THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND KURDISH CASES

By

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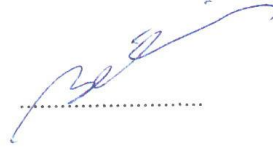
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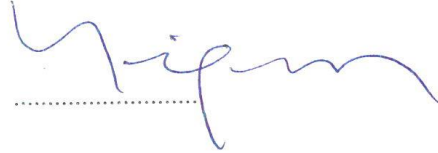
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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND KURDISH CASES

Ali Beştaş

M.A. Thesis, December 2017

Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Dr. E. Fuat Keyman

This study focuses on the negotiation processes of Northern Ireland and Kurdish cases by taking the role of the civil society actors into consideration. It, first, gives literature on the theoretical framework of civil society notion and second, a brief historical background of each cases. Then, the study concentrates on the role of civil society actors in the Northern Ireland case and Kurdish peace process which took place between 2013-2015. This study emphasizes that the civil society actors have positive impacts in conflict resolutions if they are functionalized in peace-keeping, peace-making, peace-building, reconciliation, inter-group dialogue, mediation, facilitation, and creating social trust mechanisms, and to be an independent figure during the processes. Based on these, this study argues that the civil society actors played relatively successful roles in the Northern Ireland negotiations while their impact has been limited in the Kurdish peace process. The Northern Ireland case is entitled as a successful case since the violence between parties is officially ended. Northern Ireland case is, therefore, coded as the instructive case of this study. On the other hand, the Kurdish peace process is considered as a failed case because of ongoing violence between parties.

Keywords: Kurdish Conflict, Northern Ireland, Negotiations, Civil Society Actors, Peace Process, Conflict Resolution.

ÖZET

SİVİL TOPLUM AKTÖRLERİNİN ÇATIŞMA ÇÖZÜMLERİNDEKİ ROLÜ: KUZEY IRLANDA VE KÜRT SORUNLARININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMALI ÇALIŞMASI

Ali Beştaş

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Bu çalışma Kuzey İrlanda ve Kürt sorunlarını, sivil toplum aktörlerinin rolü bağlamında ele almaktadır. Çalışmada, ilk olarak sivil toplum kavramının teorik literatürü verildikten sonra, her iki çatışmanın kısa tarihsel geçmişi verilmektedir. Üçüncü olarak da sivil toplum aktörlerinin Kuzey İrlanda ve 2013-2015 yılları arasında gerçekleşen Kürt Sorunu müzakerelerinde nasıl rol aldığı irdelenmektedir. Bu araştırma, eğer sivil toplum aktörleri barış koruma, barışma, barış inşası, uzlaşma, gruplar arası diyalog, arabuluculuk, kolaylaştırma, ve sosyal güveni tesis etme mekanizmalarında işlevsel hale getirilirse ve bu aktörler bağımsız birer figüre haline gelirse çatışma çözümlerinde pozitif rol oynayabileceklerini vurgulamaktadır. Sivil toplum aktörlerinin bu mekanizmalardaki rolleri bağlamında, bu çalışma sivil toplum aktörlerinin Kuzey İrlanda müzakereleri kapsamında göreceli olarak başarılı olurken, bu durumun Kürt Sorunu müzakerelerinde sınırlı kaldığını savunmaktadır. Kuzey İrlanda sorunun başarılı bir şekilde sonuçlandırıldığına dair kriter, çatışmaların sona ermesidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kürt Sorunu, Kuzey İrlanda Sorunu, Sivil Toplum Aktörleri, Çatışma Çözümü, Barış

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GLOSSARY

IRA: Irish Republican Army

DUP: Democratic Unionist Party

UUP: Ulster Unionist Party

SIN FEINN: Irish Republican Party

SDLP: Social Democratic and Labour Party

Ak Parti: Justice and Development Party

BDP: Peace and Democracy Party

HDP: Peoples' Democratic Party

PKK: Kurdistan Worker's Party

1. Introduction

There are many dimensions of conflict resolution processes such as levels of leadership, internal and international environment and conditions, parties' needs, position, interests and involvement of civil society actors. It is stated that no factor alone can be sufficient to reach a sustainable peace. Since each dimension has different importance in conflict resolutions, it is widely assumed that involvement of civil society actors is one of the crucial element to build-up proper conditions for creating comprehensive peace.

The overall aim of this study is to explore the role of civil society actors in conflict resolutions by investigating the dynamics of conflict with the exemplifying of two cases: The Northern Ireland and Kurdish issues. This thesis argues that while civil society actors' involvement in the conflict resolution process is of utmost importance for success, these roles are nevertheless limited, that is, their presence constitutes a necessary but not sufficient condition for the possibility of ending the conflict and moving to the post-conflict stage, towards the creation of peace in a sustainable way. In the following pages the thesis demonstrates that comparing the Northern Ireland and Turkish cases, one could suggest that one of the recent attempts to establish the necessary conditions for the solution of the Kurdish issue in Turkey failed because of many reasons, but one of them is the limited space of given to civil society actors in the negotiation periods between 2013-2015.

This paper asserts that the role of civil society actors can play a positive role during the conflict resolution process if they are functionalized in peace-keeping, peace-making, peace-building, reconciliation, inter-group dialogue, mediation, facilitation, and creating social trust mechanisms, and being an independent figure during the processes. In this thesis, as civil society actors are one of the fundamental components of the conflict resolution process, the role of civil society actors in conflict resolution processes is studied by applying a comparative approach towards the Kurdish and Northern Ireland case. The civil society actors are very crucial elements for a proper and functional conflict resolution which promotes peace, strengthens dialogue between parties and creates bottom-up peace building mechanisms.

The study proposes that the dysfunctional and passive structure of the civil society actors is one of the reasons that lead to the failure of the peace process in Turkey. This thesis asks the following questions while trying to answer them; how do civil society actors contribute to a comprehensive peace in a conflict resolution process? What kind of roles and functions do the civil society actors have in the conflict resolution process? What role did civil society actors played in the Kurdish and Northern Ireland cases? What are the differences and similarities between the proposed cases?

There are many reasons to compare the Kurdish and Northern Ireland cases despite the very different political, social, and cultural dynamics. Both cases have a long past of conflict and periods of negotiations. Another reason is that Britain and Turkey both refused to have direct negotiations with the members of the opponent sides for a long time. There was a multi-actor structure in both cases. Britain had the process with IRA and Sinn Féin which was seen as the political strand of the IRA by the British authorities, and Turkey had same with PKK and BDP-HDP which is seen as the political strand of the PKK by the Turkish authorities.

It is obvious that the topics of Kurdish and Northern Ireland issues are too broad to be confined within the borders of a single research. For this reason, the historical background of each case is mentioned but the primary focus is specifically given to the role, function and involvement of the civil society actors in each of the processes. The research is narrowed down to the comparison of the cases towards the end of the study, so that the research builds on an in-depth analysis rather than shallow remarks.

The intrastate conflicts have been particularly increasing in the post-Cold War period and many countries have been facing intrastate challenges. There are three major elements that give way and influence this wave of contemporary conflicts (Gahramanova, 2006). Firstly, the post-Cold War era created more democratic grounds due to several authoritarian governments declining. This was an opportunity for most of the minorities to defend their rights within different contexts. Secondly the post-Cold War era built-up a new international environment in which there have been increasing concerns for minority and human rights, and thirdly the term 'self-determination' gained popularity and far-reaching discussion among minorities (Gahramanova, 2006).

Since there have been many elements to push the establishment of armed non-state actors, there are two tendencies of states against armed non-state actors; firstly, many states struggle with

ontological concerns and show very strict positions against minority movements. To give an example, there are similar patterns in Spain in terms of Catalonia's demand for separation and in Iraq with Northern Iraq's status. The second tendency is developing multi-cultural structures within the society to manage conflict transformation. The Northern Ireland case and very recently the FARC case in Colombia are considered to be proper examples of this behaviour.

According to the conflict resolution literature, there are many functions the civil society actors exert conflict resolution processes. For example, Galtung (1976) proposed three functions of the civil society actors in conflict resolution, namely peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building. It is asserted that civil society actors have a role of being a bridge and providing social trust between top and grassroots levels. Moreover, they play supportive roles in reducing violence, mediating between parties and facilitating circumstances for a sustainable peace-building.

The conflict resolution processes are ran to stop violence between opponent groups. Essentially, the conflict resolution literature aims to end the violence with peaceful ways. There are some cases that have allowed for the practicing of such a process; one of them is the Northern Ireland which is generally considered to be a successful case in terms of ending the violence with peaceful methods. As the Turkish government also attempted to start a conflict resolution process in the Kurdish Issue, there were many discussions about whether it would work adequately or not.

2. Methodology and Literature Review

Primary and secondary sources have a great importance when it comes to the methodology which is applied for this research. As primary sources, the field studies done in Cizre, Siirt, Diyarbakır, Batman and İstanbul are used. Books, commentaries, articles, criticisms journals and magazines as well as the historical background of the cases are used as secondary sources for the study. The secondary material derived from the literature- both historical and current- regarding the topic is supplementary and helped interpret the data gathered through the field studies.

The opinions of civil society actors and ordinary citizens who were interviewed during the fieldwork for this study constitute a significant starting point due to the fact that local actors of the Southeast of Turkey are a natural part of the process. It was interviewed with twenty-five persons in total, but there were a lot of unstructured and random talks during the field study as well. I benefited from all interviews, random talks and my personal observations while writing a thesis. There were mainly two criteria of selection to participants; firstly, it was interviewed with people who actively participated in a civil society organization during peace process between 2013-2015, and secondly, it was interviewed with people who lived in a neighbourhood where mostly affected by violent actions. The main reason of my criteria is to find people who were directly involved and influenced by peace process developments so that it increases a realistic dimension of the thesis.

Therefore, as there is a communication line between civil society actors and people, their recommendations regarding potential participants was taken into consideration too. As there was a possibility of security concerns of the participants because of the sensitive political issues, the names of the participants were not asked. The timing of the in-depth interview was shaped by the participants themselves, but each generally lasted approximately 35-40 minutes. Participants were not interviewed with strict questions. Since an unstructured interview style gives the participants the opportunity to feel more comfortable, there were no detailed and structured questions before the interviews and it was mostly the participants who shaped the course of interview.

On the other hand, I did not make field study for the Northern Ireland case in the thesis because it is an instructive case of my study. Since the Northern Ireland is coded as a successful case because of that there is an official peaceful agreement between parties; there is currently no systematic violence in the Northern Ireland. For this reason, as the most important developments happened during conflictual and negotiation periods before the final agreement, it was sufficient to be benefited from secondary resources which is included broad literature about the conflictual and negotiation periods in this study.

This study is composed of six chapters. After the introduction, in the first chapter, the theoretical framework of the civil society is explained by referring to historical background of the civil society notion. In this chapter, the theoretical framework of the civil society and the role of the civil society actors in conflict resolutions is set out. In the second chapter, roles and functions of the civil society actors are clarified through the Northern Ireland case, the instructive case of this study.

In the third chapter, the Kurdish peace process which took place between 2013 and 2015 is analysed with its historical background. After a short historical background of the Kurdish issue, the role of civil society actors is explained through conflict resolution theories. In the fourth chapter, both cases are compared in terms of role of civil society actors. Finally, the conclusion part includes the limitations of the study and final remarks.

3. Theoretical Framework of the Civil Society in Historical Background

The notion of civil society can be deliberated in two ways; the first way is the civil society as a concept derived from civility. The historical and theoretical literature of civil society came into existence from the difference between civility and barbarity (Farrington, 2004). These two converse concepts have been considered within the context of society. The second notion of civil society is more complex and modern than civility, it emerged around 18th and 19th centuries and it has been changed and revised after the collapse of communism in terms of democratization of the society. Thus, the second notion of civil society is mostly inter-related with democracy, sub-titles of democracy and liberty.

The development of the civil society notion includes the formation of the society, economy, politics and others. As there have been many different definitions of civil society, it is possible to make different conceptualizations about the concept. However, according to Charles Taylor (1990), there are three forms of civil society; civil society in a minimal sense, where the civil society is not under control of a government; one in a stronger sense, where a civil society can help society to construct itself and lastly one where the civil society can influence any government policy.

The idea of modern civil society concept came into existence in the political field in the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe. However, theorists such as Hobbes, Locke, Hegel, Marx and Gramsci mentioned the importance of civil society in different contexts. From Hobbes, Hegel, Marx and Habermas to today's global civil society structure, the concept of civil society has been discussed within different contexts until now (Marchetti& Tocci, 2009). In early periods the concept was argued as a part of state formation from political theorists like Hobbes, Locke and Ferguson. Hegel proposed three forms of ethical life; family, civil society and state; the civil society has a responsibility of mediation between individuals and form of state (Cohen, 1994). According to Locke, the first task of the civil society is to protect the individual—his/her rights and property—against the state and its arbitrary interventions. Gramsci located it within the society's superstructure which consists of two levels; civil society and political society (Laclau&Mouffe, 2001).

Tocqueville is one of the most important theorists of the concept of civil society. He extensionally wrote on what civil society is and how civil society influences or is influenced by

the government. According to Tocqueville's civil society definition, it is based on voluntary, non-political social organizations that strengthen democracy preventing the tyranny of the majority (Gabelaia, 2016). Moreover, associations, which can be "religious, moral, serious, general or restricted, enormous or diminutive", protect diversity by uniting equal but weak individuals into powerful groups. These associations prevent the fragmentation of society by forcing people to consider the affairs of others and to work with their neighbours (Encarnación, 2002).

Robert Putnam defines civil society, also called a social capital, as "features of social life-networks, norms and trust- that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives." (Newton,1999, p.12). In his article, The Importance of Being Modular, Ernest Gellner (1995) agrees that civil society is "that set of diverse non-governmental institutions, which is strong enough to counterbalance the state…whilst not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests." (P.32)

However, when it came to periods of emerging capitalism, particularly Marx, Hegel, Tocqueville had handled the civil society concept in context of class inequality and, in the periods of democratization wave, the concept was considered especially by Gramsci and Habermas within the framework of democratic rules and liberal ideas; the concept referred to the inclusiveness of the civil society into the politics, and it was a realm that demands political and social rights of society (Baker,1998).

In the contemporary era, civil society has widened that include a variety of fields, researches and organizations such as, research centres, activist organizations and social movements. Particularly, the developments in eighteenth centuries created a different sense of civil society in political and social scopes. For example, in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the perspective of civil society was formed based on the resistance against totalitarian regimes. This formation has spread among many regions among the world such as; Taiwan, Latin America countries, and even recent rebellions in the Middle East which are called spring (Arab spring) as it was called Prague spring (Keane, 2010).

After Cold War era, the international environment was discussing basically nuclear non-proliferation, globalization, gender and race, ethnic conflicts, and minority issues. During this period, the civil society had developed better in terms of democratization, governance and

human rights in accordance with post-Cold War conditions (Marchetti& Tocci,2009). Most of the countries in the Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East have faced a transition from authoritarianism to democracy. So that civil society, with its civil society organizations resisted against authoritarian governments.

A diversification and ramification of the civil society actors influenced the roles of civil society actors as well. For example, the functions of local, national, international and transnational can be different from each other. Therefore, there have been growing of different types of civil society organizations in time. Such as business-oriented, religion-oriented, or research-oriented and further types of organizations. As it is explained in table 1, each different types of civil society actors have varied into different roles.

Figure 1: The typology of Civil Society Actors (Marchetti& Tocci,2009).

Type of Track Diplomacy	Actors
Professional	Technical Experts Consultants
Business	Businessmen Trade unions Professional associations Organized crime networks
Private citizens	Individual citizens Diaspora groups Families and clans
Research, training and education	Special interest research centres Think tanks Universities
Activism	NGOs Lobby groups Grassroots social movements Local communities Combatant groups
Religion	Spiritual communities Charities Religious movements
Funding	Foundations Individual philanthropists
Communication	Media operators

As civil society actors have very dynamic and diverse structure in today's world, there are non-governmental, quasi-governmental organizations and even governments themselves have been producing civil society actors (Klabbers, Peters&Ulfstein, 2009). For this reason, civil society has not unique and single structure, but rather complex, flexible, and have blurred lines between governmental and public institutions and organizations. However, it is generally assumed that a civil society refers to a realm of social life, market exchanges, charitable groups, voluntarily associations, briefly a sphere without public and governmental organizations (Keane, 2010).

The civil society actors are essentially a sphere of interaction between state and society. As it is emerged through a self-mobilization and self-creation, they have a capacity to be independent which makes them more credible. It would be a mistake to put civil society actors without society and politics, but it is not a part of any political organization or governmental agencies. The role of civil society actors does not directly control to power or take advantage for political gaining but producing the impact on the government mechanisms and mediating the relationships between politics and society.

According to Andrew Heywood (2013), "civil society refers to a realm of associations, business, interest groups, classes' families and so on"(P.106). Mainly, there are two important contributions of the civil society; first, it creates and a canal between public and private sphere second it creates a check and balance mechanism against governments in terms of influence policy. Lederach (1997) defines civil society as "a web of human relationships made of individual people, their networks, organizations, and in the situations around which social and community life is built. It is dynamic, adaptive, at times nebulous, at times well structured, though much of it informal.

Moreover, it is not only within any certain boundaries of countries but also non-governmental organizations and business beyond the borders in the international arena. The World Bank has adopted a definition of civil society developed by a number of leading research centres;

"The term civil society to refer to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of

organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations." (Mundial, 2006)

3.1. Uncertainty of Civil Society Definition

Civil society is a term which means different things to different people. The boundaries between concepts of civil, political and economic society are ambiguous. The sphere of civil society is not considered to be a single and unique sector. For example, business sector carries out civil society roles, when doing tax exemption (Paffenholz, 2009). Non-governmental organizations are sometimes managed with business sector or have close relations with the state, yet it is still a part of the civil society organizations.

As it is mentioned, the term civil society has been changed over time according to conditions in periods. In today's context, civil society is accepted as an intermediary between state and society (Paffenholz, 2010). The civil society organizations consist of independent and private citizens that they have intend to demand social, political and economic rights from governments. Moreover, they express their ideas to check the state apparatus to make it more accountable and transparent. Civil society organizations are entities such as; non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups, non-profit organizations and others.
Figure 2 (Dudouet, 2007).
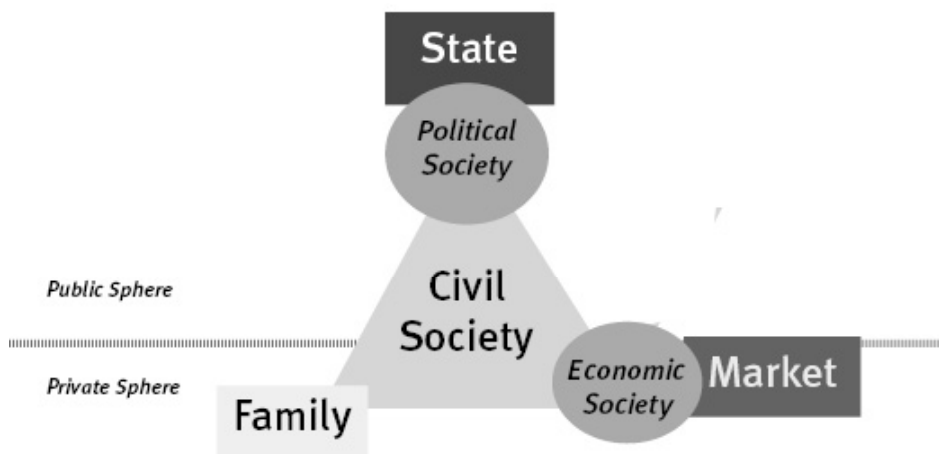
According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)' definition; *"[CSOs] can be defined to include all non-market and non-state organizations outside of the family in which people organize themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain. Examples include community-based organizations and village associations, environmental*

groups, women's rights groups, farmers' associations, faith-based organizations, labour
unions, co-operatives, professional associations, chambers of commerce, independent
research institutes and the not-for-profit media." (OECD,2012, P.7)

3.2. Democracy and Civil Society Actors

Democracy is basically a system that based on the democratic principles, the rule of law and institutions that help to create a democratic and peaceful society. As this system include a variety of institutions and organizations, civil society actors are one of the most important components of the democratic system. In a democratic system and society, power-sharing, check and balance system, political and civil society organizations are an inevitable part of the democracy. As states have multi-dimension structures, set of institutions and organizations, civil society actors can promote compromise, conciliation, peaceful and democratic management among institutions and organizations.

An integration of civil society actors into the system can provide establishing a ground for moderate politics and also render unofficial interaction between institutions and members of society. As every government may be tended to be an authoritarian, the first and essential role of the civil society actors is to try to limit the power of the state or government and create a space between state and society. The efforts of limitations are realized in order to monitor the acts of political leaders and state officials.

Farther, the civil society actors have a capacity to raise consciousness and awareness in the case of abuse and corruption of power by the government. As in the democratic countries, citizens have a right to life, freedom of speech and social justice, when government attempt to violate the such fundamental rights of citizens, the civil society organizations have the responsibility to call the government to account for it. The civil society actors can contribute to the public participation in any process of decision making in a country. As there are various types of civil society actors, they also contribute the economy, education, health and other forms of life in the country. Merker and Lauth defined five roles of civil society actors to foster democratization; protection, intermediation, participatory socialization, integration and communication (Dudouet, 2007). In addition to this, since intra-state conflicts are difficult challenges for the democratic countries, conflict resolution theories present important

theoretical pathways of long-term peace to overcome these sort of conflicts in countries. (Paffenholz& Spurk,2006).

3.3. Functions of Civil Society Organizations in Conflict Resolution

As the ethnic, religious, ideological non-state groups and actors have been increasing after Cold War era, civil society has come to the point that it has the capacity to influence a government's policies to resolve the conflicts in a peaceful way. Therefore, civil society actors have become a very crucial element during the conflict, transition and post-conflict periods.

The conflict is basically defined a situation that takes places when one or more parties have incompatible goals (Tidwell&Alan 1999). That is why it is very hard to find a common solution between competent parties because of the difference in interests, needs and purposes. The liberal school of conflict resolution proposes that when basic human necessities are denied or rejected, conflict is inevitable (Burton, 1990). A conflict can be carried out through violence or not; this is up to the intensity of incompatibility between parties.

As groups who have self-definitions and identities differing in terms such as ethnic, religious and political groups; they publicly declare their incompatibility against state and their activities lead to affiliations and division among society.
Horowitz's contribution on this issue is crucial (1995);

''In divided societies, ethnic conflict is at the center of politics. Ethnic divisions pose challenges to the cohesion of states and sometimes to peaceful relations among states. Ethnic conflict strains the bonds that sustain civility and is often at the root of violence that results in looting, death, homelessness, and the fight of large numbers of people. In divided societies, ethnic affiliations are powerful, permeative, passionate, and pervasive.'' (P.12).

Despite, the high number of inter-state wars before the Cold War, after the Cold War mass violence between states decreased, but a number of intermediate-level and intra-state conflicts significantly increased (Zartman, (Ed.), 2007). As it is mentioned in Horowitz's quotation, such conflicts damage the society's structure that lives together in harmony. Such conflicts cause arising of polarization and escalation of violence in the society.

The consequences of intra-state conflicts are far more reaching than mere polarization, they can be more practically serious issues such as waves of refugees, displaced persons, a certain section of society being forced live without basic life support, shelter, medicine food, water and others (Zartman, (Ed.), 2007). With the intensification of conflict, people became paralyzed with fear, and normal life becomes dysfunctional. Even worse psychological, social, physical and further types of violence become a part of the normal life. So that the fear of ethnic cleansing emerges, as it happened in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia and other cases. The hopes for living together disappear and the feeling of insecurity, distrust and hatred become a pattern of the society.

The lack of the achievement basic human needs as well as protracted social conflict and deep-rooted problems are the main sources conflict. The fulfilment of these deficiencies is essential components of ending conflict. Along with basic needs, such intra-state conflicts are generally related with political and social issues, that is why social and political recognition, political toleration, non-discriminative policies are also part of the fulfilling deficiencies. Thus it can be said that the conflicts and its resolutions are very multi-dimensional, so if the government or political system cannot satisfy and fulfil the requirements for ending the conflicts, it is necessary to find satisfiers internationally or within the civil society.

In such circumstances, local, national, international or transnational civil society actors can play a significant role in ending the conflict in a comprehensive way. Civil society actors have many functions; they can promote de-securitization of conflict in order to increasing awareness and consciousness of peace in society. They can also be active in mass demonstrations, media diffusion, public assemblies, monitoring and direct activities (Marchetti& Tocci,2009).

Civil society organizations are often not directly involved in the process (Marchetti& Tocci, 2009). However, the considerable exception was experienced between 1990 and 92; the non-state actor which is called the community of Sand's Egidio contributed to the parties turning back to the table for an agreement. They directly contacted with rebels and the community itself tried to build up a ground for negotiation in Congo (Ngubane, 2000). Finally, the agreement was signed and the parties thanked the community officially. In another instance, Norwegian non-state actors helped to sign the record of 1993 between Israel and Palestine.

Civil society has various functions in many fields such as economic, social, political, cultural and other areas. It aims to secure the people's rights in the case of violation. As there are many discussions about the boundaries of civil society actors, Barnes makes a difference between civil society and political society. There is no doubt that there is no certain different line between civil and political society, but in terms of theoretical framework, civil society, as it was mentioned, refers the realm which is apart from public sphere, however political society includes political parties, interest groups and political movements (Koko, 2016).

From a wider perspective, regarding the role and involvement of civil society organizations in conflict resolution, Galtung mentioned the importance of civil society in three processes which are peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building (Galtung, 1976). These are mechanisms that provide successful processes for proper conflict resolution. But before conflict resolution process, understanding the dynamics and the emergence of conflict are quite important. It should be noted that the role and importance of the civil society actors are not only essential in conflict resolution stage, but also before conflict arising and during conflict escalation periods as well.

Civil society is one of the most important components of conflict resolution processes in terms of creating a bottom-up peace-building and reconciliation. They can play a crucial role in the constitution of democratic governance. Moreover, they have the capacity to prevent conflictual processes, if they can be structuralized well, especially in transition periods. It is generally assumed that the civil society is a very important bond between the top and bottom levels, and when a bond between these levels is powerful; comprehensive peace can be constructed more easily.

As Zartman explained, the civil society actors give support for first-track negotiations, and when parties unofficially accept to come together for negotiations, then the included civil society actors prepare the ground for negotiations (Zartman, 1989). Secondary roles of civil society actors in a conflict management can be carried out by lobby groups, think tanks, research centres, initiatives that gather and prepare necessary information for both parties which facilitates track-two diplomacy.

In the stage of violence and conflict, civil society actors have the capacity of preparing and providing ground for the ceasefire and peaceful negotiations. They can also effectively

reconcile people and bring them together, rather than be part of the official processes. For example, organizing the capacity building, training, inter-group dialogue, truth and reconciliation commissions are some of the crucial actions of civil society actors during conflict resolution process.

As the civil society has the capacity to push the activities of government's policies, conflict resolution processes are one of the areas that civil society should be part of in terms of ending conflicts with structural solutions. The civil society actors are generally important instruments for creating positive changes. Galtung defines three approaches to pathways of structural peace; peace-making, peace-keeping and peacebuilding. He basically points out structural transformation without violence (Galtung, 1976).

3.3.1. Peace-keeping

As a definition, it can be said that it is the diplomatic resolution of conflict. It is a form of action to help host countries for creating a peaceful environment (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2017). Galtung (1976) makes three distinctions in peacekeeping; intra-national peacekeeping, intra-regional peacekeeping, and international peacekeeping. Intra-national peace-keeping refers to a state's intervention in the vertical and horizontal conflict. It makes state a secondary party. However, intra-regional peacekeeping is about providing peace for a periphery by using the monopoly of power of the state, and lastly, international peacekeeping is newer one that has been developed under United Nations authority (Galtung, 1976). It is an intervention by the United Nations peace-keepers which is regulated in the United Nations charter, and it aims to keep civilians from violence.

However, the method of peace-keeping is very significant for long-term and effective peace. It should be included civil society actors, local partnerships and grassroots organizations. The focus of the peacekeeping should be based on humanitarian aid, rather than intervention. As local civil society actors have variety forms and have experience in the intervened region, an inclusion of them could contribute to last peace and security. Faith-based and education organizations, women initiatives and human rights advocates, both on local and national levels can lead the way to build a dialogue mechanism between parties. Moreover, they can contribute to conflict resolution process. During disarmament, de-mobilization and re-integration(DDR) processes, they can promote to include local people for comprehensive peace. Otherwise, the

peace-keeping activities may be seen as an external intervention, and this may increase the tension and reaction among local people. An exclusion of the civil society actors causes to miss the real dynamics of conflict.

3.3.2. Peace-making

Galtung explained that even if the conflict is over officially, there may still be a war because of old hatred, other possible threats, and that war does not finish in a definite way (Galtung, 1976). That is why the establishment of reconciliation mechanisms is very important to prevent any potential for further conflict. Peace-making is basically a transformation process that builds an agreement address to all the parties in conflict. The peace-making concept is using various concepts in different contexts. The United Nations' charter Chapter VI, defines peace-making as 'an action to bring hostile parties to the agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen' (The United Nations,1945).

Therefore, peace-making is equal to diplomatic attempts turning conflict into a non-violent medium. Fundamentally, peace-making is performed through negotiation, mediation, reconciliation and arbitration. Apart from the United Nations context, peace-making can be used at any stage of conflict resolution process. Civil society actors can play very important role in the peace-making process. They can have a direct contact with parties during negotiation. They can also facilitate track II and track 1 ½ diplomacy.

3.3.3. Peace-building

Peacebuilding is about dealing with issues such as territorial readjustments, refugee return, property rights, security guarantees, etc. but it also covers the wider economic, political and social regulation of countries before, during and after the end of the violent conflict (Marchetti& Tocci,2009). The civil society actors can contribute to reduce conflict, end violence and build sustainable peace in the post-conflict period (Paffenholz, Thania.2009). Lederach(1997) emphasizes the importance of building dialogue between parties that includes local leaders, civil society actors and international players. In 1992 the United Nations general secretary Boutrus Ghali, in his report, he mentioned a need of peacebuilding for United Nations Strategy. In 2007, United Nation's defined peace-building;

> *"Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or*
>
> *relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict*

management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives." (The United Nations, 1945)

Furthermore, Paffenholz and Spurk mentioned seven important factors that play a crucial role in peace-building; protection, monitoring, advocacy and public communication, social cohesion, intermediation, facilitation, and service delivery (Paffenholz&Spurk, 2010).

- *Protection*

  It is about the creation of peace zones, providing humanitarian aids and civil society organizations for the security of people. It involves international and national guardianship, the creation of safe zones, watchdog activities, and other protectionist activities. Independent and international non-governmental organizations are safer for civilians. There are examples of negotiation zones in Mozambique, Columbia and Philippines that these places were a kind of safe heaven for parties. Moreover, with the acceleration of globalization, the international civil society actors have become more prominent such is the case for the United Nations and Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others. This carves further roles for civil society actors. Such global civil actors have better movement area, and higher financial and organizational capability.

- *Advocacy and public communication*

  This function is based on raising consciousness and awareness in order to build communicational organizations. In this phase basically; agenda-setting, lobbying for civil society involvement in the peace negotiations, creating public pressure and international advocacy efforts for specific conflict issues are to be realized (Francis, n.). The aim is to debate issues that have been neglected by public institutions and create awareness to compensate the neglecting that in turn may provide progress in education, infrastructure, and services in the country. Because the conflictual areas are generally underdeveloped places needed to be developed. Not only services but also political, social and cultural transformation are part of the peace-building that is debated by leaders and civil society actors during the process. For public communication,

technology has a very substantial role to interact and mobilize society in a very short time. Therefore, technology can make great contributions in the peace-building process. Civil society actors can easily spread any developments in the country via media and technology. Such mechanism is very easy and a short way of that provides positive propaganda for process and conveys important messages to the public. Further, as transparency is very important during peacebuilding periods, parties have the chance to share developments with grassroots through the civil society actors.

- *Intermediation and Facilitation*

  As conflict resolution process takes place between not only parties but also different groups at different society levels, there are intermediation and facilitation actions during the process that contributes to the participation of society into conflict resolution process. Intermediation and facilitation include activities that can directly influence society. For example, establishing or supporting research centres, institutes, universities, initiatives and society organizations can strengthen and enhance intermediation and facilitation so that conflict resolution could gain a new dimension for creating a proper basis.

- *Social Cohesion*

  Conflicts do not only damage people's lives but also destroy the sense of living together. Paffenholz and Spurk(2006) mentioned social cohesion in their article, according to which this function during peace-building is there to help people learn how to live together in peaceful coexistence. The members of society or citizens lose trust and hope in each other. For this reason, social cohesion actions are very crucial for successful peace-building. Mediation, truth commissions, reconciliation activities are crucial to empowering social cohesion.

- *Monitoring*

  Protection of human rights and monitoring abuse, violence and reporting these to the center contribute to create early warning systems for parties. As civil society actors are independent, impartial, and have a potential to be closer to the society, they can be efficient during conflict resolution. Paffenholz and Spurk gave examples of the civil society organizations which have the capacity of monitoring such as; United Nations, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Conflict Early Warning and

Response Mechanism (CEWARN) which established under Intercontinental Government Authorities Development(IGAD). The monitoring of public institutions may not reveal realities in the regions, because particularly societies who are effected by conflict have certain positions against the state. For this reason, the involvement of civil society actors in monitoring can be more effective in peacebuilding.

- *In-group socialization*

    Both groups who are generally defined themselves as an enemy against each other can socialize through street theatre, peace campaigns, schoolbooks, poetry festivals, traditional trainings and the inter-group dialogue. (Worchel& Coutant, 2008). The main purpose of this function is to change attitudes and the discourse of the society. The turning of negative and hostile actions into positive approach and behaviour are significant for peaceful coexistence. In case of successful in-group socialization, enhancing inter-group dialogue, negotiation and reconciliation can be made easier and more efficient.

- *Service Delivery*

    It is basically a mechanism to create entry points for other peace-peacebuilding functions. Moreover, the conflictual areas generally became underdeveloped in terms of services and infrastructure. One of the parts of the peace-building is reconstruction and developing of places to provide services for people with organizing aid projects. Such developments can create positive perception for conflict resolution in the society. There are many national and international non-governmental organizations work in service delivery issues. Particularly international organizations have a capacity to create common platform for humanitarian aids which contribute to the peacebuilding activities.

Paffenholz and Spurk's ideas on the civil society actors are very significant functions for long-term peace. They are basically revealing a mind map of steps that should be done before the conflict, during the conflict and after the conflict. In addition to this an efficient inter-group dialogue organized by independent civil society actors can contribute better in the reconciliation process than any of parties doing it.

3.4. Multi-Track Diplomacy in Conflict Resolution and Civil Society Actors

Multi-track diplomacy is the process that involves a wide range of actors working together to build a comprehensive peace. As multi-track diplomacy has been gaining popularity and support in recent times, track I and II diplomacy are older concepts in the conflict resolution. Basically, track I diplomacy includes state and government apparatus, and it is used within the context of formal relationships. The interactions between parties are taken place by official heads of states and or representatives. According to The Institute of World Affairs, the track I diplomacy activities include formal consultations, "Good offices", special envoys, mediation, negotiations, international or national condemnations, fact-finding missions, diplomatic and economic sanctions (Nan, 2003).

The track I diplomacy in the conflict resolution has its advantages as well as disadvantages; Official diplomatic efforts between parties have better funds, and parties have further resources and security compared to unofficial parties. Moreover, official negotiations between parties can give confidence to parties in terms of enabling parties take risks and conduct negotiations, because it is very real that negotiations have the capacity to impact parties' prestige negatively. On the other hand, however, track II diplomacy contains civil society actors such as; national and international actors, research centres, civil individuals and others. Unofficial parties have a flexibility of exploration of new ideas and also have the capacity to pursue the public for negotiations. At that point, the role of civil society is substantial, because persuasion of the public by civil society actors which has close relations with ordinary citizens is healthier for sustainable negotiations.

Track II diplomacy aims to create a peaceful, sustainable and non-coercive negotiation medium between parties. In track II, there are intermediaries who are generally non-governmental organizations, academics, former government officials, humanitarian organizations, research centres and so on. In track II diplomacy, informal intermediaries' intervention at different levels can change. Table two shows that what kind of activities or processes are taken place by intermediaries.

Figure 3 (Nan, 2003)

Track II diplomacy strengthens civil society actors' hand and brings non-official, influential and private people or actors who have the capacity to interact with society, into the process. These intermediaries facilitate dialogues and problem-solving meetings between parties as well as organize workshops.

As literature and researches on the conflict resolution have expanded and grown in time, new tracks have been added into the conflict resolution literature. Louise Diamond brought a new dimension with using the conception of 'multi-track diplomacy'. This term includes nine specific tracks that aim to promote peacebuilding in top-down context. With the development of the new model in track diplomacy, the hierarchal approach of the conflict resolution has also changed. Instead of pyramid model of track diplomacy understanding, the new circle diagram is developed to define specific processes (Diamond&cDonald, 1996).

Figure 4 (Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy,What is Multi-Track Diplomacy)
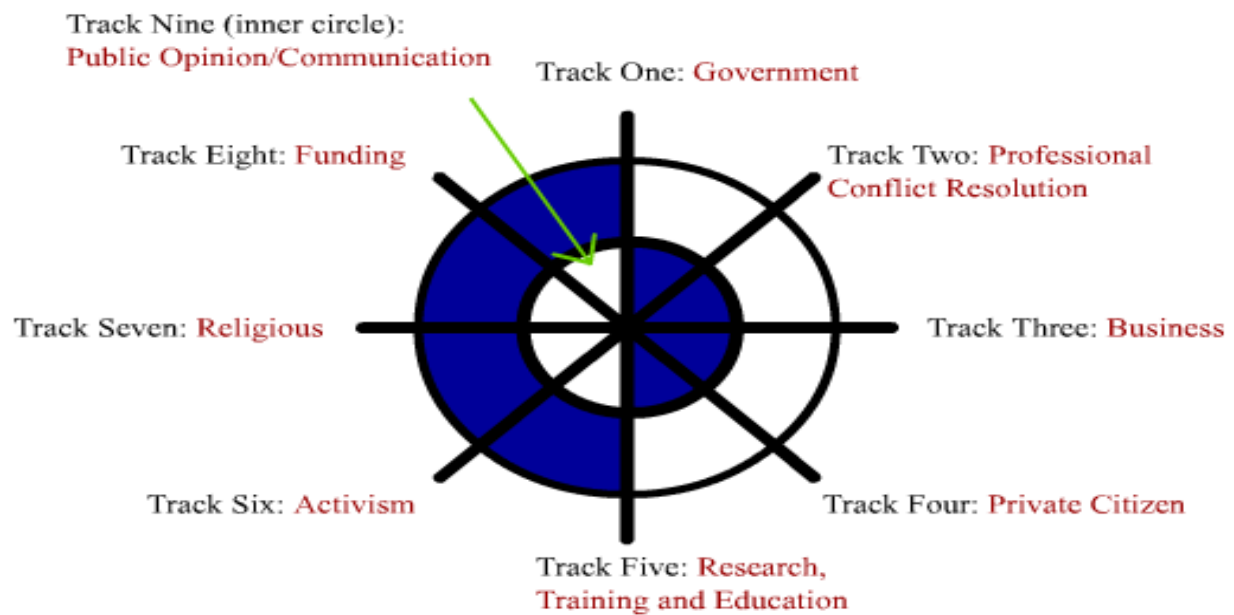
The newer and longer multi-track diplomacy approach expands the role of civil society actors and private initiatives. As it is shown in the diagram, on the contrary of using the order of importance process, each step and track has equal importance, and each of them has its own resources, capacity values and approaches (Diamond&cDonald, 1996). According to Diamond, no track can build peace by itself, and no one can be separated from each other either (Diamond, &cDonald, 1996). The advantage of multi-track diplomacy, each track specifically addresses the different dimension of conflict and its solution.

So that, with reference to diagram, it would be easier and beneficial integrate conflict resolution process with all level of society and its interactions. In particular, civil society actors have more specific roles in the multi-track diplomacy. The using and distribution of resources, information and capacity are shared by different sectors of civil society actors. Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy redesigned the diagram of multi-track diplomacy and specified activities in each track concretely.

Figure 5 (Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, what is Multi-Track Diplomacy)

Nine Tracks in the Multi-Track System

TRACK 1
Government, or Peacemaking through Diplomacy.
This is the world of official diplomacy, policymaking, and peacebuilding as expressed through formal aspects of the governmental process.

TRACK 8
Funding, or Peacemaking through Providing Resources.
This refers to the funding community-those foundations and individual philanthropists that provide the financial support for many of the activities undertaken by the other tracks.

TRACK 2
Nongovernment/Professional, or Peacemaking through Conflict Resolution.
This is the realm of professional nongovernmental action attempting to analyze, prevent, resolve, and manage international conflicts by non-state actors.

TRACK 7
Religion, or Peacemaking through Faith in action.
This examines the beliefs and peace-oriented actions of spiritual and religious communities and such morality-based movements as pacifism, sanctuary, and nonviolence.

TRACK 3
Business, or Peacemaking through Commerce.
This is the field of business and its actual and potential effects on peacebuilding through the provision of economic opportunities, international friendship and understanding, informal channels of communication, and support for other peacemaking activities.

TRACK 6
Activism, or Peacemaking through Advocacy.
This track covers the field of peace and environmental activism on such issues as disarmament, human rights, social and economic justice, and advocacy of special-interest groups regarding specific governmental policies.

TRACK 4
Private Citizen, or Peacemaking through Personal Involvement. This includes the various ways that individual citizens become involved in peace and development activities through citizen diplomacy, exchange programs, private voluntary organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and special-interest groups.

TRACK 5
Research, Training, and Education, or peacemaking through Learning.
This track includes three related worlds: research, as it is connected to university programs, think tanks, and special-interest research centers; training programs that seek to provide training in practitioner skills such as negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution, and third-party facilitation; and education, including kindergarten through PhD programs that cover various aspects of global or cross-cultural studies, peace and world order studies, and conflict analysis, management, and resolution.

(Inner circle)
TRACK 9
Communications and the Media, or Peacemaking through Information.
This is the realm of the voice of the people: how public opinion gets shaped and expressed by the media-print, film, video, radio, electronic systems, the arts.

Source: Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace, by Dr. Louise Diamond and Ambassador John McDonald, Kumarian Press, 1996

3.5. The Role of Civil Society Actors in Conflict Stages

As conflict transformation or stages has a series of phases, each phase has different dynamics. There are several different models to define conflict stages. Doudet (2007) has defined eight main stages using a diagram; peaceful social change, latent conflict, nonviolent, confrontation, violent confrontation, conflict mitigation, conflict settlement, (negative) peace implementation, and (positive) peace consolidation. In this cyclical model, conflict stages are sequential, and the model shows that each stage has a possibility to evolve into one another. That is why it can be inferred that signing a peace agreement does not mean a final solution of the conflict. Table five at below shows how stages transform into each other, and how a stage can evolve onto the other.

Figure 6 (Dudouet, 2007, P.21)
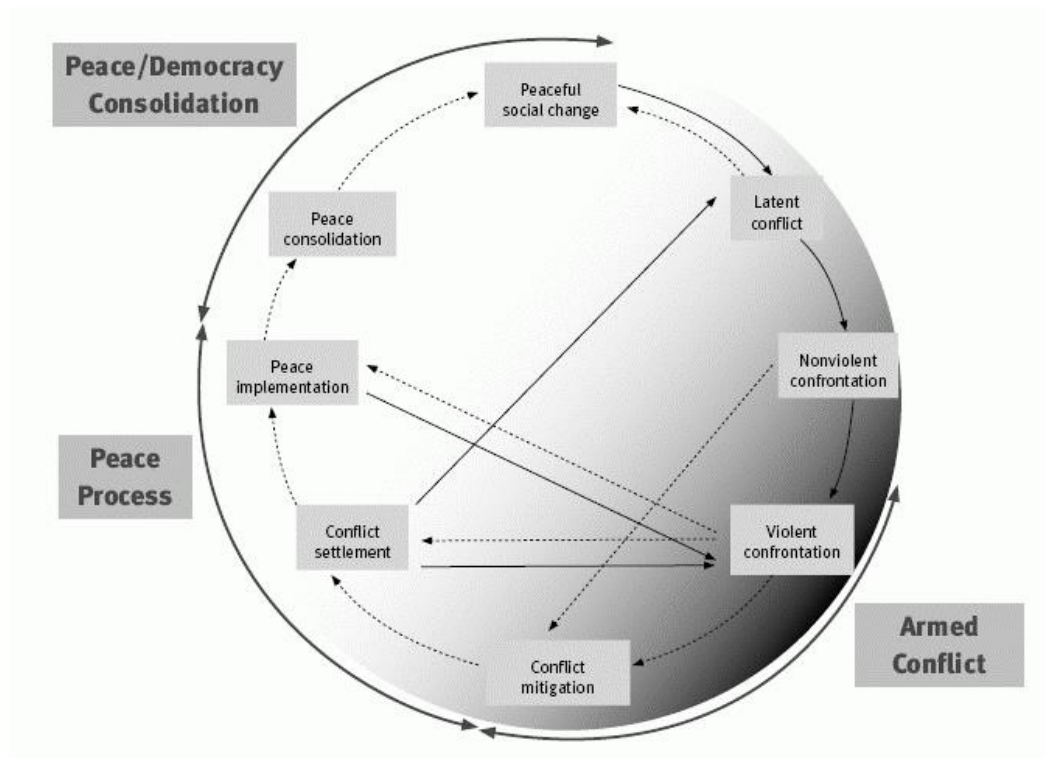
3.5.1. Civil Society Actors During Conflict

Protracted intra-state conflicts damage the daily life of people and cause social trauma, physical harms, human rights violations and further social problems. During conflictual times, because of fear and repression, social mobilization is very hard. That is why the presence of civil society actors during wartime is very crucial to help people, monitor human abuses, reveal violations, and inform government officials of them. Since the state apparatus focuses on security and military issues in wartime, public institutions do not properly perform their social duties. Furthermore, sometimes state officials may be responsible for human rights abuses and crimes.

As state's consent is relatively weak in conflictual areas, there could be a negative relationship between citizens and state officials. That is why state officials may not pay attention to the human rights violations. Thus involvement of the civil society actors can give an opportunity to reveal real social dynamics because the civil society actors generally better stress on social dynamics, rather than political and militaristic ones. They draw attention to a political exclusion, social injustice, and cultural discrimination which are generally shown as a source of the conflict. One the other hand, there is a generally negative communication style between

state officials and the civil society actors as well because state officials may not be pleased to be revealed their activities by the civil society actors in the conflictual regions.

However, despite the possibility of negative relations between state officials and civil society actors, the latter are independent actors who could establish communication channels between opponents. So that if parties wish to stop the violence against each other, it should be positive relationship between all mechanisms. Plus, not only communication between opponent groups but also even if state apparatus wants to use violence against armed groups without harming private citizens, the civil society actors can evacuate people from conflictual regions too because private citizens may not trust either state officials or armed group members. For this reason, civil initiatives can play a crucial role in intervention methods of state.

Paffenholz and Spurk found their impact during armed conflicts rather limited, but notably because "it proved extremely hard to mobilize people for a long-term culture of peace when they were in need of basic needs." (Paffenholz,2009). As there are many forms of civil society actors, the presence of all forms of them during conflicts is very significant considering the lack of provision of the basic needs of people such as food, water, shelter, medical and social and others. If each form of civil society actors can fulfil people's necessities, then fewer people would be harmed by the conflict.

3.5.2. Civil Society Actors During Negotiation Process

The conflict to peace transition period is a very complex and a dynamical process. Since this process can be marked as democratic transition periods, it means that parties decide to liberalize the political system, establish more inclusive and decentralized mechanism. In this way, there are many issues that civil society actors can contribute in; the changing of a political system, providing a continuation of peaceful negotiation and involving society itself in negotiations. That is why it would be not easy to have such fundamental changes decided by the state alone. At this point, again, impartial and independent civil society actors can help implement these alterations in practice. Increasing the consciousness of peace and teaching people the advantages of peaceful negotiations are jobs that can be better done by civil society actors.

3.5.3. Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Civil Society Actors

Post-conflict terminology refers to a process that goes from a negative line to positive one and is a transition period of "forging structures and processes that redefine violent relationships into constructive and cooperative patterns" (Lederach, 1997). Moreover, there are sub-stages in the post-conflict periods that define how to build a comprehensive peace such as demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) or sometimes subtitled as economic reconstruction, educational rehabilitation, social normalization and others (Dudouet, 2007). If the peace-building process goes well, the last phase of the process is a reconciliation period which underlines peace gaining support among society.

A question of how the members of opponent groups become a part of the normal life produced DDR programs in the conflict resolution literature. As disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is an important aspect of post-conflict peacebuilding process; the involvement of civil society actors in these stages could provide better achievements. The main objective of DDR program is the promotion of long-term peace, security, economic development and structural alterations.

If positive peace is aimed for, namely not only ending conflictual violence but also creating peace to finish hostility for even next generation, the implementation of DDR, peaceful rehabilitations and reconciliation, are necessary steps to be accomplished. Otherwise, with a few vain political attempts or the usage of high-level weapons, violence may be ended, yet hostility will continue to remain present. The enemy groups have a past of data, myths, images and recollections that describe the justification of their existence and the reason of their enmity (Nadler, Malloy,Fisher, 2008). Because of the roots of such feelings, partial parties' actions may remind them of their history. That is why the presence of civil society actors is significant for inter-groups dialogue or truth commissions. Since the role of civil society actors is to provide better communication within society, private citizens should be active players in civil society organizations. For instance, in post-apartheid South Africa, social reconciliation was achieved through truth and reconciliation commissions which was a religious-based organization led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Since each conflictual case has its own distinctive dynamics and features, different forms of reconciliation mechanisms should be developed. For example, in Rwanda religious based truth commission did not work because of

sensitive structure of the religion among the society so that different-based commissions managed the process.

An intergroup dialogue is a necessary condition for the beginning of a conflict resolution process (Nadler, Malloy,Fisher, 2008). Pettigrew proposed that inter-group contact is a basis for the finding of commonalities between groups (Nadler, Malloy,Fisher, 2008). This reduces intergroup hostility and creates pathways from hostility to peaceful coexistence. For the reconciliation an inter-group dialogue is also very crucial element and if it is organized by independent civil society actors, it contributes better than public institutions' activities.

There are mainly two approaches which describe the intergroup contact, first, highlighting the commonality between groups and latter forming a super-group which can contact with both sides and manage the relations between them (Worthington, Witvliet, Pietrini&Miller, 2007). It should be an understanding of the main concerns of groups to find common points between groups. For example, a super-group or it can be called a moderator group could require participants to wear the same colour clothes, speaking a common and peaceful language, and creating sub-super groups between each other among both group members. This provides the group members to recognize each other, forming of a basis for communication as well as changing the cycle of negative perception.

The civil society actors have great social capacities to accelerate the truth-telling process and allow that the past is forgotten not with repression but consent. They can organize documentation projects, academic studies, literary projects, memorial and symbolic speeches and expressions. With these, people will be able to understand the importance of peace and how violence and hatred diminish their life quality.

4. The Role of Civil Society in Northern Ireland Case

The Northern Ireland peace process is widely thought to be a successful case which can be a model for other societies in conflict (White, 2013). As there is a long story of conflict in the Northern Ireland, when it came to 1970s, several attempts were undertaken in order to reduce violence. From 1922 onwards, the position of the Northern Ireland was increasingly discussed in the United Kingdom's political agenda because of the rise of the opponent's voices. The presence of competent groups and political parties lead to a deep crisis in British and Irish politics. The central government of Britain and Ireland, Sinn Fein, which was considered to be political strand of Irish Republican Army organization, pro-monarch and mostly representative of Protestants, Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) have been the main actors to determine the future of Irish politics. Besides the Good Friday Agreement which is the official document of the ending conflict in the Northern Ireland was signed between those parties.

In 1988, informal talks between Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the DUP, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland had taken place in Germany (Guelke, 2003). The parties talked on the terms without giving bounding promises to each other because the main purpose of the talk was securing the primary terms and preparing a ground for next-coming negotiations. Although the parties had not had successful negotiations since they could not find a common ground in the first stage, they continued until the final agreement was reached. In the nature of conflict, the major reason for the difficulties is that parties have different approaches towards peace. In Northern Ireland's case, despite them having different approaches all parties desired to end violence. That is why, even if parties had no concrete results for a long time, they insisted on carrying out the talks.

The long processes in a sense created a basis for the final agreement. By mid-1990s, the parties informally formed the principles of the final agreement. During these informal and rare talks, both parties continued with their military operations at the same time. In March 1993, the killing of two children with IRA bombings created a sensational effect in the society. The reaction to the explosion led to the formation of the Peace Initiative '93. While civil society actors became prominent with this incident and the informal talks continued, these informal talks between

parties were revealed by newspapers. The Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew confessed about some talks in one of his speeches.

In December of 1993, John Major and Irish Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, signed the Downing Street Declaration (Coakley&Todd, 2014). This mutual commitment constituted the final agreement between parties. In 1996, multi-party negotiations were held with the participation of Sinn Fein and the unionist movement. When these multi-part negotiations started, the Irish Republican Army gave a commitment of not breaking the ceasefire. At that point there were formal talks with the international environment's support and civil society actors that wanted to finish the violence, on the other side too there was a political will to end violence. It meant that at that point the conditions for peace had matured sufficiently.

Although there were many disagreements between parties and sessions ended in deadlocks from time to time, parties were willing to continue negotiations. As this moment is very significant for a healthy peace process, there were many elements to prevent a possible breaking of the diplomacy table; firstly, an international environment; even if parties were not agreeing on some issues often, the selected chairman had the authority to continue the process and the capacity to reach political figures such as the president of the United States of America, the British Prime Minister, or the Irish Taoiseach. That is why such a coordination gave the capacity to resolve disagreements in a short time (BBC History,1999). The involvement of US senator George Mitchell provided the use of a moderate language towards the parties. Secondly, the pressure from the civil society actors which is one of the most important elements that have the capacity to canalize the process was present.

Former Irish Foreign Minister John O'Donnell expressed how the process worked;
''When negotiations were continued, many people complained that there is no any progress in the negotiations. But despite, on the following day, everybody sits on the chairs. There are two important features of negotiations; first there was an independent and impartial chairman, secondly, there was a structure of negotiations, it did not work randomly. When people sometimes screamed to each other, chairman Senator Mitchell did not want shut up them; he thought that people should scream at each other.'' (Baysal,2015)

It is assumed that there are two important factors that provided the successful conclusion of negotiations in the Northern Ireland conflict; firstly, a supportive attitudes of international

environment, particularly by the United States of America and secondly relatively successful structure of the civil society (Farrington, 2004). For instance, the negotiation process started to be chaired by an international actor that both parties accepted it and the process was accelerated with bilateral and multilateral sessions.

Despite the central government's rejection of having negotiations with Irish Republican Army organization early on, both parties continued to meet in order to reduce violence. The negotiations started in 1980s but the concrete conclusion was in 1994 with the decision to have an official meeting of the two parties. British Prime Minister John Major decided to cancel the meeting without providing any reason. However, at that point, a very critical step was taken by the President of United States of America Bill Clinton by inviting Sinn Fein leader's Garry Adam to the White House. Therefore, it was not easy for parties to leave the table since the international actors were an important part of the process.

This shows that the parties could not break the regular course of events easily because third parties were playing a very crucial and active role on checking the contracting parties. In this sense the United State of America was a significant third party. The former Irish Foreign Minister Liz O'Donnell mentioned the role of third party in the process;

"USA was very important for us. IRA had close relationships with Irish people who live in the USA. An inclusion of USA into peace process was a very idealist intervention. Clinton said we want Irish people to be happy again in his speech and he assigned senator Mitchell to be chair of negotiations. Mitchell was very honourable and respectable person and he was a very neutral person. He was very strict for two parties. An inclusion of Mitchell contributed respect in the negotiations. As because of he was a very respectable person, parties behaved very respectfully. This provided an increasing of mutual respect between parties in time."
(Baysal,2015)

Since needs, positions, interests and values are the main determiner of parties in the conflict resolution the parties had extremely divergent attitudes towards each other. The perception of the peace process was very different to the parties in the Northern Ireland case at the beginning of the talks. The British government perceived that peace refers to providing economic and political stabilization in Ireland, for the Unionists peace meant strengthening of the bond between the United Kingdom and Irish territories. On the other side, IRA and the pro-IRA

political movement had a hope of obtaining political status, providing power-sharing in politics and institutions, and further forms of political autonomy from conflict resolution process.

As politics is widely divided in Northern Ireland case, the Northern Ireland is deeply divided in numerous fields as well and this reflected on the structure of civil society actors in the country. For instance economically, there has been a serious gap of economic standards between regions in the Northern Ireland. While some of the regions have been well developed, others did not. As it is possible to observe in the conflictual regions, there is a generally considerable economical gap between conflictual and non-conflictual areas. Socially, the society was divided into a lot of different categories, foremost sectarian polarizations. In addition to this, the positions of political parties and movements were quite radical against each other. The civil society actors in such fragmented societies tend to be weak.

4.1. Civil Society in the Northern Ireland

The civil society in the Northern Ireland had been generally existed based on the voluntary activities until 1990s such as helping people, aid campaigns and assistance for elders and others. That is why civil society activities related to politics were absent for a long time (Mclean, 2013). However, when it comes to 1980s and 90s, numerous civil society activities concentrated on the social and political issues, and conflict in their country.

Moreover, despite weak civil society actors in Northern Ireland, strong initiatives were initiated during the peace process. One of them was Initiative '92 which was planned by Robin Williams (The Editor of Fortnight Journal) and Simon Lee (Professor of Jurisprudence at Queen's) in 1991. The main idea was to create a grassroots movement which became more involved in decision-making mechanisms and politics. These few funders started to spread their ideas among people, especially in the places mostly exposed to violence. After creating a management committee of seven people, these initiatives started to work in different parts of the regions. One of the members of management committee of initiative, journalist Andy Pollak explained the way of working in the preface to A Citizens' Inquiry;

''The whole exercise—launching the work of the initiative, holding public meetings, canvassing for submissions, organizing 'focus groups' and oral hearings, and preparing, publishing and launching the report—was carried out in the thirteen months between May 1992 and June 1993.'' (Opsahl, 1993)

There are many examples of initiatives and civil society activities that played a crucial in the Northern Ireland such as the initiative of the independent citizen group, the Opsahl Commission, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, "Yes" campaign, a Civic Forum, and further civil society activities and organizations (Guelke, 2003). The valuable feature of these civil society actors is that most of them were not under the control of any political party and they were not engaged in a partial political mechanism. It is for sure that there were financial and social supports for some of these civil society actors, for example the Irish-American lobby had a great economic and lobbying power in the US, provided support to them during the process.

4.2. Opsahl Commission

The Opsahl Commission was an independent public organization, entirely separate from government agencies or any public institutions. It was chaired by the respected Norwegian human rights lawyer, Professor Torkel Opsahl (Wanis, 2005). When the Opsahl Commission was established, the peace process had been discontinued by the parties, and it was one of the worst periods between them. There was frustration among the people. So during the negative periods, the Opsahl Commission established a process which is called 'initiative 92' to create a ground for a return on the negotiation table. The organization was talking to local communities, individuals and families to learn their views about the conflict. These activities continued for a year and it helped garner a political, social and economic picture of the society.

The initiative held public workshops in villages, public squares, church halls, and it was the first time, people took an opportunity to express their ideas. Such meetings in the different part of the Northern Ireland made people more socialized and provided them became much more interested in the social and political issues in the country.

At the end of all the fieldwork, talking with people, interviews, workshops and further activities were compiled in a book called the Opsahl report. These efforts had built a peaceful perception in the eye of society and politics that increased consciousness and awareness in the process. As it is mentioned in the Theoretical Framework of Civil Society chapter, civil society actors have a capacity of reconciling people, bringing them together and creating a basis for inter-group dialogue. So that the Opsahl Commission was an important actor to perform such important activities for a peaceful existence.

Civil society actors are considered capable of pushing government's policies and activities during conflict resolution processes, as such, the Opsahl Commission tried to bring government's interest in writing reports. The Opsahl report received a great amount of attention, and whole reports were discussed in the Irish Parliament for a long time. Despite British politicians being strongly against some articles and texts in the report; the reports discussed at the European Parliament as well (Fitzduff&Williams, 2007). The report included many important issues such as the inclusion of women in politics, educational alterations like changing curricula, cultural, social and political rights of Irish people and further critical points.

The Opsahl Inquiry managed to bring together people from different sections of the society. It became a place where people were able to talk even if they had different backgrounds and ideas. There were unionists, extremists and paramilitary people in the organization. Not only people from different political background, but also from different occupational groups such as teachers, students, doctors, traders and other participated in the commission. In terms of definition of peace-making which is basically about bringing hostile people together; the Opsahl Commission activities tried to have direct contact with all parties and promote dialogue between them. For this reason, it is fair to say the commission held very significant peace-making activities during the conflict.

Avila Kilmurray who was a director of the Community Foundation for the Northern Ireland expressed the process as she experienced; when those people came to together under the name of the Opsahl Commission, rather than expressing their ideas via talking face to face, it was distributed blank cards, and people were writing their ideas on these cards (Hughes, 2011). This practice continued for a long time until people started gaining confidence and trust in each other. At the end of collecting the written cards, without any possibility of constraining, people's ideas were compiled as a report.

The Opsahl Commission did not start revolutions or make any direct attempts to finish problems. It was started by a few men to simply talk to people, but it became a huge civil society movement with time. That indirectly pushed people to ask themselves what can be done for a peace process. The commission was composed of academicians, former political actors, lawyers, church representatives and ordinary citizens. Such a diverse team could work very efficiently. These people who were from different segments of the society could achieve impact

in some part of the political mechanisms and the Opsahl Commission's ideas and works highly influenced Belfast Agreement in 1998 because Commission was very powerful theoretically as well as practically, they had an experiences in the field, they had talked with people, they knew the real stories of people, and they knew what the society wants from a government.

The former Irish Foreign Minister Liz O'Donnell and who is very active during peace process, he says;

''The important thing is that humanizes the process, and we tried to create a space that people understand each other. We humanized the relationships. At that point, civil society actors' contribution was very important because they had a contact with all segments of society.'' (*Opsahl, 1993*)

For this reason, a commission could address the main problems with their social and political accumulation. The Opsahl Commission contributed to the solution of most of these issues which took place in the final agreement, the Belfast Agreement. The idea of recognizing Irish Nationhood, reformations in the politics, economic and social rights found the place in the agreement. Article 5 of the section of the Belfast Agreement entitled "Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity" subsection "Economic, Social and Cultural Issues":

''All participants acknowledge the sensitivity of the use of symbols and emblems for public purposes and the need in particular in creating the new institutions to ensure that such symbols and emblems are used in a manner which promotes mutual respect rather than division. Arrangements will be made to monitor this issue and consider what action might be required'' (Melaugh, 1998)

Belfast Agreement includes many sections, and it has an inclusive characteristic. The articles were formed under numerous sections such as;
• Rights, Safeguards, and Equality of Opportunity;
• Decommissioning;
• Security;
• Policing and Justice;
• Prisoners;
• Validation, Implementation and Review (Melaugh, 1998).

With such a wide span of working, the commission started to give and publish recommendations in many fields such as politics, constitution, social rights, economics and more. The importance of these recommendations was that they were collected and compiled by commissioners in order to gather ideas from ordinary citizens themselves. When these recommendations were published, people feel something from their ideas directly. That was strengthening the power of civil society actors. Once again, Andy Pollak explained the role of the recommendations;

''In essence, we consider that—provided that Irish nationalism is legally recognized in Northern Ireland—a government of Northern Ireland should be put in place, based on the principle that each community has an equal voice in making and executing the laws or a veto on their execution, and, equally shares administrative responsibility. This government should be free to discuss and negotiate its relationships, institutional or other, with the government of the Republic of Ireland.'' (Opsahl, 1993)

Opsahl Commission's motto, ''Parity of Esteem'' inspired different sections of the society, not only Catholics but also Protestants, unionists and other communities, while it provided a magical effect in the society for reconciliation (Guelke, 2003). When the talks between parties failed in 1992, Opsahl Commission published "A Citizens' Inquiry" whose language of publication was very inclusive, and that arouse people's interest in the peace process. The Opsahl Commission became an important actor in or the peace process and it inspired other certain sections of society to be active in the process. One of them was the Women's Coalition political party which was established for the purpose of inclusion of women.

Another important attempt of civil society actors was the "Yes Campaign" in 1998. As it is mentioned, the campaign was organized by non-political actors and it was based on the main purpose: saying ''yes'' to the Belfast agreement. According to Cochrane and Dunn, the civil society played an important role for a successful outcome;

''It may be concluded that the independent 'Yes' campaign was the result of a healthy civil society, and that the eventual vote of 71 per cent in favour of the Good Friday Agreement in the May 1998 referendum would have been significantly lower had it not been for its contribution to the political process.'' (Cochrane, 2002)

It can be said that civil society groups tried to facilitate the dialogue between parties, supported the idea of peaceful coexistence among society and included all segments of society into the

peace process (Guelke, 2003). He draws attention on two civil society initiatives in the 1990s: The Opsahl Commission of 1992 and the "Yes" Campaign for the referendum in 1998. (Lederach, 1995). These two initiatives contributed reconciliation and gradual peace in the Northern Ireland and as a matter of fact, this is very important for not back turning conflict. As it is explained in Cochrane and Dunn's article; the contribution of the civil society actors to the peace process is indirect rather than direct and gradual rather dramatic (John, &Kew, 2008).

4.3. Peace People

During the conflict in the Northern Ireland, a number of civil society actors called for peace and protested the government. One of those organizations was the ''Peace People''. The organization was established by three women named Mairead Maguire, Betty Williams, and Ciaran McKeown in 1976, as a grassroots movement to protest violence (Peace People, 1976.) When three children were killed and their mother injured by a speeding car of Irish militants in the street, it created a sensational effect in the society and the late children's aunt started to protest the violence in the country. That protest grew out from day to day and lead to an organization named the Peace People. The organization brought a different section of people together among the country. This, cross-community contact was not only achieved in the local areas but it also dispersed throughout the whole country and it provided the raise of consciousness against violence and for the peace.

For example, young students were trained in summer schools in regular meetings under the name of ''Education for Mutual Understanding''. In addition to this, one of the most important elements in the Northern Ireland, the religious communities, were very effective to end violence as they were held to a high prestige in the society. Corrymeela was a Christian community that tried to get into touch with politicians as well as Irish Republican Army members to convince them on ending violence (Cichon, 2001). The organization charged its members with sending them to local regions, streets and neighbourhoods to talk with people and mobilize them for the achievement of peace. This was a very critical attempt that persuaded people to take steps towards ending violence. The action of Christian Community is a very good instance of intermediation and facilitation mechanism. Since a community can be considered as a civil society actor, will of peace among the community members made a tremendous contribution in the process. They have a further capacity of convincing people for peace because of having

religious identity and prestige in the society. Such critical role of mediation and facilitation effected both parties.

As many central governments may have tendency not including the civil society actors into the political process, because of their reluctance of power-sharing, politicians in the Britain and Ireland too did not desire to include them into the process as well in the early periods. However, when the civil society actors' activities became known in the society, policy makers could not ignore them any longer. In the context of advocacy and public communication, with lobbying, agenda-settings and public pressure, civil society actors try to be part of the conflict resolution process. Many civil society actors made incredible efforts to be involved in the process. This provided that public institutions started to check their actions in their policies.

4.4. G7 Organization

Another crucial civil society contribution was the G7 organization. The leaders of seven different occupational groups formed a platform and developed a dialogue with policy makers. The different occupational groups most of which had been identified as rival sects started working together. For example, two local newspapers started to publish common editorial works. As service delivery such as health, education, infrastructure, market and other stuff are very important for basic human needs, these should be developed during conflict resolution process for comprehensive positive perception in the society. So the coming together of different occupation groups provided service delivery to be implemented better in Northern Ireland.

4.5. Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)

The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) was another volunteer community that they could impact process positively in the Northern Ireland. Seamus McAleavey who was head of the NICVA organization played a very significant role in the Northern Ireland issue with the 'Yes' campaign. The NICVA members showed a very supportive behaviour during their work to end up with yes before an agreement.

The organization included many civil society initiatives, and the 'Yes' initiative was one of them. The reason of NICVA's official neutrality was that political partisanship made it very difficult to manoeuvre independently as a civil society actor. NICVA had not to obligate to prefer nationalist to unionist or vice versa and that extended the capacity of self-manoeuvre for

an organization. That is why the NICVA members could participate in the government an organization as an independent civil society actor and convey their ideas to the members of the government. Therefore, this was a very effective way to influence on the process.

The director of the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action between 1985 and 1998 and the leader of the ''Yes" campaign Quintin Oliver insisted that the civil society has a significant impact on the "*mood and atmosphere*" of the political platform (Guelke, 2003). They provided that awareness of peace was increasing day by day while the conflict was in stalemate. All-involving civil society actors in negotiations have more power and ability of creating durable peace (John&Kew 2008). To achieve the durable and stable peace, all conflicting factions must come to a favourable position towards harmonization (Mclean, 2013).

During the negotiations, there were special meetings in which many citizens were able to participate and these meetings were a kind of micro-level of the negotiations. In these special meetings, the commission tried to create diversity and representability in the negotiations. Moreover, privately and for once only, the electoral threshold was removed for a while as they tried to bring each political side to become a part of the process. Again O'Donnell mentioned;

''If we just invited some of the people, we were going to make polarized people that is why we wanted to all voices became part of it. From women coalitions to occupational groups, to a certain extent, we tried to include people. This made process much easier.'' (Baysal,2015)

The patterns of civil society actors are quite interesting regarding that they were very active before a ceasefire of Irish Republican Army in 1994, and after the breakdown of a ceasefire in 1996, but not during negotiations between parties (Farrington,2004). It can be inferred that civil society actors in the Northern Ireland had concerns of a possibility of the negative influence of their activities on the negotiations during non-conflictual periods that is why they were not very active during negotiations. Therefore, it seems that civil society actors were much more active during conflictual times.

As there is the sociological aspect of the conflict, ending the violence does not bring a final solution. That is why political and social behaviours and relations should be changed in accordance for long terms results. A new and positive form of communication should be constructed through the country and civil society also can make contributions towards these changes. Regarding tracks diplomacy, the Northern Ireland case looks successful; its having

more than two official parties in the table, having a third party and international commission, and committing of good actions on the hands of the civil society actors make Northern Ireland a successful and exemplary case.

As a result, the parties signed the Good Friday Agreement in Belfast in 1998. This was a historical moment for the history of both parties. With this agreement, parties accepted that the future of the Northern Ireland would be determined by the Irish people itself through a referendum. The agreement was including a form of power-sharing in administration, proportion in elections, autonomy, rights of minorities and further. The process which is called peace process is concluded successfully according to both parties as well as the international environment. Moreover, the process has been taken as an example by many similar cases in the world.

Since the civil society actors played an important role before, during and after the conflict resolution process and in peace-keeping activities, it played an important role in decommissioning of weapons of the Irish Republican Army. During disarmament, de-mobilization and re-integration (DDR) peacekeeping activities, the civil society is very outstanding because reliability and objectivity of activities make them more credible. IRA's weapons were decommissioned under the observation of impartial and objective international commission by using pouring concrete in 2001. This strengthened the credibility and reliability between parties.

Belfast Agreement, or with its other name, Good Friday Agreement, is a document that proves and commitment of a transition from majority rule to power-sharing in the institutions and politics. After an agreement was signed, antagonistic groups shifted closer, and groups believed that rather than division harmonization was possible (Mclean, 2013). The moderate groups became more visible in the public areas. This was a substantial process for peace-building in the Northern Ireland.

5. The Role of Civil Society Actors in the Peace Process in Turkey, Between 2013-2015
5.1. Historical Background of Kurdish Issue

There are blurred lines regarding to label the Kurdish issue in Turkey. Although Gareth Winrow and Kemal Kirisci highlighted the Kurdish-Turkish conflict as trans-state ethnic conflict, they draw attention to the ethnic formation of the Kurdish identity (Ozcelik, 2006). In fact, it is very difficult to define Kurds' situation due to their position not only in Turkey but also dispersing in four countries in the Middle East.

As the roots of the Kurdish issue go beyond the Ottoman Empire, there have been many rebel movements against a central authority from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic, and this conflict has been continuing until now. Even if the conflict which occurs between the rebel groups and Turkish states (the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic) has been continuing in changing intensity, sometimes low-intensity conflict or high, there have also been negotiation periods between parties from time to time. Meanwhile, until now, there have been eighteen Kurdish rebellions, with primary ones such as Koçgiri, Sheik Said, Ararat and Dersim rebellion (Çelik, 2010).

The last version of Kurdish rebel group which is called the Kurdistan Workers'Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan—PKK), is a separatist group formally established in 1978 but launched its first violent actions in 1984 (Jongerden, 2007). When PKK first came to exist, the governments' strategy for regions where mostly Kurdish lived, was based on generally suppressive principles. Most commonly used strategy for Kurdish areas was a declaration of emergency rule, with intent to minimize activities of a separatist organization. Since then the stage and the form of conflict between the parties have changed, yet continue up to today.

Although the PKK was established with the intention to create a free, independent and separate Kurdish state, there have been many discussions about whether the aim of the PKK is a creating a new state or not. One of the top leaders of PKK Cemil Bayık, in his interview with the BBC, expressed that they did not want to establish a new and separate state. Cemil Bayık declared;

> "we don't want to separate from Turkey and set up a state. We want to live within the borders of Turkey on our own land freely... The struggle will continue until the Kurds' innate rights are accepted." (BBC News, 2016).

However, in the eyes of the Turkish government, as well as many countries in the world, PKK is recognized as a terrorist organization. According to the Turkish government and many people who live in the country, the organization tries to damage national integrity and the unity of the country using violence. While these discussions have been continuing for a long time, the result is terrible; more than 40.000 people died, thousands are internally displaced, and the hatred between the parties and the peoples on both sides has been increasing day by day (BBC News, 2016).

Particularly the conflict between the PKK and Turkish Republic security forces peaked between 1991 and 1999. During the period, the highest number of deaths, human rights violations, destructions and displacements had happened because of the violent activities in the region. (Çelik, 2010). When the leader of an organization was prisoned in Turkey in 1999, PKK declared a unilateral cease-fire and presented their new strategy which was promised to be based on the peaceful methods; yet, in a short time, the conflict re-escalated again.

In the early 1990s, Turkish President Turgut Özal took a step towards negotiations which was a path that was different and never tried before. Such an idea aroused the interest of some politicians, and Turgut Özal began to work on the negotiation project with the General Commander of Turkish Gendarmerie Eşref Bitlis, and the former Finance Minister Adnan Kahveci. As the project was working well in a short time, negotiations provided an opportunity to proclaim a declaration of a cease-fire by PKK on 16 March of 1993. The major aim of the Turkish President is to propose a reform package for the solution of the Kurdish issue and ending violence. He wanted to present a plan to the National Council Meeting which is the highest level meeting in the government, yet, President Özal died on 17 April, and his plan was never presented. In the meantime, many journalists and politicians claimed that the President's death was an assassination with an intention to stop negotiations and the reform package (Oda tv, 2016).

When Süleyman Demirel became the President and Tansu Çiller the Prime Minister, their approach to the solution was entirely different. They planned to use high intensity violence against PKK. However, the violence affected the civilians as well, which is why this was the worst period in Turkey, regarding the deaths of civilians and violation of human rights and democratic principles. One of the evidences of violations is the evacuation of inhabited villages.

Approximately three thousand villages were destroyed and most of the local people, about two million, had to flee their villages and become homeless and jobless just in a night. In this period, there was a high number of internal displacements among the country too (Marchetti& Tocci, 2009).

5.2. The Period of Ak Parti

While the vicious conflictual cycle continued between Turkey and PKK, Ak Parti's (Justice and Development Party) victory in the election changed the direction in the struggle against PKK as well. Particularly, the emergency rule in the east had caused numerous highly traumatic events for the local society. Under the emergency rule, the central government appointed a governor who had far-reaching authority within the rule of the anti-terrorism law. Therefore, the first job of the Ak Parti was an abolishment of the emergency rule. This provided a deep breath for the Kurdish society because the emergency rule had continued for about fifteen years. Meanwhile, the decision for the abolition of the emergency rule was taken by a coalition government before Ak Parti came to power. However, Ak Parti government executed the implementation; that is why it was seen as an accomplishment of the new government. additionally, there was an important impact of the European Union(EU) in an abolishment of emergency rule because the EU had a positive perspective to Ak Parti and Turkey's EU accession processes was accelerated in this period.

When the Ak Parti came to power in 2002, Turkey had intense and serious problems with human rights violations in the country, especially throughout the Kurdish regions, where economic, political and social challenges were prevalent. Economically, it was one of the worst periods for Turkey. The relationship between Turkey and the European Union was unstable, and the society was desperate, particularly because of dysfunctional social services. However, when the Ak Parti came to power, they had a very reformistic and progressive character. They initiated new sessions with the European Union, developed infrastructure and social delivery, removed emergency rule in the east, and made crucial economic pushes in the country. This naturally impacted the Kurdish issue positively again.

As a prime minister and president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been sitting in power for fourteen years, as of today. Since Erdoğan has been a powerful and practical leader in his government, his party has been gaining more votes than the pro-Kurdish political movement in the areas

mostly populated by Kurds. This makes Erdoğan an important figure, because many Kurdish people perceived Erdoğan as a defender of their rights (Gurbuz, 2017).

Although the Ak Parti had a different perspective than previous governments in regard to the Kurdish issue, and even if they made reforms in Turkey, there was no specific attempt for the Kurdish issue until Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speech in Diyarbakır in 2005. It was a historical moment for the issue when Erdoğan said ''The Kurdish question is my problem.'' (Türkyurdu, 2009). Meanwhile, it can be argued that removing the emergency rule, and reforming economy, social service, health system/ care, education and further reforms had satisfied Kurdish people.

The first step of AK Parti within the acts towards a resolution of the Kurdish issue was the introduction of the Kurdish version of the TRT news channel. It was called ''6''. The channel was the first public Kurdish television channel in the history of Turkey. After this, a Democratic Initiative Process was started under the coordination of Beşir Atalay who was the Interior Minister. Another positive alteration was the abolishment of restriction of speaking in the Kurdish language in jails. Since welcoming thirty-three members of PKK at the Habur border crossing in 2009 was a peak point for the democratic initiative process; nevertheless, this was also one of the reasons for ending this process.

The claims of exaggeration of celebrations during the passage in Habur had created a negative reaction in the Turkish society and in some political segments. Despite this, parties had insisted on continuing the process, but they mostly tried to do it in secret talks because when the efforts about peace process were made in front of media, they received very strict criticism because of the widely-discussed Habur celebrations. While negotiations were continuing, a tape recording of the Oslo negotiations was found leaked on the internet and on many public websites. The talks and those participating in the negotiations were thus revealed. Turkish Undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization Hakan Fidan and Afet Güneş were talking to the top leaders of PKK with a mediator. Both parties blamed each other for the leakage of the video footage to the press and of provocation aiming to end the democratic initiative process.

5.3. The Negotiation Periods 2013 - 2015

The re-escalation process started again with mutual military attacks. There was tension between PKK, its leader Öcalan, the Pro-Kurdish political movement and the government due to the protests caused by the denial of Öcalan's lawyers' request to meet him. Furthermore, prisoners were in hunger strikes for a long time. Within such a strained environment, Abdullah Öcalan called for an ending to the hunger strikes. This was an important appeal to start the new process as he started to regularly meet the BDP-HDP members (BDP: Peace and Democracy Party, closed in 2013, New party was established: HDP: Peoples' Democratic Party), as well as intelligence officers. This regular and secret talks provided important results; Öcalan called for PKK members to leave from Turkey's borders on 21 March of 2013.

As the conflict has a very complex structure, the negotiation process had a very complex structure in Turkey in general as well. There have been many conflictual parties in the Kurdish issue; the primary was the Turkish Republic, PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, Pro-Kurdish political movement HDP, Turkish society and Kurdish society. Within the primary parties, specifically two figures were very crucial and determinant who are Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Öcalan. These are very important leaders in their respective communities due to their ability to persuade the members of their community.

Thus, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Öcalan had a determinant role in the negotiations between 2013 and 2015. As the most certain section of Turkish society was against the introduction of such a peace process because of their nationalist background, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had an ability to persuade them with his impressive speeches and style. For these reasons, during the negotiations, his role could influence the process.

Since the international environment is a very important part of the negotiation process, it can be said that the international actors can assist as a secondary party in the conflict resolutions. Despite there was no official secondary party in the negotiation periods in Kurdish issue, it can be inferred that the European Union and the United States of America were two important actors in negotiations periods. Despite the fact that the United States of America was not a part of the process in appearance, the US had a capacity to intervene in the process because of being in the important ally with Turkey, as well as having operations with PKK in Syria. Both international

actors had a positive approach to the negotiation process; Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was even presented as the peace envoy in the some of the prominent western media broadcasts.

Because of the civil society actors being another significant element in the conflict and negotiation processes, the role of civil society actors in the Kurdish issue is quite questionable in various aspects. As a matter of fact, the reason of questioning the role of civil society actors is not only related to the negotiation process but also goes deeper to the roots and tradition of governance mentality of the Turkish state. As Kalaycıoğlu mentioned, the Turkish authority does not prefer to share any form of its authority with any actors. That is why there is a traditionally weak structure of civil society, from the Ottoman Empire to this day (Çelik, 2010).

Furthermore, as Turkish society and politics is more engaged in economic relationships rather than cultural and social ties, accordingly, business groups have more impact on the society and government than ordinary civil society organizations (Çelik, 2010). Within this context, economic and political outcomes are more prominent than dealing with peace-building or other social concerns in Turkey. This form of civil society actors created disadvantages, as well as advantages in the Kurdish issue. In terms of disadvantages, the civil society and business actors looked out for their own economic profits. For this reason, they did not sufficiently deal with the Kurdish peace process. However, when the conflict between the Turkish Republic and PKK deescalated and negotiations between the parties progressed well, an area where mostly Kurdish economically became a safe zone for business actors because of ending the violence. As a consequence, they started to vastly invest in the region, which was an important outcome and at the same time factor of the peace process in Turkey.

In addition to this, since the conflict in Turkey has been continuing for a long time, it created polarizations among Turkish society and politics, and it polarized the structure of civil society in the same way. The attitude of civil society actors is generally divided into two categories; first being on the side of PKK or HDP, second being on the side of Turkish state's sensitivity line. More specifically, in one sense civil society actors make choice whether they have an anti-establishment political stance or establishment/nationalist political stance (Marchetti& Tocci, 2009). These strict distinctions between groups and civil society actors reveal a deep two-dimensional mistrust form. Firstly, it created mistrust between public institutions and civil society actors, and secondly, among civil society actors.

However, in the early periods of negotiations in 2013, Erdoğan brought together people who were among the country's prominent figures and disclosed to them the reasons for commencing the peace process. Thus, this was provided to different groups started to be closer that reflected on the society positively. This rapprochement provided to form a committee of wise men, which was one of the concrete and positive attempts by the government.

The committee of wise men was divided into seven regions because of the geographical structure of Turkey; academicians, writers, artists and intellectuals were working in each region (CNN Türk, 2013). The committee was visiting the local areas, talking to ordinary citizens, observing the process and compiling their experiences into a report to later present to the government.

Theoretically, this was a very good model in terms of implementation of a conflict resolution process, because as it is mentioned in the theoretical framework section, creating a bond between the top and down in the society and politics is a very crucial part of the conflict resolution process. The committee of wise men was a mechanism between high-level politics and grassroots. In the early periods of the commission, it created a positive image within the social and political sphere, and parties in the negotiation were satisfied with its existence. As a matter of fact, the committee of wise men was a project to create a communication between different segment of society and the civil society actors (Barış Vakfı, 2017). It could be a good model to localize the process.

However, there were two main problems with the committee of wise men. First, it was not clear whether the government took into consideration the reports which were given by the members of the committee, and second, to what extent could the members of the committee interact with local people? As of the first problem, one of the top-level members of the committee of wise men criticized the reports; according to him the opinions of the members were not taken in consideration by the government (Beştaş, Personal Interview, 2017).

It can be said that the idea of creating such a committee is very important and is an appropriate step for a proper conflict resolution process; yet, if this idea is not functionalized well, there may be frustration among the committee members. Even though the committee of wise men was established with great hopes, it did not meet its functional requirements because the

government did not believe in the importance of the committee's work. The second problem of the committee is regarding the relationship between the committee members and local people. One of the people who live in Cizre which is one of the most Kurdish populated town, criticized the relationship between the committee and the local people:

> *''I live in Cizre, and I know that most of the people who live in this small town, did not see any members of the committee of the wise men; we just heard that they came to the city, met with the chief police, qaymaqam (district governor), and some/the well-known people. They never entered into any poor neighbourhoods, and did not go to any poor homes to drink their tea and listen to our experiences. To be honest, we do not know them.''* (Beştaş, Personal Interview, 2017)

Thus, it can be inferred that there is a problem of interaction between the local people and the committee. Many people who were interviewed shared more or less similar opinions about the committee of the wise men *(Beştaş, Personel Interview, 2017).* It may not be helpful to make generalizations on whether all the members of the committee have a good interaction with the local people or not, however, there are other implications that prove a dysfunctional aspect of the committee. Normally, such committees become more active in the process when negotiations tend to get broken, but the committee in this case did not make any concrete attempts or activities to provide a continuation of negotiations when the process faced difficulties. This derived from the fact that negotiations were not structured based on the multi-party mentality. There were primarily two sides which were the government and PKK members, however, in a healthy conflict resolution process, some of the active civil society actors become part of the negotiations as a mediator, or even become a party in order to find a common ground between the parties. The form of inclusion of civil society actors can be differentiated according to the nature of conflict case.

A project which was conducted by Graduate Institute Geneva and Centre on Conflict, Development and Peace-building in cooperation with Bilkent University, mentioned that there could be seven models of inclusion of civil society actors in negotiations; direct representation at the negotiation table, observer status, consultation, inclusive commissions, high-level problem-solving workshops, public decision-making, and mass action (Paffenholz, 2015). No matter which of them is implemented, the important point is to encourage civil society actors to be active and functional in the process. In the case of the committee of the wise men, the committee was not an independent and objective actor in the negotiations; it was formed by the

decisions of the parties rather than the decision of independent civil society actors or society itself.

In regard to a model of inclusion of the civil society actors, there was no determined and definitive forms of inclusion of the civil society actors in the negotiation periods in Turkey. Not only inclusion of the civil society actors but also participation of the additional groups is also very crucial. In the Kurdish case, there were mainly two main stream parties that directed to the process. However, when power-holder or main parties in the negotiations do not allow to include more actors, this reduces the possibility of the success in the process (Paffenholz, 2015). Plus, Involvement of the civil society and additional actors is healthier in decision-making process as well. Otherwise the power-holders can marginalize non-mainstream activities.

Besides, in 2014, the government faced many challenges, such as the corruption case against government members, a chaotic discussion in Ak Parti after Erdoğan's withdrawal from chairman office, developments in Syria and other events. When former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu became the Prime Minister and Chairman of Ak Parti, there had been disagreements between him and President Erdoğan. These disagreements and the ambivalent discourse and policies affected the peace process negatively. One of the examples of this uncertainty showed up in 2015 when the government declared the Dolmabahce commitment with HDP members of the parliament. Approximately twenty days later, President Erdoğan made a speech stating he did not recognize this commitment (Al Jazeera, (2015).

Within the context of international challenges, the Syrian civil war had a great impact on the peace process in Turkey. The first impact began with blockage of Kobani by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant(ISIL) (Letsch, Hawramy&Harrison, 2014). When the ISIL attempt to capture to the town, YPG (YPG: People's Protection Units) wanted to pass weapons by through the Turkish border; however, the Turkish government refused to allow YPG's weapon transfer through its border. Thereupon, HDP called for large-scale protests in Turkey, particularly in the east. The protests took place between 7 and 12 October of 2014, and according to the Human Rights Association's data, 46 people died, 682 people were injured and 323 were imprisoned (Radikal, 2014).

The Kobani protests were another milestone for the future of the peace process in 2014. Firstly, it showed the international dimension of the Kurdish issue because Kurds have been dispersed

in many countries, but mostly originated from some parts of Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey, this made it harder and more complicated process. Such a dispersion among four countries created serious challenges in the Kurdish issue. It makes difficult to determine the limits of the issue. As a matter of course, the peace process was affected because of developments in Syria and Iraq between 2013-2015.

Since protection is one of the important element of the conflict resolution process, it is possible to claim that there are quite weak protection activities during peace process between 2013-2015. Although peace process was continuing at this period, security officers could not protect people in Kobani incidents. More importantly, there was no any civil society actors to prevent people get into violence. Protection of the citizens is one of the important function of the civil society actors, but the civil society actors had not success in Turkey.

In regard to the conflict resolution process, the Kobani events helped bring out the peace process' deficiencies, starting with the lack of mediation. It was clear that the Kobani events were going to harm the peace process; but there was no concrete civil society actors' attempt to prevent the events, or to find a common ground between the government and the Kurdish side. Normally, as it was mentioned in IRA's case, civil society actors took an active role in the process during the worst periods of the conflict. However, as it can be observed, in the Kurdish issue, only the primary parties gave their decisions heavy charged with political concerns. There was no official or public mediator trying to find the compromise between the parties. This shows that the intermediation function is too weak in the peace process. In the function, the intermediator must participate in the process actively and have access to the information regarding the negotiation process (Çelik, 2010).

In terms of the second deficiency, it can be deduced that the limits or borders of the peace process were not adequately determined by the parties. For instance, there could have been a common mind map created by the parties, discussing what would happen when external events and actors would involve in Turkey's internal issues. For this reason, it seems that there was a lack of comprehensive roadmap in the peace process. In spite of negative developments, with both parties' efforts, it was decided to continue working on the negotiations after the Kobani events.

In addition to this, many writers and intellectuals think that international aspects of the Kurdish issue are the most important reason to end peace process. First and foremost, the developments in Syria in which YPG-PYD became a very popular actor after defeating the ISIL organization in many areas, and expanding their territories to the east of Euphrates. One of the well-known intellectuals on the Kurdish issue, Mesut Yeğen, mentioned that the competition between the Kurdish forces and Turkey in Syria's territory affected the direction of the peace process in 2015 (Al Jazeera, 2015). Some of the interviewees in Cizre, Diyarbakır and Siirt have similar opinions about the ending of the peace process. One of them said:

> *''PKK and the Turkish government finished the peace process because of*
> *Syria. While HDP became very strong in the parliament, and there was a*
> *proper time for peace; why did they sacrifice us for their interests in Syria?''*
> *(Beştaş, Personal Interview, 2017).*

Furthermore, many interviewees did not support the motto of HDP which was "We will not make you the president". According to some of the interviewees although Erdoğan or Ak Parti is the only alternative actor to continue the process, they are curious, about why they chose to be against Erdoğan, and why they did not use a softer language against him (Beştaş, Personel Interview, 2017). Therefore, they had higher expectations from civil society actors, especially the one that are from the east of Turkey asked why they did not try to find a common ground between each other (Beştaş, Personal Interview, 2017).

The general election in July of 2015 was one of the milestones of in terms of influencing the peace process. Since Ak Parti and HDP are the main parties and partners of the peace process after the general elections in 2015, they came face to face because of the increasing percentage of votes on HDP's side and HDP passing 10% percentage election threshold in Turkey for the first time. On the other side, it was the first time Ak Parti could not establish a government by itself due to the low vote rate.

This means that the partners of the peace process became the main competitors because they started to perceive that they were a threat to each other's mere existence. That is why such an existential threat restricted the area of action of the peace process and the civil society. There is another factor that narrowed down the area of civil society actors and damaged social trust, which is regional risks. As Turkey has ontological concerns with the establishment of a Kurdish

state in Syria or Iraq, that influenced its foreign policy. The fear of Kurdish separatism caused constraints to an inclusive Turkish foreign policy (Keyman, Düzgit, 2017).

Moreover, there were some problems with the implementation of policies during the peace process; the government generally had a holistic perspective with implementing central policies for all regions. Since each region and city have different dynamics in comparison to others, with the central policies different local problems may not be solved. For this reason, such a centralist understanding restrained to reveals real dynamics of different regions during peace process between 2013-2015. The committee of wise men could be a good model to localize the process. The committee which included people who have different intellectual background had a capacity to constitute an alternative policy for local problems. Not only the committee but also the civil society actors could warn the government's centralist policies with propose new local policies by doing public pressure. However, it could not be a successful attempt.

Another problem is that while the peace process was continuing in 2014 and 2015, YPG-H which is a 'city organization' of PKK, constructed ditches and trenches, but actor interfered to stop these actions. A study published by the Public Policy and Democracy Studies (PODEM), was questioning why did the government shut their eyes when the public order was broken? (PODEM, 2017). President Erdoğan, in one of his interviews, answered this question saying that the government had allowed it on goodwill, but it was abused (Sözcü, 2016). Some of the interviewees remarked their opinions;

> *''We were calling the police, and saying that there are ditches here; our children cannot go to school, but the police were not coming.''*
> *(Beştaş, Personal Interview, 2017)*

In this case, the problem of monitoring by civil society actors can be seen. As civil society actors can play the role of the watchdog in the sense of monitoring, they take action without having any political stance. On the contrary, they do this for 'accountability' of the government. (Çelik, 2010). The function of monitoring is very crucial because in the violent areas, the east of Turkey there is a problem regarding a legal security. The question is why and how did the government allow tranches and ditches in the middle of cities, and why did civil society actors not deal with such a problem? Despite many civilians encountering vital challenges, the civil society actors could not monitor the situation; they were incapable of even raising public awareness about this issue in the society.

Since there is a problem of distrust between the Kurdish people and the state's security officers due to historical tension, official representatives may not properly fulfil the role of a watchdog. Therefore, monitoring by the independent civil society actors could have saved more lives during the conflict in the ditches. An interviewee made a great contribution on this issue:

> *''The civil society actors see some risks in this region, that is why they do not want to work here, but when they think that conditions become mature politically, they just start to show their faces. However, this created a disadvantage; when political conditions are not proper politically, nobody stays in the field, people encounter and struggle against violence with nobody's help.'' (Beştaş, Personal Interview, 2017)*

As civil society actors have a role of advocacy and public communication during the resolution process, in a sense they were fulfilling this function very actively; yet, the form of actualising the function was problematic in Turkey, since the language of public communication is very determinant in the society, because of the fact that politicization of the civil society actors restrained the use of objective language in the public communication. For instance, a certain section of society use ''terrorist'' while another ''guerrilla'', and a political stance can be seen in the way certain actors chose to express themselves verbally. However, instead of using both words, a common word which does not bother any of the sections of society could be used. Another interviewee offered recommendations regarding the role of civil society actors during peace process:

> *''The deficiency of peace process was that both parties, the government and the Kurdish side, set up a political relationship with citizens, and unfortunately the civil society actors behaved just as political parties. That is why they could not care about every certain section of society. However, there are some areas in the society that political actors cannot get into; only unbiased, impartial and independent people or actors can enter and develop a relationship with this people, yet, no civil society actors made such effort.'' (Beştaş, Personal Interview, 2017)*

The civil society actors' role is simply referring to contribute in finding a common ground between divided communities, and with demands of ordinary citizens, to have an impact on politics. The form of roles can be realized in many levels of the society – to be a bridge between

adversary social groups, to be a facilitator between society and the state, and also between the state and violent groups, and others (John&Kew, 2008). These refer to a social cohesion function which may be the most difficult function to practice in Turkey. There are serious tensions, hatred and divisions between Turkish and Kurdish societies. The most effective way of overcoming this problem is increasing inter-group dialogue between groups. This was also one of the most problematic issues in the peace process.

Additionally, the peace process was ongoing between top leaders and politicians, but it was not integrated into the society very well. There was no mechanism to create a space where different people could come together and be in contact with each other. Such mechanisms are generally carried through truth commissions. In truth commissions, people who have different backgrounds come together and tell their stories and feelings under the lead of an objective chairman (McConnachie, 2004). This is the first step towards creating a path for peaceful co-existence, but it did not happen in Turkey's case during the peace process.

One of the elements of the peace-building function is providing return to refugees and property rights and territorial adjustments, yet there were no such official compensation activities during the peace process. Considering the high number of internal displacements and evacuations of villages in the east, many people had to move from their villages and those villages are still empty because of improper living conditions. There is no electricity and fresh water services, and it is still forbidden to return to some of the villages even currently. For this reason, a compensation process, providing help to the people who want to return to their villages, could help change the negative perceptions against state authority.

The process of peace-building aims to alter the discourse of parties and to provide more positive, compromising and collaborative ground in society and politics. Even so, the strain in the politics and social medium can be minimised by high-level politicians to a certain extent. If social and political transformation cannot be achieved, civil society actors should be included into the process, so that the multi-dimensional transformation could be worked on and managed.

Since peace-making activities are ran for the functionalization of a reconciliation mechanism, they need to bring together even most ultra-dissentient groups. There are many adversary groups in the Kurdish issue, such as PKK supporters, ultra-nationalist groups, conservative groups, village guards, and many other sub-groups.

For this reason, as reconciliation is a mechanism which allows disputant to solve conflict in peaceful methods, it cannot be achieved if there is no confrontation process between these groups. Without reconciliation, parties cannot forget their image of the past, hatred and negative actions. Under these circumstances, despite the agreements of the top leaders, positive peace cannot be restored/ kept/ established. Therefore, the conflict resolution process should be conducted based on the comprehensive and integrative top-down policies. Even if the end of the physical violence could be reached sooner, there should be a comprehensive social transformation among society for the long-term positive peace.

6. Comparison of the Northern Ireland and Kurdish Cases

The truth is that there are fundamental differences and dynamics between the IRA case and the Kurdish issue such as; geographical conditions, historical, sociological and political variations. Geographically, Turkey's position has created very crucial challenges for Turkey; having borders with the Middle East, Asia, and Caucasus, and a cost with Aegean and the Mediterranean Sea makes Turkey a more complicated country particularly because of that regions have conflictual dynamics. There is a weak state authority in Syria because of a long and intense civil war, and currently, Iraq struggles with the separation of Northern Iraq. Moreover, there has always been high tension between Armenia and Turkey because of historical hostilities. On the other side, there have usually been problems between Greece and Turkey for the status of islands and the Kardak crisis was one of them. Since the Syrian civil created a huge worldwide refugee crisis, many Syrians seek to pass to Europe by using the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea. So all of these international crises make Turkey's position more complicated in its geography.

Although Ireland experienced many geographical challenges in Europe in the past, today it is a relatively more peaceful region compared with Turkey. Despite its being an island that led to some disadvantages for Ireland, like the possibility of isolation from the developments in the world, on the other side, it made it a less-conflictual area. Furthermore, Ireland is located in the European territories, some of the most peaceful regions in the world, which in turn created positive developments for Northern Ireland.

Historically, there are eighteen rebellions of Kurds in the region, and the history of Kurds goes a long way back. This makes the Kurdish issue not only limited within the Turkish Republic history but also the period before too. The Irish case also goes beyond at least before a thousand years under the King Second Henry's rule. Ireland was the first colonial land of Britain thus for this reason the local kings never wanted to lose this land. Sociologically there are challenges in both communities; in Irish society, there are sectarian divisions, and this sometimes created serious tensions among the society. In the Kurdish society, Kurds have dispersed into four countries; Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. Additionally, Kurdish society has very different sects and religions within itself.

From the standpoint of political differences; as it is stated, geographical, historical and sociological challenges have been creating different forms of politics in each case. However, this work does not focus on these differences, instead of it, it concentrated on the dimensions of the conflict resolution processes within the context of the role of civil society actors. More specifically, it compares the role of civil society actors with comparing both peace processes particularly in the negotiation period.

As IRA case has been expressed as a successful case among the researches, this does not mean that all problems and challenges have been solved in the Northern Ireland yet at least systematic violence has been over in Irish lands. However, in the Kurdish case, the violence between parties has still been continuing particularly in recent times. For this reason, the criteria of defining cases as successful or failed is determined by observing violent situations of the countries in this study.

After 25 years of violence in Ireland a final peace declaration was signed. There were numerous challenges in the negotiations between parties in the Irish case and it took 13 years to reach the deal. There are still many problems in the Northern Ireland; there is a group which separated from IRA, self-proclaimed 'Real IRA' and this organization accused IRA for betraying their principles. However, there has been no sociological base of this group so that they could not be successful.

Farther on, there are still high buildings between the Protestant and Catholic neighbourhoods so that they do not enter to each other's streets. Some of these people defined their neighbourhood as a rebel zone. However, the Irish society could, to a degree, minimize these activities because of the society's will to peace.

According to Dr. Melaugh;
''There are still separate sectarian communities, and discussions about symbols and flags but most of the people satisfy for ending violence in Northern Ireland.'' (Nolan, 2012).

Within the context of differences between cases, there is numerous distinctness between IRA and Kurdish cases. There are multilateral negotiations in IRA case such as The central government of Britain and Ireland, Sinn Fein, Irish Republican Army organization, Ulster Unionist Party(UUP), Social Democratic and Labour Party(SDLP). However, on the other side,

there are basically two sides in the Kurdish case; the Kurdish movement representatives and the members of the government.

Limited numbers of representatives in the Kurdish negotiations lead to a feeling of exclusion for some certain section of politics and society. Thus many opponents of maintaining negotiations have surfaced. For example; CHP (Republican People's Party), MHP (Nationalist Movement Party), and HUDA-PAR are some of the prominent parties that were not involved in the process. For this reason, when the government strived to make some reforms regarding the Kurdish issue, they encountered very serious criticism.

The Northern Ireland negotiations are considered to have been a more participative platform in Britain and Ireland as it was observable parties were trying to include their people in the negotiations. Therefore, an involvement of multi-party participants and different forms of organizations make negotiations easier in terms of convincing communities against the negotiations. While the Northern Ireland case is seen more successful within the context of participation, in the Kurdish issue, this looks more limited.

Further, there were various active civil society actors and they were able to have very close relationships with local people in the Northern Ireland; the Opsahl Commission, NICVA, Peace People, G7 and others. The common point of these organization is that they were not established by any political mechanism; most of the members of these organizations were ordinary people, academics, human rights defenders and others. In the Kurdish case, most of the civil society initiatives were encouraged by parties firstly. For example, a committee of wise men was established by the primary parties. Because of security concerns, most of the civil society actors did not want to conduct work in the east of Turkey, but when the region became relatively safer, with the encouragement of the government, civil society actors started to work, and made investments in the region.

For this reason, the civil society actors were in a sense politicized seeing how when the negations started to break, they just pulled back and avoided to take any risks. Nevertheless, as it was in the IRA case, civil society actors should be much more active in the difficult periods and to try going back to peaceful negotiations. Besides, instead of government's direction on the civil society actors, conversely, the civil society actors should recommend policies, direct, motivate and affect the government in the conflict resolution process. In the IRA case, the civil

society actors were very active particularly in the conflictual periods and during peaceful periods they recommended policies to the government. In fact, the Opsahl commission made great contributions to the Belfast Agreement in both form and substance.

As it is stated, when the negotiations turned difficult in the Kurdish issue, most of the civil society actors waited for the main parties' reactions so that they could shape their stance for the process accordingly. That is why there was a lack of role of mediations by civil society actors in the negotiations.Within the scope of the role of the civil society actors, there are many specific functions as it is mentioned in the previous sections such as protection, advocacy, public communication, intermediation and facilitation, monitoring, service delivery, and in-group socialization. There were monitoring activities in the IRA case for example when parties decided to discharge of weapons, which were buried under the observation of international and independent civil society actors. This shows that the civil society actors have significant roles during the negotiations.

In the IRA case the civil society actors had the ability to bring people of different background and political ideological choices together so that they could build on the socialization of the groups with each other. Moreover, the Opsahl commission focused on the protection of victim and injured families in its reports. Although there are fundamental deficiencies in both cases, there are more positive developments on the function and role of the civil society actors in the IRA case.

As it is specified, the role of civil society actors can be in different models such as direct representation at the negotiation table, observer status, consultation, inclusive commissions, high-level problem-solving workshops, public decision-making, and mass action. Another problem is that there was no concrete, clear and distinct modality of solution in the Kurdish peace process. One can thus conclude that the process lacked of a durable and secured base which in turn made it more fragile.

What is more, the civil society actors provide transparency and openness in the civil society actors. In other words, while political parties can make negotiations and agreements behind closed doors, the civil society actors can integrate political decisions into the society. In the Kurdish issue though, there is a political process rather than a sociological one, and the

negotiations mostly took place between top leaders. There was no powerful mechanism between the top and grassroots in the talks between 2013 and 2015.

Since the presence of international actors is a determinant element of a conflict resolution process, there was an active actor, Senator George Mitchell, who played a very important role in the IRA case. All the parties in the negotiation table accepted the presence of a senator during the talks. However, there was no explicitly declared international actor or any form of a mediator in the Kurdish peace process. This was one of the prominent deficits in the Kurdish peace process.

Figure 7 (Beyond Intractability, Maiese, 2007)

Types of Actors

Approaches to Building Peace

Level 1: Top Leadership

Military/political/religious leaders with high visibility

Focus on high-level negotiations
Emphasizes cease-fire
Led by highly visible,
single mediator

Level 2: Middle-Range Leadership

Leaders respected in sectors
Ethnic/religious leaders
Academics/intellectuals
Humanitarian leaders (NGOs)

Problem-solving workshops
Training in conflict resolution
Peace commissions
Insider-partial teams

Level 3: Grassroots Leadership

Local leaders
Leaders of indigenous NGOs
Community developers
Local health officials
Refugee camp leaders

Local peace commissions
Grassroots training
Prejudice reduction
Psychosocial work
in postwar trauma

Affected Population

Derived from John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 39.

Ledearch (2003) approached the peace-building process in terms of levels and roles drawing the pyramid as it is shown in table 6. Mainly there are three levels of peace-building activities; the top elite, the middle-range, and the grassroots. The top elite level often includes high profile people from the military, political and religious institutions and leaders. The second level, namely the middle-range actors include non-governmental organizations, governmental organizations and movements. They are generally not part of any official institutions. They have a very wide network among the society, and they have the capacity to create a connection between top-leaders level and grassroots. The third and last level is grassroots level that generally involve local communities, relief projects or local organizations. The grassroots level is intertwined with masses and ordinary citizens. The important dimension of grassroots is that local organizations witness the reality first-hand. That is why they have broad reaching experience and knowledge of real dynamics in the regions they operate in.

It can be stated that the top elites have the power to access important information and affect decision-making process. However, despite this power, the middle-range and grassroots levels people are much more tended to have real dynamics of the conflict. As a matter of fact, a successful conflict resolution process must be an inclusion and integration of these three levels.

In the context of Kurdish negotiations from the window of Lederach pyramid, there are some problems of implementation in each level. As negotiations did include many political parties, there were a considerable amount of people from the top elite level in Turkey that were against the peace process. As Turkish military officers are generally considered to have Turkish nationalistic tendencies, there were many elite military officials against negotiations.

As the middle-range level has the capacity to create a more sustainable peace process, they can play a crucial role in establishing productive relationships, problem-solving workshops, conflict-resolution training, and the development of peace commissions (Beyond Intractability, Maiese, 2007). Yet during the negotiations in Turkey, these mechanisms were quite weak. As a matter of course, the grassroots level weakened even more, thus the real dynamics of the Kurdish conflict were missed.

As protracted conflicts lead to a lack of fulfilling basic human needs, security concerns, psychological traumas, thus the negotiations process should be more than a political process. It should be a process that could compensate deficiencies of the past. That is why not only political

but also sociological dynamics must be part of the negotiations. In the Kurdish case, there are many factors which are related to the human needs theory. Human needs theory argues that conflict occurs when people are not able to fulfil their needs.

As there is a problem of unmet human needs in the Kurdish issue, fulfilling these needs cannot be completed in a short time. There is an issue of recognition of identity, culture and language of Kurds in a legal way (Çağlayan, 2013). These are very broad and essential topics to solve. Although the Ak Parti government with the cooperation of pro-Kurdish political party conducted several reformations about Kurds' language, identity and culture, these reformations did not address the Kurdish people's needs sufficiently.

The report of the wise men committee compiled the demands of people who are living in the South-eastern Anatolia. It includes securing of Kurdish educational and cultural rights, and local status under the constitutional guarantee. One of the important demands in the report is the founding of truth and reconciliation commissions (Akil Insanlar Heyeti Güneydoğu Raporu, 2013). However, these demands were not taken into consideration by officials.

As this study focuses on comparing IRA negotiations and Kurdish peace process between 2013 and 2015, it can be observed that there are fundamental differences between the cases. In terms of involvement of the civil society actors, they are more prominent, active and functionalized in IRA case when it is comparing with Kurdish peace process; there is a top-down negotiation with a great presence of the civil society actors in the IRA case.

On the other hand, it was the first time, Turkey had a chance to come within an inch of peace with the 2013-2015 negotiations. There are many factors that lead to the failure in Turkey such as; developments in Syria and Northern Iraq, internal alterations, incorrect political moves and others, yet this study claims that one of the reasons why the Kurdish peace process is failing is that the civil society actors were not properly structuralized and could not play a proper role.

Moreover, during the negotiations period, the parties tried to handle all of the deprivations, and deficiencies in the past and demands only by political mechanisms which led to the problems not being solved with extensive and inclusive ways. On the point of civil society actors having impartial and independent nature, during negotiation periods, the civil society actors could

diagnose basic human needs of people if they were properly functional but it did not work in Turkey.

It is obvious that the final decision of a conflict resolution is taken by high-level politicians or bureaucrats yet if the politicians want to give a decision of peace, it should be in a comprehensive way of peace-building. That is why peace cannot be brought by only top's decisions but also including all layers of the society with one of the layers being the civil society actors which can be the right bond between the head and the society.

7.Conclusion

In order to understand the role of civil society actors on the conflict resolutions, it is very necessary to have knowledge of the civil society literature. Furthermore, more specifically, to understand the role of civil society actors on the Northern Ireland and Kurdish issue cases, it should be having a comprehensive knowledge of dynamics in both cases. This study tried to give the wide theoretical framework of the civil society notion and then analysed both cases based on conflict resolution literature.

It is very hard to measure the role of civil society actors on conflict resolutions because it may not be possible to create causal relationship between conflict resolution process and the civil society actors. However, if the conflict resolutions are handled based on holistic perspective, it is possible to find correlation between the civil society actors and conflict resolution processes. As it is mentioned, there are several dimensions of conflict resolutions, the levels of leadership, international environment, internal dynamics, the civil society actors and others. That is why each element can influence the conflict resolutions in many aspects. The civil society's impact is indirect, rather than direct; and it is gradual rather than dramatic.

On the other hand, current political risks should be considered. As the systematic violence is over in the Northern Ireland, it can be remarked that there are fewer risks when it compares with the Kurdish issue. The fear of separatism, regional developments particularly in Syria and Iraq, turbulent internal politics in Turkey such as ditches in the east of Turkey, coup attempt on 15 July and more make Kurdish issue difficult to be solved.

However, apart from fears and risks, Kurdish issue should be handled based on the democratic principles. It is obvious that an unresolved Kurdish conflict weakens Turkey's hand in international arena because of Kurdish conflict is directly related with democratic principles. Many international organizations and as well as governments criticises Turkey's policy of Kurdish issue. A lack of democratic principles and limited fundamental freedoms also create negative impacts on the solution of Kurdish issue.

As it can be observed that the most important element of intrastate conflicts is concern of separatism. Although there are an ontological concerns and regional risks around of Turkey, Turkish policy-makers should distinguish between democratic principles and ontological

concerns. As the aim of peace process was empowerment and enhancement of social trust to obtain democratic consolidation, it should be theoretically and practically a roadmap which addresses the real dynamics of problems.

Meanwhile, there are many cases which can be related with ontological risks that created a serious crisis. More recently referendums in theNorthern Iraq and Spain are ones of them. In both cases, central governments intervened to the autonomous regions in order to very strict policies. The Central Iraqi Army send its troops to Northern Ireland regions and did not recognize the referendum. On the other side, Spanish government retrieved the autonomous statues of Catalonia.

However, it can be seen successful developments in terms of peaceful conflict resolution process in FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) case in Columbia. There is relatively brilliant form of solution in Columbia such as meaningful role of civil society actors, political and social reforms, formation of institutions and active role of international environment. Although there were very serious problems which are a very deep-rooted, trauma, hatred, huge numbers of deaths, now there is a post-conflict period in Columbia.

It can be mentioned that Kurdish issue is required to include the civil society actors in the conflict resolution process. Because they a capacity to have communication line with society so that they can reveal real dynamics. However, powerful conflict parties or power-holders may want to instrumentalize them which restricts their activities. Therefore, the civil society actors became to be part of the political discussions. Whereas, the civil society actors should be more objective. They should empower and enhance their capacity to influence and direct main parties, not directed by political figures. In this context, despite there are terrible results of peace process in 2013-2015, the civil society actors may derive lessons from their mistakes.

One of the disadvantages of Turkey within context of peace process between 2013-2015 is that the most certain section of the society was persuaded of peaceful negotiations. The most of the people in Turkey had a very high expectation for peace but this has turned into frustration among society. Such a fragility in the society makes it hard to go back to the negotiation table in a short time yet a comprehensive road map for peace can make it possible. It is crucial to state that many innocent people have been losing its lives because of this conflict day by day. For this reason, it is very vital to finish this conflict in a very short time.

In terms of limitation of this thesis, the study does not give all details about the civil society, Northern Ireland and Kurdish issue literatures. It is very clear that the literature on the civil society as well as the Northern Ireland and Kurdish issue is too broad to be a single research. In order to give a holistic study, it is benefited from social, economic, political and historical background of the cases, but it does not focus on the all dynamics. It dwells upon to reveal the role of civil society actors in conflict resolutions.

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