ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER

ISSN: 1304-7310 (Print) 1304-7175 (Online) http://www.uidergisi.com.tr

Ontological Insecurity, Anxiety, and Hubris: An Affective Account of Turkey-KRG Relations

Ozlem KAYHAN PUSANE

Associate Professor, Isik University, Department of International Relations

Aslı ILGIT

Associate Professor, Cukurova University, Department of Political Science and International Relations

To cite this article: Ozlem Kayhan Pusane and Aslı Ilgıt, "Ontological Insecurity, Anxiety, and Hubris: An Affective Account of Turkey-KRG Relations", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 19, No. 73, 2022, pp. 95-111, DOI: 10.33458/uidergisi.1085441

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.33458/uidergisi.1085441

Submitted: 12 May 2021
Last Revision: 27 January 2022
Published Online: 10 March 2022
Printed Version: 9 April 2022

Uluslararası İlişkiler Konseyi Derneği | International Relations Council of Turkey
Uluslararası İlişkiler – Journal of International Relations
E-mail: bilgi@uidergisi.com.tr

All rights of this paper are reserved by the *International Relations Council of Turkey*. With the exception of academic quotations, no parts of this publication may be reproduced, redistributed, sold or transmitted in any form and by any means for public usage without a prior permission from the copyright holder. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the author(s)'s and do not reflect those of the *Council*, editors of the journal, and other authors.

Ontological Insecurity, Anxiety, and Hubris: An Affective Account of Turkey-KRG Relations*

Özlem KAYHAN PUSANE
Associate Professor, Işık University, Department of International Relations, İstanbul
E-mail: ozlem.pusane@isikun.edu.tr
Orcid: 0000-0002-2188-8526

Aslı ILGIT
Associate Professor, Cukurova University, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Adana
E-mail: asli.ilgit@gmail.com
Orcid: 0000-0001-6560-3388

ABSTRACT

Given Iraqi Kurds' special place in Turkey's 'biographical narrative', Turkey-Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) relations are not simply strategic or economic but also highly affectively charged. These relations involve emotional encounters filled with anxiety, pride, anger, and disappointment that generate concerns for not only Turkey's physical security but also its ontological security. This paper traces the emotional context of Turkey-KRG relationship. It suggests that a combination of Turkey's deep-rooted 'anxiety' and 'hubris' toward the Iraqi Kurds prevented the emergence of a close partnership between these two actors and fostered merely a 'fragile rapprochement' since 2008.

Keywords: Ontological security, emotions, identity, foreign policy change, Turkish foreign policy

Ontolojik Güvensizlik, Endişe ve Kibir: Türkiye-IKBY İlişkilerinin Duygusal Çerçevesi

ÖZET

Iraklı Kürtlerin Türkiye'nin 'biyografik anlatıları' içindeki özel yeri nedeniyle Türkiye-Irak Kürt Bölgesel Yönetimi (IKBY) ilişkileri yalnızca stratejik ve ekonomik değil, aynı zamanda kaygı, gurur, öfke ve hayal kırıklıklarıyla dolu temaslar da içeren duygu yüklü bir ilişki olagelmiştir. Bu çerçevede, IKBY Türkiye'nin yalnızca fiziksel güvenliği için değil, ontolojik güvenliği için de endişe kaynağı olmuştur. Bu makale, Türkiye-IKBY ilişkilerindeki duyguların izini sürerek Türkiye'nin Iraklı Kürtlere karşı geliştirdiği kökleşmiş 'kaygı' ve 'kibir' duygularının bu iki aktör arasında 2008'den itibaren yakın bir ortaklığın ortaya çıkmasını engellediğini ve ilişkilerin yalnızca kırılgan bir yakınlaşma ile sınırlı kalmasına sebep olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ontolojik güvenlik, duygular, kimlik, dış politika değişimi, Türk dış politikası

* We would like to thank Lara Gülmez for her research assistance. This research was supported in part by Işık University's Research Fund (BAP Project no: 19A302) and Çukurova University's Research Fund (BAP Project no: 11464).

Introduction

"Our interlocutor is not the Kurdish leaders, but Iraq's central government. Other than that, I cannot meet with a *tribal leader*, [Masoud] Barzani or anyone else."[1] Such is the scornful response of Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan, in the early 2000s, when commenting on the relations with the Iraqi Kurds within Turkey's counterterrorism policy against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). However, in a momentous 2013 rally in Diyarbakır, Erdoğan passionately greeted Barzani, President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), by saying:

> "We're *brothers*; we're one and together not till to the bazaar but to the grave, to Armageddon. We are members of the same geography, the same land, the same civilization. Welcome to your *brothers'* land of the Turkish Republic, welcome to our Diyarbakır just like your father, your uncles did 80 years ago."[2]

Conversely, with the KRG's independence referendum in 2017, the future of bilateral relations looked bleak once again when Erdoğan retorted, "We did not think Barzani would make such a mistake until the last minute, but clearly we were mistaken. At a time when our bilateral relations are at their best level in history, this decision, made without any prior consultation or meeting with us, is a *betrayal* to our country."[3]

Abovementioned comments in some ways demonstrate the striking shifts in Turkey's policy toward the KRG under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) governments from a mostly militarist and disdainful approach to gradual rapprochement and then to strained interactions all in the span of twenty years. While much has been written about the initial change from antagonistic relations to increased cooperation, there is a lack of scholarship written about the broken rapprochement between Turkey and the KRG in the late 2010s.[4] This paper, thus, asks why the Turkey-KRG rapprochement failed to bring about a close partnership, as expected by the Turkish officials, and was easily disrupted with the 2017 independence referendum.

Turkey, like any other state, aims to construct a coherent story about itself. It does so by giving meaning to the past and the future to maintain a continuity and security of the Self at domestic and international levels. These 'autobiographies' not only give meaning to states' actions but also reveal affective components of states' identity. In that sense, as much as they may demonstrate shifts in Turkish foreign policy, the abovementioned remarks also suggest the importance of the Iraqi Kurds' place in Turkey's 'biographical narrative' and its ontological security.[5] Put differently, Turkey-KRG relations are not simply strategic or economic but also highly affectively charged, involving emotional

1 "Türkiye'nin Muhatabı Kabile Reisi Değildir", *Yeni Şafak*, 7 June 2007, https://www.yenisafak.com/politika/turkiyenin-muhatabi-kabile-reisi-degildir-49338 (Accessed 3 August 2020), *emphasis added*.

2 "Diyarbakır'da Barzani-Erdoğan Mitingi", *Sözcü*, 16 November 2013, https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2013/genel/diyarbakirda-barzani-erdogan-mitingi-408071/ (Accessed 29 October 2020), *emphasis added*.

3 "Erdoğan'dan Barzani'ye 'İhanet' Suçlaması", *Deutsche Welle Türkiye*, 26 September 2017, https://www.dw.com/tr/erdo%C4%9Fandan-barzaniye-ihanet-su%C3%A7lamas%C4%B1/a-40686834 (Accessed 18 October 2020), *emphasis added*.

4 See Şaban Kardaş, "Transformation of Turkey's Regional Policies: The Case of the KRG Referendum Debacle", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 53, No 4, 2018, p. 16-34; Bill Park, "Explaining Turkey's Reaction to the September 2017 Independence Referendum in the KRG: Final Divorce or Relationship Reset?", *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 18, No 1, 2019, p. 46-60.

5 Felix Berenskoetter, "Parameters of a National Biography", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 20, No 1, 2014, p. 262-288.

encounters that generate concerns for Turkey's physical and ontological security. Yet such ontological insecurities and affective dynamics are rather overlooked by regional analysts and Turkish foreign policy scholars. This paper traces the emotional features of Turkey-KRG relations and examines how a range of emotions triggered by perceived insecurities affect Turkey's foreign policy change toward the KRG since 2008.

Ontological security, affective dispositions, and emotional reactions have recently been at the forefront of research on state actions.[6] Based on the premise that states are concerned not only for their 'physical' or 'material' but also for their ontological security, this literature emphasizes the construction of states' identities through routines and narratives that in turn affect foreign policy.[7] States' understanding of their Self might be challenged by crises, threats, traumas, or even external stigmatization and criticism, thereby increasing their anxieties and ontological insecurities and disrupting their routinized foreign policy. States, thus, pursue certain actions to overcome these insecurities and to maintain the story they tell to and about themselves.[8]

Anxiety is the driving emotion of ontological security logic. States' anxieties triggered by crises, traumas, or major transformations that would undermine the notions of who they are lead to policies of managing anxiety and maintaining a continuity of Self, i.e., ontological security seeking.[9] Recently, some scholars call attention to anxiety's interactions with other political-social dynamics, its manifestations, and its dual role in states' ontological security and foreign policy.[10] These studies suggest that anxiety might lead to insistence on 'stability' of a conflictual relationship as political actors maintain their identity constructed in this relationship with the Other(s) while giving room for change to a peaceful relationship under certain conditions. Yet, as Rumelili and Çelik argue, the conditions for the manifestation of either role of anxiety need further exploration.[11]

Building on these arguments and picking up where Rumelili and Çelik left off, we examine how anxiety interacts with other emotional dynamics of a state's ontological security and makes certain foreign policy changes possible. By focusing on the contemporary Turkey-KRG relationship, we examine the nature and limits of Turkey's rapprochement policy toward the KRG between 2008-2017. We argue that while this policy provided a great opportunity for Turkey to forge a

6 E.g., Brent Sasley, "Affective Attachments and Foreign Policy: Israel and the 1993 Oslo Accords", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 16, No 4, 2010, p. 687-709; Todd Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2015.

7 E.g., Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No 3, 2006, p. 341-370; Bahar Rumelili, "Identity and Desecuritisation: The Pitfalls of Conflating Ontological and Physical Security", *Journal of International Relations and Development,* Vol. 18, No 1, 2015, p. 52–74; Bahar Rumelili and Umut Can Adısönmez, "Uluslararası İlişkilerde Kimlik-Güvenlik İlişkisine Dair Yeni bir Paradigma: Ontolojik Güvenlik Teorisi", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 17, No 66, 2020, p. 23-39.

8 Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-identity and the IR State*, Routledge, New York, 2008; Jelena Subotic and Ayşe Zarakol, "Cultural Intimacy in International Relations", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 19, No 4, 2013, p. 915-938; Deepa Prakash and Aslı Ilgıt, "More than a Feeling: Emotional Responses to International Criticism in Erdoğan's Turkey", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 43, No 1, 2017, p. 130-151.

9 Ayşe Zarakol, "Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan", *International Relations*, Vol. 24, No 1, 2010, p. 3-23; Jennifer Mitzen, "Anxious Community: EU as (In)security Community", *European Security,* Vol. 27, No 3, 2018, p. 393-413.

10 Christopher C. Browning and Pertti Joenniemi, "Ontological Security, Self-Articulation and the Securitization of Identity", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 52, No 1, 2017, p. 31-47; Bahar Rumelili and Ayşe Betül Çelik, "Ontological Insecurity in Asymmetric Conflicts: Reflections on Agonistic Peace in Turkey's Kurdish Issue", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 48, No 4, 2017, p. 279-296.

11 Rumelili and Çelik, "Ontological Insecurity".

cooperative framework with the Iraqi Kurds, it also challenged Turkey's sense of Self constructed through a conflictual relationship with the regional Kurds. Thus, in seeking ontological security, Turkish leaders aimed to alleviate their historical anxiety about an independent Kurdish state by carving a higher status for Turkey as the big brother or even the patron of the Iraqi Kurds, couching this delicate process within a distinct discourse of 'brotherhood'. Turkey's deep-rooted *anxiety* and *hubris* toward the Iraqi Kurds played an important role in preventing the emergence of a close partnership based on trust and empathy between these two actors and instead fostered merely a 'fragile' rapprochement since 2008.

Below, we first identify the key arguments of ontological security and emotions studies. Then, we make a case for a deeper analysis on relations between ontological insecurities, emotions, and foreign policy change. Following, we then summarize the Iraqi Kurds' place in Turkey's identity narratives and examine the trajectory of Turkey's ontological security concerns and emotion discourses toward the KRG since 2008. Lastly, we provide a summary of our argument and suggest directions for further research.

Ontological Security, Emotions, and Foreign Policy Change

In International Relations (IR), two recent, inter-related research agendas on Ontological Security (OS) and 'narrative turn' examine how the psychological, physiological, and social complexities of emotions influence foreign policy. Drawing mainly on the socio-psychological roots of the individual's existence, the concept of ontological security is based on the premise of the 'security of the self', i.e., for the individual to have a coherent sense of self in the world.[12] Applying this framework to international politics, ontological security literature underlines political entities' "pursuit of ontological security, i.e., the security of Self and Being, as a motive distinct from and additional to the pursuit of physical security, i.e., the security of the 'body' and survival."[13] In this ontological security seeking process, identity narratives serve as "a sense-making device that allows conceptions of stable selfhood to be projected, even protected, across time and space."[14] Put differently, "national biographies" constitute states as a "bounded community over time and space" and are employed to describe and justify states' actions.[15] Thus, states seek ontological security to have a sense of continuity and stability over time, which, in turn, makes certain practices and actions possible.[16] States' ontological security might be derived from the external, intersubjective interactions with Others[17] or the internal self-understandings[18] or both.[19]

12 Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, New York, Polity Press, 1991; Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics".

13 Bahar Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory: Hobbes, Existentialism, and Ontological Security", *International Theory,* Vol. 12, No 2, 2020, p. 266.

14 Brent J. Steele and Alexandra Homolar, "Ontological Insecurities and the Politics of Contemporary Populism", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No 3, 2019, p. 214-221.

15 Berenskoetter, "Parameters of a National Biography"; Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations.*

16 Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics".

17 Ibid.

18 Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*.

19 Catarina Kinnvall, "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 25, No 5, 2004, p. 741-767.

Ontological security seeking is mostly about overcoming or managing anxieties that threaten the core of the Self and prompt insecurities. Contrary to frequent references to *fear* in IR as the driving factor for state behavior, an ontological security lens highlights the relevance and implications of *anxiety* in politics.[20] Despite the difficulty of distinguishing between these two emotions as well as their ambiguity, OS scholars make an analytical distinction between fear and anxiety. They argue fear as being directed at a specified object or threat "that prompts an adaptive response" and anxiety as "a 'diffuse, unpleasant and vague sense of apprehension' that exists prior to and relatively independent of any given actual threat object", thus "unconsciously organized and experienced internally, rather than projected externally."[21] In that sense, ontological security framework suggests that states opt for actions that would control their anxieties and maintain their coherent sense of Self.

However, several scholars recently point out that the earlier studies' predominant focus on "stability" and associating anxiety-reducing with security undermines the "reflexivity" of the Self, and thus, ignores the possibility of change and the potential of agency.[22] These recent studies also offer key insights into the link between emotions, ontological security, and foreign policy change. Steele, for example, refers to "transformational possibilities" whereby states may change their actions to "confront self-identity threats."[23] While Subotic highlights state elites' strategic and selective use of state identity narratives, Cash points to the reorganization of a state's cultural repertoire that allows for a change in foreign policy while maintaining that state's ontological security.[24] Focusing more specifically on conflictual relations, Rumelili demonstrates how anxiety's dual role, on one hand, leads to a state's insistence on stability, hence the continuity of conflictual policies, while, on the other, facilitates change, hence the possibility of peace-driven initiatives.[25]

These insights within the OS literature resonate well with recent calls for a more nuanced understanding of 'change' in the foreign policy change literature. This literature has so far focused mainly on the roles of domestic and external factors such as international norms, policy failures, bureaucratic structures, domestic politics, leadership characteristics, and perceptions.[26] Despite a growing body of work on the role of individual emotions in decision-making,[27] these studies have so far left affective dynamics rather underexplored when examining how or why a state's foreign policy changes.

In this paper, we build our argument on these insights while paying particular attention to calls for the manifestations of anxiety as well as the agency and reflexivity of the state, and thus, for the

20 Rumelili, "Identity and Desecuritization"; Catarina Kinnvall and Jennifer Mitzen, "Anxiety, Fear, and Ontological Security in World Politics: Thinking With and Beyond Giddens", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, 2020, p. 240-256; Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety".

21 Ibid.

22 Browning and Joenniemi, "Ontological Security".

23 Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations.*

24 Jelena Subotic, "Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 12, No 4, 2016, p. 610-627; John Cash, "Psychoanalysis, Cultures of Anarchy, and Ontological Insecurity," *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, 2020, p. 306-321.

25 Bahar Rumelili (ed.), *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*, London, Routledge, 2015.

26 E.g., James I. Walsh, "Policy Failure and Policy Change: British Security Policy After the Cold War", *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 39 No 4, 2006, p. 490-518; Fredrik Doeser, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Change in Small States: The Fall of the Danish 'Footnote Policy'", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol 46. No 2, 2011, p. 222-241; Alex Mintz, "How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic Perspective", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 48 No 1, 2014, p. 3-13.

27 E.g., Jacques E. C. Hysman, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions and Foreign Policy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006; Sasley, "Affective Attachments".

conditions of foreign policy change. OS scholars have underlined how anxiety, as the accompanying emotion of ontological insecurity, might transpose into either 'fear' or 'hope', thereby leading to either further securitization and negative political outcomes or creative changes and positive political outcomes.[28] Yet, fear and hope constitute only some of the potential emotions that would interact with existential anxieties and condition the change of action. 'Hubris' or 'excessive pride' might also emerge in cases of ontological insecurity as accompanying emotions and mitigate disruption or uncertainty in a particular way, thus shaping the nature of foreign policy change. Hubris is characterized by both 'dark' and 'bright' facets through which, we argue, it moderates anxiety and restrains uncertainty.[29] On one hand, excessive pride, overestimated self-confidence, and exaggerated self-worth increase leaders' ambition, resolve, and their tendency to face and embrace anxiety and change. On the other hand, higher self-esteem and confidence might lead to increased willingness to be in control and speak up in the face of challenges. During uncertainty, hubris, characterized by projection of power, strength, and authority, can generate not only bold and committed actions and quick moves for innovation, but also lead to overconfidence in one's judgment and contempt for any challenge.[30]

Therefore, regardless of their capacity for facing anxiety or for generating alternative possibilities, a sense of exceptionalism and overconfidence in specialness enables states to manage their ontological insecurity by providing not only greater leeway for 'creative' change in foreign policy but also a framework for perceiving, understanding, and embracing this change. Anxiety accompanied by hubris might also explain why states express disappointment or rage instead of hope when confronted with unexpected developments beyond their control and perceive those as betrayals or insults and not merely 'concerns' in foreign policy change processes.

In the following analysis, we share an understanding of the affective dimension of the power of language and call attention to the ways discourse evokes, reveals, and engages emotions in politics. We follow Koschut's guidelines on discourse analysis to examine the symbolic and emotion meanings in political rhetoric.[31] Specifically, in speeches of major Turkish foreign policy actors, we analyze the verbal expressions of different emotions within their political context between 2008-2017.[32] The foreign policy change where Turkey replaced its behavior of avoiding direct contact with the Iraqi

28 Kinnvall and Mitzen, "Anxiety, Fear and Ontological Security"; Karl Gustafsson, "Why is Anxiety's Positive Potential So Rarely Realised? Creativity and Change in International Politics", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24 No 4, 2021, p. 1044-1049.

29 Jessica L. Tracy and Richard W. Robins, "The Psychological Structure of Pride: A Tale of Two Facets", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 92, No 3, 2007, p. 506 –525; Timothy A. Judge, Ronald F. Piccolo, and Tomek Kosalka "The Bright and Dark Sides of Leader Traits: A Review and Theoretical Extension of the Leader Trait Paradigm", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No 6, 2009, p. 855–875.

30 David Owen and Jonathan Davidson, "Hubris Syndrome: An Acquired Personality Disorder? A Study of US Presidents and UK Prime Ministers over the last 100 years", *Brain*, Vol. 132, No 5, 2009, p. 1396–1406; Michael Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*, Washington, DC, Potomac Books, 2004.

31 Simon Koschut, "Introduction *to Discourse and Emotions in International Relations*", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 19, No 3, 2017, p. 482-487*;* Simon Koschut, "Speaking from the Heart: Emotion Discourse Analysis in International Relations", Maéva Clément and Eric Sangar (eds), *Researching Emotions in International Relations: Methodological Perspectives on the Emotional Turn*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 277-301.

32 We acknowledge that sometimes the ontological insecurities of the ruling party are different from those of the state, especially when the former's own political survival is at stake. However, our analysis focuses on Turkey's historically rooted ontological insecurities regarding the Kurdish issue. By covering both the AKP and other major state actors, including the National Security Council, the military, etc., we present a common discursive emotional framework for the Turkish state. We thank the reviewers for reminding us of this point.

Kurdish leaders and non-recognition of the KRG's official status with political-economic cooperation fell short of transforming the Turkey-KRG relationship into a close partnership based on trust and empathy. We demonstrate how ontological anxiety and the accompanying hubris shape the range and nature of this policy change.

Iraqi Kurds in Turkey's Ontological Security Considerations

The Turkish national identity narrative contains a strong emphasis on "preservation, glorification, and unity" of the Turkish state.[33] These tenets of Turkey's identity are rooted in the historical experiences of several national groupings' pursuit of self-determination with support from the European powers in the late Ottoman years. These memories were reinforced by the Treaty of Sévres (1920), which aimed at partitioning Anatolia along ethnic lines.[34] Thus, a strong connection emerged "among ethnic demands, foreign intervention, and territorial disintegration" in the construction of Turkey's autobiography in the early 1920s.[35]

The Ottoman Empire's Kurdish population, considered part of its Muslim majority, was an integral aspect of this identity narrative. From the 19th century onwards, however, several Kurdish uprisings flared in resistance to the Ottoman Sultan's centralization policies. Still, Turks were able to receive the Kurds' support both in World War I and in the following National Struggle.[36] However, discussions about a possible Kurdish autonomy in the early 1920s were soon abandoned as the Republic's founders embarked on creating a centralized administration and unitary state.[37]

Within this background, Turkey's self-identity was built on the idea of territorial integrity and a homogenized nation where all citizens are considered Turk and any focus on ethnicity is considered divisive. Over time, this self-narrative had important implications on the negative perception of pro-Kurdish movements and political parties in Turkish politics, and on the demonization of the outlawed PKK and any actor associated with it.[38] Today, in Turkey, a possible loss of territory is perceived as "the loss of an arm or a leg".[39]

Regional Kurds, specifically the Iraqi Kurds, were also incorporated into this narrative. In the early 1960s, Turkish policymakers fretted about the implications of the Iraqi Kurdish rebellion on Turkey's Kurdish population. They considered the possible emergence of an independent Kurdistan as an existential threat to Turkey. These concerns continued to haunt Turkish representations of Iraqi Kurds first, with the creation of a no-fly zone after the 1991 Gulf War and later with the Turkish Parliament's rejection of the American request to open a northern front in the 2003 Iraq War. These developments turned northern Iraq into "a major living space and military base for the PKK" and strengthened American-Kurdish cooperation.[40] Beginning in the 1990s, the Turkish narrative presented the

33 Umut Can Adısönmez and Recep Onursal, "Governing Anxiety, Trauma and Crisis: The Political Discourse on Ontological (In)Security After the July 15 Coup Attempt in Turkey", *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 29, No 3, 2020, p. 292.

34 Asa Lundgren, *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2007, p. 21.

35 Rumelili and Çelik, "Ontological Insecurity", p. 286.

36 Özlem Kayhan Pusane, "Turkey's Kurdish Opening: Long Awaited Achievements and Failed Expectations", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 15, No 1, 2014, p. 83.

37 Metin Heper, *The State and the Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

38 Rumelili and Çelik, "Ontological Insecurity", p. 286.

39 Quoted in Lundgren, *The Unwelcome Neighbour*, p. 22.

40 Özlem Kayhan Pusane, "Turkey's Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency", *Middle*

Iraqi Kurds as the 'Other' who tolerated the presence of an enemy, the terrorist group PKK, within areas under their control in northern Iraq, thereby threatening not only Turkey's physical security but also its identity and ontological security. Reflecting Turkey's deeply rooted ontological insecurities, Turkish officials refrained from recognizing the Iraqi Kurds as a separate interlocutor in Iraq in the early 2000s. They dubbed them 'tribal leaders' even after the 2005 Iraqi Constitution recognized KRG as an autonomous region. Therefore, the word 'Kurdistan' has turned into a contested concept in Turkish politics and its usage even in reference to geographical context became a taboo in political discourse.

Yet, from 2008 onwards, Turkish leaders sought to improve relations with the KRG. Arguably, a number of internal and external factors facilitated this rapprochement.[41] First, the KRG's rich energy resources and KRG officials' contribution to Turkey's initiative of developing political solutions for its Kurdish question brought Turkey closer to the KRG.[42] The declining political influence of the military in this period paved the way for the AKP government to transform its domestic and foreign policy toward the Kurds. By disentangling itself from a military-dominated Kurdish policy of the 1990s, the government took a number of steps to "expand its base among the Kurds" domestically while engaging the Iraqi Kurds in the struggle against the PKK.[43] Meanwhile, the Syrian conflict pushed Turkey and the KRG toward cooperation against the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its armed wing, the People's Protection Units (YPG), which Turkey identifies as the PKK's Syrian affiliate and the KRG sees as a rival in Kurdish politics. Political instabilities and uncertainties subsequent to these developments left Turkish policymakers quite anxious about their future relations with the KRG. Simultaneously, they presented a window of opportunity for a policy change to improve relations with the Iraqi Kurds.

We argue that this foreign policy transformation presents a perfect example of the "dual role of anxiety."[44] Existential anxieties, on one hand, enabled Turkish officials to maneuver into a change in their relations with the Iraqi Kurds. On the other hand, they impeded Turkish policymakers' ability to maintain a coherent story for Turkey. Thus, ideas, practices, and routines identified with a conflictual relationship with the Iraqi Kurds did not completely disappear in the Turkey-KRG relationship. Consequently, instead of leading to a new relationship based on trust and empathy, Turkey's exacerbating anxieties accompanied with other emotional dynamics, particularly 'hubris' prevented a radical transformation in the Turkey-KRG relationship and confined this change to a fragile rapprochement. The rest of the paper provides a detailed analysis of this argument.

Eastern Studies, Vol. 51, No 5, 2015, p. 732; Murat Özçelik, *Oyun Kuruculuktan Oyun Bozuculuğa*, İstanbul, Karakarga Yayınları, 2018, p. 79.

41 See Natalie Tocci, "Turkey's Kurdish Gamble", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 48, No 3, 2013, p. 67-77; David Romano, "Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkey: Temporary Marriage?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 12, No 1, 2015, p. 89-101.

42 "Kapalı Kapılarda Geçen 4 Saat", *T24*, 28 September 2010, https://t24.com.tr/haber/kapali-kapilarda-gecen-4-saat,101295 (Accessed 18 August 2020).

43 Gönül Tol, "Untangling the Turkey-KRG Energy Partnership: Looking Beyond Economic Drivers", Policy Brief 14, Global Turkey in Europe, 2014, https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/GTE_PB_14.pdf (Accessed 12 November 2021).

44 Rumelili, *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security*.

A Fragile Turkey-KRG Rapprochement

Emotional references and affective attachments to various foreign policy issues have been the hallmark of the AKP governments since 2002. In particular, the affectively charged notions of 'friendship', 'neighborhood', and regional 'brotherhood' have dominated the AKP's "nation-branding" strategies,[45] aiming to construct a new self-narrative as well as a national mission for a 'New Turkey'. For the AKP, Turkey's opening to neighboring regions is a natural extension of foreign policy mainly because Turkey's 'artificially constructed' borders separated relatives and siblings who lived together under the 'glorious' Ottoman roof for centuries.[46] This excessive pride and self-worth are, in fact, extensions of AKP's reconstruction of Turkish identity through a Neo-Ottoman narrative based on glorifying the Ottoman Empire as the 'cradle' of civilization and Turkey as the 'heir' responsible for cultivating this legacy in the region and beyond.[47] In foreign policy, most eloquently articulated by former Foreign, and also, Prime Minister Davutoğlu, "reintegration with neighbors" and reviving the relations of the proud Ottoman times was reflected in the well-known AKP maxim of "zero problems with neighbors" and identified as the "normalization of history".[48]

These notions of overconfidence, exaggerated pride, and self-appointed specialness could be also seen in the relationship with the Iraqi Kurds, especially with the beginning of a Turkey-KRG rapprochement after 2008, couched in a 'brotherhood' and 'kinship' discourse. Expressions of hubris in the form of familial bonds allowed Turkish officials not only to contain their anxieties originating in a changing context of bilateral relations, but also to control and shape their future with the KRG.

At its core, this rapprochement centered mainly on developing a common regional vision between two regional actors with shared concerns about the future of the region. But especially for Turkish leaders, it rested on some kind of 'brotherhood' or 'historical siblinghood' rooted in the Ottoman times. In President Erdoğan's words, "we are not after saving the day; rather, we are aiming to construct the region along with our brothers in the region."[49] Yet, while providing a collaborative structure between Turkey and the KRG, the rapprochement process also unveiled the ontological insecurities and entrenched anxieties in bilateral relations.

The first explicit signs of this policy change were a series of high-level meetings with Iraqi Kurdish leaders, paving the way for building economic and political connections.[50] Around the same time, a 'milestone' was achieved when Jalal Talabani, albeit as the Iraqi President, was officially invited

45 Christopher S. Browning, "Nation Branding, National Self-Esteem, and the Constitution of Subjectivity in Late Modernity", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 11, No 2, 2015, p. 195-214.

46 "Başbakan Erdoğan'ın Konuşmasının Tam Metni", *T24*, 30 September 2012, https://t24.com.tr/haber/basbakan-erdoganin-konusmasinin-tam-metni,214180 (Accessed 19 August 2020); Anthony Shadid, "Can Turkey Unify the Arabs?", *The New York Times*, 28 May 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/29/weekinreview/29ottoman.html (Accessed 19 August 2020).

47 Edward Wastnidge, "Imperial Grandeur and Selective Memory: Re-assessing Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign and Domestic Politics", *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 28, No 1, 2019, p. 7-28.

48 Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring", *Turkey Policy Brief Series*, No 3, 2012; Shadid, "Can Turkey Unify the Arabs?".

49 "Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın 25'inci Dönem İkinci Yasama Yılı Açış Konuşması", *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, Vol. 2, 1 October 2015, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/td_v2.goruntule?sayfa_no_ilk=122&sayfa_no_son=133&sayfa_no=122&v_meclis=1&v_donem=25&v_yasama_yili=&v_cilt=2&v_birlesim=001 (Accessed 18 October 2020).

50 Özlem Kayhan Pusane, "The Role of Context in Desecuritization: Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Northern Iraq (2008-2017)", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 21, No 3, 2020, p. 392-413.

to Turkey for the first time by Turkey's President upon receiving tacit approval from the National Security Council (NSC).[51] In another sign of this shift, Turkish leaders dropped their long-standing refusal of including the KRG into the tripartite counterterrorism consultation mechanism between Turkey, Iraq, and the US, and agreed to hold one of these summits in Erbil in October 2009.[52] Perhaps, the most symbolic incident was the 2013 Diyarbakır meeting to which Turkey officially invited the KRG leaders and where Prime Minister Erdoğan used the word 'Kurdistan' for the first time when referring to northern Iraq.

These symbolic gestures were closely entwined with a political discourse gradually recognizing the KRG as Turkey's interlocutor in the region, albeit as a 'brother'. In that sense, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's 2009 visit to Iraq was a harbinger of momentous changes, indicating, above all, Turkey's 'acceptance' and 'recognition' of the KRG. Feeling "at home" in Erbil, Davutoğlu envisioned the people of the region; the Arabs, Turks, Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis all constructing the Middle East together.[53] In the ensuing months, Turkey's first Consul General to Erbil was granted special permission to use the phrase "Kurdistan Region of Iraq" in his diplomatic correspondence with the KRG officials.[54] The KRG flag was raised for the first time alongside the Turkish and Iraqi flags at Turkey's National Day reception on October 29.[55]

'Bonds of brotherhood' discourse gradually intensified and continued to discursively and behaviorally shape Turkey's changing attitudes. Meanwhile, the KRG President Barzani, being disdained as a tribal leader earlier, was officially invited to Turkey by the Turkish foreign minister as "Kak Masoud" ("brother Masoud", in Kurdish).[56] Similarly, addressing his 'Kurdish brothers' during his first visit to Erbil, Erdoğan referred to economic ties and Turkish investments in the region as proof of Turkey and the KRG being "in a union of hearts."[57]

Based on references to Turkey's Ottoman heritage, this brotherhood discourse not only includes striking emotional and cultural connotations but also suggests a sibling relationship in which Turkey assumes the 'big brother' role while the KRG is the 'little brother'. Such connotations of exceptionalism was blatant in the AKP officials' declaration of Turkey as "the protector/guardian" of "the Kurds outside" by using the Arabic word "hami", and their renunciation of others' 'attempts' to be the "hami" of the Kurds.[58] In a culture where familial bonds and respect for elderly are deemed one of the

51 Metehan Demir, "MGK'dan Talabani'ye Sarı Işık", *Hürriyet*, 22 February 2008, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/mgkdan-talabaniye-sari-isik-8284143 (Accessed 3 August 2020); Cengiz Çandar, *Mezopotamya Ekspresi: Bir Tarih Yolculuğu*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2012, p. 273-274.

52 "Üçlü Zirve İlk Kez Erbil'de Yapıldı", *Sabah*, 22 December 2009, https://www.sabah.com.tr/siyaset/2009/12/22/uclu_zirve_ilk_kez_erbilde_yapildi (Accessed 3 August 2020); Özden Z. Oktav, "Çok Boyutlu Türk Dış Politikasına Bir Örnek: Türkiye-Irak-Bölgesel Kürt Yönetimi Arasında Gelişen İlişkiler ve Nedenleri", *Ortadoğu Etütleri*, Vol. 2, No 2, 2010, p. 53-74.

53 "Davutoğlu Barzani ile Görüştü", *Hürriyet*, 31 October 2009, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/davutoglu-barzani-ile-gorustu-12820830 (Accessed 3 August 2020).

54 Aydın Selcen, *Gözden Irakta*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2019, p. 64.

55 "'Kürdistan' Bayrağı Türk Protokolünde", *TimeTurk*, 29 October 2010, https://www.timeturk.com/tr/2010/10/29/kurdistan-bayragi-turk-protokolunde.html (Accessed 6 August 2020).

56 "Davutoğlu'ndan 'Kak Mesut' Savunması", *Milliyet*, 7 July 2010, https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/davutoglundan-kak-mesut-savunmasi-1260526 (Accessed 7 August 2020).

57 "Erdoğan'dan İbrahim Tatlıses'li Mesaj", *Vatan*, 30 March 2011, http://www.gazetevatan.com/erdogan-dan-ibrahim-tatlises-li-mesaj-368024-gundem/ (Accessed 19 August 2020).

58 Zübeyde Yalçın, "Dışarıdaki Kürtlerin Hamisi de Türkiye", *Sabah*, 17 October 2014, https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2014/10/17/disardaki-kurtlerin-hamisi-de-turkiye (Accessed 18 October 2020).

bases of social and family life, the big/little brother dynamic suggests not only the affective dimension of siblinghood but also that Turkey protects, supports, educates, and disciplines its little brother, while the Kurds respect Turkey and listen to its advice.[59]

This brotherhood discourse was undoubtedly instrumental in Turkey's delicate attempts of mitigating anxieties over establishing closer relations with the KRG that challenged Turkey's ontological security. For example, after speaking of the "KRG reality" in a conversation with journalists in 2009, President Abdullah Gül had to deny having used the word "Kurdistan" in the following controversy about whether or not he used the official name "Kurdistan Regional Government."[60] Similarly, during Masoud Barzani's visit to Turkey in 2010, the Turkish side made an attempt to conduct meetings in Turkish-Arabic rather than Turkish-Kurdish, moved Barzani's meeting with Gül from Ankara (the capital city) to Istanbul, and rescheduled it for a weekend at the summer residence of the Turkish presidency in order to give it a more informal appearance.[61] Despite these perversely counterintuitive attempts, the insistence on brotherhood continued to shape the rapprochement.

These endeavors demonstrated that Turkish officials were experiencing a combination of 'anxiety', and 'hubris' in their dealings with the Iraqi Kurds and that anxiety played a dual role in this process. On one hand, Turkish policymakers had established formal contacts with the KRG and taken important steps to build closer relations with the Iraqi Kurds. On the other hand, they were still uneasy about attributing any official status to the KRG because of its possible implications on Turkey, a country with the largest Kurdish population in the region. In order to manage their anxieties, Turkish officials framed Turkey-KRG relations within a distinct discourse of brotherhood and positioned themselves as the big brother. However, the ontological insecurities released by the rapprochement continued to push them towards the stability of the conflictual relationship that they had long established with the Iraqi Kurds.

A number of developments after 2015 further exacerbated these anxieties and heightened Turkey's sense of specialness. They began with the AKP's decision for an alliance with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) after its failure of obtaining a majority in the 2015 parliamentary elections. Also, the end of the peace process and the subsequent revival of the PKK attacks in Turkey as well as the PYD/YPG's political gains in northern Syria helped to pave the way for increased nationalist sentiments in Turkey. Such events also drove Turkish officials into a security-oriented approach to regional developments, bringing "national survival considerations back to the surface."[62] Thus, anxieties and hubris that were already set in motion by the rapprochement process were amplified by these post-2015 developments. Reaching their tipping point in 2017, these developments made Turkish officials warier of an empowered KRG when the Iraqi Kurdish independence looked like a real possibility.

59 Arzu Yılmaz, "Kürtlere 'Hamilik' Yarışı", *Birikim*, 21 November 2014, https://birikimdergisi.com/haftalik/1285/kurtlere-hamilik-yarisi (Accessed 18 October 2020).

60 "Uçaktaki Gazeteciler Yazdı: 'Kürdistan' dedi mi?", *NTV*, 25 March 2009, https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/ucaktaki-gazeteciler-yazdi-kurdistan-dedi-mi,gFY9IL38jkCb3hX1ILfJ5Q (Accessed 18 August 2020).

61 Selcen, *Gözden Irakta*, p. 71-73.

62 Kardaş, "Transformation of Turkey's Regional Policies", p. 28-29.

Turkey's Reaction to the Independence Referendum

The KRG's independence referendum in 2017 undoubtedly created serious tensions in the region and beyond. Yet Turkey demonstrated one of the most confrontational approaches and the strongest objections, which significantly challenged the Turkey-KRG rapprochement.

Turkish policymakers were already troubled by the referendum decision, considering it a "grave mistake" that would lead to "a, God-forbid, civil war", and outraged at the KRG's disregard of their "warnings" and "recommendations".[63] This discourse reflected typical hubristic perception of the subordinate being in conflict with the inflated self-view, i.e., 'little brother' KRG not listening to its 'big brother'. Consequently, the referendum was almost unanimously framed as 'illegal', politically and legally 'illegitimate', or 'null and void' in Turkey. [64]-

Indeed, this account of the referendum included both direct and indirect manifestations of 'anxiety'. For example, when speaking about the referendum's dire consequences, Turkish leaders expressed their concern for Turkey, the region, and the Kurds. President Erdoğan's Chief Advisor İlnur Çevik rhetorically asked, "What if the Barzani administration would cause instability in the region? What if the PKK would benefit from this instability and slither not only in Sinjar and Qandil but also into the rest of the region just like the PYD/YPG did in northern Syria? Therefore, Turkey is seriously anxious."[65] Anxiety discourse was also evident in indirect ways, for example, when Turkish officials frequently used such words as "major crisis" and "dark days ahead for the region" in the context of the referendum.[66]

In communicating such alarming messages, Turkish leaders targeted domestic audiences, the Iraqi Kurds as well as regional and international actors, seeking to provoke anxiety among them. For instance, Turkish politicians insisted that the referendum would be detrimental to the Kurds, who were the most "privileged" group in Iraq with their own parliament, flag, security forces, etc., as it would mean the 'total loss' of all the gains they have made since 2003. Moreover, with this referendum the Kurds would put themselves in a dangerous position by distancing themselves from Turkey, their closest ally.[67]

Turkey's anxiety and hubris in the form of a self-appointed big-brother role vis-a-vis the Iraqi Kurds also manifested itself in the form of direct and indirect expressions of 'rage'. These manifestations were evident particularly in reference to the status of 'Kirkuk' as well as the 'Turkmens' living in northern Iraq for whom Turkey feels a special ethnolinguistic affinity. For example, Bahçeli, the leader of AKP's partner, MHP, perceived the referendum as "a test for Kurdistan", which would harm "Turk-

63 "Çavuşoğlu: IKBY Referandumu Irak'ı İç Savaşa Kadar Götürür", *BBC Turkish*, 16 August 2017, https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-40942305 (Accessed 18 October 2020).

64 "17 Temmuz 2017 Tarihli Toplantı", MGK, 17 July 2017, https://www.mgk.gov.tr/index.php/17-temmuz-2017-tarihli-toplanti (Accessed 18 October 2020).

65 "Çevik, 'Biz Barzani'yi Kendisinden Fazla Düşünüyoruz…'", *Yeniçağ*, 21 September 2017, https://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/cevik-biz-barzaniyi-kendisinden-fazla-dusunuyoruz-173192h.htm (Accessed 18 October 2020).

66 İbrahim Kalın, "KRG Referendum: A Dangerous Precedent with Consequences", *Daily Sabah*, 26 September 2017, https://www.dailysabah.com/columns/ibrahim-kalin/2017/09/26/KRG-referendum-a-dangerous-precedent-with-consequences (Accessed 27 October 2020); "MHP Lideri Bahçeli: Korsan Referandum Yok Hükmündedir", *Hürriyet*, 25 September 2017, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/mhp-lideri-bahceli-korsan-referandum-yok-hukmundedir-40589844 (Accessed 18 October 2020).

67 Kalın, "KRG Referendum".

mens and Turkey" and considered it "a casus belli for Turkey."[68] Thus, Turkey's anxiety was transposed into 'rage' rather than just 'concern', which led to the referendum being construed as 'betrayal'.[69]

This emotional framework evidently hindered the Turkey-KRG rapprochement from moving forward. Finding Barzani's "unilateral" decision a "defiance of Turkey", President Erdoğan was furious because "even though he knows our sensitivities about the territorial unity of Iraq, that Kirkuk is a special place, how dare he attempt to conduct some operations just by himself in these places."[70] Thus, Turkey considered this referendum a "betrayal", an "unforgivable mistake", mainly because it was decided not only without any prior consultation with "us" but also at a time when "our bilateral relations are at their best level in history."[71] Such emotional responses, in turn, led to a threatening attitude: "You will be left alone when we begin implementing our sanctions."[72]

In sum, the independence referendum unveiled Turkey's historical anxieties and hubris toward the KRG, a combination transposed and manifested into rage despite the ongoing rapprochement since 2008. Reaching their tipping point with the possibility of the realization of Iraqi Kurdish independence in 2017, Turkey's harsh reactions were to a great extent the outcome of the ontological insecurities unleashed by Turkish policymakers' efforts to build a close partnership with the Iraqi Kurds. They also reflect Turkey's self-positioning itself as the KRG's big brother who is responsible for protecting and helping the little brother, expecting, in return, the latter's respect and compliance.

Conclusion

In this paper, we explore the role of ontological security as well as emotions in shaping foreign policy transformations. We focus specifically on the Turkey-KRG rapprochement since 2008 to demonstrate how Turkey's ontological insecurity, triggered by this policy, interacted with different emotional dynamics, and shaped the nature of the rapprochement process. Our analysis shows that Turkey's shift to improving relations with the Iraqi Kurds provided an important opportunity for a closer Turkey-KRG partnership. However, during this process, Turkish leaders also aimed to carve a higher status for Turkey as the big brother or even the patron of the Iraqi Kurds, reflecting their enduring historical anxiety about an independent Kurdish state. This combination of deep-rooted anxiety and hubris toward the KRG prevented the growing Turkey-KRG ties from building a trust-based relationship. Instead, it prompted a fragile rapprochement, which was easily interrupted in the face of the 2017 referendum.

Our analysis shows, first, how anxiety, as the predominant emotion in the ontological security framework, coexists with other emotional dynamics and, through its dual role, may constrain and condition the nature of foreign policy change processes. Thus, our paper highlights the often-

68 "MHP Genel Başkanı Bahçeli: Kuzey Irak'taki Referandum Türkiye İçin Gerekirse Savaş Sebebi Sayılmalı", *BBC Turkish*, 24 August 2017, https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-41035397 (Accessed 18 October 2020).

69 We thank Bahar Rumelili for highlighting this point.

70 "Erdoğan'dan IKBY Referandumu Açıklaması: Hükümet Nihai Kararı 22 Eylül'de Verecek", *BBC Turkish*, 15 September 2017, https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-41288441 (Accessed 20 October 2020).

71 "Erdoğan'dan Barzani'ye 'İhanet' Suçlaması"; "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Hamaney'e: Orta Doğu'yu Bölmek İstiyorlar. Barzani Affedilemez Bir Hata Yaptı", *BBC Turkish*, 5 October 2017, https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-41508077 (Accessed 18 October 2020).

72 "Erdoğan'dan Yine 'Yanılmışız' İtirafı: 'Kürdistan Referandumu' Sonuçları", *Cumhuriyet*, 26 September 2017, https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/erdogandan-yine-yanilmisiz-itirafi-kurdistan-referandumu-sonuclari-saibeli-831882 (Accessed 20 October 2020).

overlooked emotional dynamics of bilateral relations and contributes to the growing research agenda on emotions and foreign policy. Second, although Turkey often resorts to "emotional diplomacy" *à la* Hall, the role of emotions in foreign policy remains underexamined in Turkish foreign policy scholarship. Our paper also fills a lacuna in this literature.[73]

Our research also raises a number of interesting questions beyond the scope of this paper. First, the Turkey-KRG relationship generates parallel and contending emotions across the political spectrum. Thus, a more comprehensive study about the emotional dynamics of Turkey-KRG relations could take into consideration various emotion discourses of different actors, including the opposition parties, bureaucratic institutions, or other circles of the Turkish society.

Second, the Turkey-KRG rapprochement also generated emotional responses on the KRG side, when, for example, Turkey was slow in helping its Kurdish 'brothers' when ISIS emerged as an 'existential threat' to the Iraqi Kurds.[74] Thus, future research could explore the KRG's emotional reactions and their implications on bilateral relations.These pathways suggest that there is still room for ontological security, emotions, and foreign policy research to grow.

Bibliography

Adısönmez, Umut Can and Recep Onursal (2020). "Governing Anxiety, Trauma andCrisis: The Political Discourse on Ontological (In)Security After the July 15 Coup Attempt in Turkey", *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 29, No 3, p. 291-306.

"Başbakan Erdoğan'ın Konuşmasının Tam Metni" (30 September 2012). *T24.*

Berenskoetter, Felix (2014). "Parameters of a National Biography", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 20, No 1, p. 262-288.

Browning, Christopher C. and Pertti Joenniemi (2017). "Ontological Security, Self-Articulation and the Securitization of Identity", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 52, No 1, p. 31-47.

Browning, Christopher S. (2015). "Nation Branding, National Self-Esteem, and the Constitution of Subjectivity in Late Modernity", *Foreign Policy Analysis,* Vol. 11, No 2, p. 195-214.

Cash, John (2020). "Psychoanalysis, Cultures of Anarchy, and Ontological Insecurity", *International Theory,* Vol. 12, No 2, p. 306-321.

Clément, Maéva and Eric Sangar (eds.) (2018). *Researching Emotions in International Relations: Methodological Perspectives on the Emotional Turn*. Cham, Palgrave Macmillan.

"Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Hamaney'e: Orta Doğu'yu Bölmek İstiyorlar. Barzani Affedilemez Bir Hata Yaptı" (5 October 2017). *BBC Turkish.*

"Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın 25'inci Dönem İkinci Yasama Yılı Açış Konuşması", (2015). *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, Vol. 2.

Çandar, Cengiz (8 November 2014). "Erbil'den Ankara'ya Bakış: Hayal Kırıklığı…", *Hürriyet*.

Çandar, Cengiz (2012). *Mezopotamya Ekspresi: Bir Tarih Yolculuğu*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları.

"Çavuşoğlu: IKBY Referandumu Irak'ı İç Savaşa Kadar Götürür" (16 August 2017). *BBC Turkish*.

"Çevik, 'Biz Barzani'yi Kendisinden Fazla Düşünüyoruz…'" (21 September 2017). *Yeniçağ*.

Davutoğlu, Ahmet (2012). "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring", *Turkey Policy Brief Series*, No 3, 2012.

73 For an exception, see Mehmet Akif Kumral, *Exploring Emotions in Turkey-Iran Relations: Affective Politics of Partnership and Rivalry*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

74 Cengiz Çandar, "Erbil'den Ankara'ya Bakış: Hayal Kırıklığı…", *Hürriyet*, 8 November 2014, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/cengiz-candar/erbilden-ankaraya-bakis-hayal-kirikligi-27538279 (Accessed 18 October 2020).

"Davutoğlu Barzani ile Görüştü" (31 October 2009). *Hürriyet.*

"Davutoğlu'ndan 'Kak Mesut' Savunması" (7 July 2010). *Milliyet.*

Demir, Metehan (22 February 2008). "MGK'dan Talabani'ye Sarı Işık", *Hürriyet*.

"Diyarbakır'da Barzani-Erdoğan Mitingi" (16 November 2013). *Sözcü.*

Doeser, Fredrik (2011). "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Change in Small States: The Fall of the Danish 'Footnote Policy'", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 46, No 2, p. 222-241.

"Erdoğan'dan Barzani'ye 'İhanet' Suçlaması" (26 September 2017). *Deutsche Welle Türkiye.*

"Erdoğan'dan IKBY Referandumu Açıklaması: Hükümet Nihai Kararı 22 Eylül'de Verecek", (15 September 2017). *BBC Turkish*.

"Erdoğan'dan İbrahim Tatlıses'li Mesaj" (30 March 2011). *Vatan.*

"Erdoğan'dan Yine 'Yanılmışız' İtirafı: 'Kürdistan Referandumu' Sonuçları" (26 September 2017). *Cumhuriyet.*

Giddens, Anthony (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity*. New York, Polity Press.

Gustafsson, Karl (2021). "Why is Anxiety's Positive Potential So Rarely Realised? Creativity and Change in International Politics", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24, No 4, p. 1044-1049.

Hall, Todd (2015). *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Heper, Metin (2007). *The State and the Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation.* New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Hysman, Jacques E. C. (2006). *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Judge, Timothy A., Ronald F. Piccolo, and Tomek Kosalka (2009). "The Bright and Dark Sides of Leader Traits: A Review and Theoretical Extension of the Leader Trait Paradigm.", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No 6, p. 855–875.

Kalın, İbrahim (26 September 2017). "KRG referendum: A Dangerous Precedent with Consequences", *Daily Sabah*.

"Kapalı Kapılarda Geçen 4 Saat" (28 September 2010). *T24*.

Kardaş, Şaban (2018). "Transformation of Turkey's Regional Policies: The Case of the KRG Referendum Debacle", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 53, No 4, p. 16-34.

Kayhan Pusane, Özlem (2020). "The Role of Context in Desecuritization: Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Northern Iraq (2008-2017)", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 21, No 3, p. 392-413.

Kayhan Pusane, Özlem (2014). "Turkey's Kurdish Opening: Long Awaited Achievements and Failed Expectations", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 15, No 1, p. 83.

Kayhan Pusane, Özlem (2015). "Turkey's Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 51, No 5, p. 732.

Kinnvall, Catarina (2004). "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 25, No 5, p. 741-767.

Kinnvall, Catarina and Jennifer Mitzen (2020). "Anxiety, Fear, and Ontological Security in World Politics: Thinking With and Beyond Giddens", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, p. 240-256.

Koschut, Simon (2017). "Introduction *to Discourse and Emotions in International Relations", International Studies Review,* Vol. 19, No 3, p. 482-487.

Kumral, Mehmet Akif (2020). *Exploring Emotions in Turkey-Iran Relations: Affective Politics of Partnership and Rivalry*. Cham, Palgrave Macmillan.

'"Kürdistan' Bayrağı Türk Protokolünde" (29 October 2010). *TimeTurk.*

Lundgren, Asa (2007). *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy*. London, I.B. Tauris.

"Maliye Bakanı Erbil'de Açılışta Sürpriz Yaptı" (14 April 2011). *Haber7.*

Mintz, Alex (2014). "How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic Perspective", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 48, No 1, p. 3-13.

Mitzen, Jennifer (2018). "Anxious Community: EU as (In)security Community", *European Security,* Vol. 27, No 3, p. 393-413.

Mitzen, Jennifer (2006). "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No 3, p. 341-370.

"MHP Genel Başkanı Bahçeli: Kuzey Irak'taki Referandum Türkiye İçin Gerekirse Savaş Sebebi Sayılmalı" (24 August 2017). *BBC Turkish*.

"MHP Lideri Bahçeli: Korsan Referandum Yok Hükmündedir" (25 September 2017). *Hürriyet.*

Oktav, Özden Z. (2010). "Çok Boyutlu Türk Dış Politikasına Bir Örnek: Türkiye-Irak-Bölgesel Kürt Yönetimi Arasında Gelişen İlişkiler ve Nedenleri", *Ortadoğu Etütleri*, Vol. 2, No 2, p. 53-74.

Owen, David and Jonathan Davidson (2009). "Hubris Syndrome: An Acquired Personality Disorder? A Study of US Presidents and UK Prime Ministers over the last 100 years,", *Brain*, Vol. 132, No 5, p. 1396–1406.

Özçelik, Murat (2018). *Oyun Kuruculuktan Oyun Bozuculuğa*. İstanbul, Karakarga Yayınları.

Park, Bill (2019). "Explaining Turkey's Reaction to the September 2017 Independence Referendum in the KRG: Final Divorce or Relationship Reset?", *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 18, No 1, p. 46-60.

Prakash, Deepa and Aslı Ilgıt (2017). "More than a Feeling: Emotional Responses to International Criticism in Erdoğan's Turkey", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 43, No 1, p. 130-151.

Romano, David (2015). "Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkey: Temporary Marriage?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 12, No 1, p. 89-101.

Rumelili, Bahar (ed.) (2015). *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*. London, Routledge.

Rumelili, Bahar (2015). "Identity and Desecuritisation: The Pitfalls of Conflating Ontological and Physical security", *Journal of International Relations and Development,* 18, p.52–74.

Rumelili, Bahar (2020). "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory: Hobbes, Existentialism, and Ontological Security", *International Theory,* Vol. 12, No 2, p. 257-272.

Rumelili, Bahar and Ayşe Betül Çelik (2017). "Ontological Insecurity in Asymmetric Conflicts: Reflections on Agonistic Peace in Turkey's Kurdish Issue", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 48, No 4, p. 279-296.

Rumelili, Bahar and Umut Can Adısönmez (2020). "Uluslararası İlişkilerde Kimlik-Güvenlik İlişkisine Dair Yeni bir Paradigma: Ontolojik Güvenlik Teorisi", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 17, No 66, p. 23-39.

Sasley, Brent (2010). "Affective Attachments and Foreign Policy: Israel and the 1993 Oslo Accords", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 16, No 4, p. 687-709.

Scheuer, Michael (2004). *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*. Washington, DC, Potomac Books.

Selcen, Aydın (2019). *Gözden Irakta*. İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları.

Shadid, Anthony (28 May 2011). "Can Turkey Unify the Arabs?", *The New York Times*.

Steele, Brent J. (2008). *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-identity and the IR State*. New York, Routledge.

Steele, Brent J. and Alexandra Homolar (2019). "Ontological Insecurities and the Politics of Contemporary Populism", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No 3, p. 214-221.

Subotic, Jelena (2016). "Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 12, No 4, p. 610-627.

Subotic, Jelena and Ayşe Zarakol (2013). "Cultural Intimacy International Relations", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 19, No 4, p. 915-938.

Tocci, Natalie (2013). "Turkey's Kurdish Gamble", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 48, No 3, p. 67-77.

Tol, Gönül (2014). "Untangling the Turkey-KRG Energy Partnership: Looking Beyond Economic Drivers", Policy Brief 14, Global Turkey in Europe.

Tracy, Jessica L. and Richard W. Robins (2007). "The Psychological Structure of Pride: A Tale of Two Facets.", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 92, No. 3, p. 506 –525.

"Türkiye'nin Muhatabı Kabile Reisi Değildir" (7 June 2007). *Yeni Şafak*.

"Uçaktaki Gazeteciler Yazdı: 'Kürdistan' dedi mi?" (25 March 2009). *NTV*.

"Üçlü Zirve ilk kez Erbil'de Yapıldı" (22 December 2009). *Sabah*.

Walsh, James I. (2006). "Policy Failure and Policy Change: British Security Policy After the Cold War", *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 39, No 4, p. 490-518.

Wastnidge, Edward (2019). "Imperial Grandeur and Selective Memory: Re-assessing Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign and Domestic Politics," *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 28, No 1, p.7-28.

Yalçın, Zübeyde (17 October 2014). "Dışarıdaki Kürtlerin Hamisi de Türkiye", *Sabah*.

Yılmaz, Arzu (21 November 2014). "Kürtlere 'Hamilik' Yarışı", *Birikim*.

Zarakol, Ayşe (2010). "Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan", *International Relations*, Vol. 24, No 1, p. 3-23.

17 Temmuz 2017 Tarihli Toplantı (2017). MGK.