sense of victimisation, political exclusion, perceived lack of equal citizenship, and ethnic alienation in

Turkey. The label terrorist, as a tool of power in the hands of the Turkish government, facilitates the Turkish government's access to raw power through emergency laws. Yet, this study finds that the application of the label terrorist creates long-term obstacles for conflict transformation and conflict resolution.

Ultimately, the Turkish government's labelling of the PKK as a 'terrorist' group has effects on the Kurds' choice to use violence in the Turkish-Kurdish ethno-nationalist conflict. The study's empirically informed conclusions reveal that the impact of the label 'terrorist' is far more complicated than previously assumed in the existing academic literature. The precise effect of the label terrorist on a given conflict, however, is an empirical question to be settled through rigorous research and separate examination on a case study basis. Drawing on the labelling theory of deviance, the securitisation theory, and supported by empirical evidence collected through the discourse analysis of participant interviews, this study finds that the designation of the PKK as 'terrorist' by the Turkish government increases the perception of victimization among members of the Kurdish community in Turkey. The study also demonstrates that the invocation of the label terrorist against PKK places the group's actors and sympathizers in a situation that makes it harder for them to engage in peaceful means of resolving the conflict. The securitisation of the Kurdish community drives its individuals, under certain circumstances, into the margins of society. The interplay between these two consequential effects of victimisation and political exclusion leads this study to the conclusion that there is an indirect relationship between designating an ethnic armed group 'terrorist' and the choice to use violence.

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Appendices

1- Certificate of Ethical Approval



**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Academic Unit: Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies

Title of Project: The effects of the label Terrorist on conflict resolution
the Kurdish question in Turkey

Research Team Member(s): Muhanad Seloom

Project Contact Point: MS389@exeter.ac.uk

This project has been approved for the period

From: 10th March 2015

To: 31st July 2015

Ethics Committee approval reference:

Signature.....*Matt Loble*..... Date.....08.04.15.....
(Matt Loble, Chair, SSIS College Ethics Committee)



2- Email exchange with Professor Howard S. Becker

Email address: hsbecker@earthlink.net

Website: <http://howardsbecker.com>

Howard Becker ▾  19 June 2015 at 17:00 

Re: Labelling Theory - Terrorism
To: Muhanad Seloom

Dear Muhanad Seloom,

I don't think I can help you. It's many years since I have worked on this kind of problem. And I have never written or spoken about the particular problem that interests you. It seems to me that the relevance of "labeling" to this case is obvious. "Terrorist" is a bad name that people and organizations bestow on one another and the real usefulness of the idea will be in seeing how they do it, what the results of such efforts are, etc. In other words, as we sociologists like to say, it's an empirical question.

Sincerely,

HSB

[See More](#) from Muhanad Seloom

3- Reflexive Journal Form

Reflexive Journal

Study Name:

Date:

Location:

Time:

Participant name:

What do I think I know from this participant?

How do I know it?

What did she or he said in the discussion which made me acquire that knowledge?

Does this knowledge support or challenge my previous assumptions?

What is the impact of this "new" knowledge on the research objectives, methods, outcomes?

4- Map of the Area Inhabited by Kurds



Map of the area inhabited by Kurds

Source of the Map:

Yildiz, K. (2005: p. viii). The Kurds in Turkey : EU accession and human rights. London ; Ann Arbor, MI, Pluto Press in association with Kurdish Human Rights Project.