Chapter 15
The 2016 Failed Coup Attempt and its Influence on Policing the Kurdish and Other Ethnic Minorities Across Turkey

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Introduction

The history witnessed that the Turks as a civilization, which consist of not one group but groups of peoples, established sixteen empires in more than 2000 years of history. In every aspect of the Turkish state, the concept of organization has been the crucial essential element since the beginning of institutionalism and socialization process of societies. Therefore, the pre-Islamic Turk Empire was both an administrative organization and a tribal confederation, which combined Turkish tribes and clans in Central Asia. There is not much information about the types of security and crime in the literature during either at the tribal level or government level, but to protect and serve was always at the center of a Turkish organizational ideology. Public safety was the primary task for the military corps. In other words, a Turkish state would protect their citizens including minority groups from any kinds of internal or external enemies and would establish the confidence and peace among its people. In the very early Turkish history, the Kagan (a title referring to the ruler of all rulers)'s possible "success depended critically on his ability to mobilize and redistribute resources, whether through tribute or trade" (Findley 2005). In the Tribal era, public security had some militaristic characters; people who were in charge of this task were called "Subaşı," which refers to the commander of soldiers. The first known Subasi was InalKagan, whose name mentioned in the Bain Tsokto inscriptions (emniyet.gov.tr). During war times, Subaşı was leading and commanding his army; in peacetime, he was providing the public safety of his region, which he was also obligated to manage.

Throughout Turkish history, during the governments of different Turkish nations, public order and public security have been provided by the State along with the

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J. F. Albrecht et al. (eds.), *Policing and Minority Communities*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19182-5_15

national defense. Thus, this chapter examines the evolution of Turkish policing through the different historical eras. It also discusses the emerging problems of the policing in Turkey, particularly after the July 15, 2016, the failed coup.

Policing During the Ottomans

There is more information about the public safety during the reign of the Ottomans which lasted for more than six centuries (1299–1923). The Ottomans was a world state and able to create a continental super-state that controlled hundreds of ethnic groups with various religious beliefs. It was a multi-national society; within its dominion lived hundreds of millions of people, of different creeds and ethnic origins. "Enforcement was highly complex and varied from location to location and among the multitude of ethnoreligious groups of the Ottoman Empire" (Piran 2011: 31). The Ottoman Rulers were usually called Padishah and Hunkar or Sultan. "The Muslim Ottoman elite, headed by a sultan who was also (after 1517) caliph (spiritual leader of Sunni Islam) incorporated a variety of subject peoples" (Cam 2014: 317). The Ottomans inherited rich political traditions from entirely different ethnic groups: Turks, Arabs, Persians, and Mongols. In the classical period of the Ottomans, Padishah was officially the government; was the ruler, leader and the commander in chief of the state.

> "From the earliest period, the Ottoman sultans had always appointed two authorities to administer a district- the *bey* (military commander), who came from the military class and represented the sultan's executive authority, and the *Qadi* (Judge), who came from the *ulema* (a name for a group of respected Islamic scholars) and represented the sultan's legal authority. The bey could not inflict any punishment without first obtaining the Qadi's judgment, but the Qadi could not personally execute any of his sentences. In his decisions and his application of the Sharia (Islamic law) and kanun (traditional law and customs), the Qadi was independent of the bey" (Inalcik 1973: 104).

The Ottoman military was also made up of people of many nationalities. At the early stages of the State, the security and public safety were very similar to the applications of the old Turkish states. However, "following the conquest of İstanbul in 1453, Sultan Mehmet II organized his nonMuslim subjects into millets, or separate religious communities, under their own ecclesiastical chiefs to whom he gave absolute authority in civil and religious matters and over criminal offenses that did not come under Islamic law" (Guclu 2017). By the fifteenth century, the state began to compartmentalize the bureaucracy, and public security was still a part of the national defense in the hands of the Ottoman military. Under the jurisdiction of the Qadi, the Turkish cavalry called Sipahis and the foot soldiers called Kapikulu, consist of Christian youths from the Balkan region, were in charge of the security in the countryside (emniyet.gov.tr). More specifically, the members of the Kapikulu unit represented the elite in the society and formed the core of famous Janissary (Yeniceri-new soldier) infantry, which was renowned for its military skills. Nevertheless, in the capital city of Istanbul, the public safety was maintained by a

unit, similar to the modern law enforcement patrolmen, called Yasakcilar (Prohibitors), led by the Subasi under the direct authority of the Grand vizier. However, outside the capital, in the country region, Subasi was working under the influence of Qadi. Subasi's were protecting the public against any criminals and rebellions. After the conquest of Istanbul (1453), the bureaucratic and military structure expanded and became more organized. In the countryside, three different groups: kollukcular (patrolmen), yasakcilar (prohibitors), and bekciler (night-watchmen) maintained the public order.

After three centuries of success and expansion, the Ottoman State has reached the apex of its time. By the eighteenth-century confusion and the corruption started to show up all administration level. Janissary corps, once the core and the dynamic of the Ottoman power, had ceased to function as the best-selected and trained unit of the Ottomans. In 1826, Sultan Mahmud II abolished the Janissary corps, which this incident later was called Auspicious Incident (in Turkish: Vaka-i Hayriye). The new Ottoman army had a particular unit formed, "Asakir-i Redife Mansure" (Victorious Reserve Soldiers) that was specifically assigned to maintain the public order. The commander of this new military police, Serasker (Captain), had the same authority as the commander of the Janissary units (Yeniceri Agasi) in Istanbul. This new military police were attached to the Ministry of Finance. Therefore, there were two different police units at the time: one for the capital (Istanbul), affiliated with the Ministry of Finance; one for the countryside (the Sipahi's) under the command of "bey's" (military commanders). This double structure continued until the establishment of the first police organization assigned to maintain the public safety in 1845.

It should also be noted that, during the years between 1839 and 1879, Ottoman society had experienced a certain degree of cultural transformation regarding minority rights in the country. "The Ottoman bureaucrats sought to save the empire from further demise and advance of European imperialism by borrowing and implementing European methods of governance" (Piran 2011: 30). Indeed, the Ottoman intelligentsia, civil servants, bureaucrats, journalists, writers, and military officers, were "pushing for a huge transformation, a rapid adaptation to modernity, and smooth incorporation into the world system" (Hanioglu 2008). This dynamic alteration was also an attempt to ease the European pressure over the politics of the state. It began with the declaration of Tanzimat Fermani, (Edict of Gulhane), in 1839, which aimed to transform the Empire into a new modern state. "As a matter of fact, the imperial edicts which constituted the core of formal and political attempts are manuscripts produced to enforce laws to ensure the security and intactness of life, property, and honor" (Kozleme 2018). Thus, within this political atmosphere, on March 20, 1845, the first police organization regulation (Polis Nizami) formed of 17 codes (emniyet.gov.tr) was made by Sultan Abdulmecid administration. This day marked the birthdate of the modern day police force in Turkish history.

The primary duties of the police were defined in the Polis Nizami as protecting the lives and the properties of all people; preventing the probable criminal events against Muslim and non-Muslim citizens, and foreigners; regulating the traffic (Gulcicek 2004). Moreover, "the word 'police' was used in the official language for the first time. The source for the regulation of new police institution was based on

French law (Birinci 1999). A year later, a second regulation required the separation of the entire police forces from the general commandership of Serasker (Captain). The new public security administration called Zaptiye Mudurlugu with the legislative assembly and a policing administrative board (Zaptiye Meclisi) technically separated the police from the military. According to Turkish police scholar Ferdan Ergut, the reformers attempted to transform police from a military bureaucracy to a civilian one during the Tanzimat era (Piran 2011). In 1879, Zaptiye Mudurlugu and Zaptiye Meclisi were finally united under the new Ministry of Security (Zaptiye Nezareti). Centralization became a vital point in the modern era of policing. The new ministry was doing the same job as the Turkish National Police organization in contemporary time. It was followed by the first police officer training school in 1891 and the first jurisprudence document regarding police management where the duties and responsibilities of the police organization were defined explicitly in 1896 (emniyet.gov.tr). Nevertheless, the first Police Regulation with 167 codes, published on April 19, 1907, was the first document that is deemed to be a Turkish style policing code written without the influence of or citation of any foreign western policies or systems (Birinci 1999).

In 1908, a second constitutional period (II. Mesrutiyet) with a new parliament started in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman constitutionalism movement was "a consequence of the conflict between Sublime Porte (Bab-ı Ali) ruling elite and conservatives which had been continuing since Reforms Period" (Akin 2009: 52). During this era, the new German and French police systems became a model for the Turkish police organization (Cam 2014). Hence, by 1909, a General Directorate of Police (Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdürlüğü) and a Police Directorate under the İstanbul Governorship replaced the older Ministry of Police (Zaptiye Nezareti) (Alyot 1947). The units were attached to the newly established Ministry of Interior (Dahiliye Vekaleti).

During the Turkish Independence War (1919–1922) three organizations were providing internal security in the country:

1. Gendarmerie, a military branch of the army, was in charge of rural areas.
2. Istanbul Police did have the jurisdiction within the city of Istanbul.
3. The National Police Organization in charge of the towns and the provinces.

In 1923, the Police Organization Act (Emniyet Teşkilatı Kanunu) unified the Police force and centralized the police command. In the early years of the Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk started revolutionary changes that have altered the foundation of the modern state. "In building a modern system of police training and education, the new Republic of Turkey established three different types of police training institutions. These were police schools, a Police Institution, and a Police College" (Cam 2014: 324). Police schools train police cadets to serve as patrolmen level; while the graduates of police colleges, which are high school level institutions, continue their university-level education at the Police Academy to become the administrators of the Turkish National Police. The Police Regulation Act of 1934, along with procedural guidelines, and 145 different auxiliary acts defined the

jurisdictional and procedural authority of the police work (Nalla and Boke 2011). The centralized organization is hierarchically structured with a quasi-military rank and command system. Each province has a police department that is directly controlled by the General Directorate headquarter in the capital city, Ankara.

The politicization of the institutions is a sad but true reality of Turkish politics since the late Ottoman era. Throughout the years, different cliques emerge to control the Turkish police whether in the form of ultra-nationalism, Islamism or socialism. The police force has always been found itself in the middle of ideological wars from left to right movements. This has been the case during the Single Party regime (1923–1950) under the Republican People's Party (in Turkish: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – CHP) to Adnan Menderes administrations in the 1950s. However, one of the worst examples of the political polarization took place during the 1970s, where at a time the Turkish public was divided along the lines of political ideologies. Many college campuses became battlegrounds between the leftist and rightist student factions in major cities. Along with political and social fragmentation, the intensity of ideological conflicts also polarized the members of the TNP. At the time, under the 1961 constitution, they were allowed to establish two unions: "Pol-Bir (Police Unity), which was the extreme and central rightist police officers and Pol-Der (Police Union), which was the leftist and social democratic-oriented police officers association. This division led to further tension and rivalry in the police rank and file" (Piran 2011: 45). During the 1980 military coup, which was carried out by the Kemalist military officers. The National Security Council showed more sympathy for the members of the nationalists than the leftists when they were dismissing police personnel from the national police force. It is also alleged that the national police have been more hostile toward the leftist movements than their counterpart, right-wing movements (Patterson 2013, June 7). It is a chronic ailment of Turkish politics that the policing in Turkey has been shaped and dictated by the policies of ruling parties in power. The modern Turkish Republic later adopted the Western models of policing and established police schools and training program for police officers. In her dissertation, Leila Piran from the Catholic University of America asserted the idea that "it was not until the 1980s, specifically under Prime Minister Turgut Ozal"s leadership, when the police began to emerge as a professional civilian force" (2011: 4). During many coalition governments in the 1990s, political parties were fighting to seize the control over the national police through the Ministry of Interior. Because:

> "The police are under the full control of the party led government...All policing matters are the responsibility of the Minister of the Interior in Turkey. The minister has a great role and power in policy making; he is the only police authority" (Aydin, 1996:78–79).

Also, the modernization effort started after the mid-1990s, which included the study abroad programs. Hundreds of first-line supervisors have been sent to Europe and the United States for training, masters and doctoral programs. New policing methods like community policing have been adopted through the members of the TNP who studied in the western nations.

The Police Image and Criticism

Police work does not only consist of crime-fighting efforts; studies indicate that a significant portion deals with minor disturbances service calls and administrative duties (Siegel and Worrall 2015). Research also suggests that the public generally holds positive attitudes toward the police (Ren et al. 2005; Cao et al. 1998; Dean 1980; Huang and Vaughn 1996; Schafer et al. 2003). Indeed, the 2017 results of the Survey on Social and Political Trends in Turkey, conducted every year by Kadir Has University's Center for Turkish Studies, revealed that police (62.3%) and gendarmerie (60.8%) were seen to be the most trusted institutions by Turkish public. Despite all political fear and retribution, the public confidant on two internal security agencies has increased significantly for the first time. However, more specifically since the failed coup of July 15, 2016, the members of Turkish National Police have been subjected to fear of retribution, loss of employment and imprisonment by political reasons as well as are under the strain of pursuing terror suspects for mostly political reasons. Frankly, "there may be differences in attitudes toward the police based on ethnic variation as well as variation in attitudes toward the degree of secularism and religion in society" (Karakus et al. 2011). Therefore, whether it is police brutality or excessive police response to civil unrest or peaceful demonstrations, Turkish police have been under constant scrutiny by many significant actors: political leadership, citizens, and international media. All of these factors define the public image of police in Turkey. It is noted that "the legitimacy of the police is linked to public judgments about the fairness of the processes through which the police make decisions and exercise authority" (Sunshine and Tyler 2003: 514). Reports of police brutality news damage the level of trust between the police and the Turkish public. Below describes some of the cases in recent years:

- In the spring of the new millennium, a six-volume report by a parliamentary human-rights panel "documented cases of torture in police stations across Turkey, contradicting government assertions that abuse is not systematic."
- In 2008, Human Rights Watch was concerned about the police abuse in Turkey after the release of an 80-page report, which had cited 28 cases of police abuse against civilians dating back to the start of 2007 (Report cites alleged Turkish police abuse 2008, December 5).
- In 2012, the son of AKP parliamentarian from Hatay province had exchanged words with a police officer from district police station. A video leaked to the media showed some officers of the station were lined up before the son for putative identification of the officer who had insulted him previously during the day. Two years later, a Turkish court sentenced the officer to 6 months prison for insulting and intimidation whereas the son of the AKP representative received fine (Benli 2015, January 30).
- In Spring 2013, a wave of demonstrations and civil unrest started initially to protest the urban development plan for Gezi Park at Taksim Square in Istanbul. Smaller than the Central Park in Manhattan, Gezi Park protests have underlined

divisions in an already polarized society in the recent years of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi – AKP) administrations. "But tensions between these protesters and the Justice and Development Party, AKP, has made the wider Turkish population acutely aware of the sort of police and military mistreatment that has long been experienced by Kurds, Alevis and other minority groups" (Sevi 2013, May 11).

- The corruption scandal that was exposed by two different police operations on December 17 and 25, 2013, shows how politics impacted both the legitimacy and image of the police in Turkey. The first police raid resulted in the arrest of 52 people, including the sons of three cabinet ministers, and the head of the state-owned Halkbank; suspects either were considered to be Erdogan's inner circle or connected in various ways with the ruling AKP. The second operation was interrupted by Erdogan before even conducted. Like in the case of July 15, 2016, failed coup, "the AKP and Erdogan were quite clear in deciding whom to blame for these problems: a U.S.-based Islamic cleric who held deep sway in Turkey" (Taylor 2014, December 30). They even further contended that members of the Hizmet movement (in English: Service) are "traitors and terrorists allied with foreign interests" (Sterling 2014, December 10). Within 2 weeks after the police operations, the 350 police officers including the officers in the financial crimes, anti-smuggling, and organized crime units were dismissed and replaced with police officials from other parts of the country (Bilefsky and Arsu 2014, January 7). More than 5000 police officers have been dismissed or transferred within a year after the corruption scandal in Turkey (Butler and Toksabay 2014, January 31).
- According to the UN Human Rights Office, more than 160,000 people have been arrested, and 50,000 remain in jail awaiting trial during an 18 month state of emergency (Turkey: UN report details extensive human rights violations during protracted state of emergency 2018, March 20). In another report, 'In Custody Police Torture and Abductions in Turkey' by Human Rights Watch (2017): "There has been a spate of reported cases of men being abducted, some of whom were held in secret detention places, with evidence pointing to the involvement of state authorities."

July 15, 2016, Failed Coup and the Government's Purge

Fear of coups has a substantive background in Turkey because Turkish history frequently repeated in regards to coups and plots. There seems to be a specific chronic crisis in Turkish political history that need to be understood. There are individual elements and dynamic factors that could be observed almost in every coup that has occurred in the following timeline: 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1998 along with several attempts and plots in between. The post-2000 era also witnessed some unusual and non-traditional forms of coup plots in Turkey. While the Email Memorandum (E-Memo) in 2007 and Judiciary Coup (J-Coup) in 2008 are the perfect examples of the unorthodox coups whereas the recent failed military plot on July 15, 2016,

stands as the enigmatic coup with a polysemous nature, since it was characterized as "operatta" rather than an actual military intervention attempt by most of the Western media (Terzides 2016, August 12). Indeed, the July 15 attempt seemed like a precipitous and disorganized action that was engineered by some of the estranged and disgruntled hardliners of the Turkish military, who thought they were about to be purged by upcoming National Council Meeting in late August 2016. "Turkey's government and courts say the Gulen movement masterminded the coup attempt, and deem it as a terrorist organization" (Human Rights Watch 2018). Fethullah Gulen, a self-exile Turkish-Sunni Scholar, has been living in the Poconos Mountains in Pennsylvania for 20 years denied accusations and condemned the coup plotters. However, "Mr. Gulen also acknowledged that he could not rule out involvement by his followers, saying he is unsure who his followers are in Turkey" (Saul 2016, July 16). Following the coup attempt on July 15th, Turkey declared the state of emergency on July 20, 2016, and the government crackdown continues to this day on a grand scale. Just a week after the coup, "the first decree signed by Erdogan authorized the closure of 1043 private schools, 1229 charities and foundations, 19 trade unions, 15 universities and 35 medical institutions over suspected links to the Gulen movement" (Jones and Gurses 2016, July 23). As of August 2018, the Turkish government has issued a total of 31 decrees since July 20, 2016. More than 125,000 people have been removed from public sector jobs including military, police, judiciary, and education and 30% of them were law enforcement personnel (turkeypurge.com n.d.).

When it comes to politicization and indoctrination of the police force, the recent AKP policies made it worse than the past experiences. Following the failed coup, the AKP promoted officers who are close to the party goals and gave them vast punitive powers to conduct investigations under the state emergency law. Once again, their policies ensured the fact that the Turkish National Police has "a broad reputation for religiously conservative and right-wing nationalist tendencies."

Conclusion

It is evident that the policing has been shown significant progress since the old Turkish states. Every historical period has a characteristics transformation of the concepts of nation and security in the history of Turkish policing. The Ottomans paved the path with bricks of pre-Islamic management principles and Turkish customs along with harmony of modern-day applications for today's Turkish police force. "Before the professional police force was founded in 1845, military forces and the Janissaries carried out enforcement of public order and policing as part of their military duties" (Nalla and Boke 2011: 289). The Turkish policing system still displays the characteristics of the military (Aydin 1997). Today, the national police are the mirror of the Turkish society, which reflects the security, moreover, the trust of the Turkish public in its government. "There are undeniable indications of interference by politicians in the Turkish police" (Ozcan and Gultekin 2000: 3). Margaret

Levi points out, "the major sources of distrust in government are promise breaking, incompetence, and the antagonism of government actors toward those they are supposed to serve" (1998: 88). Since July 15, 2016, failed coup, severe deviations from the constitution and the laws indicate the fragile structure of the Turkish democracy once more.

Moreover, the increasingly authoritarian nature of the current leadership also forces police to deviate out of its legitimate work. Besides the current intensity of constant fear of losing employment and imprisonment with almost no due process generate low morale and incapability. "Low morale is a real problem, as it negatively impacts the mission and efficacy of a department and the emotional and physical wellness of officers" (Wasilewskia 2010, October 6). In addition to the fearful working atmosphere and low morale, the loss of the invested experience of officer knowledge and training in critical units like intelligence, organized crime, and financial crimes divisions will hurt the efficiency and operational capability of the national police in the long term. Turkey should able to develop an active recruitment program that should be purely based on merit by evaluating the officer's qualification and knowledge rather than seeking ideological loyalty to the political parties and religious movements.

Finally, both the police working conditions and hours should not be forgotten. "Research shows long hours and off-duty work can negatively impact officers' performance" (Maciag 2017). Indeed, long hours has been one of the ongoing problems within the TNP. Police officers whether as patrolmen or first-line supervisors, work 12 h daily shifts and they only have one off day of the week, which can be canceled anytime during an emergency situation. Therefore, in addition to low-morale working conditions with being influenced by the party politics in recent years, the police work shifts also impact the performance of the members of the Turkish National Police. New regulations must be created to adjust both the conditions and the hours of the police officers.

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