THE ROLE AND EFFECT OF SOCIAL HATRED ON CONFLICTS:
The Examples of TIGERS OF TAMIL and PKK

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Abstract

Social hatred is one of the important elements that cause an increase in the severity and increment of conflicts. In the formation of social hatred, a deep discrimination between ethnic groups, othering, humiliating, conflict, violence-focused incidents in society, and trauma in the society are effective. This study will try to expose the social reasons fueling the conflict in the Tamil and Kurdish Issues, analyzing the Turkish and Kurdish societies. In a war or a severe trauma occurring under similar conditions, a definable enemy or oppressive large groups are a matter. Generational transfer of trauma and a common sense of shame may transform into social hatred between the two ethnic groups. Transmission of trauma from generation to generation with a common sense of shame may lead communities to othering each other. In case of converting the events, which a discriminated community lived in the past to social hatred, may increase the severity of conflict. This declaration aims at presenting an analytical perspective on whether there is a social hatred between the Turkish and Kurdish communities. In this context, the resembling points of Tamil and Kurdish issues will be put forward. However, there is not “a direct hatred against the Turkish” in the social basis of the Kurdish Issue. It will be tried to emphasize that the Kurdish and Turkish communities are not in a direct conflict with each other in Turkey in contrast to the conflict in Sri Lanka. From this point, it will be focused on the present cultural and religious similarities to solve the conflicts. In this way, this analysis will provide a comparison on the role and effect of social hatred on the conflicts in Turkey and Sri Lanka either, and focus on the concept of “social hatred” to resolve conflicts.

Key Words: Social Hatred, the Kurdish Issue, the Tamil Issue, PKK

Introduction

Social hatred is an important element that may cause conflicts to appear and may lead to increase the violence of conflicts. In the formation of social hatred, deep discriminations, othering among ethnic groups, humiliating, conflicts, violence-focused incidents in society and its transformation into trauma in the society are effective. These traumatic conditions in the struggle of Sri Lankan Government with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, shortly, Tigers of Tamil) occurred for both the Tamil people and the Sinhaleses. The Tamils, in particular, were exposed to more negative conditions than the Sinhaleses. The Tamils, in particular, were exposed to more negative conditions than the Sinhaleses. In a heavy trauma that emerges from a war or similar conditions, a describable enemy or an existence of a wide oppressive group that causes a victim intentionally to suffer is a matter. The transfer of trauma from generation to generation and the common sense of shame have transformed into a social hatred between both ethnic groups.

The transfer of Trauma from generation to generation and the Common Sense of Shame may cause communities to other each other. Especially, it can be explained by this social vicious circle that LTTE does not experience difficulty to find a militant. The goal of this Study is to put forward how the social hatred occurring in Sri Lanka affected the

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conflicts. This essay, at the same time, aims at presenting an analytic point of view on whether there is a social hatred between the Turkish and Kurdish communities. In this way, this analysis is going to provide a comparison on the role and effect of social hatred on the conflicts in both Turkey and Sri Lanka.

The Formation of Social Hatred in Sri Lanka and Tigers of Tamil

In 1991, five hundred thousand Tamils\(^3\) were brought from the South India to Sri Lanka. This number was equal to twelve percent of the total population in that period\(^4\). Buddhist monks saw the Tamils, who came to Sri Lanka, as occupiers because they were not Buddhist\(^5\). Because the English brought the Tamils from the South India to the Lanka Island, it caused the community to remember the struggle between the Empire of Sinhalese in the past and the Empire of Chola (Tamil), which was a dominant power in the South India in the thirteenth century BC, again. The Empire of Chola had made great wars with the Sinhaleses to get the control of the Island\(^6\). Mahavamsa, who is the most effective leader to set a social order among the Sinhaleses, presents this process to us in details. The control of the Empire of Chola on the Island, which was one of the Empires of Tamil, is perceived by the Sinhalese as an invasion. Particularly, the struggle of Sinhalese against the Portuguese people played a significant role in the formation of the Sinhalese’s national conscious and their adaptation to the “Sri Lanka” Island.\(^7\)

The most important element that causes a conflict to occur between the two ethnic groups in Sri Lanka is democracy as an English heritage, which is tried to integrate into the Island. In this context, the Donoughmore Commission\(^8\), which was established to build a democratic order in the Island, prepared a Constitution in 1931. While this Constitution helped for opening up an opportunity to fulfill the demands of majority, it gave rise to ignore

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\(^3\) The population of Sri Lanka, according to the data in 2001, is 21,283,9132 (July 2011). The ethnical distribution of population is the following (as to the data in 2001): The Sinhaleses 73.8 \%, Sri Lankan Moors 72 \%, the Indian Tamils 4.6 \%, the Sri Lankan Tamils 3.9 \%, and others 0.5 \%. Those who do not include in any group are 10 \%. The rate of religious distribution is (the data in 2001): Buddhists 69.1 \%, Muslims 7.6 \%, Hindus 7.1 \%, Christians 6.2 \%, and those who do not include in any group are 10 \%. [CIA Factbook](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ce.html).


\(^7\) Rajapakse, (2003), p. 131-133.

the demands of other ethnic groups more.

The Constitution prepared the State of Sri Lanka to independence. The biggest action uncovering separation after independence came from the Sinhalese. By the Sinhalese issued the “Sinhalese Only Bill” in 1956, “Sinhale language” became the official language.

Nevertheless, the Tamils did not accept this constitutional amendment and began to worry about themselves would be removed by the Sinhalese. In this way, the deputies of Tamil origin, who showed the biggest reaction against this legal amendment in that period, expressed that the Tamils were urged to fight for their independence by force to speak their own (mother) languages.

By the 1972 Constitution, the name of Sri Lanka having the name of “Ceylon” was changed as “Sri Lanka.” This name change strengthened the belief of the Sinhalese about Sri Lanka belonged to themselves more.

The Sri Lankan Government, by the advantages given by the Parliament, took the young people of Tamil away from the state offices. Consequently, the well-educated young people of Tamil became unemployed. In the meantime, the paramiliter nationalist groups of the Sinhalese attacked the Tamils. In this process, the Tamil nationalist groups gather into groups in universities and among young people. In this way, it was laid the foundations of the Marxist Tigers of Tamil. The Founder of Tigers of Tamil, Pharabakaran had gone into his first action in eighteen years old, he had assassinated the Mayor of Jafna of Tamil origin because the Mayor had betrayed his (political) action.

The Sinhalese nationalist groups had attacked the Tamils in 1983. The Sinhalese had plundered of the Tamils’ valuables by these attacks; they had killed the civil people of the Tamil origin. These plundering actions had caused a part of the Tamils to run away from the country. With regards to the Tamils who were staying in the Island, they had come together around Tigers of Tamil and the other organizations of the Tamils. So, it had been waged a civil war that would continue until 2009. Tigers of Tamil had been supported by India in the

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12 The English was describing the people who were living in the Ceylon Island as “Ceylonese” (Nithiyanandam, 2000, p.287). The reason that the name of the Island was changed in 1972 based upon that Prince Vijaya arrived at the Lankan Island at first in the Mahavamsa Meeting. See more information: Ruwan Rajapakse, *Concise Mahavamsa*, (Sri Lanka: Sinhalanet.com, 2003).
first phase of their struggle. It had been allowed Tigers of Tamil to pitch a training camp in the boundaries of the Autonomous Tamil Nadu State in India.\textsuperscript{15}

The basic element separating Tigers of Tamil from the other nationalist Tamil organizations is that it is the unique organization aiming at independence. By Indira Gandhi wanted not to see a Tamil state in India that would discomfort themselves, India changed its foreign policy supporting Tigers of Tamil. India, after this phase, tried to mediate between Tigers of Tamil and the Sri Lankan Government. The offer of an Indian peace keeping force was approved by the Sri Lankan Government, and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was positioned at the Island. The coming of the soldiers of the Indian Peace Keeping Force was not positively met by Tigers of Tamil. The view of the Tamils about India was affected more negatively by the soldiers of the Peace Keeping Force joined to tortures and rapes. Rajiv Gandhi drew the soldiers of the Peace Keeping Force back in 1991. After this process, India approached the developments in Sri Lanka in a more passive manner.\textsuperscript{16}

Because the two ethnic groups saw the Island as “Home of Ancestors,” this caused them to see each other as “evil.” Particularly, the Sinhaleses having the state power in their hands did not fail to get into infra dig actions against the Tamils.

One of the most effective elements, which leads to constitute a social hatred, is to humiliate the opposite ethnical element. If necessary to give an example in this point, the rape attempts against the kin of Tigers of Tamil ranged from 14-year-old girls to 70-year-old women. Another reason that the Tamils flamed with vengeance against the Sinhaleses was that their mothers and sisters were raped by the Sinhalese soldiers in front of their eyes.\textsuperscript{17} Despite rape is accepted a war crime, it could not be opened an investigation against the Sri Lankan soldiers, who attempted the rape actions. This caused the rapist soldiers not to be punished because the victims were threatened and the state mechanisms took the process easy. This conclusion was leading the Tamils’ trust in the State to reduce more.

The disappearance of a large part of the Tamils detained fuels the suspicion that the Tamils were tormented in the detentions.\textsuperscript{18} Kumaratunga, who was the President of Sri Lanka in 1995, addressing the relatives who lost their family members between January 1988 and 1995, expressed they established a commission to seek the lost people. On this Commission,

ten thousand applications of loss were made.\textsuperscript{19} Despite Tigers of Tamil were constricted in an area for 35 km in 2008, it kept on almost two years that the Sri Lankan Government took the control of the North. However, the continuation of the Tamils’ supporting for Tigers of Tamil is closely concerned with the continuation of the Tamils’ humiliating the Sinhaleses.

The main element of the Sinhaleses’ enmity of Tamil was Mahavamsa. Mahavamsa shaped the social life of the Sinhaleses. The Tamils, according to this understanding, were the occupiers coming to the Island. The Sinhaleses were taken away from the Sri Lankan state mechanisms with a social hatred and revenge that they felt against the Tamils and they were humiliated because they had got a different religion and language. It became by their wishes for independence and nationalist attitudes that Tigers of Tamil took a role inside social life within these developments.\textsuperscript{20} The Sri Lankan Government increased the actions against Tigers of Tamil after 2006. When the civil war that occurred in 2009 ended, four or five hundred thousand people of Tamil origin had been displaced in the end of this civil war and eighty thousand people had passed away.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{The Kurdish Issue in Turkey and PKK}

The Republic of Turkey faced with the Kurdish issue just after its foundation. The Sheikh Said’s Rebellion broke out in 1925.\textsuperscript{22} There are three points of view related to the Sheikh Said’s Rebellion, which have reached until today. The first view bases the outbreak reasons of the Rebellion on a religious movement. The resurrection of Caliphate, according to this view, is the basic reason of the Sheikh Said’s Rebellion. According to the second viewpoint belonging to the Kemalist sight, while the Sheikh Said’s Rebellion is that the undeveloped and feudal Eastern region reacts to the modernization and the progressivist movement brought by the Kemalist revolution, the third viewpoint believes in that the Sheikh Said’s Rebellion occurred on the base of the Kurdish nationalism.\textsuperscript{23}

The 1921 Constitution\textsuperscript{24}, which was prepared before the proclamation of the Republic, had not then included some elements like language and religion of State. By the 1924 Constitution\textsuperscript{25}, it had been stated that the language of the State was Turkish and its language

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Amnesty International}, (January 2002), AI Index: ASA 370495, p.4.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Amnesty International} (March 2002), AI Index: ASA 370042009, p.2.
\textsuperscript{23} Oran, (2002), p. 266.
\textsuperscript{24} Kanuni Esasıyeye, 10.11.2011, \url{www.tbmm.gov.tr/anayasa/anayasa21.htm}.
\textsuperscript{25} 1924 Anayasasi, 10.11.2011, \url{www.tbmm.gov.tr/anayasa/anayasa24.htm}. 
was Islam; the 1924 Constitution had entered into force as a product of a modernist national statist viewpoint. To express that the Sheikh Said’s Uprising, which broke out just after the 1924 Constitution, constituted a Kurdish national conscious can misguide us. It is understood that Sheikh Said did not rebel because it was referred only to the Turkish language and the Turkish identity in the 1924 Constitution. Nevertheless, it is estimated that this Rebellion broke out from Sheikh Said’s religious worries and (possibly) an English support. Because, at most the English had gotten benefitted from the Sheikh Said Rebellion; Mosul (Iraq) had remained under the English regime. However, the Sheikh Said Rebellion would serve as a model to the Kurdish movement that would emerge in the late of 1970’s.

Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK-Partiya Karker Kurdistan) was established in the meeting holding in the Fis Village of Lice District of Diyarbakır Province on 27 November 1978. The aim of PKK, during the period when it was established, was to found an independent Kurdish state. It appears that the foundation of PKK was actualized by the Marxist Kurdish nationalism rather than the Sheikh Said Rebellion in this context. By 1979, Syria financed PKK to advance itself. In other words, PKK was supported by some states in the region and some powers during the periods of foundation and development.

The first raid of PKK was made in the District of Semdinli of Hakkari Province on 15 August 1984. PKK, in the period between 1984 and 1990’s, applied great pressures on the people in the region and made efforts to the people in the region to support themselves by force of arms. The terrorist organization PKK, in the following process, started to experience densely actions against the governmental elements and powers (such as soldiers, police officers, teachers, doctors, nurses, site workers, agricultural engineers, etc….) with a kind of guerilla war.

According to the population census in 1996, in the Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia regions, totally 11,534,000 people were living. This is eighteen point four percent of the

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26 Oran, (2002), p.266.
28 According to the data in 2008, the rate of the Turkish in the total population is 70-75 %, the Kurdish, 18 %, and others, 7-12 %. Muslims in Turkey are 99.8 %, and the members of other religions are 0.22 %. (See: CIA Factbook, 11.12.2011, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html.
population of Turkey.\textsuperscript{33} The GNP shares of the Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia regions in 1996 actualized, respectively, three point three percent and five point two percent.\textsuperscript{34} According to the November 1997 data of the Governorship of the State of Emergency of Region (GSER), excluding those returning, eight hundred and twenty villages and two thousand and three hundred and forty five hamlets were evacuated in the six provinces where GSER included and in the four provinces in which were its adjacent areas. Totally in the three thousand and one hundred and sixty five accommodation units, the 378,335 people from 57,314 houses had migrated to various cities.\textsuperscript{35}

Today, the people in the region claims that their houses, stables and storehouses were destroyed, a considerable part of it was burned, grasslands were closed, and their products were destructed in the process of the forced evacuation of village.\textsuperscript{36} Because the forced migration was suddenly and corporately and because the necessary precautions were not taken by the State, some unjust treatments occurred. Upheavals facilitated PKK to have a social support in the region and enable it to propagandize in a better way.\textsuperscript{37}

The lost five hundred and twenty people in custody, according to Human Rights Association and some various organizations by the applications of the relatives of the lost, follow like this course in years: 1991-four, 1992-eight, 1993-thirty six, 1994-two hundred and twenty nine, 1995-one hundred and twenty one, 1996-sixty eight, 1997-fourty five, 1998-nine. If needed to draw attention to the rapid increment in the lost people in custody in 1994 in particular, the lost in custody in 1994 took the place of the unsolved murders in the GSER between 1992 and 1993.\textsuperscript{38} Because this process was not managed by the State in better conditions, it was facilitated PKK to socialize and play an important role. PKK obtained a more confortable ground in the region because it wished for mirroring its own terrorist activities legitimate in this way. In the struggle of the Turkish Republic with PKK, the eleven thousand and five hundred and five Turkish citizens passed away in the years between 1984 and 2009. The loss of PKK at the same period was twenty nine thousand and six hundred and

\textsuperscript{34} Dogu ve Guneydogu Raporu Ocak 1999, p.5.
\textsuperscript{36} Dogu ve Guneydogu Raporu Ocak 1999, p.5.
thirty nine. Consequently, forty-one thousand and one hundred and forty four people had died between 1984 and August 2009.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Conclusion}

The ethnic conflicts occurring in Sri Lanka have appeared by the effect of the Sinhaleses in the State mechanisms have increased after the independence. Because the Sinhaleses have prevented the Tamils to obtain important positions and work in the state mechanisms, Sri Lanka has been dragged into a civil war. The Sri Lankan Government has not accepted the Tamils’ cultural differences; it has leant some rules under the frame of the Sinhalese’s supra-identity against them. The foundations of social hatred in the Sinhaleses and the Tamils have been laid by the Sinhalese community has been extremely affected from the Mahavamsa meeting and they have seen the Tamils as the occupiers who occupied the lands. Because the Sinhaleses have seen the Hindu Tamils as occupiers while blessing Buddhism, the social hatred between the two groups has remained lively. Some religious mechanisms as Mahavamsa have caused the unwelcome events lived in the past to transfer from generation to generation. In this context, Mahavamsa has led both ethnic groups to keep their hatreds alive.

Due to the fact that some insulting chauvinist elements (such as rapes, sacks, divesting of cultural and educational rights, disavowal of equality opportunities, etc.), similar to Sri Lanka, have not been a State policy, the social hatred perception has remained weak between both the Turkish and Kurdish communities. The foundational philosophy of the Turkish Republic has been shaped under the frame of modern perception of national state and the Turkish identity. While the Turkish Republic does not break off from this foundational philosophy today, It has a flexibility to be able to make arrangements in favor of the Kurdish people to get their cultural and social rights in a more easier way. Because the Republic of Turkey does not apply on some exclusionist nationalist policies toward the Kurdish people, It has a more flexible structure than Sri Lanka. In this way, It prevents the problem to transform into a social conflict in this way.

The claim about the Turkish and Kurdish people have a social hatred against each other has been expressed by small groups. It is an important element weakening the perception of social hatred and vengeance between the Turkish and Kurdish communities that the religions of the Turkish Community and the Kurdish Community are same, and their cultural sensitivities are similar. Despite PKK comes to the fore in the region more by some

policies such as forced evacuation of village, which the Turkish Republic applied on the region in the past, did backlash, the PKK’s claims,\textsuperscript{40} about the main reason of the PKK’s terrorist actions in Turkey is social hatred and social revenge, are remaining weak.

As a result, today the PKK factor in the Turkish foreign policy plays a key role in the relationships of Turkey with the states in the region, USA, and EU.\textsuperscript{41} That’s why, the existence of PKK is tied to the balance among the regional and international (great) powers more than social hatred. Similarly, this idea can be confirmed by the PKK’s terrorist actions may be changed according to the regional mobility and the world conjuncture.

\textsuperscript{40} Bal, (2011), p.11.
\textsuperscript{41} Altunisik, Tur, (2005), p.90.