

TERRITORIALITY IN THE MAKING: A PYD ANALYSIS VIA SCHOOL  
TEXTBOOKS

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TEXTBOOKS**

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## ABSTRACT

### TERRITORIALITY IN THE MAKING: A PYD ANALYSIS VIA SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

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The inquiry of this thesis is a very contentious non-state actor, the PYD, and more specifically, its territorial perception. The critical analysis of the conception of territoriality in school textbooks is believed to reveal a cognitive map of the PYD regarding its territorial direction. In this regard, the territorial perception is scrutinized through educational textbooks taught at the primary, secondary, and high school levels in the PYD administration. To do that, this thesis methodologically applies qualitative content analysis since it provides a detailed explanation of a scientific subject's materials to comprehend its meaning through the coding system and, thereby, the interpretation. Based on the constructivist view, this thesis examines territoriality as it pertains to the concepts of national identity, nationalism, and homeland. To this end, it is observed that this conception leads to the construction of the perception of occupied territories, resistance, liberation, and governance. Findings drawn from data collection show that all discursive practices, such as territorialization of history, mapping, and poetic space, are all used to construct this trajectory regarding territory.

**Keywords:** Qualitative study, territoriality, the PYD, education

## ÖZ

### İNŞA SÜRECİNDE TERİTORYALİTE: OKUL DERS KİTAPLARI ÜZERİNDEN BİR PYD ANALİZİ

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Bu tez tartışmalı bir devlet dışı aktör olan PYD'nin teritoryal algısını ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda PYD yönetiminde ilkokul, ortaokul ve lise düzeyinde okutulan eğitim ders kitapları aracılığıyla ilgili aktörün teritoryal algısı irdelenmektedir çünkü okul ders kitaplarındaki teritoryalite kavramının eleştirel analizinin, PYD'nin teritoryal yol haritasına ilişkin bilişsel haritasını ortaya çıkardığına inanılmaktadır. Bunu gerçekleştirmek için, bu tez metodolojik olarak nitel içerik analizini uygulamaktadır çünkü bu metot, bilimsel bir konunun materyallerinin ayrıntılı bir şekilde açıklanmasını, kodlama sistemi aracılığıyla anlamının anlaşılmasını ve dolayısıyla yorumlanmasını sağlamaktadır. İnşacı bakış açısına dayanan bu tez, teritoryaliteyi ulusal kimlik, milliyetçilik ve vatan kavramlarıyla ilgili olarak incelemektedir. Bu doğrultuda bu anlayışın işgal edilmiş topraklar, direniş, kurtuluş ve yönetim algısının inşasına yol açtığı görülmektedir. Elde edilen bulgular, tarihin bölgeselleştirilmesi, haritalama ve şiirsel mekân gibi tüm söylemsel uygulamaların, teritoryalite kavramını bu şekilde inşa etmeye yönelik olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Niteliksel analiz, teritoryalite, PYD, eğitim

*To hope with its deeds and manifestation*



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In one of his quatrains, Omar Khayyam states that the written word, once written, remains unchanged. No amount of religious devotion or intelligence can undo what has been written, nor can any amount of sorrow erase it. This sentiment holds true for this thesis as well. Although it is the culmination of an extensive work, I am aware of its shortcomings, for which I take full responsibility. However, this work owes its success to the invaluable contributions of many individuals, to whom I am deeply grateful.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM .....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZ .....	v
DEDICATION .....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES .....	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xvi
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. Background and Context.....	1
1.2. Purpose Statement and Research Question.....	3
1.3. The Significance of the Study .....	6
1.4. Thesis Structure .....	7
2. METHODOLOGY.....	9
2.1. Introduction .....	9
2.2. Qualitative Research .....	10
2.3. Research Philosophy and Paradigm.....	12
2.4. Data Collection Procedure .....	15
2.5. Sampling Procedure .....	16
2.6. Data Analysis Procedure: Qualitative Content Analysis .....	36
2.7. Trustworthiness, Reliability, and Validity of the Study.....	41
2.8. Research Limitation .....	43
2.9. Conclusion .....	43
3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: TERRITORIALITY .....	44
3.1. Introduction.....	44
3.2. Constructivist Approach .....	45

3.3. The Etymology of Territory .....	49
3.4. The Significance of Territoriality.....	51
3.5. Territorial Anomalies and Territorialization Strategies .....	52
3.6. Meaning.....	57
3.6.1. The Link between Territory and National Identity .....	57
3.6.2. The Link between Territoriality and Nationalism.....	59
3.6.3. The Link between Territoriality and Homeland.....	61
3.7. Non-State Actors in World Politics: Perception, Resistance, Liberation, and Governance .....	64
3.7.1. Occupied Territories.....	65
3.7.2. Resistance, Liberation and Self Determination.....	66
3.7.3. From Sovereignty to Governance .....	72
3.8. Discursive Practices .....	80
3.8.1. Territorialization of History .....	82
3.8.2. Priority, Indigeneity, and Duration .....	85
3.8.3. Mapping .....	87
3.8.4. Literary/ Poetic Space .....	90
3.8.5. Song.....	91
3.8.6. The Sphere of Education .....	92
3.9. Conclusion.....	96
4. THE ASCENDANCY OF THE PYD .....	97
4.1. Introduction .....	97
4.2. Historical Background: Syria's Kurds .....	98
4.2.1. Kurdish Issue During the French Mandate .....	102
4.2.2. Kurdish Issue After Syrian Independence.....	110
4.2.3. Kurdish Issue During the United Arab Republic Period.....	111
4.2.4. Kurdish Issue During the Ba'th Period .....	113
4.2.4.1. Kurdish Issue During the Period Between 1963 and 1970 .....	114
4.2.4.2. Kurdish Issue During the Period Between 1970 and 2000 .....	116
4.2.4.3. Kurdish Issue During the Period Between 2000 and 2011 .....	118
4.3. Kurdish Parties in Syria.....	120
4.4. Syrian Civil War .....	123
4.5. The Rise of the PYD .....	125

4.5.1. The Territorial Expansion of the PYD .....	126
4.5.2. Resistance against the PYD .....	130
4.5.3. The PKK-PYD Connection.....	132
4.5.4. De Facto Autonomy .....	135
4.5.5. Democratic Confederalism.....	138
4.5.5.1. Gender Perspective .....	143
4.5.6. The Sphere of Education .....	145
4.6. Concluding Remarks .....	148
<b>5. FINDINGS: CONSTRUCTION OF TERRITORIALITY VIA</b>	
<b>EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM .....</b>	<b>151</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	151
5.2. Education.....	153
5.3. Etymology.....	155
5.4. Geographic Features .....	155
5.5. Meaning .....	157
5.5.1. National Identity .....	158
5.5.2. Nationalism .....	162
5.5.3. Homeland .....	166
5.6.. Perception, Resistance, Liberation, and Governance .....	169
5.6.1. Occupied Territories .....	169
5.6.1.1. Displacement .....	173
5.6.1.2. Burning .....	174
5.6.1.3. Demographic Changes .....	174
5.6.1.4. Exile .....	175
5.6.1.5. Massacre.....	176
5.6.2. Resistance, Defense, Liberation .....	178
5.6.2.1. Resistance and Defense .....	178
5.6.2.1.1. Non-Kurdish Rebellions .....	180
5.6.2.1.2. Historical Kurdish Rebellions .....	181
5.6.2.1.3 Rebellions in Rojava and the PKK .....	182
5.6.2.1.4. Martyrdom .....	184
5.6.2.1.5. Political Figures .....	185
5.5.2.1.6. The Role of the Women in Resistance.....	185

5.6.3. Liberation .....	186
5.6.4 Territorialization Strategy and Governance .....	187
5.6.4.1. Territorialization Strategy .....	187
5.6.4.2. Old Kurdish Administrations .....	191
5.6.4.3. Critique of Nation-state .....	192
5.6.4.4. Governance.....	193
5.6.4.4.1. The Dichotomy of Rojava vs Syria .....	197
5.7. Other Remarkable Discursive Practices .....	202
5.7.1. Place Names .....	202
5.7.2. Territorialization of History .....	205
5.7.2.1. Ancient History .....	205
5.7.2.2. Indigeneity .....	206
5.7.2.3. Cradle of Civilizations .....	207
5.7.3. Symbols.....	210
5.7.4. Maps .....	211
5.7.5. Poetic Space and Emotional Attachment .....	218
5.8. Conclusion.....	223
6. CONCLUSION .....	225
REFERENCES .....	230
APPENDICES	
A. FIRST PAGES OF THE TEXTBOOKS' TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	252
B. IMAGES ILLUSTRATING CHILDREN ENGAGING WITH TEXTBOOKS .....	279
C. CURRICULUM VITAE .....	280
D. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET .....	281
E. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU .....	300

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. List of Courses in Basic Education in the PYD Administration.....	17
Table 2. Sample of School Textbooks .....	18
Table 3. Contents of the Textbooks of Kurdish Language (1-5) .....	20
Table 4. Contents of the Textbooks of Kurdish Language (6-9) .....	22
Table 5. Contents of the Textbooks of Society and Life .....	24
Table 6. Contents of the Textbooks of Social Sciences .....	25
Table 7. Content of the Textbook of Geography .....	26
Table 8. Contents of the Textbooks of History (7-9).....	27
Table 9. Contents of the Textbooks of History (10-12).....	29
Table 10. Contents of the Textbooks of Culture and Ethics .....	32
Table 11. Contents of the Textbooks of Kurdish Literature .....	33
Table 12. Contents of the Textbooks of Sociology.....	34
Table 13. Contents of the Textbooks of Jineoloji (Woman Science) .....	35
Table 14. Table of Codes and Subcodes .....	37

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Cover Pages of the Books of Kurdish Language (1-5).....	21
Figure 2. Cover Pages of the Books of Kurdish Language (6-9).....	23
Figure 3. Cover Pages of the Books of Society and Life .....	24
Figure 4. Cover Pages of the Books of Social Sciences.....	26
Figure 5. Cover Page of the 9 <sup>th</sup> Class Geography .....	27
Figure 6. Cover Pages of the Books of History (7-9).....	29
Figure 7. Cover Pages of the Books of History (10-12).....	31
Figure 8. Cover Pages of the Books of Culture and Ethics.....	32
Figure 9. Cover Pages of the Books of Kurdish Literature .....	33
Figure 10. Cover Pages of the Books of Sociology .....	34
Figure 11. Cover Page of the Book of Woman Science.....	35
Figure 12. Kurdish Population in Syria.....	99
Figure 13. Climatic Regions of Kurdistan .....	156
Figure 14. Map of the Treaty of Sevres .....	171
Figure 15. Cities of Syria .....	198
Figure 16. Map of Syria .....	198
Figure 17. Map of Syria .....	198
Figure 18. An Exercise Displaying that There are Four Parts of Kurdistan .....	201
Figure 19. Suppression of Sheikh Said Rebellion.....	204
Figure 20. Nowruz Celebration .....	210
Figure 21. Kurdish Flag over a Grave of a ‘Martyr’ .....	211
Figure 22. Sharif Pasha’s Map of Kurdistan .....	213
Figure 23. Map of United Kurdistan .....	214
Figure 24. Kurdistan Map Displaying Amed as Capital City .....	214
Figure 25. Cartographic Representation of Syria .....	215
Figure 26. Map of Northeastern Syria.....	215
Figure 27. Three regions: Cizîr, Ferat û Efrîn.....	216
Figure 28. Agriculture Map of Rojava .....	216



Figure 29. Map of Population Levels in Rojava .....	217
Figure 30. Rivers of Rojava .....	217
Figure 31. Map of Efrîn .....	218

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DFNS	Democratic Federation of Northern Syria
DTK	Demokratik Toplum Kongresi (Democratic Society Congress)
HAMAS	Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (Islamic Resistance Movement)
HPG	Hêzên Parastina Gel (People's Defense forces)
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham
KCK	Koma Cîvaken Kurdistan (Kurdistan Communities Union)
KDP-S	KDP-S Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria
KKK	Koma Komalên Kurdistan (Assembly of Communities of Kurdistan)
KLI	Kurdish Language Institute
KNC	Kurdish National Council
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NSA	Non-State Actor
NSAA	Non-State Armed Actor
PÇDG	Partî Çareserî Dîmokratî in Kurdistan (Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party)
PJAK	Partîya Jîyana Azada Kurdistan (Kurdistan Free Life Party)
PKK	Partîya Karkerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers' Party)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
PYD	Partîya Yekîtiya Demokrat (Democratic Union Party)
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
TC	Territorial Contender
TEV-DEM	Tevgera Civaka Demokratîk (Movement for a Democratic Society)
TGiE	Tibet Government in Exile
UAR	United Arab Republic
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (People's Protection Units)
YPJ	Yekîneyên Parastina Jin (Women's Protection Units)

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*“Nought loves another as itself  
Nor venerates another so,  
Nor is it possible to Thought  
A greater than itself to know:”*

*‘A Little Boy Lost,’ William Blake*

#### 1.1. Background and Context

It is an empirical fact that the most salient sources of conflict in the contemporary world are ethnic and religious tensions.<sup>1</sup> Due to rival claims over specific territories, there has been a great number of ethnic tensions and national disputes.<sup>2</sup> The reason, as Raymond Hinnebusch remarks, is the artificial character of state boundaries which have created an incongruity between territory and identity.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the salience of “politico-territorial identities” has been a potent reality in world politics,<sup>4</sup> and a separate state drive, that is sovereignty, has existed in various regions such as Sri Lanka, Spain, Scotland.<sup>5</sup> Actually, this has also been apparent in the Middle East, and particularly in Syria. In this regard, it can be stated that territorial issues have always caused problems for modern Syria. From the beginning and onwards, its

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<sup>1</sup> Zeki Sarıgil, “Curbing Kurdish Ethno-nationalism in Turkey: An Empirical Assessment of Pro-Islamic and Socio-economic Approaches,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2010, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “The ‘Sacred’ Dimension of Nationalism,” *Millenium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2000, p. 812.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Hinnebusch. *The International Politics of the Middle East*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> David B. Knight, “Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 72, No. 4, 1982, p. 526.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 525.

borders changed several times.<sup>6</sup> One of the last de facto changes appeared in November 2013 when the PYD (Democratic Union Party) announced the creation of a “joint-interim administration” containing regional and legislative assemblies and governments in established three cantons: Efrîn (Afrin), Kobanê (Kobane) and Cêzîre (Jazira).

Charountaki sees all Kurdish movements, including the PYD, as “non-state” actors, which refers to groups of people that have shared objectives and may participate in the international system but are not organized into a state and “are characterized by an amorphous proto-state status.”<sup>7</sup> There are two significant elements in the definitions of non-state actors. First the degree to which organizations utilizing violence can be considered as non-state actors. Some scholars e.g., Josselin and Wallace identify NSAs (non-state actors) as actors located in civil society, thus non-violent.<sup>8</sup> The PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) is almost the first name that comes to mind when one speaks about the PYD. The relationship of the PYD with the PKK has generated important questions about violence. Hence, the PYD has been presumed as a violent non-state actor by a plenty of studies.<sup>9</sup> But, as Jennifer Jeffires suggests, categorizing non-state actors as violent or nonviolent prevents understanding important dimensions of political phenomena, such as their roots with religion, nationalism, as well as their resistance practices.<sup>10</sup> At that point, Stephen Walt’s comprehension of the ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham) also epitomizes this stance. In his article titled as “ISIS as Revolutionary State,” he compares and indeed imitates the state-formation of the revolutionary states with the one of the ISIS.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Please see Leila Vignal, “The Changing Borders and Borderlands of Syria in a Time of Conflict,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 4, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Marianna Charountaki, “Kurdish Policies in Syria under the Arab Uprisings: A Revisiting of IR in the New Middle Eastern Order,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2015, pp. 338-341.

<sup>8</sup> Daphné Josselin and William Wallace, *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, please see Can Acun and Bünyamin Keskin, *PKK’nun Kuzey Suriye Örgütlenmesi: PYD, YPG*, Ankara: SETA, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Jennifer Jeffires. *Hamas: Terrorism, Governance and Its Future in Middle East Politics*, California: Praeger, 2016, pp: 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen M. Walt, ISIS as Revolutionary State: New Twist on an Old Story, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 6, November/December 2015.

Another question is the issue of autonomy and proxy. At one hand there are companies and organizations whose activities need approval and protection from one or more national governments; at the other hand are movements and groups that are seen as threats to established order by the states in which they operate. Also here, there are intermediate types, with states funding subversive groups to destabilize other governments.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, there is a literature that treats this subject beyond this two-dimensional categorization.<sup>13</sup> According to these studies, the state remains as the most important actor in the international affairs. However, the influence of ethnic communities is not underemphasized in these studies. Indeed, some other studies introduce the agency debate of the ethnic groups and categorize these groups as ethnic non-state actors.<sup>14</sup> In this thesis, I do not specifically define the PYD as an ethnic non-state actor. However, as I will elaborate below, I adopt the stance that the agency of non-state actors significantly shapes political and social dynamics.

## 1.2. Purpose Statement and Research Question

The Syrian Kurds have rarely been the topic of academic studies. Following the upheavals in March of 2004 in the Kurdish-populated regions of Syria, a series of work was published on that topic.<sup>15</sup> However there had been little increase in these studies until 2011 when the PYD emerged as a powerful actor after the uprisings started in Syria. As a result, the uprisings encouraged the publication of a series of academic studies. In the same vein of metaphor that Josselin and Wallace point out,

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<sup>12</sup> Josselin and Wallace, *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, please see Donald Horowitz. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985; Paul Smith eds., *Ethnic Groups in International Relations*. New York: New York University Press, 1991; Bernard Schechterman and Martin Slann eds., *The Ethnic Dimension in International Relations*. New York: Praeger, 1993; and Stephen Ryan. *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing, 1990.

<sup>14</sup> Milton J. Esman, "Ethnic Actors in International Politics," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1995; and Hemda Ben-Yehuda and Meirav Mishali-Ram, "Ethnic Actors and International Crises: Theory and Findings, 1918–2001," *International Interactions*, Vol. 32, No.1, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Harriett Montgomery. *The Kurds of Syria: An Existence Denied, Executive Summary*. Berlin: Europäisches Zentrum für Kurdische Studien, 2005; and Kerim Yıldız. *The Kurds in Syria: The Forgotten People*, London: Pluto Press, 2005.

the PYD appears as either hero or villain in these studies. For the part of the existing literature that views the PYD as hero, projects it as the presager of a leftist glorious revolution.<sup>16</sup> Another part of the existing literature became more critical against the PYD considering it an offshoot of the PKK, thus calling it a terrorist organization.<sup>17</sup> Of course, there are exceptions of these sided studies in favor of any ideology, however they remain in minority.<sup>18</sup>

In the same vein, as the territorial roadmap of the PYD keep its ambiguity, there have been above-mentioned dissimilar perspectives on the issue. In fact, what makes the situation more complicated is the relevant decision-makers' political discourse. In that sense, as Hisyar Ozsoy points out, Öcalan's court defense in 1999 came as a surprise to numerous Kurds since it significantly deconstructed the PKK's initial political vision, which revolved around an anti-colonial armed struggle aimed at achieving an independent state and territorial sovereignty.<sup>19</sup> In this manner, based upon the PKK's political discourse, Ahmed Hamdi Akkaya claims that an institutional plan to construct a civil society to rebuild Kurdistan from the bottom appears to have superseded a territorial strategy (creating freed land) and state-building for the PKK ideology,<sup>20</sup> which means that, unlike its previous approach, there seems to be a shift toward an insitutional strategy that prioritizes the development of civil society, and this new strategy doesn't aim to build an

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<sup>16</sup> For instance, please see Nazan Üstündağ, "Self-defense as a Revolutionary Practice in Rojava, or How to Unmake the State," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No.1, 2016, p. 205.

<sup>17</sup> For instance, Oktav, Dal, and Kurşun's piece refer the YPG, the military wing of the PYD, as "a paramilitary force and a terrorist organization: Ö. Zeynep Oktav, Emel Parlar Dal and Ali Murat Kurşun, "Reframing and Reassessing the VNSAs in Syrian Conflict: An Introduction," in Özden Zeynep Oktav, Emel Parlar Dal and Ali Murat Kurşun eds., *Violent Non-state Actors and Syrian Civil War: The ISIS and YPG Cases*, Switzerland: Springer, 2018, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Ünver's both studies exemplify this stance. In both studies, he avoids normative explanations and expressing ideological feelings. Please, see Akın Ünver, "Weak States, Strong Non-State Actors: Theory of Competitive Control in Northern Syria," *Ortadoğu Etüdüleri*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2018; and Akın Ünver, "Contested Geographies: How ISIS and YPG Rule "No-Go" Areas in Northern Syria," in Özden Zeynep Oktav, *Violent Non-state Actors and the Syrian Civil War: The ISIS and YPG Cases*.

<sup>19</sup> Hisyar Özsoy, 2010. *Between Gift and Taboo: Death and the Negotiation of National Identity and Sovereignty in the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya, "The PKK's Ideological Odyssey," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 6, 2020, p. 740.

independent Kurdistan. However, the situation doesn't align with Akkaya's suggestion. The PYD, which exhibits similar ideological patterns to the PKK, has not only profited from the ethno-nationalist territorialization where the presence of the PYD is advantageous due to Kurdish demography<sup>21</sup> but also has had maximalist expansionist goals as will be explained in the fourth chapter. In this way, as Dinç expresses, although “Rojava”<sup>22</sup> is often portrayed as a new administration type of non-nationalist, non-statist model, the Kurdish movement is always present with its reminders through the images and portraits of the Kurdish leader, flags, and territories.<sup>23</sup>

To reiterate, the political trajectory of the PYD regarding the territoriality is ambiguous as in the case of the PKK. As put by Allsopp and Willgenburg, a de facto ten-years governance depict this ambiguity:

The system was declared in January 2014 – has been referred to by the PYD as the ‘Interim Transitional Administration’ (in 2013) and as the Democratic Self-Rule Administration-Rojava. The areas under its governance have been called ‘Western Kurdistan’, ‘the Autonomous Regions’, ‘Rojava’, Federal Northern Syria, the Democratic Confederalist autonomous areas of northern Syria; and in late 2015, the Federation of Northern Syria-Rojava and, from December 2016, the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria. In September 2018 the form of governance reverted to self-administration when a Self-Administration in Northern and Eastern Syria was formed to include SDF controlled areas around Raqqah, Manbij and Deir al-Zour.<sup>24</sup>

In general, the purpose of this research is to contribute to the growing body of academic literature on the PYD. As an understudied non-state actor, there has not been any in-depth study to scrutinize its territorial perception,<sup>25</sup> especially through its

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<sup>21</sup> Ünver, “Weak States,” p. 67

<sup>22</sup> In the Kurdish language, the word ‘Rojava’ means ‘West,’ and it is used to refer to the Kurdish territories that are in Syria. Please, see Cengiz Güneş. *The Kurds in a New Middle East*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, p. 69.

<sup>23</sup> Pınar Dinç, “The Kurdish Movement and the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria: An Alternative to the (Nation) State Model,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22, No.1, 2020, p. 56.

<sup>24</sup> Harriett Allsopp and Wladimir Van Willgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria: Governance, Diversity and Conflicts*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2019, p. 89.

<sup>25</sup> The study of Cemgil is an exception. He scrutinizes the territorialization policy of the PYD as a territorial anomaly. Please, see Can Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria: Geopolitics as the Interplay of Multiple Strategies of Spatialisation,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 2019

internal sources. To fill this gap, I have contemplated to collect knowledge of territoriality from the local context of the PYD regarding how it is resonated in its own sources.

The inquiry of this thesis had started with the question of what the role of territoriality in expansion the PYD has been. This question led to the exploration of the PYD's discourse through school textbooks. In this context, the research question of this thesis is *how the content and framework of 'territoriality' is constructed through the discourse of education at primary, secondary and high school levels in the PYD administration.*

### **1.3. The Significance of the Study**

The examination of non-state actors is not convenient to the principles of the state-centric worldview of international relations. A great majority of studies underemphasized the role of non-state actors. In this line, most scholars either fail to afford any agency to non-state actors or concentrate narrowly on ethnic conflict. This has been apparent also in the research of the scholars who have studied the PYD. Both approaches are clearly significant, but each restricts our comprehension. Nay, I believe that each non-state actor has its own natural dynamics. To comprehend these dynamics, I think it is necessary for a critical scientific study granting agency to the movements and carrying research about them “through acknowledging, listening and learning from their own voices, knowledges and meanings, to understand and interpret their agency.”<sup>26</sup> In this vein, I prefer the school textbooks to study as the significance of textbooks, among other resources, lie in the fact that to shed light on features of movements that remain insufficiently comprehended<sup>27</sup> as they enable the verbal and visual identification of the nation and demarcation of its borders within a world comprised of territorial nation-states.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Paul Routledge, “Critical Geopolitics and Terrains of Resistance,” *Political Geography*, Vol. 15, No.6/7, 1996, p. 528.

<sup>27</sup> Francesca Polletta, “Contending Stories: Narrative in Social Movements,” *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 21, No.4, 1998, p. 419.

<sup>28</sup> Jordi Tejel, “The Complex and Dynamic Relationship of Syria's Kurds with Syrian Borders: Continuities and Changes,” in Matthieu Cimino eds., *Syria: Borders, Boundaries, and the State*, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 20120, p. 247.



All in all, the main significance of this thesis lies in the fact that it utilizes firsthand resources that are often ignored by previous researchers and seek to avoid making a biased analysis of the PYD. Secondly, this study tries to demonstrate that the content of education both constructs the conception of territoriality and provides considerable information about the territorial politics of the PYD. In this context, the analysis of the conception of territoriality in education reveals interactions among education system and party politics. More importantly, different from other studies, the main argument of this thesis suggests that the construction of territoriality by the PYD is diverse and not uniform. In this context, it is argued that territoriality is constructed through a state-oriented perspective that selectively incorporates elements of libertarian municipalism, communalism, and feminism.

#### **1.4. Thesis Structure**

As can be seen, in **the first chapter**, I explain the context and background of the study and introduce the purpose of statement and the research question. Additionally, I claim the remarkable points about the significance of the study.

In **the second chapter**, I outline the methodology utilized in this study. In this sense, I explain the underlying research philosophy and rationale behind the selection of qualitative research as the preferred approach. Subsequently, I introduce the methods used for data collection and sampling. Then, I detail the procedure for data analysis. Finally, I discuss the aspects of trustworthiness and explore the limitations of the study.

As it is the conceptual framework of this thesis, after introducing the etymology and significance of the territoriality, in **the third chapter**, first I examine territorial anomalies considering a wide spectrum of non-state actors. Then, I explore the meaning of the concept through scrutinizing its connections with the concepts of identity, nationalism, and homeland. Based on this “meaning,” I think that they prevalently have the perception of “occupied territories.” Hence, I investigate the practices of resistance and liberation, and thereby governance which I believe follows the process of the perception of occupied territories. Finally, I concentrate on

the role of discursive practices such as territorialization of history through narratives, and memories, the discourse of priority in territory, mapping, poetic space, songs, and the education sphere in constructing territoriality.

As mentioned above, the relationship between territory and ethnicity generates a degree of tension. In **the fourth chapter**, I present a concise history of the Kurds in Syria concentrating on this relationship. By providing this information, I provide that the PYD and its educational system has not emerged in a historical vacuum. In this regard, the information that I explain in this chapter provides to complete a connection between the conceptual framework and the basic findings from school textbooks which is explored in **the fifth chapter**.

In **the fifth chapter**, based on the trajectory of my conceptual framework, through much more subtitles, I examine how territoriality is constructed through the selected school textbooks. In line with the conceptual framework outlined in the third chapter, I examine various facets that contribute to the construction of territoriality. The initial focus is on the educational sphere, aiming to demonstrate how it is perceived as a mechanism for constructing territoriality. Following this, I explore the etymological roots of the term ‘territory’ and elucidate its significance through the lenses of national identity, nationalism, and homeland. Additionally, I address perceptions of occupied territories, the concepts of resistance and liberation, and the new governance model characterized by territorialization strategies, incorporating several nuanced subtopics. Furthermore, I explain the territorialization of history, analyzing perceptions related to the ‘cradle of civilizations,’ the possession of an ancient history, and the primacy of homeland. I also investigate the roles of symbols and maps in this context. Lastly, I consider the construction of territoriality within literary, and more specifically, poetic spaces.

**The sixth chapter** is conclusion part which summarizes and reanalyzes the main findings of this research.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODOLOGY

*“Relying on a successful methodology of proven worth, they are not assailed by doubt or despair.”<sup>29</sup>*

#### 2.1. Introduction

Methodology is the way to find out knowledge. In this sense, the methodological question is “What are the ways of finding out knowledge?” or “How can we go out finding out things?”<sup>30</sup> so the purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology employed throughout this study through displaying how I found out the knowledge explained in the “finding” chapter of this thesis. Since “*how* knowledge is acquired, organized, and interpreted is relevant to *what* the claims are,”<sup>31</sup>

I integrate my claims while indicating how I acquired these findings. In this regard, in this chapter firstly, I address some points regarding the qualitative research and this study’s congruence to it. Following this, I focus on the philosophy of research and thereby why qualitative research specifically was adopted for this study. Afterwards, I introduce the procedures of data collection and sampling. Then, I describe the procedure of data analysis. Finally, I elaborate trustworthiness, reliability, validity and the limitations of the study.

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<sup>29</sup> Naguib Mahfouz. *Tharthara Fawq Al-Nil (Adrift on the Nile)*. Cairo: Darshorouk, 2006, p. 716.

<sup>30</sup> Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln. *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Newbury Park and London: Sage Publications, 1989, p. 83.

<sup>31</sup> Altheide, D.L. and J.M. Johnson (1994) “Criteria for Assessing Interpretive Validity in Qualitative Research,” in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, quoted in Natasha S. Mauthner and Andrea Doucet, “Reflexive Accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis,” *Sociology*, Vol. 52, No. 3, 2003, p. 416.

## 2.2. Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an approach that investigates a specific research topic within its context. This type of research is exploratory in nature, focusing on definitions, concepts, meanings, symbols, metaphors, characteristics, and descriptions associated with various phenomena<sup>32</sup> that have not been studied before or requires a new perspective for investigation.<sup>33</sup> This broad field of qualitative research is also strengthened by Denzin and Lincoln's definition:

*Qualitative research* is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible... They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.<sup>34</sup>

These definitional contexts elucidate the rationale behind adopting a qualitative perspective for this study and the points that they argue is completely in accordance with the purpose of this dissertation. To express it without reiteration, this study desires to analyze an understudied topic from a new angle and this makes it convenient to use qualitative research.

Moreover, Sarah Tracy's identification of three fundamental concepts -self-reflexivity, context, and thick-description- that establish the foundation for a conducting qualitative research lay the groundwork for this study to be a qualitative study.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Danica G. Hays and Anneliese A. Singh, *Qualitative Inquiry in Clinical and Educational Setting*. New York and London: The Guilford Press, 2012, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2018, p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> Sarah J. Tracy, *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 2020, p. 2.

Firstly, self-reflexivity involves acknowledging that researcher's previous experiences, different perspectives and points of view have a significant influence on their engagement with and interpretations of any text or context.<sup>36</sup> However, the fundamental assumption leading many data analysis techniques is to consider the data, the method and the researcher as distinct and independent entities rather than entities that are reflexively interconnected.<sup>37</sup> The positivist model enforces the entity of researcher to be absent also through qualitative data analysis based on computer aided programs.<sup>38</sup> In fact, values inherently impinge the research. Firstly, the personal choices of the investigator (usually in congruent with the values of the sponsor<sup>39</sup>) leads the enter of values into inquiry. Secondly, the selection of the theory itself is a values choice by dismantling (a preference) other possible theories. Thirdly, they enter through the paradigm. Fourthly, values enter as all research containing humans are not devoid of any value.<sup>40</sup>

In this regard, primarily, giving agency to marginalized groups has been my academic interest. Secondly, the fact that if I had not studied the Kurdish language since my undergraduate years, it would not have been possible for me to do this study. It should be noted that language proficiency is significant in qualitative research as Dunn puts forth that if you cannot read or speak the language in which the majority of the data is written, you should probably look elsewhere since it does not provide enough data to work with.<sup>41</sup> The third point is that I have become a skeptical person after years of ontological inquiries. This skepticism provided me not to affiliate myself with any subject or object. Indeed, it made me open to new interpretations which is one of the salient features of the qualitative research.

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Mauthner and Doucet, "Reflexive Accounts," p. 414.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 415.

<sup>39</sup> For instance, "The security of a job, and a position within academia, also undoubtedly make it easier to admit and articulate the confusions and tensions we felt and how these manifested themselves in our research." Please, see *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Guba and Lincoln. *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, p. 102. "Anyone evaluating biology textbooks for use in a religiously conservative state had better be aware of that fact, for example." Please, see *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Kevin C. Dunn, "Historical Representations," in Audie Klotz and Deepe Prakash eds., *Qualitative Methods in International Methods: A Pluralist Guide*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 85.

Secondly, qualitative researchers intentionally analyze and document subtle indicators in order to choose appropriate actions, as well as to comprehend the context and construct wider knowledge arguments about the larger image.<sup>42</sup> This aspect also fits this study since it concentrates on the documents of education and believes that the ontological and epistemological representation of the concept of territoriality in these documents can be better analyzed by adding contextual information about the PYD as it will be provided in the fourth chapter.

Thirdly, thick description is the practice of surpassing superficial understandings, to delve further into the contextual interpretations of behaviors<sup>43</sup> rather than seeking “generalizability to a larger sample.”<sup>44</sup> As for this study, the qualitative research allowed this study to scrutinize the concept of territory through various forms of it is represented in textbooks. Examination of the concept of territoriality has revealed that the territoriality has been reflected through eleven concepts: (1) welat (homeland), (2) cîh (place), (3) herêm (region/territory), (4) erd (land), (5) ax (soil/land), and (6) xak (territory), (7) başûr (South), (8) bakur (North), (9) rojhilat (East), (10) rojava (west), and (11) Kûrdistan. These concrete data from textbooks is accomplished with the use of thick description as it provides consistency between data and conclusions.<sup>45</sup>

### **2.3. Research Philosophy and Paradigm**

The answer of what appropriate framework fits the research project leads to careful thinking regarding both ontological and epistemological position of a research.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Sarah J. Tracy. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>44</sup> Hays and Singh. *Qualitative Inquiry*, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> Michael W. Kramer and Tony E. Adams, “Etnography,” in Mike Allen ed., *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2017, p. 461.

<sup>46</sup> George Kamberelis, Greg Dimitriadis, and Alyson Welker, “Focus Group Research and/in Figured Worlds,” in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2018, p. 1223.

Pointing “the nature of reality,” ontology refers to what extent seeking a “universal truth” would be pursued about a certain issue or process in qualitative research.<sup>47</sup> The primary question here is whether social entities possess a reality independent from social actors, or whether they have meaning and reality by interacting with social actors.<sup>48</sup> These two approaches are respectively objectivism and constructivism.<sup>49</sup> Objectivism considers meaning and reality apart from social actors and any consciousness.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, constructivism is an ontological position that asserts “all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world; and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.”<sup>51</sup> Qualitative researchers takes their roots from a relativistic ontology that has an intersubjective nature, is socially constructed and contextually shaped.<sup>52</sup> In this regard, as a linguistic expression, a written text is also accepted as a form of “socially structured signification.”<sup>53</sup> The influence of political, historical, and cultural events over these significations<sup>54</sup> are key premises of constructivism.<sup>55</sup>

Territoriality has been the main concept that this thesis revolves around. The next chapter will provide a more comprehensive picture of this concept. For the ontological position of this study, it should be remarked that territory is not

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<sup>47</sup> Hays and Singh. *Qualitative Inquiry*, p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> Alan Bryman. *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 32.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* These ontological frameworks have been diversified also by other authors. For instance, please see Hays and Singh. *Qualitative Inquiry*, pp. 34-44, and Sarah J. Tracy. *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 49-56. According to the frameworks outlined in these books, it is possible to categorize various ontological positions under two headings as Bryman suggests.

<sup>50</sup> Alan Bryman. *Social Research Methods*, p. 33

<sup>51</sup> Michael Crotty. *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in Research Process*. London, Sage Publications, 1998, p. 44.

<sup>52</sup> Karin Klenke. *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*. UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2016, p. 15.

<sup>53</sup> Ian Parker, “Lacanian Discourse Analysis in Psychology,” *Theory & Psychology*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2005, p. 164; and Fazilet Canbolat, 2018. *A Qualitative Research on Suicide Notes: Mental Representations in Suicide Notes of Men*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, METU, Ankara, p. 30.

<sup>54</sup> Hays and Singh. *Qualitative Inquiry*, p. 41.

<sup>55</sup> Constructivism, constructionism, and social constructivism are terms that are interchangeably used. Please, see Sarah J. Tracy. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 51.

understood in terms of a geometrical space, rather many aspects of it are discussed how it transformed into a “meaningful structure.”<sup>56</sup> In this sense, territory is accepted as a product of the human agency and political, cultural, and historical events are considered to be influential to understand the significance of it. Thus, ontological position of this thesis is constructivism.

Ontology has an influence over epistemology in the sense that the latter is defined as the method of acquiring knowledge through the question of “How do we know what we know?”<sup>57</sup> Positivism and interpretivism are two major research paradigms providing epistemological assumptions of research activities.<sup>58</sup> Positivism holds the view that reality exists “out there” and to discover it, positivists apply universal laws and causality.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, interpretive perspective, which is also termed as constructivism or social constructivism,<sup>60</sup> understands human activity as a “text” that can be concentrated, interpreted and evaluated, rather than a physical material to be found and sized.<sup>61</sup> That means that those who subscribe to the interpretivist school of thought believe that knowledge is socially constructed through use of language and interaction. This method implies that cultural and historical contexts are to be considered concurrently for any text to be comprehended.<sup>62</sup>

Paradigms are the chosen methods for constructing knowledge, comprehending reality, and learning about the outside world. They are a set of discourses making up the philosophical assumptions that underpin one’s perspective.<sup>63</sup> Based on the

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<sup>56</sup> Steven Grosby, “Territoriality: The Transcendental, Primordial Feature of Modern Societies,” *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1995, p. 149.

<sup>57</sup> Karin Klenke. *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*, p. 15.

<sup>58</sup> Timothy P. Hilton, Peter R. Fawson, Thomas J. Sullivan and Cornell R. Dejong. *Applied Social Research: A Tool for the Human Services*. New York: Spring Publishing Company, 2020, p. 45.

<sup>59</sup> W. Lawrence Neuman. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2014, p. 98.

<sup>60</sup> Sarah J. Tracy. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 51.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.



ontological and epistemological explanations, the research paradigm of this study is constructivism since it presents the idea of contextualized multiple truths which need to be explored through interpretation. Although I argue that constructivist paradigm best fits my inquiry, I don't certainly presume that this is the only way to answer this question. To reiterate with strong words, why I have chosen the constructivist paradigm to answer my methodological question is hidden in this quotation: "the inquiry must be carried out in a way that will expose the constructions of the variety of concerned parties, open each to critique in the terms of other constructions, and provide the opportunity for revised or entirely new constructions to emerge—a hermeneutic methodology."<sup>64</sup>

#### **2.4. Data Collection Procedure**

As Patton remarks, there are three kinds of data that qualitative research is based on: both in-depth and open-ended interviews, direct observations, and written communications.<sup>65</sup> Written communications cover an extensive source of data. Finding, examining, and evaluating all various types of these documents are part of a qualitative research.<sup>66</sup>

To determine the categories of data to collect is one of the first stages of a project.<sup>67</sup> As for the topic of this study, it is not possible to lean on the primary data sources since there's an ongoing war in the field; secondary data sources was utilized using internet. In fact, as Pinçon remarks, when it is not possible to access physically to the relevant group or community, the use of internet is an alternative means to collect data.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Guba and Lincoln. *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, p. 89.

<sup>65</sup> Michael Quinn Patton. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks: CA, Sage Publications, 2015, p. 55.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Sarah J. Tracy. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 76.

<sup>68</sup> Deborah DeCloedt Pinçon, "Internet as Cultural Context," in Mike Allen ed., *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2017, p. 783.

The data corpus has been arrived through the link of <https://minhac.info><sup>69</sup> and it consists of 3 files containing 105 textbooks. I have arrived this website by a notification of Kurdish Literature expert Selim Temo Ergül as he had shared the link in his social media account.<sup>70</sup> Although the website doesn't provide any information except the files of textbooks, there are two evidence for its reliability. Firstly, there are three academic publications giving reference to same textbooks.<sup>71</sup> Secondly, there's an official account of the PYD on YouTube<sup>72</sup> where teachers deliver their lectures, and the content of these lectures comprise of the same textbooks which this study utilizes. Moreover, photographic evidence of the relevant textbooks, taken within various educational settings, has been included in the appendix.

## 2.5. Sampling Procedure

A sampling procedure is a strategy for selecting data sources specifically.<sup>73</sup> When assessing written documents, the researchers first need to identify at what level exactly they plan to take their samples, as well as what units of analysis will be counted in the evaluation.<sup>74</sup> Based on this perspective, this study utilizes the method of purposeful sampling as it prioritizes the careful selection of instances that possess a significant amount of information, cases that inherently and substantively provide light on the inquiry topic under investigation,<sup>75</sup> and ensures that the data they collect is relevant to the research questions, objectives, and aims.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> <https://minhac.info> (Accessed on January 12, 2024.)

<sup>70</sup> Selim Temo [@selimtemo]. (May 22, 2021). Retrieved September 12, 2023, from <https://twitter.com/selimtemo/status/1396047926804242435>

<sup>71</sup> Please, see i) Pinar Dinç, "The Content of School Textbooks in (nation) States and "Stateless Autonomies": A Comparison of Turkey and the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (Rojava)," *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 26, No.4, 2020; ii) Elise Boyle Espinosa and Adam Ronan, "Rojava's 'war of education': the Role of Education in Building Revolutionary Political Community in North and East Syria," *Third World Quarterly*, available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/01436597.2022.2115884?needAccess=true&role=button>, accessed on September 12, 2023; and iii) Ofra Bengio, "Reclaiming National Identity in Kurdish School Textbooks," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 3, 2020.

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/@dibistanamale4851/playlists> (Accessed on September 12, 2023)

<sup>73</sup> Sarah J. Tracy. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 82.

<sup>74</sup> Bruce L. Berg. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 244.

<sup>75</sup> Michael Quinn Patton. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, p. 401.

<sup>76</sup> Sarah J. Tracy. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 82.; According to Mayring, there're nine stages of content analysis. These are: "determination of the material; analysis of the situation in which the text

Employing purposeful sampling method, all textbooks involving specific phrases, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, and sections were selected for this study. Indeed, a sample can be taken from any one or more of the following levels: words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, sections, chapters, books, authors, ideological attitude, subject issue, or other relevant aspects.<sup>77</sup> The rationale behind selecting these textbooks is that the relevant parts of their contents cover information regarding the concept of territory. In this context, 27 textbooks were selected after careful reading.

Table 1<sup>78</sup> presents all compulsory school textbooks of primary, secondary, and high schools. The subjects highlighted in bold font represent the samples utilized in this study.

**Table 1.** List of Courses in Basic Education in the PYD Administration

<b>All Subjects in the Curriculum</b>		
<b>Primary Level Grades 1-6</b>	<b>Intermediate Level Grades 7-9</b>	<b>High School Level Grades 10-12</b>
Arts	Arts	Chemistry
Music		Kurdish Grammar
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
<b>Kurdish Language</b>	<b>Kurdish Language</b>	<b>Kurdish Literature</b>
Sports	<b>Geography</b>	Geography
<b>Society and Life</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>History</b>
<b>Social Sciences</b>	<b>Culture and Ethics</b>	<b>Sociology</b>
Science	Science	<b>Woman Science</b>

originated; the formal characterization of the material; determination of the direction of the analysis; theoretically informed differentiation of questions to be answered; selection of the analytical techniques (summary, explication, structuring); definition of the unit of analysis; analysis of the material (summary, explication, structuring); interpretation.” Philip Mayring. *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse*. Grundlagen und Techniken. Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis. Weinheim: Deutscher Studienverlag, 1988, p. 42, cited in Stefan Titscher, Michael Meyer, Ruth Wodak and Eva Vetter (Bryan Jenner Trans.) London: Sage Publications, 2000, p. 64. As I explain here and in other subtitles, I complete all these stages in my thesis.

<sup>77</sup> Bruce L. Berg. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 244.

<sup>78</sup> The tables and coding format of textbooks in this chapter were developed based on the exemplary tables presented in Sungur’s distinguished doctoral dissertation. Please, see Zeynep Tuba Sungur, 2020. *What Education Builds as Nation in Afghanistan: A Case of Nation-Building*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, METU, Ankara.

Table 1. (continued)

English	English	English
Arabic	Arabic	Arabic
		Woman Science
		Philosophy
		Physics

All subjects of 105 school textbooks are presented in Table 1. 78 textbooks have been excluded because they don't include any information clearly regarding territoriality. In line with the purposeful sampling, the selected textbooks are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Sample of School Textbooks

<b>Sample of School Textbooks</b>				
<b>No.</b>	<b>Title of Textbook</b>	<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Publication Date</b>
	<b>Kurdish Language (KL)</b>			
1.	Kurdish Language 1 (1-KL)	Primary	1	No Date
2.	Kurdish Language 2 (2-KL)	Primary	2	2019/2020
3.	Kurdish Language 3 (3-KL)	Primary	3	2019/2020
4.	Kurdish Language 5 (5-KL)	Primary	5	2020/2021
5	Kurdish Language 6 (6-KL)	Primary	6	2021/2022
6	Kurdish Language 7 (7-KL)	Intermediate	7	2019/2020
7	Kurdish Language 8 (8-KL)	Intermediate	8	2019/2020

Table 2. (continued)

8	Kurdish Language 9 (9-KL)	Intermediate	9	2019/2020
<b>Society and Life (SL)</b>				
9	Society and Life 2 (2-SL)	Primary	2	2019/2020
10	Society and Life 3 (3-SL)	Primary	3	2019/2020
<b>Social Sciences (SS)</b>				
11	Social Sciences 4 (4-SS)	Primary	4	2019/2020
12	Social Sciences 5 (5-SS)	Primary	5	No Date
13	Social Sciences 6 (6-SS)	Primary	6	2019/2020
<b>Geography (GE)</b>				
14	Geography 9 (9-GE)	Intermediate	9	2019/2020
<b>History (HI)</b>				
15	History 7 (7-HI)	Intermediate	7	2019/2020
16	History 8 (8-HI)	Intermediate	8	2019/2020
17	History 9 (9-HI)	Intermediate	9	2019/2020
18	History 10 (10-HI)	High School	10	2019/2020
19	History 11 (11-HI)	High School	11	No Date
20	History 12 (12-HI)	High School	12	2020/2021
<b>Culture and Ethics (CE)</b>				
21	Culture and Ethics 7 (7-CE)	Intermediate	7	2019/2020
22	Culture and Ethics 9 (9-CE)	Intermediate	9	2019/2020

Table 2. (continued)

<b>Kurdish Literature (KL)</b>				
23	Kurdish Literature 11 (11-KL)	High School	11	2019/2020
24	Kurdish Literature 12 (12-KL)	High School	12	2020/2021
<b>Sociology (SO)</b>				
25	Sociology 11 (11-SO)	High School	11	2019/2020
26	Sociology 12 (12-SO)	High School	12	2020/2021
	<b>1. Woman Science (WS)</b>			
27	Woman Science 12 (12-WS)	High School	12	2020/2021

These textbooks were included in the sample after careful analysis and examination.

The Contents of Kurdish Language (1-5)<sup>79</sup> that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 3.** Contents of the Textbooks of Kurdish Language (1-5)

Chapter	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 5
<b>1</b>	No Title	Answer	No Title	No Title
<b>2</b>	<b>No Title</b> <b>3) School Library</b>	School	No Title	<b>No Title</b> <b>1) Let's learn about Our Homeland</b> <b>2)Til Helef</b> <b>4)Martry Peyman</b> <b>5)Colorful Flag</b>

<sup>79</sup> The content provided by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Kurdish Language textbook is insufficient, therefore it was not included in the analysis.

Table 3. (continued)

<b>3</b>	<b>No Title</b> <b>4) Our Mountains</b>	Family	No Title	No Title
<b>4</b>	<b>No Title</b> <b>1) Our Homeland</b> <b>2) Nowruz</b> <b>5) Product and Nature</b> <b>6) Our Historical Places</b>	<b>Homeland</b>	No Title	No Title
<b>5</b>	<b>No Title</b> <b>2)Salesman</b> <b>4)Farmer</b>	Cooperation	<b>No Title</b> <b>1)Nowruz</b> <b>2)Efrîn</b>	No Title

*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study. Furthermore, chapters lacking titles that nonetheless provide sufficient information are supplemented with additional details, including both numbers and titles of relevant subsections.

The cover photos of the textbooks of Kurdish Language (1-5) are as follows:



**Figure 1.** Cover Pages of the Books of Kurdish Language (1-5)

The Contents of Kurdish Language (6-9) that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 4.** Contents of the Textbooks of Kurdish Language (6-9)

Chapter	Class 6	Class 7	Class 8	Class 9
1	Towards a Better Personality	No Title 6)Findik Fortress 10) My Love and Happiness 12)My Sound	No Title 5)Who am I? 8)A Region of Kurdistan 9)My Homeland	No Title 3)Tormented but Inexplicable 4)Rebellion of 12 <sup>th</sup> March 7)Qedemxêr
2	Environment and Health	No Title 4)Sharafkhan Bidlisi 5)Khabur 6)Ehmedê Xanî 9)Homeland	No Title 2)The Castle of Elodîno 3)Young Mountain Goats 5)Melayê Cizîrî 7)Zilan Massacre	No Title 3) The Forerunner of Popular Uprisings 4)Moaning 5)Cegerxwîn
3	Patriotism	No Title 2)Nowruz 3)Lake Qulingan 5)Before Botan 6)Arbil Fortress 8)The Surname of Leyla Qasim 9)Binive Lolo 13)Qazi Mihemmed 14)Lament for Kurdistan	No Title 3)Happy Nightingale 5)Tilhelef 8)Message of Nowruz	No Title 6)The Message of Martyr Zilan
4	Children's Rights		No Title 2)Dr. Qasimlo 4)Osman Sebrî	No Title
5				No Title



*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study. Furthermore, chapters lacking titles that nonetheless provide sufficient information are supplemented with additional details, including both numbers and titles of relevant subsections.

The cover photos of the textbooks of Kurdish Language (6-9) are as follows:



**Figure 2.** Cover Pages of the Books of Kurdish Language (6-9)

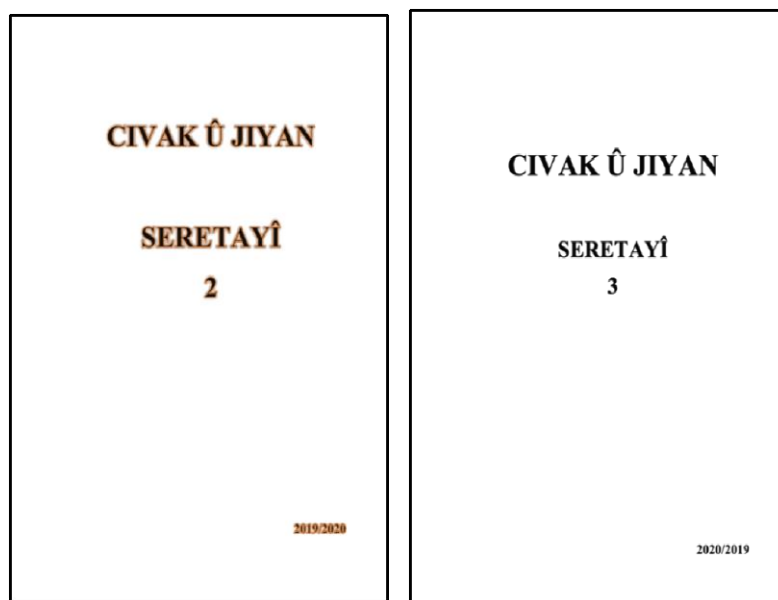
The Contents of Society and Life that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 5.** Contents of the Textbooks of Society and Life

<b>Class 2</b>	<b>Class 3</b>
<b>Chapter 3: What Do They Learn in School?</b>	<b>Chapter 5</b> 1)Our Homeland is Very Beautiful 3)Our System 4) Travel, See, Know, Like 5) People and Beliefs around us 6) Faith without a Prophet: Yesidism
<b>Chapter 34: Where Do We Live?</b>	
<b>Chapter 39: National Holidays</b>	

*Note.* Only relevant chapters of the subject are included in this table, and they are highlighted in bold font. Chapter 5 of Class 3 doesn't have a title, so both numbers and titles of relevant subsections are written.

The cover photos of the textbooks of Society and Life are as follows:



**Figure 3.** Cover Pages of the Books of Society and Life

The Contents of Social Sciences that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 6.** Contents of the Textbooks of Social Sciences

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Class 4</b>	<b>Class 5</b>	<b>Class 6</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Society and People</b>	No Title 2)Book of Social Sciences 8)Step by Step Northeast Syria 9) The Spring of the Peoples and Rebellion 10) Rojava Revolution 11) The Federation System of Northeast Syria 12) Administrative System of Northeast Syria 13) Our Martyrs	No Title
<b>2</b>	<b>Culture</b>	No Title 6) Industry	No Title
<b>3</b>	<b>The Place Where We Live</b>	No Title	No Title 1)Kurds 2)Identification of Kurds in History-1 3)Identification of Kurds in History-2 4)The Situation of Kurdistan before Islamic Invasion 5)Islam and Kurds
<b>4</b>	<b>History</b>	No Title	
<b>5</b>	Science and Technology		

*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study. Furthermore, chapters lacking titles that nonetheless provide sufficient information are supplemented with additional details, including both numbers and titles of relevant subsections.

The cover photos of the textbooks of Social Sciences are as follows:



**Figure 4.** Cover Pages of the Books of Social Sciences

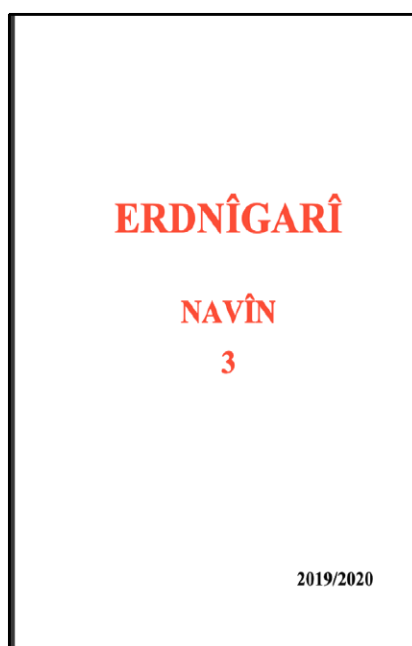
The Content of Geography that provides relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 7.** Content of the Textbook of Geography

Chapter	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Class 9</b>	<b>No Title</b>	<b>No Title</b>	<b>No Title</b>	<b>No Title</b>	<b>No Title</b>
	<b>1)Overcrowding Pollution</b> <b>2)Environmental Problems</b> <b>3)Civil Problems</b>	<b>1) Kurdistan</b> <b>2)Topography of Kurdistan</b> <b>3)Climate of Kurdistan</b> <b>4)Waters of Kurdistan</b> <b>5)Natural and Wild Plants</b> <b>6)Human Geography</b>	<b>1)Syria</b> <b>2)Climate of Syria</b> <b>3)Density of Population</b> <b>4)Industry and Travel</b>	<b>1) North and Eastern Region of Syria</b> <b>2)Climate and Climatic Regions</b> <b>3)Human Activities in North and Eastern Region of Syria</b>	<b>1)Efrîn</b> <b>2)Kobanê</b> <b>3)Qamişlo</b> <b>4)Amûdê</b>

*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study. Furthermore, chapters lacking titles that nonetheless provide sufficient information are supplemented with additional details, including both numbers and titles of relevant subsections.

The cover photo of the textbook of Geography is as follows:



**Figure 5.** Cover Page of the 9<sup>th</sup> Class Geography

The Contents of History (7-9) that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 8.** Contents of the Textbooks of History (7-9)

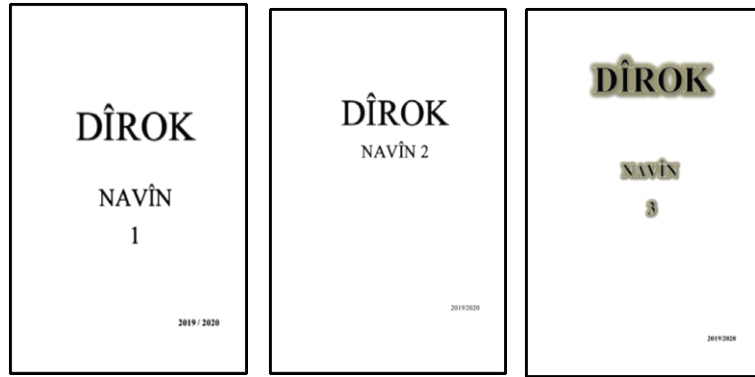
<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Class 7</b>	<b>Class 8</b>	<b>Class 9</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>What's History</b>	<b>No Title</b> <b>4)Komegena Society</b> <b>5)Sasanian Empire</b>	<b>Capitalism</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Language and Culture of Mesopotamia</b>	<b>No Title</b> <b>2)Seljuk Empire</b> <b>3)Moghul Invasion</b>	<b>The Developments that Happened in 20th Century and the Situation of Kurdistan</b>

Table 8. (continued)

<b>2</b>	History of the Natural Society	<b>No Title</b> <b>3) The Arrival of Islam to Kurdistan</b> <b>4) Oppositional Islam and the Umayyad Period</b> <b>5) The Abbasid Period</b> <b>8) Movements against the Fundamentalist Islam-2</b> <b>9) Kurdish Rulers during the Islamic Period-1</b> <b>10) Kurdish Rulers during the Islamic Period-2</b>	<b>Rebellions Led by Mîrs and Sheikhs</b>
<b>4</b>	System of Civilizations	<b>No Title</b> <b>2) Safavid State</b> <b>3) Agreements between Kurds and Ottomans</b> <b>4) Agreement between Idris Bitlisi and Yavuz Selim</b> <b>5) People's revolts against Ottomans</b> <b>6)The Situation of Eastern Kurdistan under Safavid rule</b> <b>7) Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin</b>	<b>North Kurdistan</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Resistance of People against Central Civilizations</b>		<b>The Situation of Eastern and Southern Kurdistan</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>History of Medes</b>		<b>Western Kurdistan</b>
<b>7</b>			<b>Kurdish People's Freedom Movement and Women's Defense</b>

*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study. Furthermore, chapters lacking titles that nonetheless provide sufficient information are supplemented with additional details, including both numbers and titles of relevant subsections.

The cover photos of the textbooks of History are as follows:



**Figure 6.** Cover Pages of the Books of History (7-9)

The Contents of History (10-12) that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 9.** Contents of the Textbooks of History (10-12)

Chapter	Class 10	Class 11	Class 12
2	<p>No Title</p> <p>2)Early Life Regions</p> <p>4)Paleolithic</p> <p>5)Mesolithic and Neolithic</p> <p>6)Products of Neolithic Revolution in Kurdistan</p>	<p>No Title</p> <p>3)The Arrival of Islam to Kurdistan</p> <p>4)The Ummayad Period</p>	<p>No Title</p> <p>1)The Situation of Kurdistan in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century</p> <p>2)Rebellion of the Babans (1806-1851)</p> <p>3)Rebellion of the Sorans (1830-1837)</p> <p>4)Rebellion of Bedirkhan Beg (1842-1847)</p> <p>5)Peoples' Rebellion in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century</p> <p>6)Causes and Consequences of the Crash of Mîrs</p> <p>7)The Conflict among Mîrs and the Resistance under the Leadership of Sheikhs</p> <p>8)Rebellion of Sheikh Ubeidullah Nehri</p> <p>9)The Hamidiye Regiments and Tribal Schools</p>

Table 9. (continued)

1	No Title 1)History	No Title 6) Sasanian Empire	No Title 5)The Impact of Capitalism over the Middle East and Kurds
3	No Title 3)Aryan Culture and Language	No Title 1) Movements against the Oppositional Islam-1 2) Movements against the Oppositional Islam-2 4)Kurdish Rulers-1 5)Kurdish Rulers-2 6)Kurdish Rulers-3	No Title 1)The First World War 2)The Destruction of the Ottoman in the First World War 3)Agreements Made against the Kurds-1 4) Agreements Made against the Kurds-2 5)The Situation of the Kurds after 1920 6)National Salvation War and the Establishment of the Republic
4	No Title	No Title 1)Seljuk Empire 3)Moghul Invasion 5) People's revolts against Ottomans 6)Safawid State 7)The War between Safawid and Ottoman for Kurdistan 8)Idris Bitlisi and Expansion of Ottoman through Kurdistan 9)The Rebellion of the Dimdim Fortress 10) Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin	No Title 1)Koçgirî Rebellion 2)Azadî Association 3)Sheikh Seîd Rebellion 4)Other Rebellions during Republic 5)Ağrı Rebellion 6)Genocide and Rebellion of Dersîm

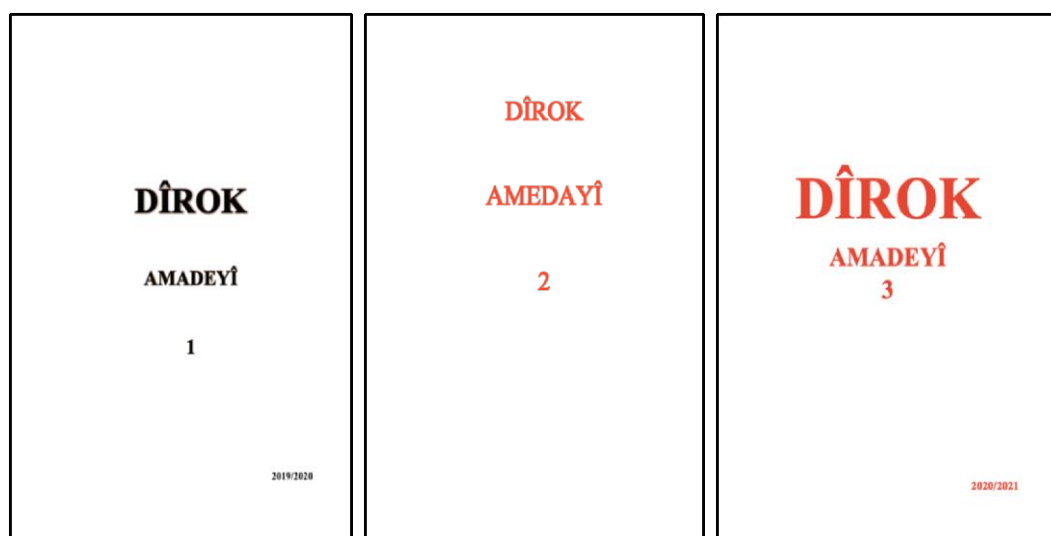


Table 9. (continued)

5	<b>No Title</b> <b>1)Hûrî</b>		<b>No Title</b> <b>1)Eastern Kurdistan</b> <b>2)Mehabad Republic</b> <b>3)Southern Kurdistan during the British Rule</b> <b>4)Southern Kurdistan between the Period of 1945 and 1975</b> <b>5)The Emergence of Baath Nationalism</b>
6	<b>No Title</b> <b>1) Medes</b> <b>2) Keyagsar and Astiyag</b> <b>3) The Significance of Medes in the Middle East</b>		<b>No Title</b> <b>1)Western Kurdistan</b> <b>2)Contribution of Western Kurds for the Independence of Kurdistan</b> <b>3)Kurdish Freedom Movement</b>

*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study. Furthermore, chapters lacking titles that nonetheless provide sufficient information are supplemented with additional details, including both numbers and titles of relevant subsections.

The cover photos of the textbooks of History (10-12) are as follows:



**Figure 7.** Cover Pages of the Books of History (10-12)

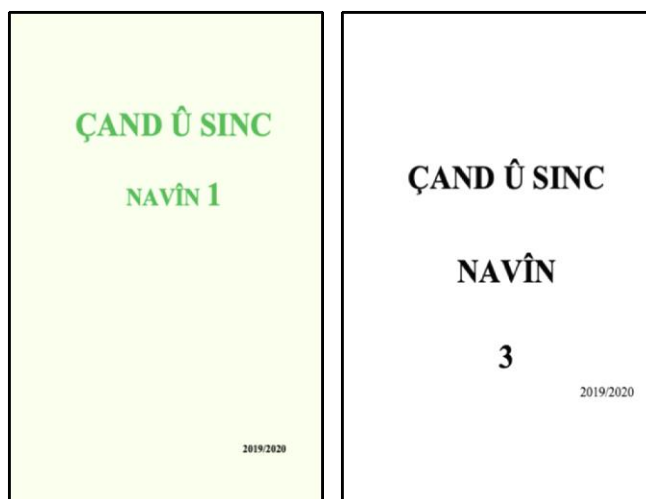
The Contents of Culture and Ethics that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 10.** Contents of the Textbooks of Culture and Ethics

Chapter	Class 7	Class 9
1	Culture and Ethics	<b>Culture and Ethics of Peoples</b>
2	<b>Culture and Ethics in History</b>	Relationship between Culture and Ethics
3	Culture and Society	Culture and Ethics in History
4	<b>Rules of Ethics</b>	<b>Culture and Ethics in Kurdish Society</b>
5	Destruction of Culture and Ethics	

*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study.

The cover photos of the textbooks of Culture and Ethics are as follows:



**Figure 8.** Cover Pages of the Books of Culture and Ethics

The Contents of Kurdish Literature that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 11.** Contents of the Textbooks of Kurdish Literature

Chapter	Class 11	Class 12
<b>1</b>	No Title <b>7) Kurdish Story Genres</b>	<b>The Last Period of Kurdish Classics</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Kurdish Literature between 16th and 17th Centuries</b>	<b>The Impact of Intellectual and Social Changes on Kurdish Literature in the 20th Century</b>
<b>3</b>	No Title	No Title 1) <b>The Situation of Kurds after Destruction of Russian and Ottoman Empires</b> 2) <b>Kurdish Literature in the West of Kurdistan after the First World War</b> 3) <b>Celadet Eli Bedirkhan</b> 5) <b>Cegerxwîn</b> 6) <b>Osman Sebrî</b> 7) <b>Qedrîcan</b> 9) <b>Musa Enter</b>
<b>4</b>	No Title	
<b>5</b>	<b>Famous Writers in the World</b>	

*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study. Furthermore, chapters lacking titles that nonetheless provide sufficient information are supplemented with additional details, including both numbers and titles of relevant subsections.

The cover photos of the textbooks of Kurdish Literature are as follows:



**Figure 9.** Cover Pages of the Books of Kurdish Literature

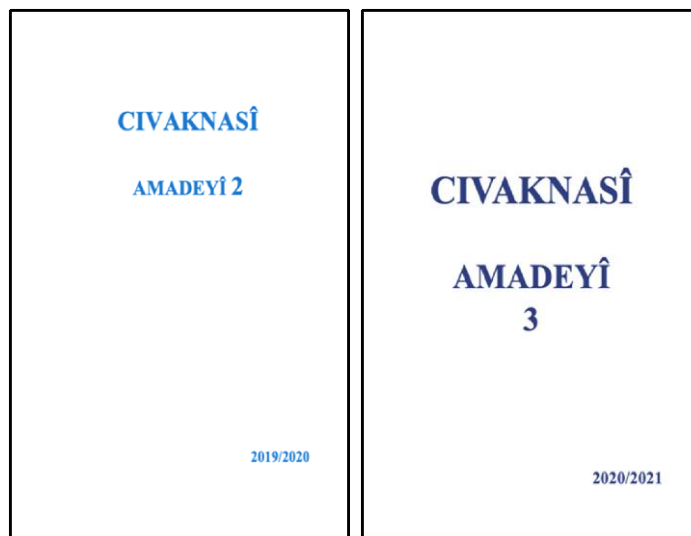
The Contents of Sociology that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 12.** Contents of the Textbooks of Sociology

Chapter	Class 11	Class 12
1	<b>Social Life</b>	Social Institutions
2	Theory and Social Fields	The Family
3	<b>Formation and Relations of Society</b>	<b>Economy in History</b>
4	<b>Social Change</b>	Civilization and Modernity
5		<b>Crises and Problems of Middle Eastern Societies</b>

*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study.

The cover photos of the textbooks of Sociology are as follows:



**Figure 10.** Cover Pages of the Books of Sociology

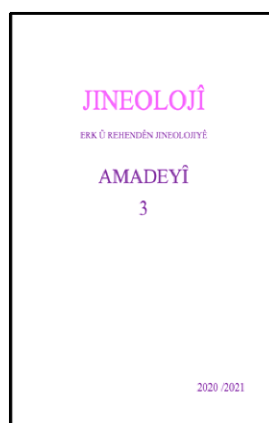
The Contents of Jineolojî (Woman Science) that provide relevant information for the purpose of this study can be seen below:

**Table 13.** Contents of the Textbooks of Jineolojî (Woman Science)

Chapter	1	2	3
<b>Class 12</b>	<b>No Title</b> 1) <b>Process of Socialism</b> 2) <b>The Role of Women in Latin American Revolutions</b> 4) <b>The Role of Women in South Africa</b> 5) <b>Hay Gin's Search for Freedom</b> 6) <b>Armenian Woman</b> 7) <b>Kurdistanî Women-1</b> 8) <b>Kurdistanî Women-2</b>	<b>No Title</b> 1) <b>Reconstruction of Independent Co-existence</b> 2) <b>Independent Co-existence-2</b> 3) <b>Building a Woman's Light</b> 4) <b>Revolution in Social Sciences</b> 5) <b>Proposal of a Research Method According to Women's Reality</b> 6) <b>Achieve Mastery</b> 7) <b>The Importance of Nature Protection for Women</b> 8) <b>A Woman is a Precious Being After All</b>	<b>No Title</b> 1) <b>Ethics and Aesthetics</b> 2) <b>Economy</b> 3) <b>Demography</b> 4) <b>Ecology</b> 5) <b>History</b> 6) <b>Health</b> 7) <b>Education</b> 8) <b>Politics</b>

*Note.* The chapters highlighted in bold font represent the main data utilized in this study. Furthermore, chapters lacking titles that nonetheless provide sufficient information are supplemented with additional details, including both numbers and titles of relevant subsections.

The cover photo of the textbook of Jineolojî (Woman Science) is as follows:



**Figure 11.** Cover Page of the Book of Woman Science

## 2.6. Data Analysis Procedure: Qualitative Content Analysis

A significant assumption made by qualitative research is that meaningful acts should be investigated, to the greatest extent feasible, in the naturalistic contexts in which they occur.<sup>80</sup> In this context, the majority of the focus of projects that work with QCA (Qualitative content analysis) is placed on comprehending the meaning of social action, as well as “understanding the meaning of statements and arguments,”<sup>81</sup> and it provides a detailed explanation of what content of your material means<sup>82</sup> in a systemic way through the arranging data into categories using a coding frame.<sup>83</sup> In a qualitative study, the researcher makes data analysis by using inductive and data-driven approach. This means that the researcher picks out primary ideas and codes as s/he makes progress through relevant material.<sup>84</sup>

As the system of categories is the basic tool of content analysis. The coding must include every unit of analysis.<sup>85</sup> In this sense, allocation may be made more than one category. As categories are “operational definitions of variables,” their definitions should be “explicit, complete and adequate.”<sup>86</sup> The system of categories should be formed before undertaking the coding.<sup>87</sup> It’s recommended to illustrate every category with textual examples “which facilitate the allocation of further textual

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<sup>80</sup> Klaus Bruhn Jensen, “The Qualitative Research Process,” in Klaus Bruhn Jensen ed., *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies*, London and New York, Routledge, 2002, p. 236.

<sup>81</sup> Udo Kuckartz and Stefan Rädiker. *Qualitative Content Analysis: Methods, Practice and Software*. Thousand Oaks: CA, Sage Publications, 2023, p. 30.

<sup>82</sup> Margrit Schreier. *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*. London, Sage Publications, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>85</sup> Units can be whole documents, themes, paragraphs, sentences, phrases or words. Please, see Margaret G. Hermann, “Content Analysis,” in Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash ed., *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 157.

<sup>86</sup> Werner Herkner (1974) “Inhaltsanalyse,” in Jurgen von Koolwijk and Maria Wieken Mayser (eds), *Techniken der empirischen Sozialforschung*, Munchen: Oldenbourg, Vol. 3, p. 174, cited in Titscher and Others, p. 58.

<sup>87</sup> Titscher and Others, p. 58.

analysis.”<sup>88</sup> In this respect, the MAXQDA facilitates the allocation of every unit of analysis to codes. The systems of categories are related with the specific research question and therefore it is constituted based on the research question and the arguments derived from it.<sup>89</sup> As I put below, in coding, my focus is the conceptual framework I drew in the third chapter. I wrote the frequency count for each subcode and the overall total.

**Table 14.** Table of Codes and Subcodes

<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcodes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Homeland</b>	Love of homeland (9), Conception of homeland (2), Identifying the homeland as Kurdistan (8), Unemotional reaction to homeland (2), General information about homeland (4), To foreground the terms of Kurdistan and homeland through teaching new words (3), Question-answer parts to reify Kurdistan as homeland (4)	<b>32</b>
<b>Syria</b>	Images of Syria (3), Cartographic representation of Syria (10), The climatological conditions of Syria (1), The issue of co-existence (Rojava-Syria dichotomy) (11)	<b>25</b>
<b>Territorialization policy</b>	Jineolojî (Woman Science) (15), Ocalan’s thoughts (6), A general information about the place people live in (1), Rojava Revolution (15), Historical territorialization practices in Kurdistan (12)	<b>49</b>
<b>Geographical Characteristics</b>	Demography (2), Landscape of Kurdistan (5), Borders of Kurdistan (2), Surface of Kurdistan (4), The climatological conditions of Kurdistan (9), Latitude of Kurdistan (1), Forests, Faunal species (1), Agrarian practices (1), Fertile lands of Kurdistan (5), Soil types in Kurdistan (7), Mountains (6), Geostrategic location (8), Natural resources (20)	<b>75</b>
<b>Four Parts of Kurdistan</b>	General Information (3), Southern Kurdistan (6), Northern Kurdistan (3), Eastern Kurdistan (5), Western Kurdistan (11)	<b>28</b>
<b>Diversity in Kurdistan</b>	Religious diversity (14), Multicultural diversity (11), Multinational diversity (1)	
<b>Territorialization of History</b>	Sedentary Life (1), The roots of territories of Kurdistan (4), Ancient History and culture (44), Ancestral land (2), Cradle of Civilizations (49)	<b>100</b>

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Table 14. (continued)

<b>Nationalism</b>	General information about nationalism (7), Kurdistan as a distinctive region (1), Cultural superiority of Kurds (2), Sacred places (5), Primordial attachment to territory (1), Emotional attachment to territory (4), Patriotism (26)	<b>46</b>
<b>National Identity</b>	Relationship between Kurdish identity and Kurdistan territories (38)	<b>38</b>
<b>Discursive Practices</b>	Images of Kurdish cities (5), Cartographic representation of occupying powers (8), Heroic narrative (1), Priority and indigeneity in territories of Kurdistan (4), Poets' engagement in territorial politics (13), Images of the cities of Rojava (4), The images of different parts of Kurdistan (80), Communication tools (3), Portraits of nationalist Kurds (40), Images of new institutions in Rojava (15), Cartographic representation of earlier Kurdish states (38), Culture and language (21), The belief that Mesopotamia is equivalent to Kurdistan (1), Kurdistan as a poetic space (39), The conception of time-space (5), Legends and myths (6), The portraits of political figures strived for Kurdistan (8), Etymology of the word of Kurdistan (12), Cartographic representation of Kurdistan (11), The symbols of the freedom of Kurdistan (11), Place names (in terms of change and rechange) (9), Definitions of some concepts (8)	<b>343</b>
<b>Education</b>	School (1), Education (28)	<b>29</b>
<b>Resistance and Liberation</b>	Religion as a form of insurgency(3), The PKK as an insurgent movement(4), Insurgencies in Southern Kurdistan,(8) Insurgencies in Northern Kurdistan (4), Insurgencies in Eastern Kurdistan (2), Insurgencies in Western Kurdistan (8), Unsuccessful 19th century Kurdish insurgencies (2), Worldwide liberation movements (13), Kurdish uprisings in history (7), Cultural resistance (14), Resistance against occupation (11), Resistance in Kobane (1), Liberation of territories (11), Kurdish insurgencies in Kurdistan (62), The role of the women in for defense of Kurdistan (24), Freedom of Kurdistan (4), Political figures (5), Martyrs of Kurdistan (32), Glorifying homeland defense (4), Self-determination (4), Defense of territories (19)	<b>235</b>



Table 14. (continued)

<b>Occupied Territories</b>	Kurdistan after arrival of Islam (5), The attacks of Salafi groups (3), Involuntary displacement (6), Intra-Kurdish conflict (4), Land usurpation (1), Safawid rule (1), Destruction of Kurdistan (6), Cultural oppression (1), Emigration (17), Burning (6), The imperialist policies against Kurdistan (33), Demographic change (5), Imperialist interventions in the Middle East (2), Dehumanization Kurdistan (6), Looting through occupying Kurdistan (6), Occupying Kurdistan for economic reasons (6), The basic reason Kurdistan to be a conflict area (15), Geospatial impacts of Capitalism (8), Treaties dividing Kurdistan (27), Peaceful treaties for Kurdistan (3), Rojava under French authority (6), Slaughters and Massacres (38), War (27), Ottoman colonialism (5), Syrian subjugation of Western Kurdistan (11), Exile (16), Occupied territories (51), Iranian subjugation of Eastern Kurdistan (10), Iraqi subjugation of Southern Kurdistan (7), Türkiye's subjugation of Northern Kurdistan (32)	<b>367</b>
<b>Governance</b>	Institutions of Rojava administration (9), Historical Kurdish administration (15), Gender-equal governance (2), The conditions for coexistence in Syria (4), Democratic society conception (27), Criticism of nation-state (1), Atatürk's administrative proposal for Kurds (8), Kurdish rulers during Islamic period (5), Begîtf as a form of Kurdish governance (1), Economic model for governance (6), Stateless governance model (7), Independent Kurdish states in history (29)	<b>114</b>

After determining the unit of analysis, forming a set of coding, and developing procedures; the next stage is to consider contextualizing the information to better scrutinize the complexities and the nuance related with any political phenomenon.<sup>90</sup>

To figure out what his/her data means, qualitative content analysis is often a good option when a researcher needs to do some kind of interpretation.<sup>91</sup> There is considerable potential for interpretation in qualitative research since it focuses on

<sup>90</sup> Hermann, "Content Analysis," p. 160.

<sup>91</sup> Margrit Schreier. *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*, p. 2.

symbolic material, such as verbal data, visual data, and artefacts.<sup>92</sup> The data that are collected in qualitative research are not standardized, thus it is necessary for the researcher to make an effort to actively interpret the data.<sup>93</sup> Interpretation involves more than just describing representations; it requires contextualization within larger meaning structures, encompassing their meaning and practices.<sup>94</sup>

What makes qualitative content analysis appropriate for this thesis is that textbooks are among other documents where QCA can be applied<sup>95</sup> and it is applicable to examining the “how” of your content<sup>96</sup> which is coherent with the characteristics of research question of this study. The primary idea of this study is to reveal the representation of territory through the textbooks of the PYD, so I picked out codes in line with this idea through relevant material. Accordingly, as mentioned previously, I identified eleven concepts that reveal the concept of territoriality: (1) welat (homeland), (2) cîh (place), (3) herêm (region/territory), (4) erd (land), (5) ax (soil/land), and (6) xak (territory), (7) başûr (South), (8) bakur (North), (9) rojhilat (East), (10) rojava (west), and (11) Kûrdistan. I have scrutinized all parts of the relevant material containing these concepts and developed certain themes. In this regard, utilizing the MAXQDA enabled this research to assign codes effectively.

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Kevin C. Dunn, “Historical Representations,” p. 83; Ferguson, employing a discovery ontology, posits that human knowing can discover or at least approach “some order in the world that stands on its own” through interpretation. Inspired by the biblical phrase, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free,” he further suggests that “interpretation values attunement with the discovered truth for its liberating potential.” In this sense, interpretivists aim to reveal “the other side of appearances,” striving to construct a comprehensive “big picture” that seeks to fully represent the world. Moreover, this approach, as a subject-centered project, privileges individualistic or collective self-understanding while acknowledging that there is always more to the self than current self-understanding can encompass. Furthermore, “interpretation always has to balance the ability of power to distort the worldview of the powerless with the ability of the oppressed to comprehend and transcend their confinement.” More importantly, “Interpretation usually embraces an expressive view of language; while a particular language is expressive of a particular worldview, it is also capable of transcending the limits of that worldview through careful use and in the appropriate circumstances,” and “Politically, the interpretive project allows its practitioners to criticize the current situation in light of higher possibilities and to ground their recommended actions in their claims to knowledge.” Please, see Kathy E. Ferguson, “Interpretation and Genealogy in Feminism,” *Signs*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1991, pp. 326-333.

<sup>95</sup> Margrit Schreier. *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*, p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Hence, it provided to organize the relevant data with respect to the concepts, topics, and themes. Then, the interpretation has played a significant role over developing these themes since most of the data is the kind that needs to be interpreted.

## **2.7. Trustworthiness, Reliability, and Validity of the Study**

As Patton remarks, the credibility of both interpretations and findings of a research rests on its paying attention to found trustworthiness.<sup>97</sup> Morrow identifies subjectivity,<sup>98</sup> reflexivity, adequacy of data and interpretation as key topics for trustworthiness of a qualitative research.<sup>99</sup> As Kevin Dunn expresses, the world does not reveal itself to us in a clear way and objective truth is not something to be found<sup>100</sup> since people make meaning of the world through social understandings that make reality comprehensible.<sup>101</sup>

In this sense, as the epistemology of most of qualitative researches, social constructivism provides engagement of researcher for discovering meaning by accepting the existence of multiple realities<sup>102</sup> due to the fact that it is based on relativist ontology.<sup>103</sup> As the beliefs and thoughts of the researcher are accepted as integral part of the research process, reflexivity stands out.<sup>104</sup> Reflexivity is defined as the characteristics of the qualitative researcher to be aware of the political, cultural, social and economic background of him/herself as well the topic that s/he

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<sup>97</sup> Michael Quinn Patton. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, p. 939.

<sup>98</sup> Subjectivity may generally be considered as a limitation taking its roots from personal judgements and biases. However, the research paradigm of this thesis is social constructivism as it accepts the idea of contextualized multiple realities which need to be explored through interpretation. Certainly, I put aside all my thoughts and made all analyses in line with the corpus of data. However, my experience with the topic enriched the analysis of the research. It should be remarked that another researcher could provide a different perspective and interpretation with a different terminology

<sup>99</sup> Susan L. Morrow, "Quality and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 2005, p. 253.

<sup>100</sup> Kevin C. Dunn, "Historical Representations," p. 91.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>102</sup> Michael Crotty. *The Foundations of Social Research*, p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>104</sup> Hays and Singh. *Qualitative Inquiry*, p. 137.

deals with.<sup>105</sup> Due to this fact, the qualitative researcher is aware of experiences, values and biases that influence the research study.<sup>106</sup>

To determine the reliability of result, one should consider how the results of his/her content analysis are to be replicable, and “Can someone else using your coding rules and procedures end up with similar results to yours?”<sup>107</sup> Of course, this thesis is a qualitative study depending on the experience and interpretation of the researcher as explained above while mentioning the concept of self-reflexivity, there is no place for this study to be replicable.

To question how valid the content analysis is another remarkable point. Margaret G. Hermann compiles four ways to ascertain validity: “content, predictive, concurrent, and construct validity.” First, content validity is also called face validity and it “is usually established through the informed judgement of the investigator. Are the results plausible? Are they consistent with other information about the phenomenon being studied?”<sup>108</sup> In this sense, my study covers all aspects of the concept of territoriality placed in the textbooks and (as indicated in the literature review) are consistent with other serious studies. Second, predictive validity is to understand or predict future events through the used content analytic technique.<sup>109</sup> In this aspect, my study is a good piece of evidence to display the territorial roadmap of the PYD. Third, concurrent validity is the ability to use the results.<sup>110</sup> In this regard, my study certainly displays the difference spatialization strategy of the PYD from other non-state actors. Finally, construct validity “is concerned not only with validating the measure but also the theory underlying the measure.”<sup>111</sup> In this sense, all my findings are congruent with the framework I draw in the conceptual framework.

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<sup>105</sup> Michael Quinn Patton. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, p. 131.

<sup>106</sup> John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018, p. 419.

<sup>107</sup> Hermann, “Content Analysis,” p. 163.

<sup>108</sup> Hermann, “Content Analysis,” p. 164.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.8. Research Limitation

The limitation of this study is the lack of field research in the region that the PYD rules. As a matter of fact, there have been many obstacles in front of a field research. Political risks led me to avoid such a trip because the PYD is accepted as a terrorist organization by Türkiye and there's not a legal framework to enter this conflict zone. Indeed, all official accounts of the PYD either TV, radio or social media accounts are restricted in Turkey. In fact, reaching the corpus of school textbooks has been a miracle through these restrictions to overcome the limitations of the field research.

## 2.9. Conclusion

Hermann determines eight steps for research who considers utilizing content analysis: 1) Does research question provide extracting meaning? 2) What sort of materials are accessible and how available are they? 3) Is your interested research convenient for a qualitative or quantitative analysis? 4) Are materials that you consider studying representational or instrumental to understand you subject? 5) what are the research's unit of analysis, coding rules, and procedures? 6) Is the research convenient to contextualize by considering culture and history? 7) Is your analysis replicable? 8) Does the analysis catch/represent what you're interested in displaying?<sup>112</sup> Considering all these points, this chapter explicated the methodology of this thesis which is guided by qualitative research. The research question of this study fostered to define the data analysis process as QCA. In this sense, this chapter investigated the applicability of QCA through a detailed explanation of research philosophy, data collection and sampling procedures. Ten themes were introduced while addressing the data collection procedure. Additional scrutiny was provided to explain the procedures of sampling thus it was remarked that 27 textbooks were selected based on employing purposeful sampling. In this context, selected textbooks were outlined with a detailed report of contents as well as all list of all subjects in the curriculum. This chapter also discussed the trustworthiness of this study concentrating on four concepts. Finally, two major limitations were introduced and the steps to eschew these limitations were discussed.

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: TERRITORIALITY

*“A Dimple in the Tomb  
Makes that ferocious Room  
A Home”  
Emily Dickinson*

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the conceptual framework of my study. As the constructivist approach guides my study, I begin by offering an overview through the lens of constructivism regarding the concept of territoriality. Then, I respectively present the etymology and the significance of territoriality. Moreover, for the sake of my study, I point out territorial anomalies. Furthermore, based on the non-state actors' literature, I focus on the meaning of territoriality, which are respectively national identity, nationalism and homeland. Based on this category, I argue that they prevalently have the perception of “occupied territories.” Hence, the practices of resistance and liberation, and thereby governance follows the process. Finally, before writing the conclusion, I concentrate on the various discursive practices which are respectively territorialization of history through narratives, and memories, the discourse of priority in territory, mapping, poetic space, songs, and the education sphere. As I repeatedly point out below, when necessary, I should remark that like Kenwick and Lemke,<sup>113</sup> I engage in a larger category of territorial challengers (the authors call it territorial contenders) that is, the cluster of all political actors seizing the territorial control of populated areas within the boundaries of recognized states.

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<sup>113</sup> Michael R. Kenwick and Douglas Lemke, “International Influences on the Survival of Territorial Non-state Actors,” *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 53, 2023, p. 479.

### 3.2. Constructivist Approach

The answer to the curious questions of Stuart Elden constitutes the base of the conceptual framework of this thesis revolves around: “Is the standard story that it emerged with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 sufficient? What different elements made up the modern notion of territory.”<sup>114</sup> As discussed earlier in the previous chapter, the ontological position of this thesis is constructivism. To make it more explicit in terms of territoriality will shed light on the purpose of this chapter, so this chapter tries to answer this question by focusing on the constructivist approach.

In general, there're two constitutive elements of territoriality. Firstly, it connotes the physical characteristics of earth's surface. Secondly, and more importantly, implies a complex and 'bounded patterns of relationships' where life is sustained. Returning to the second category, territory implies: a) how its inhabitants perceive the land, and b) the collective consciousness ascribed to these “bounded patterns of relationships.” Grosby thinks that this consciousness is result of a historical process and can be defined as a “a product of human imagination” which acquired reality.<sup>115</sup>

There're two related fundamental points regarding territory in the existing literature on the theoretical literature on its social dynamics that Grosby remarked in the second category. One is the oft-quoted Sack's point that “the attempt to control space is a basic feature of human existence deeply embedded in social and political relations”<sup>116</sup> as he puts forth the argument of “all territorial relationships are defined

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<sup>114</sup> Stuart Elden, “How Should We Do the History of Territory?” *Territory, Politics, Governance*, Vol.1, No.1, 2013, p. 6.

<sup>115</sup> Steven Grosby, “Territoriality: The Transcendental, Primordial Feature of Modern Societies,” *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1995, p. 149.

<sup>116</sup> Robert David Sack. *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 19; adopting “the societal conception of space” (R. D. Sack. *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980, p. 168) Williams and Smith argue that there're two primary properties of that conception. The first one is the conception that people construct “between their society and its geographic place” which means that societies justify their occupancy on specific places through social procedures and organizations. The second conception of space is “the knowledge and attitude that people have regarding other peoples and places.” In other words, it is “the national construction of social space.” Please, see Colian Williams and Anthony D. Smith, “The National Construction of Social Space,” *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1983, p. 504.

within a social context”<sup>117</sup> which leads to other argument that “territory is a social construct that is fundamentally embedded in social processes.”<sup>118</sup> The significance of these two points is that “territory cannot be understood as a collection of objective attributes. Instead, territory must be seen in terms of the dynamic relationship existing between an area and the social processes and ideologies that give it meaning.”<sup>119</sup> Certainly, this approach displays that the significance of territory depends on the beliefs of human beings about it. However, as Tuomas Forsberg points out, this argument shouldn’t evoke the fact that territoriality has a potent of radical and swift change because, as Grosby argues, “a territory is a temporally deep structure,”<sup>120</sup> so social constructions are not easy to change faster than same physical parts of a territory.<sup>121</sup>

Meanwhile, although research philosophy of this study is constructivism, it doesn’t deny the realist ontology as Forsberg argues that “the view that the importance of the material world depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of that world,” doesn’t inherently reject the existence of a reality that transcends discourses.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, a strong constructive perspective on territory is trivial and misleading to some extent because understanding objects in the material world inherently involves human interpretation, and “social constructions are always constructions of something,” thus they are not completely arbitrary, and individuals

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<sup>117</sup> Robert D. Sack, “Human Territoriality: A Theory,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 73, No. 1, 1983, p. 57.

<sup>118</sup> Alexander B. Murphy, “Historical Justifications for Territorial Claims,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 80, No. 4, 1990, p. 532; Based on aphorism of “space is a social construct,” Doreen Massey also argues that space is constructed by the interaction between people and the physical social practices, Doreen Massey. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, p. 254; Similarly, David Knight has argued that “territory is not, rather it becomes, for territory itself is passive, and it is human beliefs and actions that give territory meaning.” David B. Knight, “Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 72, No. 4, 1982, p. 517.

<sup>119</sup> Murphy, “Historical Justifications,” p. 532.

<sup>120</sup> Grosby, “Territoriality,” p. 149.

<sup>121</sup> Tuomas Forsberg, “The Ground without Foundation: Territory as a Social Construct,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2003, p. 11.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.



cannot design the world by their wishes. Hence, the crux of matter is not “whether territory is socially constructed but how it is constructed.”<sup>123</sup>

According to the constructionist theory of meaning and representation, while physical things exist, they take meaning within discourse.<sup>124</sup> Nay, the material world is not inherently self-evident to those who inhabit it. Rather, societies attach meanings and values to it; in a sense construct it. This process occurs through “the construction of discourses.”<sup>125</sup> Needless to say, as Forsberg argues, “the view that the importance of the material world depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of that world,” doesn’t inherently reject the existence of a reality that transcends discourses.<sup>126</sup>

In line with the premise of Roxanne Doty, the assumption of this study is that representation stands as a significant part of world politics, thus constituting “a critical and legitimate area of inquiry.”<sup>127</sup> The objective in examining these practices isn’t to uncover obscured fundamental truths, rather to scrutinize how certain representations construct “the production of knowledge and identities.”<sup>128</sup> I discuss the role of discourse through school textbooks in constructing the territoriality. To do this, I discuss various forms of discourse such as historical myths, maps, social narratives, and political rhetoric embedded in these textbooks. In this regard, the crucial issue for this chapter is to emphasize territory as the result of discursive practices. Here discourse encompasses “the patterned, structured modes of thinking, saying, writing, and doing that have the effect of essentializing or universalizing sovereignty, sovereign territory, and their associates’ images and oppositions.”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Work of Representation,” in Stuart Hall ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London: SAGE Publications, 2003, p. 45.

<sup>125</sup> Kevin C. Dunn and Iver B. Neumann. *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016, p. 2.

<sup>126</sup> Tuomas Forsberg, “The Ground without Foundation,” p. 8.

<sup>127</sup> Roxanne Lynn Doty. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Ann Arbor Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 5.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> David Delaney. *Territory*. p. 54.

More specifically, I connote various forms of discourse such as historical myths, maps, social narratives, and political rhetoric.<sup>130</sup> As Moore underlines, these discourses are in line with the representation of the relationship that political ethnic groups develop with a territory.<sup>131</sup>

Researchers generally construct the narrative based on the territorialization policies of the states.<sup>132</sup> Accordingly, states are considered to have a decisive role in construction of the manifestations of territoriality, “particularly through spatial socialization and territorialization of meaning” through many ways such as governance, administration, politics, and education.<sup>133</sup> This construction of meaning occurs through both physical and symbolic violence penetrated control of the state, marginalization and destruction of diverse “aspect of centrifugal otherness, such as instances of ethnic solidarity or indigenous movements.”<sup>134</sup>

However, based on the argument of the “regions are socially constructed and politically contested,”<sup>135</sup> both theoretically and practically the state-centric conceptualization of territoriality is contested. Like all organizations, rebel groups are socially constructed entities aggregating a wide variety of perspectives and individual agendas. Like all nation-states, they set up governments “that mimic the forms and practices of the national governments they seek to replace.”<sup>136</sup> In this sense, Yeşiltaş and Kardaş enlist three aspects of territoriality for the non-state armed

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<sup>130</sup> Adam Moore, “Ethno-Territoriality and Ethnic Conflict.” p. 96.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> Anssi Paasi, “Boundaries as Social Processes: Territoriality in the world of flows,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1998, p. 70.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69, and A.D. Smith, ‘Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism,’ *International Affairs*, Vol. 72, 1996, pp. 445-58.

<sup>134</sup> Paasi, “Boundaries as Social Processes,” p. 69.

<sup>135</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein, “Introduction: Asian Regionalism in Comparative Perspective,” in Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi eds., *Network Power: Japan and Asia*, Ithaca N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1997, p. 7, and Ayşegül Sever. *Regionalism revisited in the post Arab Spring Middle East*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science, p. 6.

<sup>136</sup> Zachariah Mampilly, “Performing the Nation-State: Rebel Governance and Symbolic Processes,” in Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly eds., *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 82.

actors (NSAA).<sup>137</sup> Accordingly, the first principle of territoriality is “the process of construction of territorial conception”<sup>138</sup> as territorial identity of an armed group revolves around its “geographical imagination of a particular place.”<sup>139</sup> Either “ethno-nationalist or teo-political,” historical practices construct “the geopolitical imagination of a NSAA.”<sup>140</sup> Moreover the process of construction practices proceeds by the “deterritorialization of the nation-state in which a NSAA lives,” and keeps going by a reterritorialization process in which a new geopolitical narrative dominates in order to establish a new nation-state under auspices of a NSAA.<sup>141</sup>

Having started with Elden, and again to sum up with Elden, I believe that “we should ask how particular territorial settlements are produced...”<sup>142</sup> In this respect, this chapter revolves around the argument that territory “always represents a human product; it always involves an appropriation and transformation of space and nature that is inseparable from the reproduction and transformation of society in time and space.”<sup>143</sup>

### 3.3. The Etymology of Territory

Interrogating the genealogy of the term is beyond the scope of this study, however I want to present both the etymology and significance of territory. As a legal and political term, territory is a concept concerning the nexus between “sovereignty,

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<sup>137</sup> The framework, though primarily centered on non-state armed actors, remains applicable even when the term “armed” is omitted, as its core principles and content do not change.

<sup>138</sup> Murat Yeşiltaş and Tuncay Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution in the Logic of Sovereignty: The Case of PYD,” *International Politics*, Vol. 60, 2023, p. 158.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, and D. Storey. *Territories: The Claiming of Space*. London: Routledge, 2012.

<sup>140</sup> J. Agnew, “Religion and Geopolitics,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2006, p. 185, and Yeşiltaş and Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution,” p. 158.

<sup>141</sup> Yeşiltaş and Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution,” p. 158.

<sup>142</sup> Stuart Elden, “Thinking Territory Historically,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 760.

<sup>143</sup> Allan Pred, “The Social Becomes the Spatial, and the Spatial Becomes the Social: Enclosures, Social Change, and the Becoming of Places in the Swedish Province of Skåne,” in Derek Gregory and John Urry eds., *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*. Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1985, p. 337.

land, and people.”<sup>144</sup> Based on common etymology, the word territory is derived from the Latin words *territorium* (the land around a town) and *terra* (land).<sup>145</sup>

Another different definition is suggested by William Connolly:

Terra means land, earth, nourishment, sustenance; it conveys the sense of a sustaining medium, solid, fading off into indefiniteness. But the form of the word, the [Oxford English Dictionary] says, suggests that it derives from *terrere*, meaning to frighten, to terrorize. And *Territorium* is a “place from which people are warned.” Perhaps these two contending derivations continue to occupy territory today. To occupy a territory is to receive sustenance and to exercise violence. Territory is land occupied by violence.<sup>146</sup>

The latter definition certainly reflects the contentious nature of territory which is largely described as a source of conflict. According to Hensel, territorial issues, among other issues, are more prone to conflict and war, and territory is perhaps the most important single cause of war between states in the last two or three centuries. Moreover, he states that if borders do not cause wars, they at least create structure of risk and opportunities in which conflictual behavior is apparently more likely to occur. In this sense, more than half of militarized conflicts between the period of 1816 and 2001 occurred between adversaries sharing a land or river border, and 14 percent arose between adversaries connected by sea.

As advancements in communications and transportation have reduced distances between lands, these figures remained unchanged over time. All in all, throughout history, there have been numerous conflicts in which people have fought to death

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<sup>144</sup> Stuart Elden. *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, p. 26.

<sup>145</sup> David Delaney. *Territory: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 13.

<sup>146</sup> William Connolly, “Tocqueville, Territory and Violence,” in M. Shapiro and H. Alker eds., *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1996, p. 44, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 14; As the argument of William Connolly was put above, the words “terror” and “territory” have a complicated relation in terms of their etymologies. Hence the link between them is more than coincidental. Please, see Elden. *Terror and Territory*, p. xxviii; Although etymologically “terra” means “land,” “the word territory conveys the notion of an area around a place; it connotes an organization with an element of centrality, which ought to be the authority exercising sovereignty over the people occupying or using that place and the space around it.” Please, see Jean Gottman. *The Significance of Territory*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1973, p. 5.

over territories whose value is questionable.<sup>147</sup> According to Toft, that exists because territory is both tangible, measurable object and intangible and “romantic subject.”<sup>148</sup>

### 3.4. The Significance of Territoriality

Initially, it is convenient to ponder about the raw material, nay space to comprehend the significance of territory.<sup>149</sup> Penrose thinks that space has two latent powers. The first is latent material power that provides substance which is fundamental for human survival on this planet, such as the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink.<sup>150</sup> Second, it has a latent emotional power. He claims that the material aspects of space produce emotional responses by human experiences with time and process.<sup>151</sup> All these latent powers suggest that space is different from place and territory. In his words:

Both place and territory refer to space that has been defined in some way and, though a territory is also a place, not all places are territories. The creation of a territory creates a place that did not exist previously and both entities can exist at one point in time but not others (Paasi 1995: 44; Sack 1986: 16). As the process of bounding space suggests, territories are the product of human agency, and this agency is usually referred to as ‘territoriality.’<sup>152</sup>

Territory in its traditional meaning, is generally evaluated “as being the static outcome of political process,” since it is understood as an unchanging element, at utmost, it can be subject to modifications due to wars, expansions, or natural events such as earthquakes. However, the globalization discourse has challenged this static definition of territory, paving way new territorial realities.<sup>153</sup> However, new

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<sup>147</sup> Paul R. Hensel, “Geography, Contentious Issues, and World Politics,” in John A. Vasquez eds., *What Do We Know About Wars*, Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012, pp. 4-9.

<sup>148</sup> Monica Duffy Toft. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>149</sup> Jan Penrose, “Nations, States and Homelands.” *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 8, No.3, 2002, p. 278.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> David Newman, “The Resilience of Territorial Conflict in an Era of Globalization,” in Miles Kahler and Barbara F. Walter eds., *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 89.

territorial entities didn't diminish the significance of territoriality. Indeed, to segregate the concept of territoriality in historical periods such as "antiquity and modernity"<sup>154</sup> seems futile since territoriality has been a significant feature of all human societies.<sup>155</sup> For instance, territoriality was an indispensable part of ancient Israeli society,<sup>156</sup> and was evident in ancient Egypt.<sup>157</sup> As millions of people have sacrificed their lives for a country or a land which they believe to belong, Grosby argues that territoriality maintains its significance even in "secular and individualistic twentieth century."<sup>158</sup> It seems that people (man) affiliated his existence with perpetual "existence of territorial sovereignty."<sup>159</sup>

That's why territoriality does not only refer "a geometrically delineated space," rather has a "transcendental significance" which transforms its state from a space into a "meaningful structure."<sup>160</sup>

### **3.5. Territorial Anomalies and Territorialization Strategies**

The nature of people-space relationship, and its significance to both the doctrines and the practices of politics have changes through historical periods ("at least for the Western world").<sup>161</sup> In this context, as Paasi notes, literally there's an increase criticizing the theoretical assumptions that take the state and boundaries as fixed entities.<sup>162</sup> This approach is largely a poststructuralist understanding that focuses on "the constructed and contested nature of identities, knowledge and truth."<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Steven Grosby, "Territoriality." p. 152.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149.

<sup>161</sup> Gottman. *The Significance of Territory*, p. 123.

<sup>162</sup> Paasi, "Boundaries as Social Processes," p. 70.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

As Cemgil explains, the institutionalization of the contemporary geopolitical order, defined by “exclusive and bounded territoriality,” does not avoid it from practical challenges, as various “geopolitical anomalies attest.”<sup>164</sup> In this sense, as Agnew puts forth “Regions, religions, and ethnicity everywhere challenge territorial states as the loci of political identity.”<sup>165</sup> As a result, the political monopoly of the state is undermined everywhere because of new loyalties.<sup>166</sup> This fact leads a fundamental reconsideration about “The geographies of territory,” which is explained properly by Elden: “Islamism acts a challenge to the relation between state, sovereignty, and territory. Nonstate actors can control territory; many states cannot.”<sup>167</sup>

In the globalizing world, the ascendancy of neoliberal policies has also decreased the dependency of citizens to national states’ social, economic, and political support, alternatively they built loyalties on imagined communities’ identity-circumscribed allegiances like religion, race, or ethnicity or on territorially circumscribed loyalties and social and economic production networks. Thus, these alternative imagined communities based on reciprocity and allegiance inherently “operate as the functional equivalents of states” in terms of providing new forms of meaning, welfare, and employment which can be articulated as “non-state sovereignty,” and this dynamic is, for instance, evident in the practices of the guerrilla forces and non-state armed actors who define themselves as alternative imagined communities fighting against the nation-state in Somalia, Congo, Sudan and other countries.<sup>168</sup>

In fact, the imposition of the Westphalian state-system to the Middle East region has also created contested legitimacy and borders for the states:<sup>169</sup> “The tension between

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<sup>164</sup> Can Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria: Geopolitics as the Interplay of Multiple Strategies of Spatialisation,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 2019, pp. 3-6.

<sup>165</sup> John Agnew, “The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory,” *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1994, p. 74.

<sup>166</sup> Agnew, “The Territorial Trap,” p. 74.

<sup>167</sup> Elden. *Terror and Territory*, p. 34.

<sup>168</sup> Diane E. Davis, “Non-State Armed Actors, New Imagined Communities, and Shifting Patterns of Sovereignty and Insecurity in the Modern World,” *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009, p. 226.

<sup>169</sup> Certainly, like all borders, the borders of the Middle east are artificial. Please, see Pinar Bilgin, “Whose ‘Middle East?’ Geopolitical inventions and practices of security,” *International Relations*,

the Westphalian state model and the promotion of transnational identities, such as pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism in the case of Arab states, or the idea that the state was to represent world Jewry in the case of Israel, was never resolved.”<sup>170</sup> Likewise, nation-state model hasn’t been compatible with religious, tribal and ethnic identities.<sup>171</sup> In this context, the Syrian civil war has been a significant example of the emergence of new forms of governance in response to the failure of a state to rule and, ultimately, to maintain a “monopoly on the use of force.”<sup>172</sup>

To recapitulate, alternative forms of national territorial division of the world political space are not exclusive to our thinking; rather it is reproduced and practically made through concrete agents’ spatialization policies.<sup>173</sup> Primarily derived from the study of Cemgil, space-making/spatialization strategies are part of production and reproduction strategies of life. In this sense, any human praxis is also a spatialization strife. Moreover, there’re always multiple spatialization strategies in the existence of multiple reproduction strategies. This results in the rivalry of spatialization strategies.<sup>174</sup> There are so many types of territorial contenders that it is observed there are three for every state in the developing world.<sup>175</sup>

In this context, one of the salient contentions over territory occurs in post-conflict societies, as different actors and communities stimulates either to maintain or to

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Vol. 18, No.1, 2004, and Raffaella A. Del Sarto, “Contentious Borders in the Middle East and North Africa: Context and Concepts,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 4, 2017, p. 52. As a constructed region it is not possible to think the idea of the Middle East apart from ‘the power and the knowledge created and imposed by the West on the rest of the world.’ Please, see Michael Ezekiel Gasper, “Conclusion: There is a Middle East,” in Bonine, Michael E. and other eds., *Is there a Middle East: The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012, p. 240, and Sever. *Regionalism Revisited*, p. 5.

<sup>170</sup> Del Sarto, “Contentious Borders,” p. 49.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> Özlem Kayhan Pusane, “How to Profile PYD/YPG as an Actor in the Syrian Civil War: Policy Implications for the Region and Beyond,” in Özden Zeynep Oktav, Emel Parlar Dal and Ali Murat Kurşun eds., *Violent Non-state Actors and Syrian Civil War: The ISIS and YPG Cases*, Switzerland: Springer, 2018, p. 75.

<sup>173</sup> Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria,” p. 4.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7; The institutionalization possibility of each strategy depends on the configuration of power relations. He calls this relational space-construction process as ‘geopolitics.’

<sup>175</sup> D. Lemke and C. Crabtree, “Territorial Contenders in World Politics,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 1, No. 27, 2019, p. 8, and Kenwick and Lemke, “International Influences,” pp. 479-480.



contend the present orders of space in a vast spectrum spanning down “to the level of cities and neighborhoods.”<sup>176</sup> It can be observed that in many societies, certain groups don’t have strong affiliation with the national territory. It can be found that these groups have maintained certain policies to split their territory from the existing state to maintain their separate identities.<sup>177</sup> Establishment of border regimes through checkpoints, and roads is a significant method to control the movement of population and claim authority over “contested regions,”<sup>178</sup> which is closely connected with the rejection of other claims to that territory.<sup>179</sup>

Certainly, territorial contenders not only include the groups defined as such: “The search for homelands and autonomous states by groups as different as the Palestinians, the Kurds, the Sikhs, and other seems to suggest that territory is still initial to the national imaginary of diasporic population and stateless peoples of many sorts,”<sup>180</sup> but also do include the alternative popular and social movements that has given strength since late seventies “reflecting the profound changes brought about by neoliberalism in the daily life of the popular sectors,”<sup>181</sup> which are “the landless and rubber toppers in Brazil, indigenous Ecuadorians, neo-Zapatistas, water warriors and coca farmers in Bolivia, and unemployed in Argentina.”<sup>182</sup> Pursuing territorialization policies is a common factor for these movements, “that is, they have roots in spaces that have been recuperated or otherwise secured through long (open or underground) struggles.”<sup>183</sup> In other words, territorial rootedness is one of the significant feature of these movements: “landless movements in Brazil, which

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<sup>176</sup> Adam Moore, “Ethno-Territoriality and Ethnic Conflict,” p. 95.

<sup>177</sup> David B. Knight, “Identity and Territory,” p. 523.

<sup>178</sup> Adam Moore, “Ethno-Territoriality and Ethnic Conflict,” p. 98.

<sup>179</sup> Oren Yiftachel, “Territory as the Kernel of the Nation,” p. 227.

<sup>180</sup> Please, see Arjun Appadurai, “Sovereignty without Territoriality: Notes for a Postnational Geography,” in Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrance Zúñiga eds., *The Anthropology of Space and Place*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p. 342.

<sup>181</sup> Raúl Zibechi. *Territories in Resistance: A Cartography of Latin American Social Movements* (Ramor Ryan Trans.) Oakland, Edinburgh, Baltimore: AK Press, 2012, p. 14.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

created an infinity of small, self-managed islands, by the Ecuadorian Indian, who expanded their communities to rebuild their ancestors ‘ethnic territories,’ and by the indigenous of Chiapas, who populated the Lacandon jungle.”<sup>184</sup>

The alternative territorialization policy of TGiE (Tibet Government in Exile) is also remarkable because it extends beyond simply exerting “diffused power over deterritorialized transnational networks.”<sup>185</sup> TGiE’s approach to constructing territory and power involves creating various agricultural settlements across India “is somewhere between state-space and diaspora-space.”<sup>186</sup> Although these settlements are established on leased land that remains under Indian jurisdiction, TGiE maintains autonomy over its internal affairs within each settlement, demonstrating what Fiona McConnell describes as “partial de facto sovereignty.”<sup>187</sup>

Finally, although the ISIS shares the same conception of territoriality with other political Islamic organizations, it has a distinct tactics and strategies of territory.<sup>188</sup> As an “imagined community,” resting on the conceptualization of Islamic ummah depicts that the ISIS has transited from the nation-state imagination of a religious though that “runs counter to the nationalist movements from the colonial and postcolonial periods.”<sup>189</sup>

To sum up through quoting from McConell, territorial “anomalous entities” include “dependencies, micro-states, internationalized and leased territories, stateless nations

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15; These new actors focused on long-term projects, particularly “to produce and reproduce life.” Territory is a space for collectively building a new social organization, where new identities emerge, and people claim their space ‘both materially and symbolically.’ In his words: “This new world exists; it is no longer merely a project or program but rather a series of multiple realities, nascent and fragile.” These movements tend to thrive territorial roots as they consider space to develop non-capitalist forms of social relationships. Please. see Zibechi. Territories in Resistance, pp. 15-31

<sup>185</sup> McConnell, “The Fallacy and the Promise of the Territorial Trap,” p. 765.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> Jabareen, “The Emerging Islamic State,” p. 52.

<sup>189</sup> Yosef Jabareen, “The Emerging Islamic State: Terror, Territoriality, and the Agenda of Social Transformation,” *Geoforum* 58, 2015, p. 53; The specific terminology regarding the conceptualization of ummah subsequently required the deterritorializing national borders or colonial geopolitical heritage.

and de facto states.”<sup>190</sup> Actually, alternative forms of territorialization have always existed. Attempts at escaping the state-based territoriality continues “for instance, the evolution of bordering regimes, modalities of sovereignty under so-called Westphalian or post-Westphalian formations; or putative processes of deterritorialization.”<sup>191</sup> Such territorialized powers confirm the assertion of Agnew that “political authority is not restricted to states and... such authority is thereby not necessarily exclusively territorial.”<sup>192</sup>

### **3.6. Meaning**

Diverse nature of non-state actor makes it difficult to unify them under a single category to display the “meaning” of territoriality for them. Consequently, I endeavored to incorporate a wide array of non-state actors in my categorization, centering on the topic under investigation, the PYD while exploring the meaning of territoriality for them, which are respectively the terms of national identity, nationalism, and homeland.

#### **3.6.1. The Link between Territory and National Identity**

The role of territory as a source of identity remains significant in modern world. People identify themselves with the places they live in. As a result, territory becomes a significant factor in creating and regenerating the collective identities. Various factors such as ethnic density, group territoriality, proximity to neighboring states etc. determine the group spatiality which is a key factor in identity construction.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> F. McConnell, “The Fallacy and the Promise of the Territorial Trap: Sovereign Articulations of Geopolitical Anomalies,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 2010, p. 763, and Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Federalism in Syria,” p. 3.

<sup>191</sup> N., Brenner and S. Elden, “Henri Lefebvre on State, Space, Territory,” *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 2009, p. 355, and Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Federalism in Syria,” p. 3.

<sup>192</sup> J. Agnew, “Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 95, No. 2, 2005, p. 441 in McConnell, “The Fallacy and the Promise of the Territorial Trap,” p. 765.

<sup>193</sup> Oren Yiftachel. *Ethnocracy*, p. 44.

Territory is not just a simple spatial locus where people interact; rather it refers the collective participation of individual members “in the image of territory component of which are bounded customs, traditions, laws, historical knowledge and often even the language.”<sup>194</sup> In this sense, the concept of “group territorial identity” has been used to include all varieties of identities: ethnic, national, tribal, and regional, and thereby (possibly) separation and foundation of a new state.<sup>195</sup>

In this regard, Paasi thinks that “territorially based national identity” mainly refers two things. First, the identification and identity of the population with a specific territory and its both symbolic and material elements, and also secondly, with a series of “images,” and narratives of that territory.<sup>196</sup> As he argues, it’s crucial to evaluate how territoriality receive meanings to better understand the involvement of territorial elements in the construction of national identity,<sup>197</sup> and, as a social function, the historical heritage of institutions reflects itself in the daily routines. In this respect, “the institutionalization of territories as homes or sources of identification of us consists of the emergence of territorial boundaries, symbols and institutions that together make the territory exist in different institutional practices and forms of social consciousness.”<sup>198</sup>

In modern form of territoriality, as can be seen, identity is defined territorially. As Penrose argues, here, material elements of the territory “including the symbolic significance of controlling it” has main influence information and preservation of

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<sup>194</sup> Steven Grosby, “Territoriality,” pp. 147-148.

<sup>195</sup> David B. Knight, “People Together, Yet Apart: Rethinking Territory, Sovereignty, and Identities,” in George J. Demko and William B. Wood eds., *Geopolitical Perspectives on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Colorado: Westview University Press, 1999, p. 221; Although the concept encompasses a variety of identities, the most divisive one is the politico-territorial identity which expresses the will of self-determination. Please, see Knight, “People Together, Yet Apart,” p. 221.

<sup>196</sup> Paasi, “Territorial Identities,” p. 4; The cultural claims are based on the idea of a group of people binding together. The nationality definition of Hartshorne expresses this well: “A feeling on the part of the people in any area of more than provincial size that they belong together. Nationality, then, is a feeling of loyalty to a particular country, both land and people.” Nationalism and its complementary part irredentism, and other religious and ethnic characteristics are included in this definition. Please, see “A Survey of the Boundary Problems of Europe,” quoted in Andrew F. Burghardt, “The Bases of Territorial Claims.” p. 233.

<sup>197</sup> Paasi, “Territorial Identities,” p. 9.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

territory,<sup>199</sup> and this fact is explored below while explaining the governance practices of non-state actors.

### 3.6.2. The Link between Territoriality and Nationalism

Historically there have been two conceptualizations of territoriality, both of which are relevant to nationalist thought. The first view considers behaviors of human being determined by its physical environment; thus, humans are accepted to have inherent territorial emotions to get and defend space.<sup>200</sup> Establishing the territorial boundaries of a group, through defining a homeland, provides the initial step for collective action.<sup>201</sup> Accordingly, territory is a means to provide internal security against external threats.<sup>202</sup>

Historical-ethnie interpretation of Anthony Smith exemplify nationalism through the concept of the ethnie that has strong attachment to collective past in the sense of common origins, shared narratives, and specific territories.<sup>203</sup> According to this interpretation, from eighteenth century and onwards, the paradigm of “return to the nature,” the idea of a national homeland and the notion of a nation owns a distinctive and peculiar land, has been a fundamental aspect of national ideologies.<sup>204</sup> As such, pre-modern territoriality forms connection between territory and identity, and as identity is defined culturally, the significance of territory lays in the emotional

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<sup>199</sup> Penrose, “Nations, States and Homelands,” p. 284.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>201</sup> H. E. Goemans, “Bounded Communities,” p. 29.

<sup>202</sup> David Delaney. *Territory: A Short Introduction*. pp. 22-23.

<sup>203</sup> Oren Yiftachel, “Territory as the Kernel of the Nation: Space, Time and Nationalism in Israel/Palestine,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 7, No.2, 2002, p. 218; The “nation” may be viewed as the form of molding and interpreting social space. Nationalism represents the form of politicizing space by viewing it in a distinctive and historic made. Please, see Williams and Smith, “The National Construction of Social Space,” p. 504.

<sup>204</sup> Anthony D. Smith. *Chosen Peoples*. p. 131; “As a material object, national territory performs a twofold role in nationalism it serves both as the material base for the projection of the nation and as evidence for its existence.” Please, see Richard A. Koenigsberg. *The Psychoanalysis of Racism, Revolution, and Nationalism*. New York: Library of Social Sciences, 1977, p. 9, and Bukh. *These Islands are Ours*, p. 9.

attachment of people to the land which has main influence in formation and preservation of territory.<sup>205</sup>

In the same manner, Paasi defines the nationalism a strategic and specific form of territoriality, and hence ‘of competition for control over land and socio-political consciousness (“a territorial form of ideology”).<sup>206</sup> While national identity refers the ideas connecting the notion of territory with language, culture, history, and memory, nationalism legitimates the national identity by considering a social group inhabiting a territory based on a real or imaginary past.<sup>207</sup> Indeed, nationalism may appear in many conditions as a “form of disintegrative power which aims to emancipate and separate components of territorial entities from the larger territory of existing state.”<sup>208</sup>

In this regard, creation of boundaries has certain implications for emotional potential of space through creation of territories,<sup>209</sup> as it specifies a homeland’s territory based on topographical features such as mountains, seas, and rivers.<sup>210</sup> According to Jan Penrose, these implications have relevance to nationalism in several aspects. First, the legitimacy of territories is drawn through the invocation of nature. Second, permanent settlements of a territory create a deep connection between people and this territory. As even the ruins of people become a part of the soil, the sense of caring for land means ‘caring for their ancestors, themselves and future generations.’<sup>211</sup> Basic feelings of belonging such as to be “at home,” or “at peace”

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<sup>205</sup> Penrose, “Nations, States and Homelands,” p. 284.

<sup>206</sup> Anssi Paasi, “Territorial Identities as Social Constructs,” *International Social Science Review*, Vol. 1, 2000, p. 4; Nationalism is a form of “constructing and interpreting social space” as it is constant striving for control of the land. The acquisition of the land provides the nationalists to reify their ‘utopia’ as a practical reality. The land provides the construction of “sovereignty, fraternity, identity and regeneration.” Please, see Williams and Smith, “The National Construction of Social Space,” pp. 502-510

<sup>207</sup> Paasi, “Territorial Identities,” p. 4.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> Penrose, “Nations, States and Homelands,” p. 280.

<sup>210</sup> H. E. Goemans, “Bounded Communities,” p. 36.

<sup>211</sup> Penrose, “Nations, States and Homelands,” p. 281.

bestow people to have direct attachment to specific places. Fourth, the tendency of people to strengthen their relationship with specific places “through history, memory and myth.”<sup>212</sup>

To provide an example, as a constructed nationalism, Palestinian nationalism constituted as a “construction of British colonialism,” its ideology and strategy emerged by its encounter with the state of Israel and the Zionist movement, and by its relationship with neighboring Arab states. As other constructed nationalism cases, the Palestinian national movement consecrated territorial boundaries -which were drawn by the British mandate spanning from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea- and granted them the historical homeland status.<sup>213</sup>

Another example can be found in the shifting territorial perception (“from a pan-Islamic to a national-Palestinian movement”) of Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement ) which can be found in one of its articles of the charter: “Neither a single Arab country nor All Arab countries, neither any king or president nor all the kings and presidents be they Palestinians or Arab.”<sup>214</sup> It seems that there’s no way/option for the relinquishment of the territories.<sup>215</sup>

### **3.6.3. The Link between Territoriality and Homeland**

Authenticity is an integral part of national identity,<sup>216</sup> and “Authentication of a national culture” is dependent on two processes: Creation of continuity with ethno-historical heritage and construction of feeling of naturalness. While seemingly separate, two processes strengthen each other: “Whereas references to significant features of natural environment serve to buttress a cultural community’s continuity

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<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>213</sup> Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela. *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000, p. 13.

<sup>214</sup> Article II of Charter of the PLO, quoted in Mishal and Sela. *The Palestinian Hamas*, p. 44.

<sup>215</sup> Mishal and Sela. *The Palestinian Hamas*, p. 44.

<sup>216</sup> Eric Kaufmann and Oliver Zimmer, “In Search of the Authentic Nation: Landscape and National Identity in Canada and Switzerland,” *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1998, p. 485.

claims, the historicists' curiosity for the collective past inevitably directs attention to significant features of homelands."<sup>217</sup> In the same vein, as Grosby arises, people appeal to concepts of home, homeland, and fatherland, rather than preferring usage of the territory since it "is not simply an area within which certain physical actions are performed, rather it refers to a structural, symbolic condition which has significance for those who act within it and towards it."<sup>218</sup>

"Sacred" or "holy" spaces are particular forms of territorial attachment. This attachment to territory is much more than the establishment of political homelands. This religious significance attributed simultaneously to the people and the land renders it the most intangible of all characteristics.<sup>219</sup> Sacred territory, historical and inalienable homeland, is indispensable part of the nation.<sup>220</sup> In this sense, the idea of antecedent historical formation is a way of saying that because "our ancestors" lived there, we own that land and its heritage.<sup>221</sup> As it has been apparent in almost all parts of the world, there is a substantial size of evidence indicating popular beliefs in the reverence of specific places and landscapes.<sup>222</sup> For instance, a secure "homeland" has precisely been cornerstone of the struggle of the ISIS.<sup>223</sup> Two beliefs has led it to trace a more territorialized approach: Firstly, "the arrival of the far-enemy within the heart of Muslim civilization," and secondly, the fragile states in Iraq and Syria provided to reinvigorate a "sacred state."<sup>224</sup> In this context, its transnational, and

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> Steven Grosby, "Territoriality," p. 150; In this sense, following approach complements the idea of Grosby: "The people occupying a piece of land constantly strived to establish a system of relations with that area that would make it a homeland providing protection and the means of survival." Please, see Gottman. *The Significance of Territory*, p. 123.

<sup>219</sup> David Newman, "The Resilience of Territorial Conflict," p. 97.

<sup>220</sup> Anthony D. Smith, "The Sacred Dimension of Nationalism," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 29, No.3, 2000, p. 806.

<sup>221</sup> H. E. Goemans, "Bounded Communities: Territoriality, Territorial Attachment, and Conflict," in Miles Kahler and Barbara F. Walter eds., *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 42.

<sup>222</sup> Anthony D. Smith. *Chosen Peoples*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 134.

<sup>223</sup> Tim Jacoby, "The Islamic "State": Sovereignty, Territoriality and Governance," *International Politics*, Vol. 60, 2023, p. 181

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*



multi-ethnic homeland vision has been rooted in “a sustained claim to the *Jazirah* territory between the Euphrates and the Tigris.”<sup>225</sup>

On the other hand, in many ethnic contentions within existing states, there’s a discordance of emotional attachments to homeland and to countries of residence.<sup>226</sup> Specifically, in cases of irredentist movements, the perception of homeland may stretch across the territories of more than one state. As “homeland” territory lies at the root of people’s ethnic and national identities, primordial attachment to territory remains the main reason for many contemporary ethnoterritorial conflicts, even though they live in globalized world.<sup>227</sup> Analyzing territory in relation with settlement patterns and homelands reveal that how ethnic groups legitimize their arguments and mobilize their population.<sup>228</sup> In this regard, the crucial thing to understand the motivation behind ethnic groups is conceptualization of territory as homeland.<sup>229</sup> Hence, homeland control provide a group to speak its language, to express its culture, and to practice its faith.<sup>230</sup> Moreover, homeland governance is vital as it determines the allocation of economic and political resources as well as regulation of which languages are spoken and “which may be worshipped.”<sup>231</sup> For instance, The LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), to a great extent, mimicked the traditional nation-state. In this sense, its incorporation of the term “Eelam” imagined Tamil homeland which displays its attachment to a particular territory in Sri Lanka.<sup>232</sup>

In fact, as Smith remarks, attributing distinctive qualities to “our” homeland and considering it with respect as the cradle “our” nation is a secular practice of

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>226</sup> Miles Kahler, “Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization,” in Miles Kahler and Barbara F. Walter eds., *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 7.

<sup>227</sup> David Newman, “The Resilience of Territorial Conflict,” p. 96.

<sup>228</sup> Monica Duffy Toft. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence*, p. 10.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>232</sup> Zachariah Cheria Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011, p. 215.

maintaining pre-modern forms of sanctifying historical places and ancestral lands,<sup>233</sup> and as the prevalence of secularization increases, much more sanctity is attributed to ancestral homelands. According to Smith, this is partly consequence of displacement of emotions. As the focal point of reverence shifted from the deity and church to the locus of “the shrine and worshippers;” all individuals have equal stance by virtue of their ancestral attachment to that territory.<sup>234</sup>

To sum up, the most powerful historical claim is based on seeing a territory as a homeland. In this sense, the concept of “homeland” encompasses both priority and duration and signifies the land as “indispensable part of the nation’s self-identity,”<sup>235</sup> and as a result homeland is “the ultimate symbol of group identity and national identification.”<sup>236</sup> This argument is exemplified properly in the following paragraph:

‘homeland’ becomes also a project of self-renewal, achieved by externalizing the struggle for collective identity in acts of environmental manipulation and by attaining mastery over a recalcitrant nature. And so, the historic territory is transformed by new cities, by a network of roads and railways, by dams and power stations, by making deserts bloom and tundra yield their riches, by multiplying factories and plants, by linking every corner to the political center through a chain of communication media and every citizen through a uniform code of law and educational system. It becomes a truly ‘national’ territory.<sup>237</sup>

### **3.7. Non-State Actors in World Politics: Perception, Resistance, Liberation, and Governance**

There are mainly three crucial practices of non-state actors which are pursuing territorial strategies. These are respectively the perception of occupied territories, resistance and liberation, and governance. I think that considering how these actors contemplate and interpret the perception of occupied territories leads the stage of resistance and liberation. In this context, analyzing both resistance and liberation

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<sup>233</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “The Sacred Dimension of Nationalism,” pp. 806-807.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 807.

<sup>235</sup> Andrew F. Burghardt, “The Bases of Territorial Claims,” p. 232.

<sup>236</sup> Williams and Smith, “The National Construction of Social Space,” p. 510.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.

practices of them highlights their policies regarding the relevant authorities. Finally, examining their governance practices, which is the result of the practices of both resistance and liberation, reveals how they establish and manage control territories and population.

### 3.7.1. Occupied Territories

Constructivist literature explains that territorial disputes are reflection of the national consciousness in which “our territory” is seen as complementary part of “the personal and group identities.”<sup>238</sup> As Poulantzas remarks, “The modern nation-state...involves the eradication of the traditions, histories, and memories of dominated nations involved in its process,”<sup>239</sup> so although the following argument is explained for the nation-state however it is also valid for non-state actors: “The disputed territory is rightfully “ours,” the argument goes: it was illegally taken away from “us” and “we” have the right to reclaim it,”<sup>240</sup> so although territory usually refers a state in terms of a bounded space controlled by a group of people; the term is sometimes used to portray an entity without a state. In this sense, Palestine and West Sahara are described as the “occupied territories.”<sup>241</sup>

Indeed, the “lose” is one of three key territorial formations for the Islamic non-state actors.<sup>242</sup> Accordingly, grievances are buttressed by historical makers: “our umma has been tasting this humiliation and contempt for over eighty years...after eighty years...the sword falls down on America.”<sup>243</sup> In this sense, the Treaty of Sevres, and

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<sup>238</sup> David Newman, " Real Spaces, Symbolic Spaces: Interrelated Notions of Territory in the Arab Israeli Conflict," in Paul F. Diehl ed., *A Road Map to War: Territorial Dimensions of International Conflict*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press 1999, 13, and Alexander Bukh. *These Islands are Ours: The Social Construction of Territorial Disputes in Northeast Asia*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p. 8

<sup>239</sup> Nicos Poulantzas *State, Power, Socialism* (Patrick Camiller Trans.) London: New Left Books, 1980, p. 113, and Ted Swedenburg. *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, p. 8.

<sup>240</sup> Murphy, “Historical Justifications,” p. 532.

<sup>241</sup> Elden. *Terror and Territory*, p. 25.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44; The other two are: The caliphate, and the network.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Sykes-Picot agreement are referred as the initiatory covenants corrupting the caliphate system having repercussions today. Even further back, fifteenth century loss of Andalusia is remarked.<sup>244</sup>

In fact, the attempt to define the homeland areas now settled and annexed by others is to portray historic territory/homeland in the largest units through reminding golden imperial age.<sup>245</sup> In this sense, ‘Sykes-Picot’ is a symbol what is affiliated with the all wrong in the Middle East<sup>246</sup> although agreement itself was not largely related to the current political leaders of the region so the collapse of the agreement has become an obsession for many in the region.<sup>247</sup>

Although territorialization policy of the ISIS can be defined in terms of localization and internalization as typical “separatist NSAA agenda,” the establishment of the Caliphate by the ISIS conveyed a message of anti-colonialism, affirming “the organization’s ancient sovereign connection to the people of its territorial heartland.” In this regard, from the beginning and onwards, the ISIS pursued a clear territorial claim, ideologically nurtured from the anti-colonial territorialization rhetoric of Osama bin Laden and Ayman adh-Dhawahiri. In this sense, the choice of Raqqa as headquarters had a symbolic association with the fact that Caliph Harun ar-Rashid had his administration there in 796. This sovereignty claim is based on refuting the Sykes-Picot geopolitical order and reclaiming “lands unlawfully expropriated from Muslims by Crusader and colonial powers.”<sup>248</sup>

### **3.7.2. Resistance, Liberation and Self Determination**

As Holsti pointed out, most of the wars in the third world revolve around the “continuing process of state-formation and consolidation.”<sup>249</sup> In this sense, it can be

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<sup>244</sup> Elden. *Terror and Territory*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>245</sup> Williams and Smith, “The National Construction of Social Space,” p. 510.

<sup>246</sup> Ariel I. Ahram, “Territory, Sovereignty, and New Statehood in the Middle East and North Africa,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 71, No. 2, 2017, p. 345.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

<sup>248</sup> Tim Jacoby, “The Islamic “State”: Sovereignty, Territoriality and Governance,” *International Politics*, Vol. 60, 2023, pp. 178-182.

<sup>249</sup> Kalevi J. Holsti. *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order: 1648-1989*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 324.

stated that “No matter how clearly borders are drawn on official maps, how many customs officials are appointed, or how many watchtowers are built” as “people will ignore borders whenever it suits them.”<sup>250</sup> In this regard, again as Holsti explains, national liberation wars, secession attempts occur in that context.<sup>251</sup>

The imposition of nation-state model upon disparate ethnic communities resulted in ethnonationalist subgroups’ counterclaims against the states. In this sense, “ethnicity” has become an instrument affecting “the livelihood of citizens in most postcolonial societies,” and ethnonationalism is not just a reaction to the state; rather it’s the ideal of the communities “to achieve their regional and local socio-political formations.”<sup>252</sup> I should remark that, although the more salient types of insurgent organizations are ethnic and nationalist, other subordinate groups can speak openly in the condition that they create “a separate social space where neither control, surveillance nor repression by the dominant forces can reach,”<sup>253</sup> and these territorial claims can drop in the following categories: historical, cultural, economic, ideological, territorial integrity, elitist, and effective control.<sup>254</sup>

Referring the historical conditions, Dudoet asserts that Resistance and Liberation Movements emerge as a political response to a set of historical conditions such as colonialism and its repercussions or recent political circumstances such as the legalization of inequality.<sup>255</sup> More recently, the motto of the ISIS is a clear sign of this belief: “We are not the sons of the Sykes-Picot.”<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Michiel Baud and Williem van Schendel, “Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands,” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 211.

<sup>251</sup> Holsti. *Peace and War*, p. 324.

<sup>252</sup> Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>253</sup> Zibechi. *Territories in Resistance*, p. 67.

<sup>254</sup> Andrew F. Burghardt, “The Bases of Territorial Claims,” p. 228; it should be noted that as the term “non-state” disregards the aims of some movements to establish separate states, instead, Dudoet prefers to use the term of “resistance/liberation movements” based on their primary objectives. Please, see Veronique Dudoet. *From War to Politics: Resistance/Liberation Movements in Transition. Bergh of Report 17*, 2009, p. 5

<sup>255</sup> Dudoet. *From War to Politics*, p. 18.

<sup>256</sup> Cole Bunzel, “From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State,” *Brooking Analysis Paper*, 2015, p. 18.

Largely based on contributions of Mohammed-Ali Adraoui, continuing with the discussion on Islamist movements, the notions of borders and sovereignty have a central place in Islamist non-state actors so that it proposes and “seeks to reunite all fellow believers across existing external geographical divisions such that the only remaining boundary would be that between Muslims and non-Muslims.” That’s a desire to re-establish Islam as a political power to suppress all internal splits that “divided the global Muslim community as a result of the ‘artificial’ constructs of nations, tribes and states,” as “Islamist forces are mainly connected by a common legacy rather than a common trajectory,” so artificial borders are seen as the fall of Islam, (both as a nation and civilization) which leads these movement to articulate:

We want, thereafter, Islam’s flag to wave again at full mast blowing in the wind, in all lands that were fortunate once to welcome Islam ... And thus Andalusia, Sicily, the Balkans, the Italian coasts as well as the Mediterranean isles are all Mediterranean Muslim colonies, and they return to Islam’s cradle.<sup>257</sup>

In this sense, the political sovereignty project of the Muslim Brotherhood is as follows: “Egypt, Syria, the Hijaz, Yemen, Tripolitania, Tunisia, Algeria, Marrakech, and any land where a Muslim dwells ..., all of these form part of our homeland, that we shall endeavor to liberate ...”<sup>258</sup>

In fact, early Islamists thought that imperialists deliberately divided the historical boundaries of the Islamic world and dominated the territories within these boundaries to achieve colonial oppression and supremacy. Against this, a counter-imperialist project, can be termed as “religious nationalism” in the forms of “resistance and conquest” to unite all worldwide Muslim was developed. The jihadist movements such as al-Qaeda and ISIS have positioned themselves to overthrow these “un-Islamic” regimes through resistance and insurrection. The most striking illustration of the territorial conception of the ISIS to destroy the Sykes-Picot borders (perceived as “colonial” and “anti-Islamic”) separating Iraq and Syria. The general vision of the

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<sup>257</sup> Mohammed-Ali Adraoui, “Borders and Sovereignty in Islamist and Jihadist Thought: Past and Present,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 4, 2017, pp. 918-924.

<sup>258</sup> Hassan al-Banna. *Majmu'at rasa'il al-imam al-shahid Hassan al-Banna* [Anthology of the Epistles of the Martyr Imam Hassan al-Banna] (Mohamed-Ali Adraoui Trans.) Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-Islamiyya, 1984, p. 79, quoted in Adraoui, “Borders and Sovereignty,” p. 924.

ISIS regarding the borders is to obliterate them “to exert domination and sovereignty all over the world.”<sup>259</sup>

The Islamic State has made its intent clear that it wants to liberate Palestine, even Arabia, and in fact the entire Muslim world from the tyrants. It has made its intention clear of a Global caliphate while the rest of the groups have not ... The aim of the Islamic State is to bulldoze all the Sykes–Picot borders which divide the Muslim world, to remove the puppet-rulers and to establish a Global caliphate.<sup>260</sup>

In this framework, the organizations such as Al-Qaeda and other no longer follows modern name of geographical places. The territories of the Islamic countries have been denominated in terms of Middle Ages usage: “Khorasan and bilad al-Cham respectively instead of Iran and Afghanistan, and Syria and Lebanon.”<sup>261</sup> Moreover, whereas the aspiration of the al-Qaeda was to construct a “Global Muslim state” over territories of Islamic states, the ISIS expanded this vision, as a revenge of the past countries’ loss of independence, by establishing the rule of “global caliphate” in the whole world regions.<sup>262</sup>

The same approach regarding resistance and liberation can be seen in Latin American movements. For instance, one of the basic goal of Landless Rural Workers’ Movement is the “understanding of the history and meaning of the struggle for land and agrarian reform that led to the creation of the settlement.”<sup>263</sup> Whether these movements define themselves in these terms or not, they are autonomous territories since they have formed new resistance spaces-Aymara headquarters, ethnic territories, Caracoles.<sup>264</sup> They create these new spaces through a struggle

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<sup>259</sup> Adraoui, “Borders and Sovereignty,” pp. 924-933.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 933.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 932; In one video, bin Laden talked in front of a world map: “The wounds of the Muslim are deep everywhere. But today our wounds are deeper because the crusaders and the Jews have joined together to invade the heart of dar al-Islam: our most sacred places in Saudi Arabi, Mecca, and Medina, including the prophet’s Mosque, and the al-Aqsa Mosque.” Please, see Elden. *Terror and Territory*, p. 40.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> Zibechi. *Territories in Resistance*, p. 123.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

process in which they're subjects: They create, organize, and control.<sup>265</sup> In this context, the same notion of resistance and fighting against injustice has led to concentrated on terminating the presence of foreign and Israeli powers in Lebanon,<sup>266</sup> and the same socio-political identity can be observed within Hamas whose self-standing policy is embedded in the comprehensive framework on Muqawama.<sup>267</sup>

A significant concept related to the issue of liberation is the idea of self-determination which naturally leads to define the territory concerned, more openly its size.<sup>268</sup> “We often find that some homogenous population, while considering itself a national unit, may be too small to form a convenient area of government, while as soon as you enlarge the area, it ceases to be homogenous.”<sup>269</sup> When the principle of self-determination clashes with the principle of sovereignty, or territorial integrity, “it has been legitimized and used to justify political agendas through modern political history,” and it has been a fact that self-determination or identity contended territorial conflicts have been the most protracted, and common forms of armed conflict and political turmoil in contemporary era.<sup>270</sup>

In this context, the Landless movement in Brazil focused on “cultural energy” and proceeded with collective memories that constituted ethnic identities, simplifying the processes of mobilization, organization, establishment of their genuine political projects,<sup>271</sup> since they view it as “an important political activity for the

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<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>266</sup> Benedetta Berti, “Rebel Politics and the State: Between Conflict and Post-conflict, Resistance and Co-existence,” *Civil Wars*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2016, p. 123.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>268</sup> Andrew F. Burghardt, “The Bases of Territorial Claims.” p. 234.

<sup>269</sup> Gilbert Murray, “Self-Determination of Nationalities,” *Journal Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1922, p. 9, and Andrew F. Burghardt, “The Bases of Territorial Claims.” p. 234.

<sup>270</sup> Roger Suso. Territorial Autonomy and Self-Determination Conflicts: Opportunity and Willingness Cases from Bolivia, Niger, and Thailand, *ICIP Working Papers*, 2010, p. 9.

<sup>271</sup> Zibechi. Territories in Resistance, p. 22.



transformation of society.”<sup>272</sup> For Hamas, the right of Muslims to establish a state in Palestinian territories leave no floor for either a political settlement or dialogue with Israel. Thus, the jihad against Israel represents true meaning of Palestinian aspirations and needs. Quotations from the leaflets of Hamas epitomizes this approach: “Let any had been cut off that signs (away) a grain of sand in Palestine in favor of the enemies of God...who have seized...the blessed land.”<sup>273</sup>

Abundant conflictual claims on territory show that it is not granted as given. Therefore, contemporary tensions among states, races, or classes have been based on “the right to rule certain territories.”<sup>274</sup> In this sense, as an example, as Kardaş and Yeşiltaş claim, the resistance of Kobane helped Kurds to construct “agency.”<sup>275</sup>

Entirely derived from Kardaş and Yeşiltaş, the ISIS threat became a “constitutive other” for Kurds following the Kobane resistance, and this “constitutive other” helped to manifest a geopolitical imagination a “secular post-nation-state discourse.” Moreover, reinvigoration collective memory as Halabja in 1988, Kobane became a symbol for the reconstruction of identity and nationhood. Furthermore, it helped Kurdish actors to construct geopolitical discourse through invoking Kurdistan’s territorial limits. As a result, the ISIS based geopolitical codes naturally constructed a geopolitical imagination by creating an “us-and-them” difference and a societal dimension that’s emotional connection to Kobane. To sum up, “ideological reference to Kurdish national values, as well as to strategic concerns about the defense of Kobane, become important in the formation of new Kurdish geopolitical imagination,” consequently the Kobane resistance helped to reinvigorate Kurdistan as Kurdish homeland.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> *Ibid*, p. 23.

<sup>273</sup> Leaflet 2, March 1988, quoted in Mishal and Sela. *The Palestinian Hamas*, p. 51.

<sup>274</sup> Andrew F. Burghardt, “The Bases of Territorial Claims,” p. 226.

<sup>275</sup> Tuncay Kardaş and Murat Yeşiltaş, “Global Politics of Image and the Making of a Legitimate Non-state Armed Actor: Syrian Kurds and ‘The Secular West’ in Kobane,” in Murat Yeşiltaş and Tuncay Kardaş eds., *Non-State Armed Actors in the Middle East: Geopolitics, Ideology, and Strategy*, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 100.

<sup>276</sup> Kardaş and Yeşiltaş, “Global Politics,” pp. 101-103.

### 3.7.3. From Sovereignty to Governance

As a form of power, territory is closely connected to the concept of sovereignty.<sup>277</sup> Sovereignty means having absolute power over a territorial space away from interference by outside parties, actors.<sup>278</sup> The modern state system is contemporary form of politico-territorial order, origins of which dates to late-medieval Europe.<sup>279</sup>

The rise of semi-autonomous historical states is associated with that order. That order grew as rulers consolidated their power over diverse territories. Arrangements regarding its organizing principles developed alongside its growth. One of the most significant principles was the belief that ultimate authority over economic, social, and political affairs should be under the charge of the historical components that make up the system. This belief/idea is generally referred as sovereignty.<sup>280</sup> This process continued until the early twentieth century. The idea of the earth's surface could be divided into discrete territorial units for governance spread away Europe.<sup>281</sup>

Territorial control is significant for both ethnic groups and states as both actors think that their survival is dependent on this control.<sup>282</sup> More importantly, collective identities have a powerful tendency to figure out their national histories in endeavor to support independent statehood,<sup>283</sup> as “living historically...implies the creation of nations and, conversely, the elaboration of the construct, ‘nation,’ is necessarily historical.”<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Stephen D. Krasner. *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999, and David Delaney. *Territory*. p. 36.

<sup>278</sup> David Delaney. *Territory*, p. 36.

<sup>279</sup> Alexander B. Murphy, “The Sovereign State System as Political-Territorial Ideal,” p. 12.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>282</sup> Monica Duffy Toft. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence*, p. 20.

<sup>283</sup> Jonathin Boyarin, “Space, Time, and the Politics of Memory,” in Jonathin Boyarin ed., *Remapping Memory: The Politics of TimeSpace*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p.15.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

As mentioned above, according to Robert Sack, human territoriality is “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area.”<sup>285</sup> Based on this definition, territoriality intrinsically leads the question of power. As Moore explains, to assert and enforce territorial allegations are directly related with authority and power issues.<sup>286</sup> Thus, it can be said that territoriality vehemently intersects with “power and meaning.”<sup>287</sup> In this regard, territoriality serves as a means to reify power. Actually, power and influence are not concrete as tangible things such as rivers, mountains. Indeed, they are potential in nature. Territoriality makes these potentials “visible.”<sup>288</sup>

To make it more clear, human territoriality, as an instinct demonstrated through the creation of boundaries and territories, leads to sovereignty, a political condition that arises to address the necessity of governance within these territories. In this sense, there are two dimensions of territoriality according to anthropologists and geographers: the demarcation of boundaries and behavior conducted within these defined boundaries.<sup>289</sup> In modern international relations, and political science, territoriality has been defined regarding spatially delineated political governance.<sup>290</sup>

After only two decades of its establishment, the territorial status quo of the World War I disintegrated into chaos. However, unprecedented destruction of World War II led to the creation of a politico-territorial order which was deemed essential for

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<sup>285</sup> R. Sack argues that his definition is applicable to attempts made by individuals or groups at any level of scale ‘from the room to international arena.’ Please, see Robert D. Sack, “Human Territoriality: A Theory,” p. 54.

<sup>286</sup> Adam Moore, “Ethno-Territoriality and Ethnic Conflict.” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 106, No.1, 2016, p. 93.

<sup>287</sup> David Delaney. *Territory*.

<sup>288</sup> Robert D. Sack, “Human Territoriality: A Theory,” p. 59. Territorial, as a social construction, has different meanings based on the relationship between societies, individuals, and space they live in. This relationship produces a form of power extending beyond politics, exercised in every realm of human spatial interaction. However, the most effective instrument of territorialization is the modern state which can govern a society. Please, see Jeremy Larkins. *From Hierarchy to Anarchy: Territory and Politics before Westphalia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 36.

<sup>289</sup> Miles Kahler, “Territoriality and Conflict,” p. 3.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

global stability.<sup>291</sup> Despite increasing of globalization, territorial attachments of governments, ethnic groups, and individuals haven't diminished significantly.<sup>292</sup>

However, sovereignty still stands at the crossroad of "terror and territory." State-centric workings ignore the existence of rebel-governed territories, referring them as "ungoverned territories," or "black spots."<sup>293</sup> While sovereign powers (recognized states) have the legitimate right of exercising violence in their territories; non-sovereign powers (individuals, self-determination movements, and non-state organizations) is seen illegitimate, and described as "terror."<sup>294</sup> In this sense, the territories under the control of rebels are generally considered nearly "terra nullis-territories devoid of any political or social order."<sup>295</sup> It can be raised although territory and population governance of the non-state actors may sometimes become rudimentary, the same situation is valid for the sovereign states of developing world.<sup>296</sup>

Nevertheless, many studies have extensively written on the conditions that can drive nonstate actors to challenge the sovereignty of the states however less has been written on the governance practices of nonstate actors.<sup>297</sup> Although there are international border conflicts, states mostly face challenges emanating "from within their borders" from insurgent groups. However, these groups are "only one type of non-sovereign actor threatening sovereign states" control of territory. However, as I explained above, I focus "on the broader category of territorial contenders (TCs)- the

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<sup>291</sup> Alexander B. Murphy, "The Sovereign State System," p. 83.

<sup>292</sup> Barbara F. Walter, "Conclusion," in Miles Kahler and Barbara F. Walter eds., *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 288.

<sup>293</sup> Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, p. 10.

<sup>294</sup> Elden. *Terror and Territory*, p. 171.

<sup>295</sup> Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, p. 241.

<sup>296</sup> Kenwick and Lemke, "International Influences," p. 485.

<sup>297</sup> Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, p. 7; As Lemke states: "Rather than focusing merely on rebels, we study all instances where a non-sovereign entity controls some part of a state's territory because that existence is a clear threat to the sovereign state, even absent fighting." Please, see Kenwick and Lemke, "International Influences," p. 485.

set of all political entities that wrest control of populates territory within the boundaries of recognized members of the international system, regardless of whether this involves civil war.”<sup>298</sup>

In this context, as Holsti remarks “statehood today is usually identified as the sole legitimate political manifestation of an ethnic/language/religious group’s exclusiveness. It’s the prime political expression of group identity in a pluralistic and fragmented world.” The notion of national self-determination stands as the base of political exclusiveness.<sup>299</sup> Scrutinizing the governance systems of the non-state groups provides to understand progress of “political order by non-state actors.”<sup>300</sup> In reality, a closer look at the non-state actors displays that there’s a parallel dynamic.

In this regard, as one of the types of non-state actors, the NSAAs mimic the same organizational structure of the states while they’re fighting against them as a part of their survival strategy.<sup>301</sup> As Yeşiltaş and Kardaş argue, “The NSAAs copy states they fight with, by adopting different warfare strategies and tactics on the ground,”<sup>302</sup> and political component as “an integral part of the Westphalian state” is the last and the most important part of the NSAAs’ sovereignty.<sup>303</sup> Indeed, a closer examination of the NSAAs indicates that the ideological formation of identity, the consolidation of legitimacy through coercive/non-coercive tools and external recognition are vital patterns in the construction of the sovereignty (state-like) of NSAAs.<sup>304</sup> In this sense, as Mampilly states “By mimicking the behavior of modern state, rebels seek to

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<sup>298</sup> Kenwick and Lemke, “International Influences,” p. 479.

<sup>299</sup> Holsti. *Peace and War*, p. 317.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> K. Schlichte. *In the Shadow of Violence: The Politics of Armed Groups*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2009, cited in Yeşiltaş and Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution,” p. 159.

<sup>302</sup> Yeşiltaş and Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution,” p. 159; The organizational structure of the NSAAs mimic the existent states in terms of ‘the struggle over sovereignty and allegiance through its organization.’ Please, see Anthony Vinci, “Anarchy, Failed States, and Armed Groups: Reconsidering Conventional Analysis,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 2008, p. 308, and Yeşiltaş and Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution,” p. 159. ‘In theory, NSAAs are understood to monopolize the legitimate means of violence by being able to eliminate domestic rivals and provide security to their population under control.’ Please, see Yeşiltaş and Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution,” p. 159.

<sup>303</sup> Yeşiltaş and Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution,” p. 160.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

discursively construct a political authority imbued with a comparable legitimacy enjoyed by national governments.”<sup>305</sup> For instance, before its defeat in early 2009, the LTTE exactly mimicked the capacity of Sri Lankan state in this control area for two decades.<sup>306</sup>

Nonetheless even the construction of governance systems of rebels mimics the one of nation-states, it should be avoided to draw parallels based on the former. Thus “it is perhaps more useful to think about insurgent groups constructing governance structures as an opportunity to examine the potential and the limitations of a political and social order produced by a nonstate or, more accurately, by a counter state.” That’s why, Mampilly claims that these groups develop governance structures in forms of “counter state sovereigns.”<sup>307</sup>

Particular circumstances induce nonstate actors to serve in governance. These scope circumstances which is apparently either lacking or missing in the limited statehood areas appear to function as equivalents of the “shadow of hierarchy of” a state.<sup>308</sup> In simplest terms, governance can be defined as “decisions issued by one actor that a second is expected to obey” and “refers to the control of social interactions by both state and nonstate actors.”<sup>309</sup> By governance, I mean “the various institutionalized modes of social coordination to produce and implement collectively binding rules, or to provide collective goods.”<sup>310</sup> I should clarify why I prefer the concept of

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<sup>305</sup> Mampilly, “Performing the Nation-State,” p. 78.

<sup>306</sup> Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, p. 25.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>308</sup> Thomas Risse, “Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood: Introduction and Overview,” in Thomas Risse ed., *Without a State: Policies and Politics in Areas of Limited Statehood*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011, p. 24.

<sup>309</sup> Miles Kahler and David A. Lake, “Governance in a Global Economy: Political Authority in Transition,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 2004, p. 409, and Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, p. 3.

<sup>310</sup> Risse, “Governance,” p. 9; Governance is defined also as “interpretation of life and an affirmation of legitimate values and institutions” that “provides symbolic and ritual confirmation of the possibility of meaningful individual and collective action.” Please, see James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, “Organizing Political Life: What Administrative Reorganization Tells us about Government,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 77, No. 2, 1983, p. 292, and Mampilly, “Performing the Nation-State,” p. 78.

“governance” instead of “sovereignty” for non-state actors. As Risse argues, governance is “a useful conceptual tool” provides to remove the state-centric approach in the study of political issues and divert the attention on the role of nonstate actors.<sup>311</sup> In the words of Risse:

By offering a wide perspective on governing modes that are not limited to hierarchical rule exerted by official agents but also comprise alternative forms of governing, the governance concept can thus be of use in the study of colonial rule. Governance provides a systematic approach to the question of the “how” and “who” of political organization.<sup>312</sup>

The existence of a continuous sovereign power is a must to raise rights over a territory, and normally human agents carry out such action.<sup>313</sup> In this sense, non-state actors are not only central figures of contemporary war-making but also they are gradually becoming protagonists of wartime and post-war political orders.<sup>314</sup> There are many examples of this phenomena: The rule of Hamas in Gaza since 2006, the declaration of caliphate by Boko Haram in Nigeria in 2014.<sup>315</sup>

In this regard, one of the main principals of territorial conception is the process of territorial control through which a NSAA applies an effective control over the no-gone zone.<sup>316</sup> To control/hold a particular territory enables the NSAAs to practice sovereign rule,<sup>317</sup> as they are qualified of being political entity by controlling a territory.<sup>318</sup> Territorial control of them occurs in three conditions. First, when the

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<sup>311</sup> Risse, "Governance," p. 28.

<sup>312</sup> Sebastian Conrad and Marion Stange, “Governance and Colonial Rule,” in Risse ed., *Governance Without a State*, p. 40.

<sup>313</sup> Gottman. *The Significance of Territory*, p. 4.

<sup>314</sup> Berti, “Rebel Politics,” p. 119

<sup>315</sup> Jabareen, “The Emerging Islamic State,” p. 52.

<sup>316</sup> As they operate militarily in the civil wars to hold control over a particular territory is significant to maintain their survival. Therefore, to hold “control over real and imaginative borders” is the “first and foremost” basic motivation for the maintenance of the survival, the defense of the ethno/religious identity (“as part of territorial conception”), and the consolidation of material capacities ‘to establish a territorial hegemony.’ Please, see Yeşiltaş and Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution,” p. 158.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>318</sup> Kenwick and Lemke, “International Influences,” p. 485.

representative of the sovereign state is removed from the area; second, when the population is taxed; and finally, when it substitutes the sovereign state in terms of providing services.<sup>319</sup>

It should be remarked that “If the insurgency is secessionist or ethnonationalist, it’s more likely to develop an effective system of governance than groups that seek to capture at the center.”<sup>320</sup> In this sense, the establishment of the autonomous municipalities represented profound changes in the territories of Zapatista in 1994 as the first change took place in the everyday life practice of production and reproduction that municipal councils and communities have taken the services of health, education and agricultural production.<sup>321</sup> Moreover, in Sri Lanka, the LTTE developed a very comprehensive governance system that was embraced by civilians through providing the educational and health services by collaborating with the Sri Lankan state.<sup>322</sup>

A significant dimension of governance formation is only after the relevant non-state actors administers territory that includes civilians and arranges to establish or urge civilian structures.<sup>323</sup> In this sense, the more the movements such as a-Mujamma‘, and Hamas prioritize territory and community, the more they concentrate on a concrete agenda related with practical problems.<sup>324</sup> Indeed, turning to the

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<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*; Mampilly characterizes an “effective governance” as a case in which a rebel group demonstrates three capacities in control of territory. First, developing a degree of stability. Second, providing a dispute resolution mechanism. Third, providing other public goods except security. Please, see Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, p. 17; Moreover, according to Kasfir, there are several conditions for the insurgent organization to create the rebel governance. To him, only groups provide these conditions area capable of forming a rebel governance. First, even though it may fluctuate within time and space, it must hold some portion of territory within the state it is rebelling against. Second, civilians are required to live in that area. Third, the organization must begin committing a violence attack to become insurgents and afterwards either menace them or maintain hostilities in territory in controls. Although it is not guarantee of triumph, international recognition enhances a profound resource to the rebel governments. Please, see Kasfir, “Rebel Governance,” p. 25.

<sup>320</sup> Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, p. 214.

<sup>321</sup> Zibechi. *Territories in Resistance*, p. 129

<sup>322</sup> Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, p. 5.

<sup>323</sup> Kasfir, “Rebel Governance,” p. 27; non-state actors must legitimize ‘the new state’ they want to establish and usually try to justify the rebellion by constructing new structures. Please, see Kasfir, “Rebel Governance,” p. 40

<sup>324</sup> Mishal and Sela. *The Palestinian Hamas*, p. 46.



territorialization encourages the development of military and civilian institutions. In this regard, institutionalization of the judiciary, economic activities, provision of public services, and a centralized broadcasting system has apparently been significant.<sup>325</sup> For example, Taliban fighters had already held most of the civil administration offices in its control area before achieving victory in 1998.<sup>326</sup> To provide another example, the establishment of Hamas at the beginning of Intifada as a nationalist Palestinian and Islamic movement questing for the foundation of a Palestinian Islamic state encouraged it to establish military and civilian institutions during 1970s and 1980s.<sup>327</sup> Moreover, The PLO's (Palestine Liberation Organization) increasing presence and political involvement through subjugating social and political institutions in the West Bank and Gaza explicates the importance of the occupied territories<sup>328</sup> as the presence of a "military occupier" spurred local Palestinian people and groups to found voluntary organizations which were generally supported by the PLO.<sup>329</sup>

One of the landmarks for governing capacity to rule is whether for governing capacity to rule is the degree of territorial control is adequate to allow to arrange structures in which civilians participate, and the second relevant point is how confident civilians feel in attending insurgent orders or utilizing rebel services<sup>330</sup> since it's the project of governance operations of the armed groups to concretize their social contract with the civil population in the areas where the state doesn't function.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Jacoby, "The Islamic State," pp. 183-184.

<sup>326</sup> Kasfir, "Rebel Governance," p. 36.

<sup>327</sup> Mishal and Sela. *The Palestinian Hamas*, p. 153.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>330</sup> Kasfir, "Rebel Governance," p. 28; The interaction type of rebels with civilians is momentous for local residents since they can govern them in better or worse conditions. A great majority of rebel groups exercises different kinds of governance, extending from the establishing minimal regulation and unofficial taxation to creating public assemblies, full-fledged bureaucracies, health institutions, education system and judicial courts. Please, see Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir and Zachariah Mampilly "Introduction," in Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly eds., *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 1

<sup>331</sup> Sukanya Podder, "Understanding the Legitimacy of Armed Groups: A Relational Perspective," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 28, No. 4-5, p. 692.

Overall, non-state actors following territorial policies have generally inherent features such as “cohesive, organized, and control territory.”<sup>332</sup> Cohesion and organization provides them to transmit information regarding repression and abuse to allies and external actors who may put pressure on host states.<sup>333</sup> Their skills improve to reach the areas where abuse may take ground thanks to its territorial control improvement,<sup>334</sup> and their ability to exert direct control over a territory as de facto sovereign power is “considered evidence of their budding statehood.”<sup>335</sup> A territorial order -to govern both natural resources and population- created through this hegemony leads to monopolize the practices of governance.<sup>336</sup>

### 3.8. Discursive Practices

Some scholars have emphasized the linguistic aspects of social construction by asserting that space is a narrative construct and borders are some kind of metaphors.<sup>337</sup> The constructivist school considers the values of territory in its intangible value and locates “the various sentiments embedded in national territory as a social construct.”<sup>338</sup> Drawing on constructivist theory, this study believes that language doesn’t only represent the world, but it also constructs the world.<sup>339</sup>

In this regard, it can be said that representation is a fundamental component in the production and sharing of meaning among members of a culture. It does encompass the use of language, symbols, and images that serve to signify or represent things.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> Kenwick and Lemke, “International Influences,” p. 484.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>335</sup> Mampilly. *Rebel Rulers*, p. 39.

<sup>336</sup> Yeşiltaş and Kardaş, “Mimicry and Substitution,” p. 158.

<sup>337</sup> Tuomas Forsberg, “The Ground without Foundation,” p. 7.

<sup>338</sup> Bukh. *These Islands are Ours*, p. 8.

<sup>339</sup> Felicitas Macgilchrist “Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks,” in Eckhardt Fuchs and Annekatriin Bock eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 70.

<sup>340</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Work of Representation,” in Stuart Hall ed., *Representation*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003, p. 15.

Representational space frequently serves as a site of opposition, where cultural and artistic movements challenge the ‘spatial’ norms established by the prevailing social order,<sup>341</sup> and representation is “the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language.”<sup>342</sup> Nay, it allows to use refer not only material aspects of the physical world-such as objects, individuals, or events- but also the imaginary realms -such as fictional entities, events, and people.<sup>343</sup>

Actually, “symbolic sovereignty” is a symbolic process to strength the sovereign claims<sup>344</sup> of the political elites “to make apparent ana opaque political body.”<sup>345</sup> For instance, national anthems are one of the first things taught a pupil in school,<sup>346</sup> to use such symbols “as a tool for creating bonds and reinforcing goals among their citizens.”<sup>347</sup> Moreover, flags serve the similar goal.<sup>348</sup> These examples can be multiplied as follows:

Imageries are constantly re-created through performance ... Many are embedded in countless everyday practices. At roadblocks, words are uttered in the language of the state. At ceremonies, speeches are delivered in the same rhetoric of official language as before. From the village level through the small subdivisions to events at the headquarters of the rebellion, the same reenactment of statehood seems to penetrate the new political order.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Jeremy Larkins. *From Hierarchy to Anarchy*, p. 38.

<sup>342</sup> Hall, “The Work of Representation,” p. 17.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>344</sup> Mampilly, “Performing the Nation-State,” p. 77; As Kauffman states “Politics is mostly about manipulating people’s emotions, and symbols provide the tools for such manipulation.” Please, see Stuart Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001, p. 28, and Mampilly, “Performing the Nation-State,” p. 79.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78; Mampilly questions the role of the symbolical domain by an insurgent organization. Either a tool of propaganda or the symbolic domain; symbolic processes take a considerable place for rebels. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 76

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>347</sup> Lisa Wedeen. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. 76-78, and in Mampilly, “Performing the Nation-State,” p. 81.

<sup>348</sup> Mampilly, “Performing the Nation-State,” p. 83; For instance, the Sudan People Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) concentrates on the symbolic procedures of statehood such as national anthem, national currency, and official flag. Please, see Podder, “Understanding the Legitimacy of Armed Groups,” p. 693.

<sup>349</sup> Mampilly, “Performing the Nation-State,” p. 83.

It's significant to point out that discourse is just one form of symbolic processes among other symbols such as rituals, and objects.<sup>350</sup> In this context, as Paasi argues, territorial identities don't get their powers from national symbols such as anthems, flags, memorial days since the latter is perpetually changing, "rather in the fusion of social action and symbols into nationalized practices and discourses that are significant in terms of national identity."<sup>351</sup> He further points out that the issue "is not where a boundary is, but how, by what practices and in the face of what resistances, this boundary was imposed and ritualized."<sup>352</sup> Hence, suggesting more broadly than traditional literature; he states that a boundary doesn't exist simply in the border region, it declares itself in various institutions such as spectacles, ceremonies, memorials, novels, the media, and the education, and the crux of the matter is that "These mediums are also the essence of the institutionalization of the border symbolism and perform the key functions of symbolism; that's social control and communication."<sup>353</sup>

### 3.8.1. Territorialization of History

Poulantzas argues that "The construction of a unified national identity" requires "the historicity of a territory and the territorialization of a history."<sup>354</sup> Based on this argument, he thinks that "the confirmation of a solid link between a delimited space and an undivided culture and history" is a requirement of national existence.<sup>355</sup> In the same manner, it is argued that every group constructs a past memory based on its distinct identity over other groups in order to "provide the group with an account of its origin and development and thus allow it to recognize itself through time."<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>351</sup> Paasi, "Territorial Identities," pp. 11-12.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>353</sup> Paasi, "Boundaries as Social Processes," p. 76.

<sup>354</sup> Poulantzas. *State, Power, Socialism*, p. 114, and Swedenburg. *Memories of Revolt*, p. 8.

<sup>355</sup> Swedenburg. *Memories of Revolt*, p. 8.

<sup>356</sup> Samira Alayan and Elie Podeh "Introduction: Views of Others in School Textbooks-A Theoretical Analysis," in Elie Podeh and Samira Alayan eds., *Multiple Alterities: Views of Others in Textbooks of the Middle East*, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 3.

Within this framework, it can be argued that the terms of identity and memory depend on each other: “The core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity.”<sup>357</sup> Meanwhile, it should be stated that identities and memories are not static phenomena, but constructions and representations of subjective reality.<sup>358</sup> To provide an example, entirely based on Swedenburg, the first insurgency of Palestinian Arabs took place in April 1936 in forms of a strike lasting six months and turning into a “Great Revolt.” “The truth of Palestinians’ memories of revolt was not to be found solely in the field in which it was articulated,” since “the truth of experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place.” The PLO sought to incorporate the memories of Palestinian people “within a larger unified narrative articulate subaltern memories with its hegemonic principle in order to create an agreed-upon definition of what the “real” past was like.” This attempt is made to constitute a historical vision to invoke a political mobilization “as well as to assert Palestinian existence and lay claim to a distinct history connected to a particular territory.” By these attempts, the PLO gradually gained the support of Palestinians living in the occupied territories and inside Israel.<sup>359</sup> Indeed, the revival of the memory of the 1936-39 quickly took place when the first intifada began in December 1987.<sup>360</sup>

The practices such as narratives that reproduce imagined communities still exist.<sup>361</sup> Narratives are defined as “stories that imbue certain real events, places, nations, and both phenomena with a certain symbolic value and meaning, by this making them socially meaningful.”<sup>362</sup> Historical narrative, as a part of collective memory, and

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<sup>357</sup> John R. Gillis, “Introduction: Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship, in John R. Gillis ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 3.

<sup>358</sup> Gillis, “Introduction: Memory and Identity,” p. 3.

<sup>359</sup> Swedenburg. *Memories of Revolt*, pp. xix-20.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>361</sup> Paasi, “Territorial Identities,” pp. 7-8.

<sup>362</sup> Janice Bially Mattern. *Ordering International Politics: Identity, Crisis and Representational Force*. Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2005, p. 83, and Bukh. *These Islands are Ours*, p. 5.

likely to be inaccurate and even official, includes symbols, myths, and other collective memories providing “maps” that helps to create a division between “us” and “them.”<sup>363</sup> To write more explicitly, as Robert T. Tally points out, narrators or authors depict the territory they survey by merging diverse elements to create the narrative. These elements may involve the “scraps of other narratives,” descriptions of individuals or places taken from direct experience or indirect sources, myths, legends, and inventions of the mind.<sup>364</sup> Narratives construct possible images of the world for readers<sup>365</sup> as the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan argues in his book titled *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, that one part of the space becomes subject for storytelling.<sup>366</sup> Certainly, that space’s not the “real” space of a city or country<sup>367</sup> however that doesn’t cease the followers adopt the “real” places to the imaginary world. For example, the spread of “Masada” as a significant national narrative became one of the foundational elements in constructing the new Hebrew culture in Palestine for the Jewish society during the formative years. Following the foundation of the Israeli state in 1948, Masada became a pilgrimage site for Israeli youth, and a significant symbol for national identity.<sup>368</sup> The implementation of a dramatic story from antiquity has contributed to Masada, which is a remote cliff covered by archeological remnants, to evolve from a neglected narrative in Jewish history to “a major Israeli national myth.”<sup>369</sup> As the constructive myths enhances to shape history though memory,<sup>370</sup> as a myth of renewal, Masada has come to represent the modern Zionist revival.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Alayan and Podeh, *Multiple Alterities*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>364</sup> Robert T. Tally Jr. *Spatiality*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 49,

<sup>365</sup> Tall. *Spatiality*, p. 49,

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51, and Yi-Fu Tuan. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, pp. 161-162.

<sup>367</sup> Barbara Piatti. *Die Geographie der Literatur: Schauplätze, Handlungsräume, Raumphantasien*, Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2008, pp. 22-23, cited in Tally. *Spatiality*, p. 52.

<sup>368</sup> Yael Zerubavel, “The Multivocality of a National Myth: Memory and Counter-Memories of Masada,” in Robert Wistrich and David Ohana eds., *Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 110.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 110-111.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

Continuing from the same point, narratives certainly construct the meanings of boundaries and their communities. In this sense, narratives are not only a mode of representation but also, they are discourses that shape the practices<sup>372</sup> through connecting trilogy of nation, state, and territory.<sup>373</sup> For instance, the historical narratives are prevalently in use in Palestine.<sup>374</sup>

To recapitulate, collective memory of a nation has a primary role in construction of the national identity.<sup>375</sup> Historical claims form the emotional dimension of territorial claims, and history is replete of memories, and it forms the kneel of national identity as Bogg states: “Boundary disputes in Europe... arise in many instances because too much history is remembered by both parties.”<sup>376</sup>

### **3.8.2. Priority, Indigeneity, and Duration**

As disputes over territory intensify between conflicting parties, they compete claims based on historical and archaeological narratives to prove the ownership over disputed territory.<sup>377</sup> The phenomenon of indigeneity in a defined territory has been a competitive issue between national and ethnic identities. As Boyarin points out, the discourse of indigeneity has been used by actors fighting to get rid of foreign overlords. Here, the claim of priority is acknowledged also by colonialists by combating them subtly and overtly. For instance, South African historiography reject the indigenous status of “black inhabitants of the country, while, at the same time, calling them as native.” As the power is decisive authority to put forth discursive claims of temporal priority, and thus to claim rights over a particular territory.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Paasi, “Boundaries as Social Processes,” p. 75.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, like the perpetual development and transformation of all institutions, the narrative constructing collective identities and also the boundaries of territorial communities are also constantly changing. Please, see *Ibid.*

<sup>374</sup> Swedenburg. *Memories of Revolt*, p. 152.

<sup>375</sup> Bukh. *These Islands are Ours*, p. 3.

<sup>376</sup> S. Whittemore Boggs. *International Boundaries*. New York, 1940, p. 17., quoted in Andrew F. Burghardt, “The Bases of Territorial Claims,” p. 230.

<sup>377</sup> David Newman, “The Resilience of Territorial Conflict,” p. 99.

<sup>378</sup> Jonathin Boyarin, “Space, Time,” p. 17.

That's the claim of indigeneity, in other words autochthony suggests that origin (origin is considered distinct from any other group but not considered distinct from territory) is not considered distinct from territory as Vidal Nacquet writes: "to be autochthonous means not having been instructed by anyone else; the theme is fundamental."<sup>379</sup>

All historical claims rely on either priority or duration. Priority means to be in a specific territory first. In Europe, the priority argument has primarily meant settlement. For instance, the Serbs claimed being indigenous people in the Western Banat region, claiming that they had settled the region before the arrival of Magyars, Germans, and Rumanians.<sup>380</sup>

Indeed, "the principle of tenure" revolves around the claim of initial settlement as groups claim the right of territorial control based on their assertions that their ancestors were the first settlers. For instance, Kosovo is seen as 'the cradle of the Serbian nation' because it was center of a medieval Serbian empire. On the other hand, Albanians trace their ancestors further back to ancient Illyrian tribes. Consequently, both groups recognize Kosovo as 'legitimate homeland' for themselves.<sup>381</sup>

The relationship between ethnicity and territory stands as a significant factor in contemporary world politics. Various social movements and actors employ the discourse of "indigeneity and territory" to stand against the dispossession and assert right of recognition<sup>382</sup> to the extent that "The determination of priority is rarely pushed back to the beginnings of history; rather, it is extended to the furthest point in time pertinent to the existing problem."<sup>383</sup> To sum up, the most powerful historical

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<sup>379</sup> Pierre Vidal-Nacquet. 1982. "Herodote et l'Atlantide: Entre les grecs et les juifs — Reflexions sur l'historiographie du siecle des Lumieres." *Quaderni di Storia*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 1982, p. 58, quoted in *Ibid.*

<sup>380</sup> Andrew F. Burghardt, "The Bases of Territorial Claims," p. 230.

<sup>381</sup> Monica Duffy Toft. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence*, p. 24.

<sup>382</sup> Penelope Anthias and Kasper Hoffmann, "The Making of Ethnic Territories: Governmentality and Counter-conducts," *Geoforum*, Vol. 119, 2021, p. 218.

<sup>383</sup> Andrew F. Burghardt, "The Bases of Territorial Claims," p. 231.



claims are when territory is thought as a national homeland as it includes priority, duration and connotes “the ultimate case of man-land symbiosis.”<sup>384</sup>

### 3.8.3. Mapping

The following quotation elucidates the significance of the maps: “Many times, in Israel and abroad, I have seen maps from 1948, where hundreds of villages and towns which have disappeared are noted on maps distributed by Palestinian institutions in the diaspora. And these maps are more dangerous than any bomb.”<sup>385</sup> In this context, Jean Baudrillard argues that maps become more real than the territory as they have taken precedence over the territory they originally represented.<sup>386</sup>

As Mignolo remarks, territorial representation constitutes a basic human need. Additionally, the ways used to represent territories are not only influenced by cultural norms but also dependent on contextual factors such as technological advancements, cognitive patterns, and social needs.<sup>387</sup> Cartography is reflection of the social context in which it is created. As such, maps undeniably belong to a cultural system.<sup>388</sup> “Adherence to the rule of ethnocentricity” became a prevalent practice in producing world maps. This practice has invoked many historical and contemporary societies to center their own territories in cosmography or world maps.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>385</sup> Uri Avneri (1983). “Remembering Zakaria.” *Al-Fqjr*, July 1, p. 7. Translated from *HaOlam Hazeh*, June 15, quoted in Swedenburg. *Memories of Revolt*, p. 22.

<sup>386</sup> Jean Baudrillard. *Simulations*. New York: Semiotext(e), 1983, p. 2, and “The Ground without Foundation,” p. 7.

<sup>387</sup> Walter D. Mignolo, “Colonial Situations, Geographical Discourses and Territorial Representations: Toward a Diapotal Understanding of Colonial Semiosis,” *Dispositio*, Vol. 14, No. 36/38, 1989, p. 124.

<sup>388</sup> J. B. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” in Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan eds., *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, London, and New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 232.

<sup>389</sup> This rule is apparent “in cosmic diagrams of pre-Columbian North American Indians as it is in the maps of ancient Babylonia, Greece or China, or in the medieval maps of the Islamic world or Christian Europe.” Please, see *Ibid.*

Before Europeans mapped the world thoroughly, geography was one of the major “to make one’s mark upon the world, and thus to define oneself as an actor.”<sup>390</sup> Based on the motto of “The patronage of maps repay thought,” and quoting Brion Harley, Henrikson states that cartography was always “the science of princes.” As such, the Muslim caliphs, sultans, Moghul Emperors in India, and the rulers of China did sponsor mapmaking.<sup>391</sup> From eighteenth century and onwards state sponsorship directly increased when national topographic searches began.<sup>392</sup>

Political maps are instruments to keep with sovereign territorial ideals, so it is not possible to consider a maples society politically.<sup>393</sup> The name of places, such as borders, carry significant geopolitical implications on maps. First, they help to revive the imagined geographies in the minds.<sup>394</sup> Secondly, they serve as powerful tools to generate territorial claims and legitimize geographical identities.<sup>395</sup> The discourse of place naming reflects not only social and political dynamics of power but also territorial control.<sup>396</sup> The power of natural frontiers to delineate kingdom boundaries was so great that mapmakers would invent imagined mountains and mountain ranges to demarcate political border.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Jonathin Boyarin, “Space, Time,” p. 6.

<sup>391</sup> Alan K. Henrikson, “The Power and Politics of Maps,” in Demko and Wood eds., *Geopolitical Perspectives*, p. 104.

<sup>392</sup> Henrikson, “The Power and Politics of Maps,” p. 105.

<sup>393</sup> Leslie W. Hepple, “Metaphor, Geopolitical Discourse and the Military in South America,” in Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan eds., *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 244.

<sup>394</sup> J. Hagen, “Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe: The Rise and Fall of the Center,” *Political Geography*, Vol. 22, 2003, p. 491, and Karen Culcasi, “Cartographically Constructing Kurdistan within Geopolitical and Orientalist Discourses,” *Political Geography*, Vol.25, 2006, p. 687. Modernists believe that the activities of a centralized and reflexive state established the phenomenon of homeland through demarcation of territory based on nationalist ideals. Census-taking and map-making are two main kinds of these activities, which made the abstract concept of nation conceivable and imaginable. Anthony D. Smith. *Chosen Peoples*, p. 131.

<sup>395</sup> Culcasi, “Cartographically Constructing Kurdistan,” p. 687.

<sup>396</sup> J. Hagen, “Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe,” p. 491.

<sup>397</sup> Peter Sahlins. *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, p. 60, and H. E. Goemans, “Bounded Communities.” p. 37.

The territories are formed by mapping; hence modern cartography has been influential in the territorial governance in terms of implementation and legitimation.<sup>398</sup> Maps are powerful icons due to their assumed “objective” scientific association, and they standardize people’s images of the world. By suggesting such “supposedly” scientific representation of the world, the visual images of maps have been utilized to explain homeland.<sup>399</sup>

State-sponsored maps might not recognize realities of some social and cultural assets such as religious centers, or ethnic clusters<sup>400</sup> however maps are not always propagated to serve powerful actors. They’re sometimes produced by subaltern social actors to contest dominant values.<sup>401</sup> For non-state actors, maps, cartoons, or illustrations are powerful tools that construct meaning and convey messages<sup>402</sup> and are a fundamental tool for justifying endeavors of territorial claims.<sup>403</sup> More importantly, they are “ideological constructions, acts of critical remembrance and redemption as well as an assertion of power to claim and hold land.”<sup>404</sup>

Henrikson states that no diplomatic strategy, information program or development project can be sustained intellectually unless it is drawn spatially. He also mentions that the hypnotic effect of the maps. Accordingly, “maps lead people to accept unconsciously and uncritically the ideas that are suggested to them by maps,” as they can be “representative in a pictorially symbolic way of a territory and the polity or other entity or occurrence upon it.” Thus, maps may be “embedded in the discourse of politics and of art, just as political symbols can be embedded in the language of maps.”<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> Vandergeest and Peluso, “Territorialization and State Power in Thailand,” p. 387.

<sup>399</sup> H. E. Goemans, “Bounded Communities,” p. 39.

<sup>400</sup> Harley, “Maps, Knowledge, and Power,” p. 281.

<sup>401</sup> Wood. *Insurgent Collective Action*, p. 46.

<sup>402</sup> Kardaş and Yeşiltaş, p. 99.

<sup>403</sup> Murphy, “Historical Justifications,” p. 535.

<sup>404</sup> Wood. *Insurgent Collective Action*, p. 218.

<sup>405</sup> Henrikson, “The Power and Politics of Maps,” pp. 95-96.

As a significant point, I should also note that Tally considers the deed of writing as a form of mapmaking<sup>406</sup> since according to him, “map is not only a geometrical figure like a grid, a visual archive like a table, or even a work of graphic art like a painting,” rather a map can be constructed through words.<sup>407</sup>

### 3.8.4. Literary/ Poetic Space

The disputed territories are more than bargaining chips in political power struggle. Rather, these territories embody historical landscapes with “sacred qualities” such as being the “cradle” of the nation, or the locus of major battles and assemblies, or the site of resting-places of esteemed figures, or simply the land of past kin states. Hence, these territories stand to “redeemed.”<sup>408</sup>

As mentioned previously, the drive to sanctify certain territories is closely connected what may be called as the “territorialization of memory.” “Ethno-history” of the community is naturalized through integrating it with parts of the community is naturalized through integrating it with parts of natural environment. As a result, natural environment and landscape of the community come to be perceived as integral part of the community’s distinctive history and development.<sup>409</sup> “These twin processes” mutually connect a community to its land, thereby the latter transforms into an “ethnoscape,” in which ethnic community becomes intertwined with its landscape.<sup>410</sup> In this manner, ethnic territory becomes a “poetic space” by acquiring all types of personal and poetic implications, recorded in verses and songs with symbols, myths, and ethnic memories.<sup>411</sup> As Said notes that “space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant and anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here.”<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Tally. *Spatiality*, p. 45.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>408</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “The Sacred Dimension of Nationalism,” p. 806.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>412</sup> Tally. *Spatiality*, p. 92.

### 3.8.5. Song

The colonial and postcolonial role must be considered to comprehend the significance of ethnicity and territory,<sup>413</sup> since there have been many cultural expressions of resistance which can be formalized as the “literature of the combat of the oppressed.”<sup>414</sup> These expressions represent the spatial struggles in the pursuit of identity and territory.<sup>415</sup> For instance, the Naxalite movement of India puts emphasis on how Naxalite was congruent with traditional identity and values of the tribes when it tried to mobilize tribal peoples of Santhal. This was made by reinterpreting traditional song structures and utilizing powerful historical narratives. As can be seen below, the Naxalites mobilized the Santhal through songs:

People of India  
In the way in which Sidhu and Kanu fought  
We will wake from our slumber following their example  
We will no longer remain asleep  
Now it is evening.  
But the morning is coming again  
A light from the east (The message of Mao Tseung)  
Has spread all over India.<sup>416</sup>

Shedding of blood by a nation’s ancestors remains to legitimate territorial claims. A Boer song exemplifies these sentiments in the way to legitimate their claims against Britain:

Leave us alone! Leave us alone!  
You shall not rob us of our own;  
We will be free! We will be free!  
Our birthright shall our standard be.

Our fathers’ sweat, our fathers’ blood  
Have soaked the ground on which they stood;

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<sup>413</sup> Anthias and Hoffmann. “The Making of Ethnic Territories,” p. 1.

<sup>414</sup> Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1996, p. 49, and Paul Routledge, “Critical Geopolitics and Terrains of Resistance,” *Political Geography*, Vol. 15, No. 6/7, 1996, p. 523.

<sup>415</sup> Paul Routledge. “Critical Geopolitics,” p. 523.

<sup>416</sup> E. Duyker. *Tribal Guerrillas*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 524; The theme of this song is in line with this quotation: “The song is an example of how the anticolonial struggle can often produce mythical and unselfcritical nationalist images and narratives, countermapping with its own elisions.” Please, see Swedenburg. *Memories of Revolt*, p. 73.

Our mothers' tears, our mothers' toil,  
Have hallowed this Afric soil.

This is our land! This is our land!  
Reclaimed by our fathers' hand;  
Reclaimed once, we claim it now,  
As made a garden by our plough.

We ask, what has to us been left?  
We will no longer be bereft!  
For Fatherland and freedom dear,  
We die, or live, and vanquish here!<sup>417</sup>

### 3.8.6. The Sphere of Education

“As far as nationalism is concerned, particularly challenging objects of research are the practices and discourses that territorialize memory and transform it as part of the civil religion,” and the latter is plays a crucial role in the territorialization process of the citizens and achieved most effectively through education.<sup>418</sup>

“...Although hardly anyone lends an ear to its music: it is so silent! This is the school,” states Althusser<sup>419</sup> as he considers a school (educational system) as the realization of an ideology based on the belief that “a political party is a realization of political ideology,”<sup>420</sup> and the school “forms a component part of different systems, which we term Ideological State Apparatuses: the religious system, scholastic system, political system, and so on.”<sup>421</sup> As all other ideological state apparatuses, the educational apparatus serves the reconstruction of the relations of production such as the relations of exploitation however, the dominant role is played by the sphere of education.<sup>422</sup>

It takes children from every class at infant-school age, and then for years, the years in which the child is most 'vulnerable', squeezed between the family

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<sup>417</sup> James Grant. *Recent British Battles on Land and Sea*. London: Cassell, 1884, p. 345, quoted in Monica Duffy Toft. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>418</sup> Paasi, “Boundaries as Social Processes,” p. 76.

<sup>419</sup> Louis Althusser. *On the Reproduction of Capitalism* (G. M. Goshgarian Trans.) London and New York: Verso, 2014, p. 251.

<sup>420</sup> Althusser. *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

state apparatus and the educational state apparatus, it drums into them, whether it uses new or old methods, a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology (French, arithmetic, natural history, the sciences, literature) or simply the ruling ideology in its pure state (ethics, civic instruction, philosophy).<sup>423</sup>

Although there's place to individuality and critical thinking, the main principle of the curriculum is to convey and espouse the values “rather than evaluate or change them.”<sup>424</sup> The role of education system through the school textbooks for the governments to spread their political and ideological propensities have a great significance.<sup>425</sup> In this respect, the main principle is to promote nationalism by using textbooks as ground both to encourage allegiances and for political mobilization.<sup>426</sup>

Turning to the point, the territorial aspect of the education is significant as it is remarked that “School is a key location in the battle between the community and the state, and so the battle takes on a territorial character”<sup>427</sup> because the territories allow these communities and movements to collectively build a new organization for all society.<sup>428</sup>

Education tends to be self-education; the educational space is not only the classroom but also the whole community; it is not only teachers who teach but also everyone in the members of the community, even children at times; the whole movement is an educating space.<sup>429</sup>

Latin American movements are inspired by popular education to employ the criteria of education. Ecuadorean Indians, Landless Movement of Brazil take responsibility

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<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>424</sup> Nathan J. Brown, “Palestine: The Unseen Conflict over the Hidden Curriculum,” in Alayan and Podeh, *Multiple Alterities*, p. 63.

<sup>425</sup> Ofra Bengio, “Reclaiming National Identity in Kurdish School Textbooks,” *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 3, 2020, 359.

<sup>426</sup> Bengio, “Reclaiming National Identity,” p. 359.

<sup>427</sup> Zibechi. *Territories in Resistance*, p. 28.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>429</sup> Zibechi. *Territories in Resistance*, p. 40.

for education in the way.<sup>430</sup> State-like institutional education was also built in the 1990s in Palestine.<sup>431</sup> As Grosby explains, “of course, the ability to be aware of a center of a territorially extensive society has been heightened by education and by modern means of communication and transportation.”<sup>432</sup> In this sense, these movements view education “as a way of building movements and as an essential aspect of everyday life.”<sup>433</sup>

In general, textbooks were viewed as “the results of political, economic, and cultural activities, battles and compromises [...] conceived, designed, and authored by real people with real interests, [...] published within the political and economic constraints of markets, resources, and power,”<sup>434</sup> and their functions are described in terms of structure, representation, steering, motivation, differentiation, practice and evaluation.<sup>435</sup>

No other socialization instrument can play the role of textbooks “in their capacity to convey a uniform, approved, even official version of what youth should believe.”<sup>436</sup> Thus textbooks are often instrumentalized to impose a specific belief system and promote legitimacy of an established order. As “the curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge incidentally appearing in the texts and classrooms. Rather, the selection and organization of knowledge for schools is an ideological

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<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>431</sup> Brown, “Palestine,” p. 55.

<sup>432</sup> Steven Grosby, “Territoriality,” p. 155.

<sup>433</sup> Zibechi. *Territories in Resistance*, p. 22.

<sup>434</sup> M. W. Apple and L. K. Christian-Smith. *The Politics of the Textbook*. New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 1-2, quoted in Eugenia Roldán Vera, “Textbooks and Education,” in Fuchs and Bock eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, p. 108.

<sup>435</sup> H. Hacker. Didaktische Funktionen des Mediums Schulbuch. In H. Hacker (Ed.), *Das Schulbuch. Funktion und Verwendung im Unterricht*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 1980 and J. J. Hansen. *Mellem design og didaktik: om digitale læremidler i skolen*. Odense: Syddansk Universitet, 2006; cited in Thomas Illum Hansen, “Textbook Use,” in Fuchs and Bock eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, p. 369.

<sup>436</sup> Howard.D. Mehlinger, “International Textbook Revision: Examples from the United States,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1985, p. 287, and Alayan and Podeh, *Multiple Alterities*, p. 1.



process that serves the interests of particular classes and social groups,” the analysis of school textbooks “provide a window, or rather a mirror, through which the researcher can gain valuable insights as to the social and political parameters of a given society, its anxieties and trepidations as well as processes of nation-building, identity construction and social change.”<sup>437</sup>

In particular, “Textbooks are usually at their best (...) on warlike matters”<sup>438</sup> to the extent that First League of nations and then UNESCO took initiative to scrutinize the content of textbooks, particularly history textbooks in which way they represented the wars, conflicts, “enemy” or “enemies of the nation.”<sup>439</sup>

Meanwhile, why I have chosen those cluster of textbooks, which were mentioned in the methodology chapter, is hidden in the following argument:

The role ascribed to the textbook of legitimizing an established political and social order, as well as constructing a national identity, is particularly relevant to textbooks in the subjects of history, geography, social studies and civics. These books provide official and legitimate knowledge that inspires the students to get to “know” themselves as members of a collective.<sup>440</sup>

Although there are substantial differences between these textbooks, my point is to bring them together.

In conclusion, based on the static-centric literature, one can see that there’s no school textbook analysis of non-state actors.<sup>441</sup> As Hansen explains, textbooks are result of a dynamic category, emerging historically and changing according to the sociocultural practices surrounding it.<sup>442</sup> In the contemporary era, textbooks are considered one of

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<sup>437</sup> Alayan and Podeh, *Multiple Alterities*, pp. 1-7.

<sup>438</sup> Walker in W. E. Marsden, ““Poisoned History”: A Comparative Study of Nationalism, Propaganda and the Treatment of War and Peace in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century School Curriculum,” *History of Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2000, p. 31.

<sup>439</sup> Sylvie Guichard, “War in Textbooks,” in Fuchs and Bock eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, p. 317.

<sup>440</sup> Alayan and Podeh, *Multiple Alterities*, p. 3.

<sup>441</sup> Guichard, “War in Textbooks,” p. 317.

<sup>442</sup> Hansen, “Textbook Use,” p. 369.

the sources of knowledge in the schools.<sup>443</sup> The guiding assumption for textbook studies is that ideologies, practices, or socio-political-cultural orders are not only shaped by the textbooks' 'text' but also by the ways in which words, images, and materiality are choreographed into instances of 'mediation'<sup>444</sup>

### **3.9. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the foundational aspects of territoriality through a constructivist lens, emphasizing its etymology, significance, and anomalies within the context of non-state actors. By examining concepts such as national identity, nationalism, and homeland, it becomes evident that the non-state actors often perceive territories as "occupied," leading to practices of resistance, liberation, and governance. Additionally, the chapter has scrutinized various discursive practices—including the territorialization of history through narratives and memories, the discourse of territorial priority, mapping, poetic space, songs, and educational spheres. In this sense, I endeavored to explain the role of education in terms of constructing the concept territoriality within the realm of non-state actors. Indeed, discursive practices emerge as crucial elements within the broader territorialization strategies of non-state actors. In this context, throughout various subtitles, I highlighted the relevant points to underscore the centrality of the sphere of education. While I pointed out in the introduction part, I should reiterate here that I drew on many case studies while writing this conceptual framework as I assume, non-state actors experience similar processes while constructing and pursuing the strategies of territorialization.

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<sup>443</sup> Vera, "Textbooks and Education," pp. 106-107.

<sup>444</sup> Macgilchrist, "Materiality and Mediality of Textbooks," p. 170

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ASCENDANCY OF THE PYD

*“Whether we are mended, or whe’r better they,  
Or whether revolution be the same.”*

*William Shakespeare*

#### 4.1. Introduction

Throughout the twentieth century, Kurds couldn’t “become masters of their own destiny and to obtain the right to have their own say on who they thought they were in history or in any given present-time, and who they wanted to be in the future.”<sup>445</sup> They’ve strived under difficult conditions either peacefully or using violence to get this right.<sup>446</sup> In this context, as Charountaki argues, even though the Kurdish role and how it interacts with state entities is not a new thing, the current changes in the Middle East have brought it to more people's attention.<sup>447</sup> In fact, little ink had been spilt over the Syrian Kurds before the popular Arab uprisings began. One of the exceptions is Jordi Tejel’s oft-quoted book which was published in 2009.<sup>448</sup> At that time, he had written that “despite attempts at reconciliation and although still considered the only true Kurdish popular party in Syria, the PKK–PYD has been unable to maintain its influence in the Kurdish political arena in Syria.”<sup>449</sup> From that

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<sup>445</sup> Hamit Bozarslan, “When the Present Sends Back to the Past: Reading the Kurdish Issue in the 2010s,” *Middle East Critique*, 2018, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 8.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>447</sup> Marianna Charountaki, “Kurdish policies in Syria under the Arab Uprisings: A Revisiting of IR in the New Middle Eastern order,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2015, p. 352.

<sup>448</sup> Jordi Tejel. *Syria's Kurds: History, Politics and Society* (Welle Emily and Welle Jane Trans.) London: Routledge, 2009.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79

time, much has changed, and the PYD currently governs Kurdish populated territories in Syria in the form of “reverse quasi-state” as Hinnebusch defines.<sup>450</sup>

In fact, as put by Lowe, there are many dynamics such as “Kurdish factionalism, the Ba’thist regime, the Syrian oppositions, neighboring states, and trans-national Kurdish politics” to explain the current PYD rule in Northern Syria,<sup>451</sup> and I aim to shed light on these dynamics to better understand the role of education for the territorialization policy of the PYD in this chapter.

## 4.2. Historical Background: Syria’s Kurds

According to Eyal Zisser, Kurds are indigenous people of the areas that were included in Syria. To him, the Kurds were already there in the seventh century when Arabs conquered the Syrian lands, and the areas in which Kurds inhabited were not thought to be an integral part of the Syrian lands, rather to be part of hinterland of Iraq and Diyarbakir.<sup>452</sup> For the more recent times, Schmidinger explains the historical account revealing the geopolitical complexities surrounding the delineation of Turkish-Syrian border.<sup>453</sup> He highlights how the construction of Baghdad railway, rather than “any ethnic or linguistic criteria” played a significant role by shaping the

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<sup>450</sup> Since they (both ISIS and the PYD) lack external recognition yet nonetheless have legitimate internal authority, he calls them “reverse quasi-states.” Please, see Raymond Hinnebusch, “From Westphalian Failure to Heterarchic Governance in MENA: The Case of Syria,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2018, p. 403.

<sup>451</sup> Robert Lowe, “The Emergence of Western Kurdistan and the Future of Syria” in David Romano and Mehmet Gurses eds., *Conflict, Democratization, and the Kurds in the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 226.

<sup>452</sup> Eyal Zisser, “The Kurds in Syria: Caught Between the Struggle for Civil Equality and the Search for National Identity,” in Ofra Bengio ed., *Kurdish Awakening: National Building in a Fragmented Homeland*, Austin: University of Texas, 2014, p. 194; However, Syrian State has denied the fact that Kurds are one of the indigenous people of Syrian territory: “Its attempt to create a homogenous Arab identity for the state and its people have meant that, since the French mandate, no census in Syria has included any indication of ethnic identity.” Please, see Harriett Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria: Political Parties and Identity in the Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2016, p. 18.

<sup>453</sup> Thomas Schmidinger. *Rojava: Revolution, War, and the Future of Syria’s Kurds* (Michael Schiffman Trans.) London: Pluto Press, 2018. It should be explained that the formation of Turco-Syrian border (“fixed by international agreement in 1929”) initiated a process of widespread sedentarization which was the most remarkable socio-economic change having impact on the Kurds of Syria under French mandate. Please, see Nelida Fuccaro, “Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism in Mandatory Syria,” in Abbas Vali eds., *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*. California: Mazda Publishers, 2003, pp. 194-195.

border and inventing “Syrian Kurdistan.” Thus, he refers the emergence of Syrian Kurdistan as a “waste product of the colonial division of the Middle East.”<sup>454</sup> At that point, it will clarify the point to display the territories where the Kurdish population lives in Syria:



**Figure 12.** Kurdish Population in Syria<sup>455</sup>

Ethnic identities of Kurds in Syria diversify based on their social context, such as class, locality, or tribe. However, a collective sense of being part of a Kurdish community remains as an indispensable part of their life in Syria.<sup>456</sup> This reality is apparent in certain cultural and social features, such as maintaining the use of Kurdish language.<sup>457</sup> In this sense, “Rojava” differs from other regions of Kurds live due to the dominant use of Kûrmancî dialect of Kurdish. There are also a limited population speaking other dialects of Kurdish basically migrated from other parts of “Kurdistan.” For instance, Zazakî is prevalent among several hundred families in Serê Kaniyê, and Sorani in the same-sized group in Hasakah.<sup>458</sup>

<sup>454</sup> Schmidienger. *Rojava*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>455</sup> David McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2021, p. 454.

<sup>456</sup> Jordi Tejel, “Toward a Generational Rupture within the Kurdish Movement in Syria?” in Ofra Bengio ed., *Kurdish Awakening: National Building in a Fragmented Homeland*, Austin: University of Texas, 2014, p. 217.

<sup>457</sup> Paulo Pinto, “Les Kurdes de Syrie,” p. 259, cited in *Ibid*.

<sup>458</sup> Schimidenger, p. 13.

Despite differences, Bengio argues that there has been a ‘tacit Kurdish sub-system’ which created a pan Kurdish identity among Kurds living in different countries.<sup>459</sup> According to her, trans-border connections were already common among Kurds before the establishment of the new states that Kurds live in Türkiye, Iraq, Iran and Syria.<sup>460</sup> After establishment of new states, Kurds rejected to accept newly created borders dividing them.<sup>461</sup> In this regard, cross-border smuggling and underground operated medreses held an important place,<sup>462</sup> and cross-border transitions provided the dissemination of political thought and ideologies.<sup>463</sup> As such, national ideas and thoughts passed through smuggling by the early 1940s<sup>464</sup> since books and journals of Kurdish nationalists were carried from Syria to Türkiye.<sup>465</sup>

Some other conditions created conditions for Syrian Kurds to have close ties with Kurds living in Syria, Türkiye, and Iraq. For instance, As Zisser claims, in the mid-1920s, against the centralization and Turkification policies of Turkish state over the Kurdish inhabited regions, many Kurds relocated to the Jazirah region.<sup>466</sup> The flow of Kurds intensified after the Sheikh Said rebellion was subdued.<sup>467</sup> Many Kurdish

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<sup>459</sup> Ofra Bengio, “Separated but Connected: The Synergic Effects in the Kurdistan Sub-System,” in Gareth R V Stansfield and Mohammed Shareef eds., *The Kurdish Question Revisited*, London: Hurst, 2017, p. 78. Gourlay defines Kürdayetî (Pan Kurdish identity) as a political identity that transcends borders and isn’t necessarily motivated by territorial claims, rather can be expressed as a form of political position to safeguards Kurdish interests and support political rights of Kurds in the Middles East. As a concept, it appeared first in a poem of an Iraqi Kurdish poet Kemal Gir coinciding the dissemination of nationalist ideas through Turkish-Syria border. It refers the distinctiveness of Kurdish ethnîe and ideology as a response to Arab nationalism. Please, see William Gourlay, “Kürdayetî: Pan-Kurdish Solidarity and Cross-Border Links in Times of War and Trauma,” *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2018, pp. 26-29.

<sup>460</sup> For more detailed information, please see Bengio, “Separated but Connected,” pp. 80-81.

<sup>461</sup> Hayriye Özen, “Latent Dynamics of Movement Formation: The Kurdish Case in Turkey (1940s-1960s),” *Current Sociology*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 2015, p. 61.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>463</sup> Gourlay, “Kürdayetî,” p. 28.

<sup>464</sup> Özen, “Latent Dynamics of Movement Formation,” pp. 57-74.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62

<sup>466</sup> Eyal Zisser, “The Kurds in Syria.” p. 196.

<sup>467</sup> Eva Savelsberg, "The Syrian-Kurdish movements: Obstacles Rather Than Driving Forces for Democratization" in David Romano and Mehmet Gurses eds., *Conflict, Democratization, and the Kurds*, p. 87.

intellectuals and nationalists, such as Celadet Bedirkhan, Memduh Selim, Ekrem Cemilpaşa and Nureddin Zaza were exiled from Türkiye during 1920s and 1930s and these notable figures made Lebanon and Syria “the centers for pan-Kurdish political and cultural activities.” As such, they played a significant role in developing Kurdish nationalism. In this context, they contributed much on the revival of Kûrmancî dialect of Kurdish.<sup>468</sup>

Against this backdrop, on October 5, 1927, Kurds founded the Khoyboun League. As a secular nationalist movement, it favored for an independent and united Kurdistan.<sup>469</sup> Based in Beirut, its branches in Hasaka, Aleppo, Damascus, Türkiye, Iraq, London, Paris and Detroit<sup>470</sup> disseminated the principles of “nationalism, self-determination, and self-preservation.” These ideas triggered the Ararat rebellion between 1927 and 1930.<sup>471</sup> Although unsuccessful armed struggle of Khoyboun shifted engagement of Kurds of Syria to political and cultural activities.<sup>472</sup> In this sense, one of the first Kurdish-Latin alphabet for the Kûrmancî dialect was developed in Damascus.<sup>473</sup> Celadet Bedirkhan and Kamuran Bedirkhan were leading

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<sup>468</sup> Cengiz Güneş, *The Kurds in a New Middle East*. p. 63; At the beginning, the catalyzer of nationalist political movements of Kurds became the Kurds who had escaped the repression of Turkish government, and the seeds of nationalist political organizations of Kurds were put by Kurdish exiles from Türkiye. In this sense, Bedirkhan brothers (Emin Ali, Celadet Eli, Kamuran, and Suraya Bedirkhan) became pioneers of constructing a Kurdish national identity in Syria. Other Kurdish nationalists fled from Türkiye were Ihsan Nuri Pasha who led the Ararat Revolt (1928-1931), Akram Jamil Pasha, Qadri Jamil Pasha as well as other intellectual figures such as Osman Sabri. Please, see Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*. pp. 49-53.

<sup>469</sup> In 1927, as its establishment purpose was to construct “Kurdish rule in eastern Anatolia,” its leaders assured France and Britain that it wouldn’t give any “encouragement to Kurdish nationalism” both in Syria and Iraq. Please, see McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*, pp. 454-455.

<sup>470</sup> Fuccaro, “Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism,” p. 197.

<sup>471</sup> David L. Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring: A New Map of the Middle East*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2015, p. 68.

<sup>472</sup> Michael M. Gunter. *Out of Nowhere: The Kurds of Syria in Peace and War*. London: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., pp. 11-12; The failure of Ararat Revolt shocked the nascent Kurdish political movement and led to questioning of Khoyboun and its method. Some leading members such as Celadet Bedirkhan turned their struggle on culture among Kurds. To directly quote: “This task of modernizing and ‘civilizing’ the Kurdish people and establishing them as a political body fell to the Kurdish intellectuals who launched a form of cultural renaissance that would define the Kurdish movement and Kurdish national identity in Syria until the present day.” Please, see Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*. p. 56.

<sup>473</sup> Metin Yüksel, 2011. *Dengbêj, Mullah, Intelligentsia: The survival and revival of the Kurdish-Kurmanji language in the Middle East, 1925–1960*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, p. 26.

figures for the Latin typed Kurdish alphabet and other publications in French mandate of Syria and Lebanon.<sup>474</sup> Successive Kurdish movements in Syria inherited its experience on subjects such as “Kurdish self-determination and oppression.”<sup>475</sup>

#### 4.2.1. Kurdish Issue During the French Mandate

As a great ambiguity marked the Syrian political life during the 1920s, various religious and ethnic groups were trying to either utilize or adopt the changing environment, which was characterized by many challenges, including the end of Ottoman Empire, international efforts to protect minorities, and the formation of the French Mandate.<sup>476</sup>

According to the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, Syria became mandate of France.<sup>477</sup> When the borders of Syria, as a new state, were defined under French mandate, a significant proportion of Kurdish population was left in its territorial borders.<sup>478</sup> According to population statistics, in 1924 the population of Kurdish community in Syria was between 200.000 and 220.000 (22.000 of whom were émigrés from Türkiye) which constituted 7.5-8 percent of Syrian population.<sup>479</sup> Among other ethnic minorities-Turks, Yazidis, Assyrians, and Armenians, Kurds constituted the largest ethnic minority.<sup>480</sup>

King Faysal and his followers who had controlled Syria between the period of 1918 and 1920 “regarded Kurds with great suspicion because of their close links with the

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<sup>474</sup> Yüksel, ‘Dengbêj, Mullah, Intelligentsia,’ p. 64.

<sup>475</sup> Kerim Yıldız. *The Kurds in Syria: The Forgotten People*. London: Pluto Press, 2005, p. 29.

<sup>476</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 12.

<sup>477</sup> David L. Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring*, p. 67.

<sup>478</sup> Eyal Zisser, “The Kurds in Syria,” p. 194; Rondot writes that French mandate didn’t have any information until 1933 whether which Kurdish tribes fell under their mandate. Please, see Pierre Rondot, “Les Kurdes de Syrie,” *La France Méditerranéenne et Africaine*. Vol. 2, No. 1, 1939, p. 88, cited in Martin Strohmeier. *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity: Heroes and Patriots, Traitors and Foes*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003, p. 130.

<sup>479</sup> For a detailed information regarding population statistics, please see Fuccaro, “Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism,” p. 192.; Later, in 1945 the Kurdish population was about 250.000, constituting approximately 8.5 percent of all Syrian population. By the late 1990s, this number increased to two million, about 10 percent of state’s inhabitants. Please, see Zisser, “The Kurds in Syria,” p. 194.

<sup>480</sup> David L. Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring*, p. 67.



previous Ottoman administration, and their consequent pro-Ottoman stance during the war.”<sup>481</sup> At that time, Kurdish nationalism was in its “third stage” which was marked by the Kurdish urban intellectuals when France became mandate of Syria in 1920.<sup>482</sup> Tribal discrepancies had hoisted socio-economic relations of Kurds.<sup>483</sup>

In general, Kurdish actors did not come into conflict with French mandate as considering the ambitions of Arab nationalists a greater threat than the French administrators.<sup>484</sup> Likewise, some French administrators, such as Pierre Rondot and Roger Lescot, collaborated with Kurdish intellectuals as the former developed a particular interest in Kurdish issue.<sup>485</sup> The creation of a Kûrmancî grammar with Celadet Ali Bedirkhan was result of such a cooperation.<sup>486</sup>

Although Khoyboun was an urban movement based on a robust ideological component, it focused on to propagate ‘national consciousness among the tribes’ because they believed in “nationalist education of the tribal society of Kurdistan” but Fuccaro thinks that this strategy didn’t become successful as it couldn’t enhance military support for the Ararat revolt and couldn’t mobilize the tribes to join the revolt.<sup>487</sup> In 1932, Khoyboun had made local attempts in Jazira region in terms of educational activities for its members “to establish a Kurdish humanitarian and charitable society.” Although such a society was not established, a monthly journal called Hawar was published at that year.<sup>488</sup> Taking French support, other cultural activities were publishing Kurdish-French bilingual periodical Roja Nû,<sup>489</sup> and

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<sup>481</sup> Fuccaro, “Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism,” p. 197.

<sup>482</sup> For the other stages, please see Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>484</sup> Schmidienger. *Rojava*, p. 42.

<sup>485</sup> Strohmeier. *Crucial Images*, p. 151.

<sup>486</sup> Schmidienger, *Rojava*, p. 42.

<sup>487</sup> Rondot, 'Les Kurdes de Syrie', 105-108; 'Les Kurdes du Levant Français,' (1940 c.a), pp. 21-22, BEY 1364, cited in Fuccaro, “Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism,” p. 207.

<sup>488</sup> Fuccaro, “Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism,” p. 207.

<sup>489</sup> Massoud Sharifi Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance: Kurdish Autonomy in Syria,” in Mehmet Gurses, David Romano and Michael M. Gunter eds., *The Kurds in the Middle East: Enduring Problem and New Dynamics*, p. 101.

opening a radio channel.<sup>490</sup> The argument of the content of Hawar and Ronahî revolved around the fact that the creation of linguistic unity would create Kurdish national unity.<sup>491</sup> In this regard, Metin Yüksel argues that Kurdish intelligentsia as reflected in Hawar Ecole, believed the central role of language for the national revival and survival.<sup>492</sup> Although it was banned in 1937 by France, the cultural activities that Hawar triggered had long-term significance: “Fostering (and standardizing) the language and the idea of a shared culture.”<sup>493</sup>

Although France had an ambiguous Kurdish policy, she exploited the strain between the Syrian national movement and Kurds. Hence, she fostered secessionist sentiments of the Kurdish population, particularly among tribal leaders.<sup>494</sup> Even though the attitude of Kurds toward mandate varied regionally,<sup>495</sup> Kurds were able to maintain their daily lives by pursuing their ethnic identity. Religious and tribal

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<sup>490</sup> Tejel. Syria's Kurds, pp. 20-23, and Eva Savelsberg, “The Syrian-Kurdish Movements,” p. 87.

<sup>491</sup> Yüksel, “Dengbêj, Mullah, Intelligentsia,” p. 259; For instance, the dream of Rewşen Bedirkhan as he wrote in Hawar was: “We (Kurds) have no schools and our children go to schools of other peoples...” Please, see Rewşen Bedirkhan, “Kebanî û Mamoste,” *Hawar*, Vol. 27, 1941, 691, quoted in Yüksel, ‘Dengbêj, Mullah, Intelligentsia,’ p. 260.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267; In this sense, the books published by Hawar displays its effort: “*Rêzana Elfabiya Kurdî* (Guide to the Kurdish Alphabet), *Ruplenine Elfabê* (Pages from the Alphabet), *Biyîşa Pêxember bi Kurdiya Dumilî* (The Prophet’s Life in Dimilî Kurdish [Zaza]), *Nivêjên Êzediyan*, *Mektûb ji Mistefa Kemal paşê re* (Letter to Mustafa Kemal Paşa), *Ji Mesela Kurdistanê*, *Elfabeya Kurdî* (Kurdish Alphabet), *Xwendina Kurdî* (Reading Kurdish) *Elfabeya Min* (My Alphabet), *Dersên Şerîetê* (Studies/Courses of Shariah), *Çarînên Xeyam* (Khayyam’s Quatrains), *Dilê Kurên Min* (The Heart of My Sons), *Proverbes Kurdes/Medhelokên Kurdî* (Kurdish Proverbs), *Le Roi du Kurdistan/Oralê Kurdistanê* (The King of Kurdistan), *Der Adler von Kurdistan/Eyloyê Kurdistanê*, *Der Schnee Des Lichtes/Berfa Ronahiyê Şîhrên Kurdî* (The Snow of the Light Kurdish Poems) and *Mesela Kurdistanê* (The Question of Kurdistan).” Please, see “Kitêbxana Hawarê,” *Hawar* 32 (September 1, 1941), p. 802 quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>493</sup> McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*, p. 455; Certainly, the Kurdish cultural revival in Syria was inspired by ‘the Kurdish cultural renaissance’ which had started in Soviet Armenia and in Iraq following World War I. “To a certain extent the “new guerrilla” ideology supported by Khoyboun, possibly inspired by Latin American movements of independence, introduced the Kurds to the language of modern nationalist mobilization.” Please, see Fuccaro, “Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism,” p. 199. In this regard, this information is valuable: “In Khoybun propaganda addressed to a number of Kurdish communities living in the United States the military mobilization of the organization is called a ‘liberation war’ which expresses ‘the right of all people to self-determination.’” Please, see ‘Abd al-Sattar Tahir Sharaf, *al-Jam’iyat wa al-Munazzamat al-Kurdiyya fi nisf qarn*, Baghdad: 1979, 72, cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>494</sup> Eyal Zisser, “The Kurds in Syria.” p. 197.

<sup>495</sup> Tejel. Syria's Kurds, pp. 20-23, and Eva Savelsberg, “The Syrian-Kurdish Movements,” pp. 11-12.

leaders were actively leading the regions in which Kurds lived.<sup>496</sup> These conditions didn't create conducive conditions for a national mobilization.<sup>497</sup> Meanwhile, according to Tejel, under the French mandate, it is not possible to talk about a minor/major opposition between Kurds and Arabs.<sup>498</sup> Put it differently, under the mandate Syrian state was in a process of construction, for their part, Kurds were "experiencing a transition its own right."<sup>499</sup> The rare mobilizations of Kurds had only local impact over two decades under the French Mandate since socioeconomic development of Kurds were far away from the notion of national unity.<sup>500</sup>

It will be meaningful to mention some of these weak Kurdish mobilizations here. Kurdish activists sent a series of petitions to the mandate power demanding administrative autonomy by pointing out the Alawi and Druze regions which had been given a particular level of autonomy.<sup>501</sup> For instance in April 1924, Mustafa Shahin, representative of Berazî tribes residing between the regions of Jarabalus and Nusaybin, appealed for "the creation of a Kurdish state."<sup>502</sup> In 1928, Kurdish representatives of Syrian assembly offered autonomy for Kurds. However, French officials refused the proposed autonomy. According to them, Kurds didn't sustain the sufficient conditions for the autonomy since they didn't have territorial compactness.<sup>503</sup> Also, in June 1928 Kurds demanded education in Kurdish language

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<sup>496</sup> Tejel, "Toward a Generational Rupture," p. 218; Arbitrarily drawn Turco-Syrian border disrupted socio-economic networks between Kurdish tribes so French administration couldn't avoid stopping commerce between these tribes (Please, see Strohmeier. *Crucial Images*, p. 151.) because the relationship between Kurds living in Turkey, Syria and Iraq was highly strong based of loose-controlled border regime during the period between 1925 and 1960. Please, see Yüksel, "Dengbêj, Mullah, Intelligentsia," p. 27.

<sup>497</sup> Tejel, "Toward a Generational Rupture.," p. 217.

<sup>498</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 13.

<sup>499</sup> Nelidda Fuccaro. "Minorities and ethnic mobilization: the Kurds in Northern Iraq and Syria," in N. Méouchy and P. Sluglett (eds) *Les mandats français et anglais dans une perspective comparative*, Leiden and London: Brill, 2004, p. 595, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>500</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 13.

<sup>501</sup> Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN), Fonds Mandat Syrie et Liban, Cabinet Politique 1054: À S. E. le Général Billotte, Commandant la 2<sup>e</sup> D, I., Délégué du H.-C. à Alep, [s. l.], le 3 avril 1924; cited in Eva Savelsberg, "The Syrian-Kurdish Movements," pp. 87-88.

<sup>502</sup> Eva Savelsberg, "The Syrian-Kurdish Movements," p. 88; and Strohmeier. *Crucial Images*, p. 130.

<sup>503</sup> David L. Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring*, p. 68.

alongside other languages in the three regions of Kurds: Kurd Dagh, the Upper Euphrates and the Upper Jazira. Moreover, they demanded appointment of Kurdish administrators in the mentioned regions however all these demands were not accepted.<sup>504</sup>

Making some concessions to the cultural aspirations of Kurds, the French mandate opened a Kurdish language course at the Arab Institute for Higher Education of Damascus and established a Kurdish course for French officials.<sup>505</sup> This action was part of the policy of the French mandate to have a sympathy to the Kurds by taking their aspirations, wishes and even criticisms, “while at the same time trying to accommodate Syria’s neighbors and the allied interests.”<sup>506</sup> When Kurds sought independence for the regions, they live in it was a threat for the regional order of France, Syrian Arab nationalists and for the neighboring countries Kurds live in.<sup>507</sup> In particular, Türkiye forced the High Commissioner to prevent the ground of such an autonomy.<sup>508</sup>

Meanwhile, tribes in Jazira utilized regional and international dynamics for their survival. They sometimes allied with France sometimes with Türkiye. After the suppression of Sheikh Said revolt, they allied with France against Türkiye however amnesty and land offers of Türkiye induced some tribes to return to Türkiye and fought against France across the borders.<sup>509</sup> Consequently, until 1930, France couldn’t set its authority.<sup>510</sup>

Between 1936 and 1939, a Kurdish-Christian movement demanded an autonomous administration for Jazirah.<sup>511</sup> They requested the similar administrative and cultural

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<sup>504</sup> McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*, p. 456.

<sup>505</sup> Fuccaro, “Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism,” p. 209.

<sup>506</sup> Rondot, “Les Kurdes de Syrie,” cited in Strohmeier. *Crucial Images*, p. 130.

<sup>507</sup> Benjamin White, “The Nation-State Form and the Emergence of ‘Minorities’ in Syria,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2007, p. 73.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>509</sup> Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, p. 48.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>511</sup> Eva Savelsberg, “The Syrian-Kurdish Movements,” p. 88.

demands that Khoyboun pursued. However, they consolidated their demands with a sequence of actions. They sent petitions to the French mandate, and League of Nations, organized public demonstrations, closed the bazaar, and more importantly created a Jazira flag to develop their identity.<sup>512</sup>

During this period, having been educated in foreign schools, a new generation of young Kurds such as Nureddin Zaza and Ismet Chariff Vanly established the organization Hêvî in 1938 to promote awakening of Kurds.<sup>513</sup> Taking assistance of Syrian Kurds and Armenians, they “exploited the oscillating tolerance of the French administration” to promote Kurdish culture.<sup>514</sup>

Certainly, after the establishment of Khoyboun, the content of the Kurdish demands diversified. They called for the Kurdish to be approved as the instruction language in Kurdish regions, and appointment of Kurdish officials in administrative structures of Kurdish regions.<sup>515</sup> However, based on the argument of Tejel mentioned above, the efforts of Khoyboun to lead a Kurdish national mobilization stood fruitless.<sup>516</sup>

Although France did not ratify it, a Franco-Syrian treaty ensuring the independence of Syria was signed in 1936. One of the most important aspects of this treaty was to put the minority communities under the patronage of National bloc led by Sunni Arab majority.<sup>517</sup> Following years, based on the Syrian’s evolving independence

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<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*; Allsopp states that focusing only autonomy of Jazira, weakened tie between three regions of Kurds and their both social and political development and thereby weakened the possibility of establishing ‘a united Kurdish identity and polity in Syria.’ Please, see Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>513</sup> Strohmeier. *Crucial Images*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>515</sup> Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN), Fonds Mandat Syrie et Liban, Cabinet Politique 571: Pétition à Son Excellence le Haut-Commissaire de la République Française en Syrie et en Liban, le 15 avril 1930; cited in Eva Savelsberg, “The Syrian-Kurdish Movements,” p. 88.

<sup>516</sup> Tejel, “Toward a Generational Rupture,” p. 218.

<sup>517</sup> Eyal Zisser, “The Kurds in Syria,” p. 197. By this treaty, the French mandate established a Syrian Arab nationalist government. In the words of Yıldız: “Whilst continuing to support the administrative autonomy of areas such as Jabal Druze. In this way, the French both provided concessions to the majority Sunni Arab population, whilst influencing and dampening such powers through relations with minority groups, avoiding what the French perceived to be the threat of Arab nationalism.” Please, see Yıldız. *The Kurds in Syria*, p. 29.

process, witnessed constant centralization attempts over Kurdish regions with the help of Arab population.<sup>518</sup> The situation of Kurds had deteriorated following the French-Syrian agreement of 1936 due to the rising “anti-Kurdish propaganda of Syrian nationalist.”<sup>519</sup>

During the same period, between 1936 and 1939 in congruent with the French Syrian Treaty of 1936, the National Bloc was dominant in Syrian politics. The government implemented a repressive policy toward the autonomous movement.<sup>520</sup> At the same time, the coalition of Kurds and Christians was dissolved following a conflict in which Kurds aligned with Syrian government against Christians.<sup>521</sup> Indeed, the Syrian government was resigned in February 1939 and the Jazirah went back to under the control of French mandate.<sup>522</sup>

Meanwhile, Soviet Union developed relations with Syrian Kurds starting from the end of 1944. The aim was to invoke a Kurdish rebellion, thereby to capture Kars and Ardahan that it had transferred to Türkiye in 1925. However, a Soviet-Kurd pact didn't emerge as they failed to establish a concrete contact with each other. The significant point is that the rhetoric of Kurds inspired socialist references afterwards.<sup>523</sup>

In 1945, a new association called Unity and Freedom (Yekbûn û Azadî) was replaced with the Khoyboun without removing it.<sup>524</sup> Given the fact that the intellectual expansion was strongly dependent on the French presence in Syria, Arab nationalists strongly opposed the allocation of cultural rights to Kurds.<sup>525</sup> In fact, the political

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<sup>518</sup> Eyal Zisser, “The Kurds in Syria,” p. 197.

<sup>519</sup> Fuccaro, Nelida (1997): “Die Kurden Syriens: Anfänge der nationalen Mobilisierung unter französischer Herrschaft”, in: Borck et al. (1997), p. 318 cited in Strohmeier. *Crucial Images*, p. 158.

<sup>520</sup> Savelsberg, “The Syrian-Kurdish Movements,” p. 89.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>523</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

heritage of French mandate was a divided society which made it difficult to create a national plan. Among other minorities, Kurds also became the target of Arab nationalism as they were identified as part of the “shu’ubiyyun,” people who would resist against Arabization policies.<sup>526</sup>

All in all, the Kurdish policy of French mandate was relevant to exert its influence over “local intermediary groups” to implement French interests.<sup>527</sup> On the other hand, despite its primordial characteristics, the emergence of Kurdish nationalism didn’t let to create loyalty as put properly by Tejel:

The continuity of the old patron–client (clientelist) networks based on tribal loyalties or the re-emergence of Kurdish tribal politics in different forms did not prevent Kurdish nationalism from emerging in the Kurdish enclaves. Quite the contrary, tribal, and religious dynamics served to cultivate Kurdish nationalism.<sup>528</sup>

In this context, Kurdish actors delineated the distinction of Kurds from other identities of the country by bringing the forefront the predominance of Kurdish identity in some regions such as Jazira.<sup>529</sup>

To sum up, the long colonial rule of French mandate allowed different Kurdish communities “especially those settled in the rural north-east of the country,” to demand autonomous regions until the 1930s.<sup>530</sup> National and international concerns of French mandate (her relations with Syrian nationalists and Kemalist Türkiye) dictated to create “divisive and conflicting loyalties,” and different segments of Kurdish communities.<sup>531</sup> Kurds experienced much more autonomy under French mandate, resisted against centralization attempts of early mandate governments of Arab nationalists. The end of French mandate in Syria meant the end of Kurdish

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<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>530</sup> Fuccaro, “Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism,” p. 191.

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*

cultural activities which were conducted by Bedirkhan brothers. Limited cultural activities were discontinued and disorganized.<sup>532</sup>

#### 4.2.2. Kurdish Issue After Syrian Independence

After withdrawal of France completely in the spring of 1946, Syria attained political independence. However, minority rights had not been secured.<sup>533</sup> Kurdish minority as well as other religious minorities was granted tolerance to a limited extent just to integrate them into the Syrian state after 1946. In this sense, Kurds were entitled to be represented in governmental positions.<sup>534</sup>

According to Phillips, the revival of Kurdish and Arab nationalism was in parallel during that period.<sup>535</sup> Until being dissolved in 1946, Khoyboun was robust during World War II years. Later, members of Khoyboun gained ground in the Syrian Communist party.<sup>536</sup> The rise of Kurdish nationalism was seen as a threat to pan-Arab unity, so even the limited tolerance didn't last. Celadet Eli Bedirkhan was assassinated in 1951. Other Kurds, such as General Tawfiq Nizamaldine, were removed from their state positions within army and police.<sup>537</sup> After the relative freedom period of French mandate, Kurdish publications were seized and destroyed by the Syrian government after the mid-1950s. Hassanpour and other define this policy of Syrian government regarding Kurdish language 'linguicide.'<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>532</sup> Yüksel, *Dengbêj, Mullah, Intelligentsia*, p. 67.

<sup>533</sup> Savelsberg, "The Syrian-Kurdish Movements," p. 90.

<sup>534</sup> Zisser, "The Kurds in Syria," p. 198.

<sup>535</sup> Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring*, p. 68.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69; The fly of Barzani to Soviet Union following his failed resistance- which was a long-standing during 1940s- against Baghdad regime and the fall of Mahabad Republic in 1947 had created a condition for Kurdish political movement to hold little for its political endeavors. Moreover, French mandate had cut its financial support for the cultural activities of Kurds. As a result "a vacuum in political and nationalist leadership among the Kurds developed at the same time as a large number of disaffected workers became more politicized." It's within this context that Syrian Communist Party attracted many Kurds at the end of 1940s. As Allsopp remarks, rather than believing a communist utopia or class interests; national interests and leftist ideology invoked them to join the party. Please, see Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>538</sup> Amir Hassanpour, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Michael Chyet, "The Non-Education of Kurds: A Kurdish Perspective," *International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue Internationale de l'Education*, Vol. 42, No. 4, 1996, p. 370.



Syrian Kurds didn't have any political movement until 1957 although independent candidates represented them in the parliament.<sup>539</sup> For the first time, the establishment of a Kurdish party dates to 1957. KDP-S (Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria)<sup>540</sup> was a branch of the one sharing the same name in Iraq. The party's aim was twofold. On the one hand, to strengthen the Kurdish entity and to advocate their national and cultural rights in Syria. On the other hand, to strive for a Syrian state to gain a democratic status that would ensure and safeguard minority rights.<sup>541</sup> The objective of party was not to liberate "Syrian Kurdistan," instead, it followed a "Syrianized" agenda.<sup>542</sup> Not going into details, the KDP split into a "Right" and a "Left" party in the mid-1960s.<sup>543</sup>

#### 4.2.3. Kurdish Issue During the United Arab Republic Period

The better situation of Kurds ended after the establishment of the United Arab Republic UAR (United Arab Republic) in 1958 since the policy of strengthening Arab identity had repercussions for Kurds.<sup>544</sup> As McDowall explains, there was no left room for non-Arab minority groups when Arab nationalism fed by Pan-Arab unity.<sup>545</sup> The KDP-S was banned and its officials were arrested by security services.<sup>546</sup> The dissolution of unity in 1961 didn't change Syria's policies towards Kurds as under the rule of "secessionist regime" between 1961 and 1963, the hostile attitudes continued.<sup>547</sup> Eyyal Zisser points out the fact that tense relations with Iraq

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<sup>539</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 48.

<sup>540</sup> It was later renamed as the Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria. Please, see" Jordi Tejel, "Toward a Generational Rupture," p. 219. Schimdienger thinks that the binary arguments within the party whether to advocate a greater Kurdistan that includes the Kurdish regions of Syria or to pursue Kurds' rights as a minority within Syria became decisive. Please, see Schimdienger. *Rojava*, p. 51.

<sup>541</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, pp. 48-49, and Eyal Zisser, "The Kurds in Syria," p. 199.

<sup>542</sup> Tejel, "Toward a Generational Rupture," p. 219, and Michael M. Gunter. *Out of Nowhere*, p. 25.

<sup>543</sup> As Schimdienger states, Kurdish parties of Syria -except the PYD-descends from one of the splits of the KDP. Please, see Schimdienger. *Rojava*, p. 52.

<sup>544</sup> Eyal Zisser, "The Kurds in Syria," p. 199; and McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*, p. 463.

<sup>545</sup> McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*, p. 463.

<sup>546</sup> Eyal Zisser, "The Kurds in Syria," p. 199.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*

and Türkiye during the 1950s increased the will of Syrian state to ensure its control over its northern territories where a large Kurdish population lived.<sup>548</sup>

During the UAR's reign, discriminatory policies against Kurds increased. The 1961 Kurdish revolt of Iraq increased concern that a similar uprising could emerge in Syria. There was a belief that Kurdish uprising in Iraq was supported by Israel. Such a belief fostered concern that Kurdish groups had potential to be directed by external powers and provide relevant domestic information to them. These concerns led to perceive Kurds to pose a threat to "Syria's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity."<sup>549</sup>

Conversely, in order to cope with the prevalence of Arab nationalism and discriminatory policies of the state, Kurds organized themselves after the establishment of the UAR.<sup>550</sup> Jalal Talabani<sup>551</sup> helped to reinvigorate the ideas of Khoyboun to revive the Kurdish movement and establish a link between Syrian and Iraqi Kurds. Meanwhile, the Syrian Communist Party offered collaboration to Kurds in the context of its ideological confrontation with the West. However, they thought that the defense of Kurdish rights would disappear within the wider struggle for labor rights.<sup>552</sup>

Encouraged by Talabani, the KDP-S revised its name as the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria. This change raised concerns among Arabs, who considered the KDP having irredentist aspirations 'to divide Syria and establish a greater Kurdistan.'<sup>553</sup>

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<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>549</sup> Kerim Yıldız. *The Kurds in Syria*. p. 32; It should be noted that a "Kurdish-Christian mini state" was about to set in the Jazira, and an autonomous unit in the Kurd Dagh "under the joint leadership of the aghawat (traditional Kurdish landlords) and of Naqshbandi religious group called the Muroud." As a result, since the early 1960s, the Jazira has particularly been subjected to oppressive policies of the state, and it was propagated "to see the Jazira as potentially another Israel, with the Kurds as occupiers." Please, see Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, p. 19.

<sup>550</sup> Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring*, p. 69.

<sup>551</sup> He was living in Syria at that time.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*

Over five thousand officials of the KDP-S were judged. Many of them were convicted either to jail or executed. As a result, “the KDP-S was driven underground in 1960.”<sup>554</sup>

According to Schimidienger, the severe oppression against Kurds during the period of the UAR has been represented with a national remembrance for Syrian Kurds as a tragic theater fire coincided with the last months of the government.<sup>555</sup> By the order of the district mayor, all primary school students had been obliged to attend the screening of an Egyptian movie in Amude, a Kurdish-Assyrian town on November 13, 1960. Exceeding 250-seated capacity of cinema, 500 students attended, and 152 children died during this fire.<sup>556</sup> After the death of 152 children in the theater fire, the ethnic tension was inflamed as it was believed that “Arab agents” sparked the fire.<sup>557</sup>

#### **4.2.4. Kurdish Issue During the Ba’th Period**

The constitution of Ba’ath party was targeting all ethnic and religious groups with a claim of “the notion of the unity of the Arab nation”<sup>558</sup> so Ba’th regime perceived internal divisions a serious threat to impose its official ideology.<sup>559</sup> In this sense, the Ba’th regime was the first government to perceive the Kurdish identity as a serious threat.<sup>560</sup>

Kurdish policy of Ba’th can be divided in two distinct phases. The first period, lasting from 1963 to 1970, the coercion was the preponderant method to manage the Kurdish issue. The second period, spanning from 1970 to 2000, seemed more

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<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>555</sup> Schimidienger. *Rojava*, p. 54.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>557</sup> Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring*, p. 70.

<sup>558</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 57.

<sup>559</sup> Tejel, “Toward a Generational Rupture,” p. 218.

<sup>560</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 57.

pragmatic that coercion and redistribution of resources were combined to manage the Kurdish issue.<sup>561</sup> The third period between 2000 and 2011 is also added in this chapter.

#### **4.2.4.1. Kurdish Issue During the Period Between 1963 and 1970**

Despite all repressions, “the Syrian state and its elites possessed neither a clear ideology nor a sufficiently coercive power base to pose a serious threat to Kurdish identity” until 1963.<sup>562</sup> However, the Kurds as well as other ethnic groups were invited either to “maintain passive obedience” or to abide by the tenets of the regime.<sup>563</sup> Different from other ethnic groups, Kurds directly suffered from the state of emergency of 1963 since new laws promptly introduced certain restrictions over Kurdish language.<sup>564</sup>

Beginning from 1945, there had been a wave of illegal Kurdish migration from Türkiye to Hasakah.<sup>565</sup> Furthermore, between 1954 and 1962, one hundred thousand Kurds fled to Amude, Qamishli, and Jazira regions from Türkiye.<sup>566</sup> Syrian government justified its disenfranchisement policies leaning on fleeing Kurds from Türkiye. Thus, based on Decree 93, following the 1962 census, 120.000 Kurds were identified as *ajanib*, being deprived of basic rights of voting, owning property, or working in government offices. Additionally, 75.000 Kurds were classified as *maktoumeen*, suffering worse conditions than the *ajanib*, who had no civil rights of legal marriage, political participation, owning property, and education.<sup>567</sup> As they were not informed properly, many Kurds didn't participate in the census. They were

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<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>562</sup> Tejel, “Toward a Generational Rupture,” p. 218.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>565</sup> Especially since 1945, the population growth in Hasaka had given concern the government in early 1960s. Please, see McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*, p. 467.

<sup>566</sup> Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring*, p. 71.

<sup>567</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 51.

classified as ‘unrecorded’ in addition to Kurds who were serving in military forces.<sup>568</sup>

More importantly, twelve-point plan of Syrian politician Muhammad Talab Hilal against the Jazira Kurds epitomizes the harsh Kurdish policy of Ba’th: 1) dispersion of Kurds from their territories; 2) depriving Kurds from education in any language; 3) depriving Kurds from employment opportunities; 4) extradition of Kurds wanted by Turkey; 5) pursuing the ‘divide and rule’ policy among Kurds; 6) creation of Arab belt and dispersion of Kurds from these regions; 7) colonization of Kurdish lands by ‘pure and nationalist Arabs.’; 8) militarization of Arab belt territories; 9) setting up “collective farms” for new Arab population; 10) a ban on the right to vote for whom doesn’t speak Arabic; 11) the displacement of Kurdish clerics and replaced with Arabs clerics; 12) implementing an anti-Kurdish propaganda among Arabs.<sup>569</sup>

Whether socialist experience of the 1950s, or infitah policies the 1970s created conditions to change anything for “Kurdish emancipation.”<sup>570</sup> Kurds were kept in an underdeveloped agricultural status by “using landless Kurds as cheap labor.”<sup>571</sup> In general rural population, and in particular landless Kurdish workers (except was rich Kurdish landlords) couldn’t have benefited from the Ba’athist development projects after 1963 coup.<sup>572</sup> Moreover, in the Jazira region, 6.552.700 acres of land was expropriated from Kurdish farmers guised under land reform.<sup>573</sup>

In the educational sphere, Kurdish schools had not already been allowed in Syria before the Ba’ath regime. However, under the Ba’ath regime unlike other minority

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<sup>568</sup> Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring*, p. 71.

<sup>569</sup> Nazdar, “The Kurds in Syria,” pp. 216-217.

<sup>570</sup> V. Perthes, “The Bourgeoisie and the Baath,” *Middle East Report* 21, Vol. 31, No. 7, 1991, and Cemgil and Clemens Hoffmann, “The ‘Rojava Revolution’ in Syrian Kurdistan: A Model of Development for the Middle East?” *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 2016, p. 58.

<sup>571</sup> A. Flach, E. Ayboğa, and M. Knapp in *Rojava*, Hamburg: VSA Verlag, 2015, p. 244, and Cemgil and Hoffmann, p. 58.

<sup>572</sup> V. Perthes. *The Political Economy of Syria Under Asad*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1995, and Cemgil and Hoffmann, pp. 58-59.

<sup>573</sup> Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, p. 25.

schools bilingual form of schools were not permitted and more importantly, the public schools played a crucial role to be centers of the Arabization of Kurds.<sup>574</sup> In this sense, in 1967, school textbooks excluded any reference to the existence of Kurds.<sup>575</sup> Syrian educational policies can be found in a secret study regarding the Kurds written in 1963 in Syria:

The Kurdish tribes of Jazira...have this one desire which gives them their strength: the dream of a Kurdish homeland which is today deeply rooted in the mind of every Kurd, thanks largely to the education we have so generously lavished upon them, and which is being turned as a weapon against us. The idea of Arabizing them through education is misguided, for the results are the opposite of what we expected.<sup>576</sup>

#### 4.2.4.2. Kurdish Issue During the Period Between 1970 and 2000

Designed in 1963 but implemented in 1973,<sup>577</sup> as a part of “Arab-belt policy,” a military zone (wide in fifteen kilometers and long in 375 kilometers) was established through Syria’s borders with Türkiye and Iraq, and Syrian Arabs were relocated in new settlements.<sup>578</sup> The construction of Tabqa dam in 1973 offered the opportunity to place Arab population to Jazirah.<sup>579</sup> In this sense, 25.000 Arab families were relocated in al-Hasaka where 41 villages had been constructed between 1973 and 1976.<sup>580</sup>

In 1977, Kurdish place names were changed with Arabic names. The place names of Kurdish regions such as Kobanê, Serê Kanîyê, and Dêrik were respectively changed to Ain al-Arab, Ras al-Ayn, and al-Malikiyah.<sup>581</sup> In the 1980s, although there was a

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<sup>574</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 59, and Schmidienger, *Rojava*. p. 67.

<sup>575</sup> M. Gunter. *Out of Nowhere*. p. 21; School textbooks of geography omitted all mentions regarding Kurds after 1963. Please, see Hassanpour, and Others, p. 373.

<sup>576</sup> Quoted in in Strohmeier. *Crucial Images*, p. 146.

<sup>577</sup> M. Gunter. *Out of Nowhere*. p. 21.

<sup>578</sup> Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 102.

<sup>579</sup> Schmidienger. *Rojava*, p. 65.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>581</sup> M. Gunter. *Out of Nowhere*. p. 21; Raising place names to eradicate Kurdish and Aramean names was a policy to “satisfy the demands of Arab nationalism.” In this context, many place names in

spark of cultural revival such as literary meetings, concerts, and poetic gatherings, discrimination policies such as prohibition on Kurdish language and cultural centers<sup>582</sup> continued in congruent with the state of emergency of 1963.<sup>583</sup> Kurdish language had never been accepted official and in 1986 it was banned also in the workplace. Indeed, in 1988 singing non-Arabic songs was prohibited at weddings and festivals. Renewed prohibitions were observed in 1989, and in 1996. Unlike other minorities such as Armenians and Assyrians, Kurds were not tolerated to teach Kurdish in their private schools.<sup>584</sup>

Syrian government granted indulgence to Kurds after the escalation of the Muslim Brotherhood's threatening insurgent activities in late 1970s. As a part of its aspiration to be a regional power, Syria harbored various movements having tension relations with neighboring countries.<sup>585</sup> During 1970s, Syria supported various Kurdish parties against Iraqi regime.<sup>586</sup> In this context, the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) of Talabani found shelter in Syria in 1975, and the government allowed the KDP to recruit hundreds of Syrian Kurds as combatants in late 1980s.<sup>587</sup> The support of Damascus had a condition that Iraqi Kurdish parties wouldn't mobilize Syrian Kurds against As'ad's regime.<sup>588</sup>

More importantly, the PKK members came to Syrian territories in early 1980s.<sup>589</sup> There was twofold aim of Assad's strategy to encourage the PKK: to dispel attention

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Upper Jazira and Kurd Dagh were expunged in the 1970s. Please, see McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*, p. 462.

<sup>582</sup> David McDowall. *The Kurds*. UK: Minority Rights Group, December 1996, p. 35, and Dryaz, "Non-State Actors and Governance." p. 102; The long list of restrictions and prohibitions regarding Kurds and their language are listed in "Syria," *Amnesty International Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review*, 2011, pp. 2-3.

<sup>583</sup> Dryaz, "Non-State Actors and Governance," p. 102.

<sup>584</sup> McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*, p. 472.

<sup>585</sup> Dryaz, "Non-State Actors and Governance," pp. 102-103.

<sup>586</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75. In this framework, the KDP and PUK were allowed to operate in Syria until 2003. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 74,

<sup>589</sup> Dryaz, "Non-State Actors and Governance," p. 103.

from Syrian domestic Kurdish issue and to embolden them combat Türkiye, Syria's enemy during that period.<sup>590</sup> Even though the regime planned to use the PKK as leverage against Türkiye, it inadvertently created a self-confidence for Kurds in Syria. Thus, even the Newroz celebrations were banned in 1986 as the participation increased after the existence of the PKK in Syria<sup>591</sup> as the PKK grabbed "public space" by waging cultural activities, most notable one was the Newroz which became entirely a PKK activity.<sup>592</sup> Imitating the state authority, it enhanced its prestige and authority. For example, it fulfilled the responsibility for law and order by displacing state authority in Kurd Dagh,<sup>593</sup> and created a strong in Kurd Dagh leaning on its leftist and non-tribal background and in Kobane where its existence weakened tribal attachments.<sup>594</sup> Consequently, the decision of Syrian Ba'th regime to provide asylum to the KDP and PUK in 1970s, and to the PKK in 1980s and 1990s, served to strengthen the influence of these groups over Syrian Kurds.<sup>595</sup>

#### **4.2.4.3. Kurdish Issue During the Period Between 2000 and 2011**

The consolidation of the autonomy of the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) in 2003 revived the same fears of a possible development in Syrian territories in 1991, when a Kurdish autonomy had been established. Thus, a wave of arrests ended the "Damascus Spring" which had been prompted by Bashar al-Assad, the successor of Hafiz al-Assad.<sup>596</sup>

In 2004, the Qamishli uprising has been a turning point for Syria's Kurds<sup>597</sup> as for the first time in Syrian history, a united Kurdish mobilization was directed against

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<sup>590</sup> Ofra Bengio, "Separated but Connected," p. 83.

<sup>591</sup> Schmidienger. *Rojava*, p. 71.

<sup>592</sup> McDowall. *A Modern History of Kurds*, p. 473.

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>595</sup> M. Gunter. *Out of Nowhere*, pp. 40-45, and Ofra Bengio, "Separated but Connected," p. 83.

<sup>596</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 74.

<sup>597</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 35.



the authority of government.<sup>598</sup> On March 12, 2004, at a football match, insults between the fans of the local team Qamishli, and opposing team Dayr al-Zur triggered a riot.<sup>599</sup> Reminding Halabja massacre, Sunni Arab fans of Dayr al-Zur chanted slogans in admiration of Saddam Hussein. The local team fans responded with chants “Long Live Kurdistan” and some others admiring George W. Bush.<sup>600</sup> After shooting of the security forces, with the order of governor, four Arabs and eight Kurds were killed. Subsequently, despite massive killings and arrests, Kurds took mass demonstrations<sup>601</sup> in all Kurdish-majority regions. Following the uprising, the first armed Kurdish movement called Tevgera Ciwanên Kurd (Kurdish Youth Movement) was founded on 12 March 2005. This group carried out a series of attacks in which nearly 120 security forces murdered. However, Syrian authorities managed to arrest leading cadres of the movement in 2008.<sup>602</sup> Despite arrests they ‘became one of the most important protagonists of the protests in Rojava’ in 2011.<sup>603</sup>

Other Kurdish parties kept their silence in this uprising. In fact, Kurdish parties constantly undertook a mediating role between the regime and Kurdish population. The constraints of their illegal operations forced them to dispose of any idea to break the “red lines” of the regime, either to demand the removal of it or to claim an independent state.<sup>604</sup> Conversely, the PYD set itself apart from other Kurdish parties by being only party dedicating wholeheartedly to the 2004 uprising. The Syrian regime retaliated brutally to this opposition, thus the PYD had a weak presence at the beginning of popular uprisings in 2011.<sup>605</sup> Although there have been some temporary

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<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>599</sup> M. Gunter. *Out of Nowhere*, p. 93.

<sup>600</sup> Phillips. *The Kurdish Spring*, p. 79.

<sup>601</sup> Harriet Allsopp and Wladimir van Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria: Governance, Diversity and Conflicts*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2019, p. 33.

<sup>602</sup> Schmidienger. *Rojava*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*, *Rojava*, p. 80.

<sup>605</sup> “Flight of Icarus: The PYD’s Precarious Rise in Syria,” International Crisis Group Middle East Report, No. 151, May 8, 2014, p. 4.

liberalization policies, Arabization policies had severely been put in practice until the eruption of 2011 uprising.<sup>606</sup> As Allsopp writes, the bases of oppressive policies were embedded in the main institutions constituting Syrian identity “the constitution, the law and the political system.”<sup>607</sup> Remaining nearly unchanged under the rule of Ba’ath regime in Syria, the only change took place in 2000 for amendment of the age of president to allow Bashar al-Assad’s presidency.<sup>608</sup>

### 4.3. Kurdish Parties in Syria

Before the establishment of the Kurdish political parties in Syria, four distinct organizations marked Kurds’ political identity: Khoyboun, Kurdish-Christian autonomist movement of 1937, the Moroud, and the Syrian Communist Party.<sup>609</sup>

Due to their smaller population, historically, Syrian Kurds have followed trajectory of Kurdish movements in Türkiye and Iraq.<sup>610</sup> Although they were less active compared to the other Kurdish movements, they identified themselves with these movements.<sup>611</sup> For instance, Syrian Kurds crossed Iraqi border to help “their brethren” in the armed conflict in 1974-75.<sup>612</sup> In this context, despite the fact that the Syrian Kurdish political parties failed to achieve significant ethnic mobilization in Syria throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Syria's Kurds were crucial to the success of Kurdish political parties from Iraq and Türkiye throughout this period, while they were contributing significantly to pan-Kurdish politics.<sup>613</sup>

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<sup>606</sup> Ofra Bengio, “Reclaiming National Identity in Kurdish School Textbooks,” *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 3, 2020, p. 361.

<sup>607</sup> Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, p. 21.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>610</sup> Bengio, “Separated but Connected,” p. 83.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>612</sup> M. Gunter. *Out of Nowhere*. p. 41, and Ofra Bengio, “Separated but Connected,” p. 83.

<sup>613</sup> Güneş, *The Kurds in a New Middle East*, p. 65.

In reality, the illegality adversely affected the structure of Kurdish parties. They survived by creating ‘clandestine system of party cells’ as they couldn’t keep larger meetings and retain permanent party structure which made the maintenance of a political strategy difficult. As a result, the parties became dependent on a leader which Schimidienger calls “party bosses.” Thus, for instance, the PDKS and its successor the Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party have been led by the same figure since 1965. Not demanding any form of autonomy and their collaboration with the regime distracted younger generation and led them to join the PKK.<sup>614</sup>

The leftist political groups have had capacity to mobilize large numbers of people among Kurds. Kurds adopted communism as a bulwark against pan-Arabism in both Iraq and Syria.<sup>615</sup> However, although having a Marxist and socialist discourse, Kurdish secular parties had moderate position in identity proclamation. This position prevented them to distinguish from other Arab parties,<sup>616</sup> and in this manner, they never involved in armed struggle against Damascus government.<sup>617</sup> Indeed, this was a strategy of the Syrian state since it was exerting a limited legitimacy and mobilization right to Kurdish parties. By this tactic, Syrian State maintained stability through preventing Kurds-along with other ethnic and religious groups- to come together as a unified ethnic identity that would threaten the regime.<sup>618</sup>

Although the government set certain boundaries for Kurdish actors-intellectuals, religious, tribal, and political actors- they consolidated their existence by constant contact.<sup>619</sup> However, Kurdish political parties could not inspire to the Kurds to attach them to a nationalist ideal due to “divided by personal and ideological quarrels,

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<sup>614</sup> Schimidienger. *Rojava*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>615</sup> Güneş Murat Tezcür, “A Century of the Kurdish Question: Organizational Rivalries, Diplomacy and Cross-Ethnic Coalitions,” *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2018, p. 8.

<sup>616</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 90.

<sup>617</sup> Tejel, “Toward a Generational Rupture,” p. 219.

<sup>618</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 89. In this way, practices regarding Kurdish language or other cultural activities can be allowed at one time and can be restricted at another. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*

lacking in human, material, and symbolic resources, and plagued by an (at best) ambiguous relationship with the government.”<sup>620</sup>

As Tejel argues, although Kurds had been exposed to certain Syrian-Arab cultural and political suppression through many means such as education, and television; Kurdish culture persisted to maintain its diverse expressions. This has also been evident in “sense of Kurdish community” although they were affiliated with various diverse group forms such as class, locality, and tribe.<sup>621</sup> Kurdish culture kept its vitality although it was exposed to Arabization policies of state.<sup>622</sup> All these were result of the attempts of Kurdish parties. For instance, the KDPS persistently advocated the teaching of Kurdish language in Latin script, and cultivating nationalist ideas of Syrian Kurds, utilizing the Kurdish myths (Sheikh Sa’id of Türkiye and Mustafa Barzani of Iraq), and prominent cultural and intellectual figures (Cegerxwîn,<sup>623</sup> Osman Sabri, the Bedirxan brothers, and Ehmedê Xanî.)<sup>624</sup>

On the other hand, Kurdish political parties had been losing popularity since the 1990s due to the factors such as factionalism, personal interests of the party leaders, and failure to achieve concessions from the state for Kurds.<sup>625</sup> The same problems kept their vitality during the 2000s. Moreover, members of various political movements such as Azadi, the Yekîfî, the Kurdish Future Movement, the KDP-S, and the PYD encountered coercion by being charged of “inciting sectarian conflict,” “weakening national sentiment,” “membership in an unlicensed organization,” and “rioting.”<sup>626</sup> However, although Öcalan was expelled and various PKK leader were extradited, the repercussions of the PKK crisis marked Syrian politics.<sup>627</sup>

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<sup>620</sup> Tejel, “Toward a Generational Rupture,” p. 220.

<sup>621</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 82.

<sup>622</sup> Tejel, “Toward a Generational Rupture,” p. 217.

<sup>623</sup> Cegerxwîn’s “consciousness-raising poetry” was influential on the emergence of “a new generation of mullahs” who uttered Kurdish concerns. Please, see Yüksel, Dengbêj, Mullah, *Intelligentsia*, p. 27.

<sup>624</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 92.

<sup>625</sup> One of the exceptions was the establishment of the Partîya Yekîtiya Kurdî li Sûriyê (the Kurdish Union Party in Syria) which made the demands of Kurds more visible. Please, see Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>626</sup> Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 104.

<sup>627</sup> Tejel. *Syria's Kurds*, p. 79.

Although constitutionally there was no room for the Kurdish parties to operate in legal framework, a number of factors became influential on the rebirth of the Kurdish issue in Syria: The impact of cross-border Kurdish movements on that of Syrian ones; the rupture between the PKK and Syrian state, a new environment following the death of Hafiz Assad in 2000, and the formation of Kurdish de-facto autonomy in Iraq.<sup>628</sup>

At the outset of the Syrian uprisings, there were nearly 300.00 Kurds deprived of Syrian citizenship.<sup>629</sup> The rights of ethnic and religious minorities were ignored at the expense of forging Arab citizenship and nationhood. Kurds were among these minorities, however they organized themselves politically and culturally to maintain and safeguard their rights.<sup>630</sup>

#### 4.4. Syrian Civil War

The arbitrary border impositions enforced by Sykes-Picot agreement created incongruence between “supra and sub-state identities.”<sup>631</sup> Territory and identity incongruence has been potential reason of the failed states in Arab Mashreq.<sup>632</sup> The collapse of Syrian state was exacerbated by a proxy war between global and regional powers after civil war erupted.<sup>633</sup> Hinnebusch argues that the Westphalian statehood collapsed in Syria after popular Arab uprisings. The limited state authority led to creation of “heterarchic zones,” where the “sovereignty of state was challenged” by supra-state influence and sub-state fragmentation.<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>628</sup> Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 104.

<sup>629</sup> Burcu Özçelik, “Explaining the Kurdish Democratic Union Party’s Self-Governance Practices in Northern Syria, 2012-18,” *Government and Opposition*. Vol. 1, No. 21, 2019, p. 5.

<sup>630</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*. p. 1; Allsopp writes another point in her another book: “Kurdish society, with its politicization and national sentiment for mass mobilization is a resource for the parties, as yet not fully exploited.” Factionalism, unwillingness to lead the Kurdish masses, not breaching the red lines of the regime marked the Kurdish political parties prior to the uprising. so, on the eve of uprisings, Kurdish parties had lost support of the Kurdish population while “Syrian Kurdish national consciousness was said to be at its highest ever level.” Please, see Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*. pp. 100-176.

<sup>631</sup> Hinnebusch, “From Westphalian Failure,” p. 393.

<sup>632</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 391-392.

Rotberg<sup>635</sup> thinks that state weakening in a country accelerates the identity-based discontent not only within its territory but also affects people in the wider geopolitical space who have the same or a similar identity. That is, as “a discontent exporting event,” state weakening has a ripple effect by creating identity-based transnational conflicts.<sup>636</sup> In this sense, Syrian civil war was seen as an opportunity by Kurds to fulfill their self-determination aspirations.<sup>637</sup> In this context, particularly, the PYD/YPG (People’s Protection Units) has evolved in this environment as an actor with quasi-state characteristics and both conventional and unconventional warfare capabilities.<sup>638</sup>

In fact, at the outset of the war, the demonstrations began without involvement of any Kurdish parties.<sup>639</sup> Despite the promises of Assad that he would grant citizenship back to all *ajanib* in early April 2011, it couldn’t weaken the protests.<sup>640</sup> To prevent the Kurds joining the popular uprisings, Syrian regime also showed tolerance towards the return of the PYD leader, Saleh Muslim who had settled in the PKK settlements after multiple detentions.<sup>641</sup> Moreover, the government allowed the PYD to open several cultural centers and Kurdish schools<sup>642</sup> however, Kurdish protests escalated after the death of Mechael Temmo.<sup>643</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> Robert Rotberg, “The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States,” in Robert Rothberg (ed.) *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, and Akin Ünver, “Weak States, Strong Non-state actors: Theory of Competitive Control in Northern Syria,” *Ortadoğu Etüdüleri*, Vol. 8, No.1, 2018, p. 60.

<sup>636</sup> Ünver, “Weak States,” p. 60.

<sup>637</sup> Zeynep Kaya and Matthew Whiting, “Sowing Division: Kurds in the Syrian War,” *Middle East Policy*. Vol. 24, No. 1, 2017, p. 79.

<sup>638</sup> Özlem Kayhan Pusane, “How to Profile PYD/YPG as an Actor in the Syrian Civil War: Policy Implications for the Region and Beyond,” in Özden Zeynep Oktav, Emel Parlar Dal and Ali Murat Kurşun eds., *Violent Non-state Actors and Syrian Civil War: The ISIS and YPG Cases*, Switzerland: Springer, 2018, p. 75.

<sup>639</sup> Robert Lowe, “The Emergence of Western Kurdistan,” p. 227.

<sup>640</sup> Schmienger. *Rojava*, p. 86.

<sup>641</sup> Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 108.

<sup>642</sup> Ayad, “L’assassinat de Mechaal Tamo Met à l’épreuve La Retenue Des Kurdes de Syrie,” cited in Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 108.

<sup>643</sup> On 7 October 2011, a prominent Kurd, Mechael Temo was killed in Qamishli. He was the leader of the Syrian Kurdish Future Movement and a member of the executive committee of the then broadly

The division of Kurds in terms of demography and geography; and their resistance against oppressive government had made them more politicized and nationalistic compared to the Arab society in Syria preceding to the Syrian uprising.<sup>644</sup> As will be mentioned below, the war laid the ground for the rise of the PYD. In this context, the argument of Sean Lee partly explains the rise of the PYD through Syrian war: If Syrian civil war had not erupted, it would not be possible to imagine “Rojava.”<sup>645</sup>

#### 4.5. The Rise of the PYD

The growth of the PYD in Northern Syria should not be viewed as a sudden development; rather, it has its origins in the lengthy history of the Kurds, particularly the PKK, in both Türkiye and Syria, as well as the internal dynamics of the Syrian conflict.<sup>646</sup> Nay, compared to the other Kurdish parties, the supremacy of the PYD didn't evolve naturally. Rather, its administrative, political, and coercive infrastructure have been constructed previously.<sup>647</sup>

As Özçelik put it rightly, armed groups advocating secession or autonomy, such as the PYD, are motivated by ethno-nationalism in terms of ideology and seek for external legitimacy compared to the other non-state armed actors.<sup>648</sup> In this regard, the desire for international recognitions imposes specific expectations and limitations on actors aspiring self-determination, affecting their strategies, in particular their relations with violence.<sup>649</sup> The PYD made many attempts to legitimize the power of

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based opposition SNC. Please, see Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 108. According to Gunter, two significant events preceded the PYD autonomy: the Qamishli revolt in March 2004, and the demise of Mechael Temmo in October 2011. Please, see M. Gunter. *Out of Nowhere*, p. 93

<sup>644</sup> Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, p. 100.

<sup>645</sup> Sean Lee, “The Evolution of Rojava: Tensions between Democratic Federalism and State-Building in Northern Syria.” in Mehmet Gurses, David Romano and Michael M. Gunter eds., *The Kurds in the Middle East*. p. 85.

<sup>646</sup> Michiel Leezenberg, “The Ambiguities of Democratic Autonomy: The Kurdish movement in Turkey and Rojava,” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2016, p. 681.

<sup>647</sup> Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 109.

<sup>648</sup> Özçelik, “Explaining the Kurdish Democratic Union Party’s Self-Governance Practices,” p. 4.

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.*

its administration. In this sense, elections played a pivotal role. The first election was held in October 2011 to form “Council of Western Kurdistan” to manage the future-captured regions. Moreover, the PYD derived its legitimacy also from being a protector of the region against the internal and external nemeses. The core actors of this process have been internally Syrian state, jihadist opposition; and externally Türkiye.<sup>650</sup> Furthermore, the process of identity construction through the symbols has been another effective legitimization strategy.<sup>651</sup>

Apart from these strategies, the PYD, compared to the other Kurdish parties in Syria, had clearer goals and the PKK’s helpful experience and practice paved it a way in the Syrian war.<sup>652</sup> The fight against the ISIS also revived solidarity among different Kurdish movements of different countries, and thereby increased its supremacy.<sup>653</sup> Cross-border Kurdish solidarity strengthened when they felt that they were not protected physically, and their interest were disdained by the nation-states where they live in. When the ISIS attacked Kurdish areas in Syria, Kurds in Türkiye watched with trepidation,<sup>654</sup> confirming the argument of Bertrand Badie: “Borderlines do not separate, but create new solidarities or activate old ones, as we can also observe in the Middle East with Kurds (between Türkiye and its neighbors.)”<sup>655</sup>

#### **4.5.1. The Territorial Expansion of the PYD**

The PYD refrained from involving in the war until the opportune circumstances emerged at the outset of the war. Later, the PYD benefited from the battle between the armed oppositions and the Assad regime. After the withdrawal of Syrian forces

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<sup>650</sup> Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 113.

<sup>651</sup> Massoud Sharifi Dryaz, “Guerrilla Warfare: Armed Struggle and Symbolic Power,” *Teorik Bakış*, No. 7, 2015, and Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 113.

<sup>652</sup> Kaya and Lowe, “The Curious Question of the PYD–PKK Relationship,” p. 278.

<sup>653</sup> Bengio, “Separated but Connected,” p. 86.

<sup>654</sup> William Gourlay. *The Kurds in Erdoğan’s Turkey: Balancing Identity, Resistance, and Citizenship*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020, p. 142.

<sup>655</sup> Bertrand Badie. *Rethinking International Relations*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020, p. 71.



from Kurdish regions (except Qamishli) in July 2012, the PYD seized the power in these regions.<sup>656</sup> By the end of July 2012, much of the Kurdish regions were under control of the PYD.<sup>657</sup> Certainly, not all progress of the PYD was as straightforward as this. For instance, in July 2013, the town of Ras al-Ayn (Serê Kaniyê) was seized after a confrontation with Jabhat al-Nusra.<sup>658</sup> Supported by the US air force, the PYD captured the control of Tel Abyad in June 2015, connecting the Jazira and Kobane cantons.<sup>659</sup> By 2018, the PYD was controlling nearly 30 percent of Syrian territory, containing strategic zones such as, oil resources, border with Türkiye, and Arab majority regions.

The ISIS besieged Kobane canton in September 2014. This situation revived pan-Kurdish sentiments among Kurdish communities as they viewed the siege of Kobane “a struggle of life and death” given the massacres of the ISIS. For instance, the KRG set aside its quarrel with the PYD and sent a military force.<sup>660</sup> The defense of Kobane became a powerful symbol for the PYD as it was described as the “castle of resistance for the four parts of Kurdistan.”<sup>661</sup> The return of numerous fallen bodies of the PKK members has increased the meaning of “Rojava” for Kurds living in Türkiye as Mesut Yeğen points out this situation as “this is virtually the first time since the foundation of the Turkish republic that the Kurds of Turkey have engaged in mass combat against a non-Kurdish force outside Turkey.”<sup>662</sup> In this sense, The

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<sup>656</sup> Spyridon Plakoudas, “The Syrian Kurds and the Democratic Union Party: The Outsider in the Syrian War,” *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol 28, No. 1, 2017, p. 101.

<sup>657</sup> Robert Lowe, “The Emergence of Western Kurdistan,” p. 228.

<sup>658</sup> Plakoudas, “The Syrian Kurds,” pp. 102-103.

<sup>659</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>660</sup> Plakoudas, “The Syrian Kurds,” p. 105. It has also strengthened the relations between the USA and the PYD. Please, see Ozum Yesiltas, “Continuity and Change in Syrian Kurdistan: The Rojava Revolution and Beyond.” in Mehmet Gurses, David Romano and Michael M. Gunter eds., *The Kurds in the Middle East: Enduring Problem and New Dynamics*, p. 135

<sup>661</sup> Güneş and Lowe, “The Impact of the Syrian War.” p. 7; Küçük and Özselçuk think that Kobane has transformed into “a metaphor for liberation.” Please, see Bülent Küçük and Ceren Özselçuk, “The Rojava Experience: Possibilities and Challenges of Building a Democratic Life,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No. 1, 2016, p. 184.

<sup>662</sup> Mesut Yeğen, “Armed Struggle to Peace Negotiations: Independent Kurdistan to Democratic Autonomy, or the PKK in Context,” *Middle East Critique*, 2016, p. 16.

YPG's ability to defend the Kurdish-led regions against the ISIS attacks, especially after 2013, is one of the primary reasons for the PYD to be the sole ruler in the regions where the majority of population is Kurdish.<sup>663</sup> In this regard, the pivotal moment in the PYD's history was its success to defend the city of Kobanê which was sieged by the ISIS in the autumn of 2014.<sup>664</sup>

According to Ünver, the PYD defines its territorial borders in a more constrained way, limited by governing the Kurdish-majority populated regions along Turco-Syrian border and thereby establishing a single territorial administration by connecting three cantons.<sup>665</sup> With a continuous belt of territory running from the Turkish to the Syrian border, the aim of the PYD is to establish an independent and self-governing federal region.<sup>666</sup>

However, the PYD began to spread out beyond its initial Kurdish territories in north of Syria and into areas with a sizable Arab population.<sup>667</sup> With its social economy model, the PYD was able to quickly consolidate power in mostly Kurdish towns. However, once it began dominating beyond Tal Abyad, its self-sufficiency slowed down, prompting it to consider multiethnic administrative compositions and the formation of new military offshoots like the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces).<sup>668</sup> The flag of the SDF hold appeal for its depiction of the organization's name in three languages (Assyrian, Arabic, and Kûrmancî) with the symbolic colors (yellow, green, and red) of Kurdish politics and featuring the map of Syria.<sup>669</sup> In certain respects, the flag mirrors the policy of the supporter of the organization, the USA

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<sup>663</sup> Güneş, *The Kurds in a New Middle East*, p. 66.

<sup>664</sup> Leezenberg, "The Ambiguities of Democratic Autonomy," p. 681.

<sup>665</sup> Ünver, "Weak States," p. 74.

<sup>666</sup> H. Akın Ünver, "Contested Geographies: How ISIS and YPG Rule "No-Go" Areas in Northern Syria," in Özden Zeynep Oktav, Emel Parlar Dal and Ali Murat Kurşun eds., *Violent Non-state Actors and Syrian Civil War: The ISIS and YPG Cases*, Switzerland: Springer, 2018, p. 40.

<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41; Territorial incompactness obstruct the separate establishment of these three cantons. Please, see Cemgil and Hoffmann, p. 64.

<sup>668</sup> Ünver, "Contested Geographies," p. 41.

<sup>669</sup> Sean Lee, "The Evolution of Rojava," p. 87.

who delineated its roadmap by keeping the territories seized from the ISIS but drawing away from the regions, such as Jarablus that Ankara captures.<sup>670</sup> According to Ünver, Kurdish demography in Syria enables the PYD to apply an ethno-territorialization policy.<sup>671</sup> However, achieving territorial compactness was complicated by Türkiye's consecutive military interventions in 2016 and 2018.<sup>672</sup> Meanwhile, the attempts of Syrian government to recontrol some regions destroyed the devises of the PYD. In this sense, with assistance of Russia, Syrian government regained the control of Manbij.<sup>673</sup> The seizure of power in Afrin canton by Türkiye in the spring of 2018 created a serious setback in PYD's governance since one of the three cantons were disconnected from its power.<sup>674</sup>

Another fundamental geographical limitation has stemmed from lack of territorial compactness and mountains, which are respectively crucial for political coherence and defensive capabilities.<sup>675</sup> In fact, to achieve territorial compactness, the PYD captured the areas such as the Euphrates Valley and Manbij, where Kurdish population does not constitute majority.<sup>676</sup> As implied, the absence of contiguous territory of Syrian Kurds led them not to concentrate on 'the simple fall of the Ba'athist regime but the implementation of its political project that goes through the territorial control of Kurdistan.'<sup>677</sup> Strong objection from both Ankara and oppositional Arab organizations prevented the PYD to establish a contiguous territorial zone along Türkiye's boundary.<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88. It should be noted that the PYD solely doesn't have the political and military power to shape its future trajectory; thus, it established "proxy relationships" with the USA and Russia. Please, see Yesiltas, "Continuity and Change in Syrian Kurdistan," p. 138.

<sup>671</sup> Ünver, "Weak States," p. 67.

<sup>672</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 125.

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>674</sup> Hamit Bozarslan, "Being in Time," p. 178.

<sup>675</sup> Lowe, "The Emergence of Western Kurdistan," p. 230.

<sup>676</sup> Özçelik, "Explaining the Kurdish Democratic Union Party's Self-Governance Practices," p. 10.

<sup>677</sup> Cyril Roussel, "La Construction d'un Territoire Kurde En Syrie: Un Processus En Cours," *Maghreb-Machrek* 3, no. 213 (2012): 84, cited in Dryaz, "Non-State Actors and Governance," p. 115.

<sup>678</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 19.

Consequently, despite disadvantageous conditions, the PYD has so far taken an approach to profit from an ethno-nationalist territorialization where the presence of the PYD is advantageous due to Kurdish demography. In this regard, PYD differs from ISIS in that it lacks a sizable area but gains more strength and support from its ideology and ethno-nationalist coherence.<sup>679</sup>

#### **4.5.2. Resistance against the PYD**

Many Syrian Kurds have opposed the PKK and the PYD since, as mentioned above, the Kurdish movement in Syria had used non-violent tools until the beginning of Syrian civil war. According to threat perception of the PYD, the Turkish state has posed a more severe challenge than the Syrian state to the Syrian Kurds. The legitimacy of the PYD has become a problem as some Syrian Kurdish parties has believed that the PYD and the PKK put the Kurdish interests in Türkiye over those of Syria.<sup>680</sup>

For a thorough understanding of the tactics and results of Kurdish nationalist mobilizations, as Tezcür argues, it is important to pay systematic attention to the conflicts between Kurdish organizations, the Kurds' search for outside assistance, and the engagement "of Kurdish political actors in democratic" battles. Given the complexity of Kurdish political history, a tripartite viewpoint like this one provides a significant analytical gain.<sup>681</sup> As the tensions between Kurdish factions have a historical background, transborder engagement for control of Kurdish regions created fragile relationships between the PKK and the KDP<sup>682</sup> so one of the key features of the Kurdish politics has been the rivalry between the PKK and KDP.

As mentioned, Syrian war has increased competition and divisions among different Kurdish factions.<sup>683</sup> There has been mainly two factions in competition based on

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<sup>679</sup> Ünver, "Weak States," p. 67.

<sup>680</sup> Kaya and Lowe, "The Curious Question of the PYD–PKK Relationship," p. 280.

<sup>681</sup> Murat Tezcür, "A Century of the Kurdish Question," p. 9.

<sup>682</sup> Kaya and Whiting, "Sowing Division," p. 80.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

their strategic and ideologic differences.<sup>684</sup> On the one hand, the KNC (Kurdish National Council) was established by a coalition of eleven parties advocated by Masoud Barzani, and its primary aim was to form a united Kurdish opposition in Syria under the auspices of Barzani.<sup>685</sup> Having a much longer history, other Kurdish political parties have strongly resisted against the rise of the PYD and thereby established the Kurdish National Council in 2011 in order to counter the PYD's force.<sup>686</sup> However, the PYD had already formed the National Coordination Body for Democratic Change<sup>687</sup> which consisted of 12 leftist Arab and Syriac parties in September 2011.<sup>688</sup>

The prevailing role of the PYD has rested on its party structure empowered with the power of its military wing YPG and its internal service known as Asayish.<sup>689</sup> The role of YPG has been vital for securing and upholding political authority over the Kurdish regions.<sup>690</sup> Other Kurdish parties, trained by the KDP, formed small militia groups to counterbalance the power of the YPG. Nevertheless, the PYD has not allowed them to operate in "Rojava."<sup>691</sup> In general, compared to the KDP, the PKK has more institutionalized links, facilitated by the KCK (Koma Cîvaken Kurdistan), a supra-organization that includes the Kurdish parties connected to PKK.<sup>692</sup> The PYD drew support from the KCK, the PKK, and from the local civic organizations in Syria. Creating such a complex system of governance, it mobilized a large Kurdish population and diminished the role of other Kurdish parties.<sup>693</sup>

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<sup>684</sup> Dryaz, "Non-State Actors and Governance," p. 108. It should be noted that, different from other parties, as a small party, Syrian Future Movement maintained its membership in SNC even after the death of its leader, Meacheel Temmo. Please, see Schmidienger. *Rojava*, p. 88.

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>686</sup> Güneş, *The Kurds in a New Middle East*, p. 62.

<sup>687</sup> It lost its significance after the establishment of the SDF. Please, see Schmidienger, *Rojava*, p. 89.

<sup>688</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>689</sup> Leezenberg, "The Ambiguities of Democratic Autonomy," p. 682.

<sup>690</sup> Lowe, "The Emergence of Western Kurdistan," p. 229.

<sup>691</sup> *Syria's Kurds: A Struggle within a Struggle*, Middle East Report No. 136, International Crisis Group, January 2013, p. 33; and Lowe, "The Emergence of Western Kurdistan," p. 228.

<sup>692</sup> Kaya and Whiting, "Sowing Division," p. 81.

<sup>693</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 16.

### 4.5.3. The PKK-PYD Connection

Unpacking the 1978 PKK manifesto, there is a call for revolution that each part of “Kurdistan” follow their own styles.<sup>694</sup> As Ahmet Akkaya identifies, the manifesto asserted that each section of Kurdistan was accountable for its own revolution, but it also stressed the solidarity of the people and territory of Kurdistan and its dedication to an “autonomous, unified, and democratic Kurdistan.”<sup>695</sup> In this context, the PYD was established in 2003 and has similar political agenda and, ideology with the PKK.<sup>696</sup>

The disenfranchisement policies of the states- in particular since the end of the Cold War- has strengthened the position of non-state armed actors.<sup>697</sup> In this context, Akkaya expresses that armed non-state groups has started to create self-defense zones within certain urban regions, establishing de facto control zones as a result of the fact that states has used violence more frequently to address legitimacy issues.<sup>698</sup> As Özçelik states, some studies have tried to explain the rationale behind the use of violence by rebel political parties.<sup>699</sup> The category of “armed political organizations” has scrutinized the relationship between political participation and violence to explore the activities of groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas who operate concurrently as parties and armed groups.<sup>700</sup>

For the PKK, after Öcalan’s arrest, there has been a significant change in the organization’s structure, and discourse, as defense took place of the offense; cease-

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<sup>694</sup> Akkaya, “The PKK’s Ideological Odyssey,” p. 735.

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>696</sup> Güneş, *The Kurds in a New Middle East*. p. 62; The establishment of the PYD was the result of the reorganization of the PKK based on the change of paradigm from state-construction to self-government. Please, see Michael Knapp and Joost Jongerden, “Communal Democracy: The Social Contract and Confederalism in Rojava,” *Comparative Islamic Studies*, Vol. 10. No. 1, p. 93.

<sup>697</sup> Ünver, “Weak States,” p. 60.

<sup>698</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>699</sup> Özçelik, “Explaining the Kurdish Democratic Union Party’s Self-Governance Practices,” p. 3.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*

fire replaced the armed struggle.<sup>701</sup> According to Akkaya, the motto of the PKK regarding the violence and nation has been “different way of seeing the things than before.” The violence has always been at the center of the PKK’s history as a form of strategic employment. However, during the long period of insurgency, the role of violence has changed from Marxist sense of “the midwife of the new society” to the Fanonian term as a “social-emancipatory role.” In this new framework, the conception of violence has become a self-defense tool that is to be instrumentalized, only if necessary<sup>702</sup> because Öcalan thought that national liberation movements as well as ‘real socialism’ had failed because of their congenital statism.<sup>703</sup> Thus he led the movement to restructure itself on the principles of autonomist democratic confederalism.<sup>704</sup> KKK (Assembly of Communities of Kurdistan, later called KCK) was organized between 2005 and 2007 in this context.<sup>705</sup>

For the PYD, it did not use violence as a tool between 2003 and 2012.<sup>706</sup> However, approximately a thousand PKK fighters abandoned their bases in the Qandil mountains and settled in northeast Syria one year after the beginning of the war. Their number increased to 50.000 within seven years.<sup>707</sup> It is known that Öcalan's stay for a long-term in Syria was responsible for the mobilization of Kurds in Syria because of the PKK activities surrounding the Masum Korkmaz camp so it can be said that the PYD inherited its relationship with violence from the PKK.

According to Tejel, there have been several reasons for sympathy of Syrian Kurds in the PKK. Firstly, the motto of an independent and united Kurdistan invoked the

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<sup>701</sup> Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 105.

<sup>702</sup> Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya, “The PKK’s Ideological Odyssey,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 6, 2020, p. 740.

<sup>703</sup> Paul White. *The PKK: Coming Down from the Mountains*. London: Zed Books, 2015, p. 129.

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>705</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>706</sup> Kaya and Lowe, “The Curious Question of the PYD–PKK Relationship,” p. 282.

<sup>707</sup> Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 99. In 2007, it was estimated that 20 percent of the PKK cadres consisted of Syrian Kurds. Additionally, during the same year, Fehman Huseyn, a Syrian Kurd, became the head of the HPG (People’s Defense Force), the PKK’s military wing. Please, see Dryaz, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

attention of the Syrian Kurds in the 1980s. Even opponents of the PKK recognized that the discourse of the PKK produced a “new” Kurdish identity “on equal footing with Arab identity.” Moreover, the PKK’s armed struggle bore fruit with political achievements unlike the passive position of other Kurdish parties.<sup>708</sup> Secondly, as a political myth, Abdullah Öcalan grew sympathy for the PKK.<sup>709</sup> Thirdly, the endorsement of Syrian government laid ground for the PKK to create an effective network, which enabled it to recruit people for the armed struggle and to take financial assistance from Kurdish businessmen.<sup>710</sup>

The PYD imitates the military structure of the PKK. As its name reminds the PKK is a political party and has a military wing called the HPG People’s Defense forces (Hêzên Parastina Gel, People’s Defense forces). In the same vein, The PYD is a political party, and its military wing YPG conducts its defense.<sup>711</sup>

The PYD’s immediate seize of the power after the start of the war in Syria, including the establishment of the cantons, the regulation of economic activities, and the rules of decision-making bodies, implied that the PYD was prepared to establish rebel governance based on Öcalan’s ideas.<sup>712</sup> The PYD is a part of the KCK charter in addition to the PKK, PJAK and PCDK.<sup>713</sup> It defines itself as a democratic, political, and social non-state and non-military organization.<sup>714</sup> Implementing Öcalan’s democratic confederalism notion, which is a bottom-up non-state structure ruled by local governance, has been the overarching goal of the PYD, and the PYD

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<sup>708</sup> Tejel, “Toward a Generational Rupture,” p. 221.

<sup>709</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>710</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>711</sup> Kaya and Lowe, “The Curious Question of the PYD–PKK Relationship,” p. 279.

<sup>712</sup> Özçelik, “Explaining the Kurdish Democratic Union Party’s Self-Governance Practices,” p. 6, and Sean Lee, “The Evolution of Rojava,” p. 85.

<sup>713</sup> In line with the charter of the KCK, the PKK created three political parties in Iraq, Syria, and Iran: the PÇDK (Partî Çareserî Dîmokratî in Kurdistan, Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party) in Iraq in 2002, the PYD in Syria in 2003 and the PJAK (Partiya Jiyana Azada Kurdistan, Kurdistan Free Life Party) in Iran in 2004. It’s evident that the word ‘Kurdistan’ doesn’t exist in the PYD’s name. Please, see Can Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria: Geopolitics as the Interplay of Multiple Strategies of Spatialization,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 2019, p. 11.

<sup>714</sup> Kaya and Lowe, “The Curious Question of the PYD–PKK Relationship,” p. 282.



implements the PKK ideas for the first time.<sup>715</sup> However as Kaya and Lowe claim, “the relationship is more nuanced than often assumed.”<sup>716</sup> In this sense, the official stance of the PKK regarding its relationship with the PYD has frequently stressed the “latter’s autonomy”<sup>717</sup> Even though they live in different countries, Kurds in Syria and Türkiye have had close ties in terms of their social and political identities. These ties and the PKK’s long-term existence in both countries connect the PYD to the PKK’s deeds in the Middle East.<sup>718</sup>

#### 4.5.4. De Facto Autonomy

As mentioned above, Kurdish-populated regions in Syria have witnessed key political events since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011. The withdrawal of Syrian forces in July 2012 gave the PYD the control of the bulk of Syria's predominantly Kurdish regions and established the facilitated for the formation of political and military organizations of the Kurds.<sup>719</sup> As Lowe epitomized, the demands of Kurdish parties can be summarized in three categories: termination of ethnic discrimination policies against Kurds; transition to a representative democratic system in Syria; and the establishment of autonomous governance in Kurdish-majority regions.<sup>720</sup> These demands have also been shared by the PYD.<sup>721</sup> In this regard, “The Cantons of Rojava” were set up by the PYD in January 2014 as a way to rule its de facto autonomy.<sup>722</sup> Renamed as the DFNS (Democratic Federation of

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<sup>715</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>716</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.* p. 276.

<sup>719</sup> Güneş, *The Kurds in a New Middle East*, p. 61.

<sup>720</sup> Lowe, “The Emergence of Western Kurdistan,” pp. 233-234.

<sup>721</sup> Jongerden, “Governing Kurdistan,” p. 65.

<sup>722</sup> Güneş, *The Kurds in a New Middle East*, p. 61. It should also be noted that the Syrian government has not given up control over northern Syria, as proved by allocation of budgets to many state structures. The salaries were paid by Damascus government in the PYD ruled territories. According to Kaya and Whiting, this situation has undermined the legitimacy of Rojava as a political entity. Please, see Kaya and Whiting, “Sowing Division,” p. 74.

Northern Syria) in March 2016, the federation's stated goal is to function as a multicultural, contiguous, self-governing territory inside a democratic and federal Syrian state.<sup>723</sup> In late 2014, According to New World Academy study, population estimates for the PYD-controlled territories was 4.6 million.<sup>724</sup>

Rhetorically, the PYD envisaged a non-statist model in “Rojava.”<sup>725</sup> It does not imply a complete rejection of state authority, but rather a considerable “rollback” of it to create political space for ethnic communities to establish their own self-administrations.<sup>726</sup> However, although Rojava is often portrayed as a new administration type of bereft of nationalist and statist characteristic, the Kurdish movement is always present with its reminders through the images and portraits of the Kurdish leader, flags, and territories,<sup>727</sup> and enjoying the same power of nation-states.<sup>728</sup> On the other hand, the ambiguous view regarding the “state” has been reflected in the Social Contract of Rojava. Whereas the earlier version of it rejected “the understanding of national, religious or militarist statehood,” the state-system was accepted in later versions: “the Charter recognizes Syria’s territorial integrity.”<sup>729</sup>

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<sup>723</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62. On September 22, 2017, the DFNS conducted elections for the co-chairs of the communes. Accordingly, there was 70 percent participation, equivalent of 728, 450 votes. Voters elected co-chairs for 3947 communes from over 16.650 candidates in Jazira, Euphrates, and Afrin regions. Please, see [tr.hawarnews.com](http://tr.hawarnews.com), cited in Jongerden, “Governing Kurdistan,” p. 70.

<sup>724</sup> Ünver, “Contested Geographies,” p. 44.

<sup>725</sup> Jongerden, “Governing Kurdistan,” p. 62.

<sup>726</sup> Güneş, *The Kurds in a New Middle East*, p. 62.

<sup>727</sup> Pinar Dinç, “The Kurdish Movement and the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria: An Alternative to the (Nation)State Model,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22, No.1, 2020, p. 56.

<sup>728</sup> Dryaz, “Non-State Actors and Governance,” p. 109.

<sup>729</sup> Sean Lee, “The Evolution of Rojava,” p. 84.; Based on one of the article of Charter that “The regional administrations of democratic autonomy do not accept the understanding of national religious or militarist statehood and, at the same time, reject central administration and centralized power,” (<http://kantonrojawa.com/peymanameya-hevpeymana-civaki/> Translation by authors, cited in Knapp and Jongerden, “Communal Democracy,” p. 96) the authors claim that this social contract doesn’t aim to create a state, or sovereign power, or radical disconnect from the statist contracts. In their article, they argue that the Social Contract of Rojava detaches the notion of ‘the state from that of government.’ Please, see Knapp and Jongerden, “Communal Democracy,” pp. 88-97.

The employment of the terms Rojava instead of the DFNS in propaganda materials and websites means that Kurdish ethno-nationalism prevails.<sup>730</sup> Rojava model was introduced as a model of local democracy, allowing commune system, women's participation, Kurds' rights. Nevertheless, contrary to this discourse, civilians were faced with coercive practices.<sup>731</sup> To make it clearer, the implementation of canton system and conscription have been two leading aspects of the DFNS.<sup>732</sup> For instance, imputing decree number 11 of the legislative council, the Jazira canton made conscription mandatory for all men between ages of 18 and 40, and imposed aggravated penalties for the transgression of it.<sup>733</sup> However, the PYD kept the issue of the conscription so chary that it was even implemented in Arab-majority regions like Tabqa and Manbij.<sup>734</sup> As a result, the PYD was accused of forcibly recruitment of Arab and Kurdish people aging between 18 and 30 to 'Self Defense Forces' in accordance with a law issued in 2014.<sup>735</sup> The report of Human Rights Watch (2015) demonstrated that child soldiers were used.<sup>736</sup> The United Nations also accused the YPG and the YPJ (Yekîneyên Parastina Jin, Women's Protection Units) of forced child recruitment, including non-Kurdish children and girls.<sup>737</sup>

The conscription issue shows that initially the PYD administration was related directly with security issues. Although de facto autonomy has been fragile and underdeveloped, the military, political, and administrative progress made it possible to establish a transitional administration in November 2013.<sup>738</sup> This situation proves the Kilcullen's theory. According to Kilcullen, armed groups can successfully imitate

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<sup>730</sup> Özçelik, "Explaining the Kurdish Democratic Union Party's Self-Governance Practices," p. 7.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>732</sup> Sean Lee, "The Evolution of Rojava," p. 85.

<sup>733</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>734</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>735</sup> Özçelik, "Explaining the Kurdish Democratic Union Party's Self-Governance Practices," pp. 9-10.

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>737</sup> UN, "Children and armed conflict—Report of the Secretary-General." (A/72/865–S/2018/465), 2018. <https://undocs.org/s/2018/465>, and Sean Lee, "The Evolution of Rojava," p. 86.

<sup>738</sup> Lowe, "The Emergence of Western Kurdistan," p. 225.

state functions like security, taxation, and service provision over time will successfully control that population's loyalty in the absence of a centralized authority.<sup>739</sup> In this context, although the PYD formed an administration related directly with security issues, its governance structure was considerably complete as it announced its legislative, executive, and judicial councils after the DFNS was established.<sup>740</sup>

The fragility of Kurdish autonomy in Syria has been evident when international community kept its silence when Afrin was captured.<sup>741</sup> The loss of Afrin and its milieu highlighted that the PYD had difficulty to maintain its secessionist movement without external support and limited financial budget because it was deprived of offensive military capabilities.<sup>742</sup> The USA didn't take the risk of a military impasse with Türkiye and Afrin didn't deem a strategic priority for it. Moscow wasn't pleased regarding the existence of the USA through the PYD's contribution.<sup>743</sup> Syrian regime hasn't recognized the autonomy of the DFNS. Additionally, Turkish opposition prevented its participation in the negotiation talks in Astana and Geneva.<sup>744</sup>

#### **4.5.5. Democratic Confederalism**

The independence of Kurdistan became unviable considering the military interventions of Turkish state.<sup>745</sup> Based on these considerations, Öcalan thought it

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<sup>739</sup> David Kilcullen. *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 125-126, and Ünver, "Weak States," p. 63.

<sup>740</sup> Daryous Aldarwish. "Local Governance under the Democratic Autonomous Administration of Rojava." *Inside Wars: Local Dynamics of Conflicts in Syria and Libya*, edited by Luigi Narbone, Agnes Favier, and Virginie Collombier, European University Institute, Middle East Directions, 2016, p. 17.

<sup>741</sup> Yesiltas, "Continuity and Change in Syrian Kurdistan," p. 139; and Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 126.

<sup>742</sup> Özçelik, "Explaining the Kurdish Democratic Union Party's Self-Governance Practices," p. 14.

<sup>743</sup> Yesiltas, "Continuity and Change in Syrian Kurdistan," p. 139.

<sup>744</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>745</sup> Cemgil, "The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria," p. 10.

was the nation-state that caused suffering of Kurds so Kurds should have left the idea of creation of a Kurdish state.<sup>746</sup> Within this context, the notion of democratic confederalism was developed as a Kurdish spatialization strategy.<sup>747</sup> While the notion of Democratic confederalism was put forward for Türkiye’s Kurdish question and for the ‘democratic deficit in the larger Middle East,’<sup>748</sup> it found place among Syrian Kurds after the beginning of Syrian Civil War.<sup>749</sup>

Defining the PYD as a prefigurative movement, Emre Şahin states that “Territorialization refers to the locational groundedness of prefigurative movements, where new social relationships are produced through affective politics.”<sup>750</sup> In this sense, Rojava territory constitutes one third of Syrian territory, and territory lies at the heart of the organization:

Rojava is our only site of practice. We are experimenting our projects and methods, with their successes and failures, in Rojava for the first time. It is our land and country, but we are governing ourselves for the first time! It is perhaps the first time Kurds are governing themselves in the past century.<sup>751</sup>

As the territory lies at the heart of the PYD, its territorialization policy is interpreted by different approaches. For instance, Anahita Hosseini considers the Rojava experience a coeval “Event”<sup>752</sup> trying “to establish a new social order” surrounded by

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<sup>746</sup> A. Öcalan. *Democratic Confederalism*. London and Cologne: Transmedia, 2011, and Öcalan, A. 2012. *Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Ulus Çözümü* [Kurdish Question and the Democratic Nation Solution]. Neuss: Mezopotamya, 2012 cited in Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria,” p. 10.

<sup>747</sup> Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria,” p. 10.

<sup>748</sup> Öcalan. *Democratic Confederalism*, pp. 119-120 cited in Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria,” p. 11.

<sup>749</sup> Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria,” p. 11.

<sup>750</sup> Emre Şahin, 2023. *From Contention to Prefiguration*. Women’s Autonomous Mobilization and Rojava Revolution. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Binghamton University State University of New York, New York, p. 55.

<sup>751</sup> Heval Çarçel, Qamishlo; cited in Şahin, *From Contention to Prefiguration*, p. 97. As Şahin observes in the field, “Today, posters of Öcalan decorate the stadium where thousands of people come together annually to celebrate the liberation of their lands from the Assad regime.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>752</sup> The term belongs to Badio.

anti-Events such as fundamentalism, totalitarianism and nationalism.<sup>753</sup> In this respect, it's remarkable that ethnic identity terms such as the "Kurdish state" has no particular emphasis which makes it crucial as it has no signs of exclusivity: "not only do indigenous Arab Christians and Kurds have equal rights, Rojava is also starting to appeal to those who consider themselves to be in the margins of their own societies."<sup>754</sup>

Emre Şahin thinks that the spatialization project of the PYD is closely linked with armed self-defense facilitating the execution of long-term initiatives that enhance the region's ability to "produce and reproduce life." This pluralistic and decentralized structure of self-defense in Rojava empowers the region to maintain its "autonomy from the Syrian state," ensuring the persistence of the revolution.<sup>755</sup>

According to Cemgil, rather than being triggered by ideational, voluntary or external factors it has been result of "experienced developments, a strategy of social reproduction." It was in this context that "the notions of democratic unity, democratic autonomy, democratic republic and finally democratic confederation have emerged" as a "strategy of social reproduction."<sup>756</sup> In this context, Cemgil presents detailed information by giving reference to the policymakers of this project. According to this, the conception of territoriality in the democratic confederalism was exemplified by Öcalan like the Dutch-Belgian border. In the words of Zübeyir Aydar, the president of the KCK legislative council:<sup>757</sup>

... We want the borders in the Middle East to become porous, like the Dutch-Belgian border. Till this day, borders have meant death for all Middle Eastern peoples. You either catch a bullet fired by a border guard or step on a

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<sup>753</sup> Anahita Hosseini, "The Spirit of the Spiritless Situation: The Significance of Rojava as an Alternative Model of Political Development in the Context of the Middle East," *Critique*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2016, p. 260.

<sup>754</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>755</sup> Şahin, *From Contention to Prefiguration*, p. 102; The author thinks that territorial project of prefigurative movements challenges the hegemony of nation-states. In this respect, he gives Türkiye's reaction against Rojava administration. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>756</sup> Cemgil, "The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria," p. 10.

<sup>757</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

landmine or are caught in the [barbed] wire. From now on we want only cultures and goods moving across those borders.<sup>758</sup>

Cemgil thinks that this territorialization strategy suggests that his idea is not simply embedded in political philosophy, it is concretized through some models.<sup>759</sup> In fact the Dutch-Belgian border model is the context of the European Union. According to Cemgil, that's why Öcalan proposes "Euphrates-Tigris water union,"<sup>760</sup> a mimicry of the EU in the Middle East including not only Türkiye and Syria but also countries such as Iraq, Lebanon.<sup>761</sup>

The principal contours of the territorialization policy can be delineated as follows. Firstly, Rojava became a region to implement this strategy. Secondly, based on Öcalan's ideas, institutions were established at every level of society to serve the creation of the confederation of libertarian municipalities, or in other words democratic confederalism in PYD controlled territory(-es) Thirdly, the territorialization strategy involved the establishment of canton-based spaces which 'would constitute the primary space of social reproduction for their dwellers.' Moreover, as part of this strategy, women-only spaces were created to foster gender-equal environments<sup>762</sup> "not only to empower women but also change the very fabric of social space and its mode of production." Next, local cooperative based self-sufficient economic units is the spatialization strategy regarding production and distribution organization which 'is the crucial aspect of socializing and politicizing economy by ensuring the direct democratic participation of the relevant local population.'<sup>763</sup> According to Cemgil, these shows that democratic autonomy doesn't propose a territorially built nation-state.<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> Başaran, E. April 17, 2013., cited in Cemgil, "The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria," p. 13.

<sup>759</sup> Cemgil, "The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria," p. 13.

<sup>760</sup> A. Öcalan. Demokratik Kurtuluş ve Özgür Yaşamı İnşa (İmralı notları) [Democratic Liberation and Building Free Life (Imralı notes)]. Neuss: Weşanen Mezopotamya, 2015, p. 41, cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>762</sup> Cemgil, "The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria," pp. 14-15.

<sup>763</sup> Biehl, J. 2015, February 25. Rojava's Threefold Economy. Accessed September 27, 2019. [www.biehlonbookchin.com/rojavas-threefold-economy](http://www.biehlonbookchin.com/rojavas-threefold-economy), cited in Cemgil, "The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria," p. 15.

<sup>764</sup> Cemgil, "The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria," p. 15.

Although all institutions and functions of a state were developed, political discourse was constructed in terms not to imitate the rhetoric and terminology of the modern state.<sup>765</sup> In this sense, a ‘social contract’ was introduced instead of a “constitution.”

The name itself distinguishes it from a constitution, which generally defines the ground norm of states. The notion of the state, and of the nation-state in particular, is presented in the preamble of the social contract as the root of the crises and problems of the people of Rojava.<sup>766</sup>

However, “despite this recognition, the multiplicity of agents and their alternative and contradictory spatialization and reproduction strategies ensure that democratic confederalist strategies of spatialization cannot be fully put into practice as intended.”<sup>767</sup> For instance, although rejects the paradigm of nation-state and considers it incongruent with the diversity and conditions of the Middle East, No one can be a member of a canton and participate in the bottom-up practices of the democratic autonomy except the Syrian citizen which is written officially in the declaration.<sup>768</sup> Moreover, Democratic Autonomy doesn’t question the legitimacy of existing states. When the war is over and the Syrian state reconsolidates its power, canton governments are considered to be maintained within state as “a dual power structure.”<sup>769</sup>

Furthermore, as Leezenberg explains, the ideology of democratic autonomy remains ambiguous since armed resistance is accepted as legitimate.<sup>770</sup> Leezenberg calls Rojava model as a “laboratory for Öcalan’s Democratic autonomy”<sup>771</sup> because he

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<sup>765</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 137.

<sup>766</sup> International Law Blog 24/10/2016: ‘The 2016 Rojava social contract: A democratic experiment of civil and social rights in northern Syria’, <https://aninternationallawblog.wordpress.com/2016/10/24/the-2016-rojava-social-contract-a-democratic-experiment-of-civil-and-social-rights-in-northern-syria/> (last accessed 18/12/2018, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>767</sup> Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria,” p. 21.

<sup>768</sup> Hosseini, “The Spirit of the Spiritless Situation,” p. 257.

<sup>769</sup> Nazan Üstündağ, “Self-defense as a Revolutionary Practice in Rojava, or How to Unmake the State,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No.1, 2016, p. 203.

<sup>770</sup> Leezenberg, “The Ambiguities of Democratic Autonomy,” p. 671.

<sup>771</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 682.



determines the theory of ‘Democratic Confederalism’ by drawing on Bookchin’s communalism.<sup>772</sup>

Ideologically in unity, however organizationally separate, the four parties seek to create the spatialization strategy, the democratic confederalism, across four countries, different from an exclusive territorial-bounded national state.<sup>773</sup> The ultimate objective is to connect Kurdish populated territories in Turkey, Iran, Syria, and Iraq through “democratic confederalism.” In this regard, political, and social structures created by the PYD resemble the PKK ones. For instance, TEV-DEM (Tevgera Civaka Demokratîk, Movement for a Democratic Society) in Northern Syria is a similar organization of the DTK (Demokratik Toplum Kongresi, Democratic Society Congress) in Türkiye<sup>774</sup> so the perspective of educational institutions ruled by the PYD should be evaluated in this context.

#### **4.5.5.1. Gender Perspective**

The ascending role of women in spatialization strategy of the PYD is worth to be discussed. The pioneer of this strategy Öcalan<sup>775</sup> argues that cultural injustices and social inequalities emerged in the Neolithic era with the inception of patriarchy based on slavery of women.<sup>776</sup> Enslavement of women is accepted as the beginning of male domination and “the foundation of state-formation and economic exploitation.”<sup>777</sup> Hence, unlike “other national liberation movements,” Kurdish movement, based on Öcalan’s beliefs, has given priority to gender relations since the end of 1990s:<sup>778</sup>

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<sup>772</sup> Michael A. Peters, “Ecopolitical Philosophy, Education and Grassroots Democracy: The “Return” of Murray Bookchin and John Dewey,” *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations*, Vol 9, No. 2, 2017, p. 8.

<sup>773</sup> Cemgil, “The Geopolitical of Democratic Confederalism in Syria,” p. 11.

<sup>774</sup> Kaya and Lowe, “The Curious Question of the PYD–PKK Relationship,” p. 278.

<sup>775</sup> A. Öcalan. *Liberating Life: Woman’s Revolution*. Cologne: International Initiative Edition & Mesopotamian Publishers, 2013, cited in Bahar Şimşek and Joost Jongerden, “Gender Revolution in Rojava: The Voices beyond Tabloid Geopolitics,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 2021, p. 1034.

<sup>776</sup> Şimşek and Jongerdan, “Gender Revolution,” p. 1034.

<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>778</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1035.

In a context in which the freedom of the people is measured by the freedom of women, therefore, the imperative to metaphorically “kill the dominant male” has become a fundamental principle for liberating life.<sup>779</sup> This’s the geopolitics from below in the Kurdish case.<sup>780</sup>

The trajectory of the PKK movements position woman “as active agents in history-making processes.”<sup>781</sup> This has results with woman to have their own agenda which generated the Jineolojî defined as “women’s science” and “the basis for an effective ideology for the future generations to achieve and preserve the full rights of women.”<sup>782</sup>

The ascending role of the movement is not only in theory, but it is put in practice. In that sense, the idea of “Democratic Confederalism” considers the significance of local assemblies, prioritizing the inclusiveness and women’s rights.<sup>783</sup>

Cantons implement gender-equal practices. As such, women have their own armed forces. Moreover, it’s a requirement for all official institutions to have female representation and 40 per cent of the administrators of the institutions must be composed of women.<sup>784</sup> The field study of Knapp and Jongerdan shows that “nobody is obliged to join a commune, but everybody is able to use the services at the commune.”<sup>785</sup> People are encourages to participate in the commune meetings.<sup>786</sup>

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<sup>779</sup> Öcalan. *Liberating Life*. 2013, p. 52, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 1040.

<sup>780</sup> Şimşek and Jongerdan, “Gender Revolution,” p. 1040.

<sup>781</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1035, and Handan Çağlayan, “From Kawa the Blacksmith to Ishtar the Goddess: Gender Constructions in Ideological-political Discourses of the Kurdish Movement in Post-1980 Turkey,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol. 14, 2012, p. 2, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 1035.

<sup>782</sup> (Korea, N. 2018. Interview in ANHA, January 13, 2018, “Jinoloji, basis for an effective ideology for future generations”, <http://en.hawarnews.org/jinoloji-basis-for-an-effective-ideology-for-future-generations/>., cited in Şimşek and Jongerdan, “Gender Revolution,” p. 1035.

<sup>783</sup> Peters, “Ecopolitical Philosophy,” p. 8.

<sup>784</sup> Hosseini, “The Spirit of the Spiritless Situation,” p. 258.

<sup>785</sup> Michael Knapp and Joost Jongerdan, “Communal Democracy: The Social Contract and Confederalism in Rojava,” *Comparative Islamic Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2014, p. 98.

<sup>786</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

#### 4.5.6. The Sphere of Education

Syrian governments have never authorized mother tongue education.<sup>787</sup> Having their own education system and not allowed to use Kurdish language in schools, Kurds have been exposed to the policies of Arabization, Persianization, and Turkification. However, thanks to the political awakening of Kurds both in Iraq and Syria have made possible the practice of Kurdish education system through which they retrieve their national identity.<sup>788</sup> There wasn't any formal education system in the Kurdish regions until 1930.<sup>789</sup> What existed-still continues- was a strong oral tradition of songs, myths, folklore and popular literature.<sup>790</sup> In this sense, it should be remarked that "it was up to the Kurds of Syria to push forward with Kûrmancî."<sup>791</sup> Politically, Kûrmancî dialect of Kurdish have been used both in party papers and communications of the Kurdish parties<sup>792</sup> and they supported Kurdish journals.<sup>793</sup>

Kurdish Language Education Institute was established in the secret meeting of 100 teachers, many of whom were oppressed, in 2005.<sup>794</sup> After the outset of Syrian Civil War, local education has been restructured by the PYD. In this context, a multitude of schools suggesting instruction in the Kurdish language have been opened.<sup>795</sup> There has been unprecedented cultural activities and efforts to flower the Kurdish language. For instance, the Qamishli health council declared that first aid courses were completed in Kurdish language in early September 2012.<sup>796</sup>

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<sup>787</sup> Hassanpour, and Others, p. 373.

<sup>788</sup> Bengio, "Reclaiming National Identity," p. 359.

<sup>789</sup> For a very short history of Kurdish education system history, please see Bengio, "Reclaiming National Identity," p. 364.

<sup>790</sup> Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, p. 156.

<sup>791</sup> Strohmeier. *Crucial Images*, p. 136.

<sup>792</sup> Allsopp. *The Kurds of Syria*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>793</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126

<sup>794</sup> Bengio, "Reclaiming National Identity."

<sup>795</sup> Leezenberg, "The Ambiguities of Democratic Autonomy," p. 682.

<sup>796</sup> *Briefing News and Activities in Western Kurdistan*, press release email from the Democratic Union Party (PYD), September 2, 2012, cited in Lowe, "The Emergence of Western Kurdistan," p. 229.

The KLI (Kurdish Language Institute) was established in 2011 and it opened branches almost in all districts and cities of Kurdish majority regions. The KLI trained thousands of Kurdish language teachers, majority of whom were women, within three years. The teaching materials were prepared in coordination with the Kurdish Institute of Diyarbakır, the Kurdish Institute of Istanbul, the Kurdish Language and Education Movement, Kurdish-Der, Egitim-Sen.<sup>797</sup> As known, Kurdish education has been provided from primary to high school in Makhmur for many years. Teachers from Makhmur<sup>798</sup> helped the KLI in terms of training teachers at the beginning of the opening of the KLI schools.<sup>799</sup> 40.000 Kurdish textbooks had been printed and 2.600 teachers had been educated by 2015.<sup>800</sup>

In one academic interview, an interviewer states that the education is one of the four pillars that each commune must have<sup>801</sup> by claiming that “The critical, multi-lingual, and popular education model prevalent across Rojava restores students’ agency inside classrooms and accelerates the spread of organic intellectuals in the region.”<sup>802</sup> Until 2015, Syrian state had maintained to provide education and paid the salaries of teachers.<sup>803</sup> In 2015, after the PYD implemented its own curriculum, the government cut the payments.<sup>804</sup> Nevertheless, the PYD administration provided the salary payments and trained new teachers to implement Kurdish language curriculum. In 2016, the DFNS completely abandoned the state curriculum and implemented Syriac,

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<sup>797</sup> Yasin Duman, “Li Rojavayê Kurdistanê Perwerdehiya bi Zimanê Kurdî û Rêveberiya Sêzimanî,” *Zend*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>798</sup> Makhmur, as a UN refugee camp, home to nearly 12000 Kurdish refugees. The PKK has been dominant in it.

<sup>799</sup> Duman, “Li Rojavayê Kurdistanê,” pp. 4-6.

<sup>800</sup> Bengio, “Reclaiming National Identity,” p. 365.

<sup>801</sup> Heval Çarçel, Qamishlo, cited in Şahin, *From Contention to Prefiguration*, pp. 36-40.

<sup>802</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>803</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 109.

<sup>804</sup> Ahmed Shiweh and Ahmed Osman 02/10/2015: ‘Kurds introduce own curriculum at schools of Rojava’, *ARA News*, <http://aranews.net/2015/10/kurds-introduce-own-curriculum-at-schools-of-rojava-2/> (last accessed 30/03/2017), cited in Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 109.

Arabic, and Kurdish curriculums.<sup>805</sup> Syrian government didn't bide the dissemination of Kurdish-instructed schools, hence closed several schools in the province of al-Hasaka and local teachers were oppressed to leave these schools. By the summer of 2018, Syrian government closed too many schools in the areas under its control in Qamishli. The PYD reciprocated by shutting down Arabic and Assyrian instructed private schools teaching the curriculum of the government.<sup>806</sup>

In the Jazira region, there were nearly 300.000 students attending more than 3000 schools by mid-2018. In the same period, there were only 58 schools of Syrian government.<sup>807</sup> While there has been an emphasis on multilingual identity of education, stressing Arabic and Syriac as well as Kûrmancî languages in visual material, the real focus was on Kurdish-language to endure long-decades Arabization policies.<sup>808</sup>

The fieldwork of Espinosa and Ronan displays that there have been concerns regarding the politicization of education system in Rojava. Some had dissatisfaction with overemphasis on teachings concerning Öcalan. Additionally, some had fears about their children would be compelled to defense forces.<sup>809</sup> The authors' interview with refugees in KRG displays that conscription and new education system have been significant factors for them to leave Rojava.<sup>810</sup> The schools who were not willing to adopt new curriculum were closed. For instance, some schools of Assyrian community were closed as they were opposed to implement the new curriculum imposing "Democratic Nation."<sup>811</sup>

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<sup>805</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 109.

<sup>806</sup> Sean Lee, "The Evolution of Rojava," pp. 86-87.

<sup>807</sup> Elise Boyle Espinosa and Adam Ronan, "Rojava's 'war of education': the Role of Education in Building Revolutionary Political Community in North and East Syria," *Third World Quarterly*, available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/01436597.2022.2115884?needAccess=true&role=button>, accessed on September 12, 2023, p. 2287.

<sup>808</sup> Sean Lee, "The Evolution of Rojava," p. 86.

<sup>809</sup> Espinosa and Adam Ronan, "Rojava's 'war of education,' p. 2295.

<sup>810</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>811</sup> *Ibid.*

Various academies have been set up alongside with the establishment of two universities. Having three campuses and consisting of seven faculties, Rojava University was the first university to be founded in 2016.<sup>812</sup> It had nearly 150 staffs and 750 undergraduate students by mid-2018. Later, in 2017, a relatively smaller university with enrolled 45 students was founded in Kobanê.<sup>813</sup> Titled in the name of Kurdish author Celadet Bedir Khan, one of these academies was founded in Qamishli. Those who were graduated from this Academy work in language activities such as schools, KLI.<sup>814</sup> Kurdish language instruction has been organized by an education council after formation of the PCWK.

#### 4.6. Concluding Remarks

This chapter scrutinizes the rise of the PYD in Syrian civil war to comprehend better the current education practice. In fact, as Kavak puts forth, it is a misleading analysis to limit the rise of Syrian Kurds to the latest Arab uprisings.<sup>815</sup> Although the state and public opinion perceived the Kurds as a menace to Syria's national Arab identity since the late 1940s onward,<sup>816</sup> the cross-border engagement within Türkiye, Iraq, Iran, and Syria remains a common feature of Kurdish politics. This engagement has been manifested in various forms, involving conflict and cooperation between Kurdish groups, and recruiting members and engaging in militant activities in neighboring countries.<sup>817</sup> More importantly, as indicated above, the social and cultural practices has been an inherent part of Kurdish society in Syria.

The two groups, the PKK and the KDP, have contending visions regarding prospective trajectory of Kurds' self-governance both within each state and in the

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<sup>812</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2287.

<sup>813</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>814</sup> Duman, "Li Rojavayê Kurdistanê," p. 7.

<sup>815</sup> Şeref Kavak, "The Arab Spring and the Emergence of a New Kurdish Polity in Syria," in Hüseyin Işıksal and Oğuzhan Göksel eds., *Turkey's Relations with the Middle East*, Switzerland: Springer, 2018, p. 208.

<sup>816</sup> Eyal Zisser, "The Kurds in Syria," p. 143.

<sup>817</sup> Zeynep Kaya and Robert Lowe, "The Curious Question of the PYD-PKK Relationship," in Gareth R V Stansfield and Mohammed Shareef eds., *The Kurdish Question Revisited*, London: Hurst, 2017; pp. 275- 276.

broader region.<sup>818</sup> The division has been deeper after the emergence of de facto administration of the PYD.<sup>819</sup> Unlike the Kurdish model in Iraq, the political ideology of Öcalan has been manifested in practice.<sup>820</sup> The KNC's decision to join the SNC increased division between the PYD and KNC.<sup>821</sup>

According to Bozarslan, unlike the past, the framework of the remilitarization for Kurds is totally different in Syria since the PYD is now protecting a “national territory” as “de facto state-entity” rather than using guerrilla methods to overthrow the existing state it lives in<sup>822</sup> as Kurdish issue revolves around the paradigm “to have the right to be in space, that means in the four ‘Kurdistans,’ and in time, in other words in the past, in the present and in the future, with the Kurds’ own words, subjectivities, wills, dreams and political and administrative formulae.”<sup>823</sup>

It should be stated that, the authoritarian nature of the PYD is like the PKK. On this occasion, according to Kaya and Whiting, the discourse of the PYD on the conception of “the Kurdish unity and democracy” is null since it restricted the political activities of the opponent parties in addition to accusation of kidnapping and arbitrary arrest.<sup>824</sup> In this context, based on Hinnebusch’s argument, regarding the Kurdish experience in the Northern Syria, its governance is best described as “ethnic Leninism” that has been hailed as a fresh example of pluralistic and multi-ethnic public participation, “with ethnic quotas” representative assemblies. The PYD, the ruling party, controlled the councils and mass organizations under the guidance of PKK cadres on loan. Quelling the dissent, arrests of members of competing Kurdish parties, and compulsory conscription were all methods used by the previous administration (Assad regime). The effort may try to increase Kurdish racial purity in

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<sup>818</sup> Kaya and Whiting, “Sowing Division,” p. 86.

<sup>819</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>820</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>821</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 150.

<sup>822</sup> Bozarslan, “Being in Time,” p. 194.

<sup>823</sup> Bozarslan, “When the Present Sends Back to the Past,” p. 8.

<sup>824</sup> Kaya and Lowe, “The Curious Question of the PYD–PKK Relationship,” p. 279.

formerly mixed Arab-Kurdish communities, according to instances of ethnic cleansing.<sup>825</sup> However, it seems that spatialization strategy of the PYD haven't stood fruitless. Following the curious question to which extent "the choices of identity and ideas of representation had changed in terms of the PYD's 'democratic moral society.'"<sup>826</sup> In a survey conducted between April and June 2016, when participants were asked to describe their identity, 91,6 per cent chose "Kurdish," 63.8 per cent chose "Muslim," and 41.6 per cent chose "Syrian."<sup>827</sup> With regard to geographical identities, "Rojava" was chosen by 52.7 per cent, "Kurdistan" with 42.2 per cent and "Syria" with 18.3 per cent.<sup>828</sup> 52 per cent of interviewers told that there has been a change in their personal and group identities in favor of ethnicization of identity since March 2011.<sup>829</sup>

The PYD has initiated a comprehensive restructuring of local education, marked notably by the establishment of numerous schools offering instruction in the Kurdish language. This endeavor has sparked an unprecedented surge in cultural activities aimed at fostering and revitalizing the Kurdish language. As it is a basic subject of this study, the representation of territoriality and how it is constructed in school textbooks will be the focus of the next chapter.

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<sup>825</sup> Hinnebusch, "From Westphalian Failure," p. 407.

<sup>826</sup> Allsopp and Wilgenburg. *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, p. 148.

<sup>827</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>828</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>829</sup> *Ibid.*



## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS: CONSTRUCTION OF TERRITORIALITY VIA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

*“Slave to words, then vassal to a name,  
Then dupe to party; child and man the same;  
Bounded by nature, narrowed still by art,  
A trifling head, and a contracted heart.”*

*The Dunciad, Alexander Pope*

#### 5.1 Introduction

This satiric poem profoundly reflects the central theme of this section of the thesis. The irony embedded in the poem reveals the influence of both contradictions and complexities rooted in political structures over the development of individuals. The etymology of the term “education” comes from “perwer” in Kurdish.<sup>830</sup> The latter is interpreted in one of the textbooks as “to be under wings, in fact, to educate a person, it also means to fly.”<sup>831</sup> There is no place here to scrutinize in detail; however, I should say that, the textbooks are under scrutiny are-like all other textbooks-ideological-oriented, and that is not possible to foster intellectual growth among children.

As mentioned previously in the methodology chapter, examination of the discourse of territoriality has revealed that the territoriality has been reflected through eleven concepts in school textbooks: (1) welat (homeland), (2) cîh (place), (3) herêm (region/territory), (4) erd (land), (5) ax (soil/land), and (6) xak (territory), (7) başûr

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<sup>830</sup> 12-WS, p. 12.

<sup>831</sup> *Ibid.*

(South), (8) bakur (North), (9) rojhilat (East), (10) rojava (west),<sup>832</sup> and (11) Kûrdistan. It is obvious that these concepts are interchangeably used to define the territoriality.

Once more, as mentioned previously, in a qualitative study employing an inductive and data-driven approach, I engage in the analysis by progressively extracting primary ideas and codes from the relevant material. In this regard, MAXQDA, through its effective coding system, as I explained in the methodology chapter, provided me to extract various meanings indicated in this chapter. I should remark that, although I utilized the most basic form of the MAXQDA through just using codes and subcodes system, it provided me to categorize my data into more particular themes. In this context, it provided me to utilize the detailed layers of the data.

In this regard, in line with the conceptual framework of this chapter, I deal with various aspects which I believe construct the concept of territoriality. The first topic I concentrate on is the sphere of education since I want to display how they themselves perceive the sphere of education as a means to construct territoriality. Then, beginning from its etymological resonance,<sup>833</sup> I try to explain how territory acquires meaning through the notions of national identity, nationalism and homeland.

Moreover, I remark the perception of occupied territories, the concepts of resistance and liberation, and the new governance model through territorialization strategy with various subtle subtitles. Furthermore, I scrutinize the concept of territorialization of history through the perceptions of “cradle of civilizations,” possessing an ancient history, priority in homeland. Additionally, I explore the symbols, and maps. Finally, I analyze the construction of territoriality via literary, or more specifically poetic space.

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<sup>832</sup> The direction names are used to refer four parts of Kurdistan among Kurds.

<sup>833</sup> In fact, all discourses regarding territoriality are constructed based on the etymological definition since there's a strong belief that Kurdistan, as a territory, has been occupied by various states and empires throughout the history due to its material and non-material wealth. Indeed, all titles and subtitles, as can be seen, are respectively following this trajectory.

## 5.2. Education

Quoting Confucius,<sup>834</sup> the language is recognized as the most significant tool for a society to be able to express its thoughts.<sup>835</sup> The role of education for constructing national identity is remarked as ‘If you don't educate your society, it will lose its chance to develop its natural identity and political institutions and leave them standing.’<sup>836</sup> A chapter of the textbook of Jineolojî (Woman Science) titled “Education” is completely devoted to the significance of the education.<sup>837</sup>

In 12<sup>th</sup> grade Kurdish Literature textbook, it is claimed that the scripts of Torah mentions about the writing and culture of the Medes which “shows Kurdistan was historically place of the writing, reading, the newspaper...,”<sup>838</sup> and the educational institutions were opened during the Medes.<sup>839</sup> In contemporary age, there have been the education activities of Mahabad Republic after its establishment.<sup>840</sup> However, “colonialist states” kept away education from the Kurdish regions.<sup>841</sup> For instance, it is explained that schools were not opened in Rojava Kurdistan.<sup>842</sup>

There is a strong claim that all the three nation-states, Turks, Persians and Arabs, beyond the culture and language of the state, pushed and excluded all the existences and carried out a process with the dominant culture and language, the Kurdish education was banned.<sup>843</sup> There are more details about the role of education on

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<sup>834</sup> “If they call you to lead a country, what will you do?” “I would correct their language at the beginning.” Please, see 7-CE, p. 38.

<sup>835</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>836</sup> 12-WS, p. 113.

<sup>837</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>838</sup> 12-KL, p. 8.

<sup>839</sup> 10-HI, p. 127.

<sup>840</sup> 9-HI, p. 103.

<sup>841</sup> 9-KL, p. 123

<sup>842</sup> 12-HI, p. 138

<sup>843</sup> 9-CE, P. 83.

Kurdish people by the colonialist power. In this sense, it is believed that they dictate the characteristics of authority and the colonialist state.<sup>844</sup>

Based on the argument that each society builds its own educational institutions according to its own conditions and it organizes schools and academies on this basis,<sup>845</sup> it is stressed that after the emergence of “the Kurdistan Freedom struggle,”<sup>846</sup> political developments took place and, in this sense, the development of the Kurdish press had a positive effect on the development of the Kurdish language.<sup>847</sup>

What is desired from education is to create “a free homeland,”<sup>848</sup> to teach and learn their history, culture, ethics...,<sup>849</sup> and to teach “values of society and homeland” through science.<sup>850</sup> More importantly, to eliminate the underestimated role of the women by criticizing the patriarchal order that “under the oppression and attacks of many patriarchal institutions, the role of women in educating children and society has changed.”<sup>851</sup> In another page, it is stated that “If there is no difference between the two sexes in the field of education, it should be built for a right future. If there is this difference, the society will be crippled. At the same time, society needs to educate its children, that is, educate itself,”<sup>852</sup> and the goal of the education is explained as to extinct the education and school system, which forcibly took away the right to education and teaching from women.<sup>853</sup>

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<sup>844</sup> 8-KL, p. 50; 7-CE, p. 45; 12-WS, p. 111; Education based on the doctrines of the occupying states and government are believed to “have created a negative impact, it does not serve the society and humanity, which means that the pages of the books have been punched and that education has gone in vain.” Please, see 9-KL, p. 9.

<sup>845</sup> 12-WS, p. 113.

<sup>846</sup> Referring the PKK.

<sup>847</sup> 3-SL, p. 105.

<sup>848</sup> 6-KL, p. 97.

<sup>849</sup> 7-CE, p. 53.

<sup>850</sup> CE-7, p. 45.

<sup>851</sup> 12-WS, p. 111.

<sup>852</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>853</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111; The superiority is given to woman in this sense: “Woman is first student of nature, the first teacher of man. He educated both his husband and his children. In the long and difficult path

### 5.3. Etymology

As Maria T. O'Shea states, the Kurds persist in believing a historical myth that involves an uninterrupted residence in the region by a distinct Kurdish ethnic group, dating back to the era of the Medes or even earlier. This myth originates from etymological assumptions.<sup>854</sup> This etymological assumption is stated in several textbooks<sup>855</sup> however the most comprehensive and the shortest is the one below:

Each time a nation came here, they gave it a different name. Sumerians called kurtî referring mountain people. The Asuras called it Subari, which means the place water spring from. The Greeks called it Mesopotamia, meaning between two rivers. The Arabs also said the place of Ekrad. Finally, the Turks came our region, they named it Kurdistan with the meaning of beautiful place. We are the people of this region/territory, we did not come here from another place. Later, many nations came to live on this land.<sup>856</sup>

### 5.4. Geographic Features

In geographic terms, Kurdistan is defined as to be located between the middle latitudes: "It has a wide territory. It is bigger than both the countries of Europe and many countries of the Middle East. The total area of Kurdistan is about 530,000 *km*<sup>2</sup>."<sup>857</sup> Moreover, Kurdistan is part of the hinterland of Middle East, and its size is around 550,000 square kilometers.<sup>858</sup> In this sense, borders of Kurdistan is drawn 'between the 32°-42°, and longitude lines 36°-51°' and "it is 1110 km long from Sivas in the north to Loristan in the south, 750-800 km wide from the city the city of

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of socialization, the woman never forgot that she is the student of nature, the teacher and the mother of the society." Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>854</sup> Maria T. O'Shea. *Trapped Between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004, p. 57.

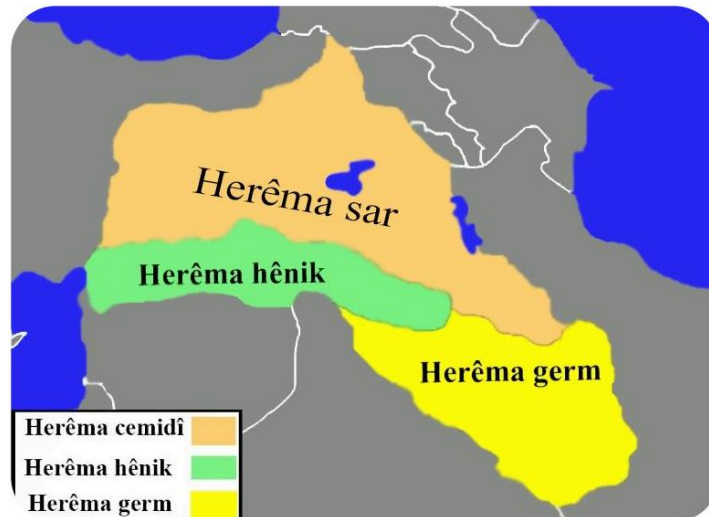
<sup>855</sup> 10-HI, p. 9, p. 54 and p. 98; 6-SS, p. 70; 7-HI, p. 44, and p. 84; In the same manner Kurdish words ax (soil), war, welat (homeland) is considered to date back to Arian culture. Please, see 10-HI, p. 54; 7-HI, p. 44; 7-HI, p. 84.

<sup>856</sup> 3-SL, p. 79; 6-SS, pp. 71-73.

<sup>857</sup> 9-GEO, p. 29.

<sup>858</sup> 6-SS, p. 70.

Maresh in the west to Lake Urmia in the east.”<sup>859</sup> According to this definition, all geographical characteristics are explained. For instance, as put here, climatic regions are divided into three parts based on this imagination of Kurdistan.



**Figure 13.** Climatic Regions of Kurdistan<sup>860</sup>

Other Geographical features constructing Kurdish territories are also highlighted. The following quotation is an example of this representation:

- 1- Kurdistan is a mountainous country.<sup>861</sup> It is in the youngest mountain ranges of the Alps and the Himalayas.
- 2- Middle height of Kurdistan, increases from the west to east south to north.
- 3- In Kurdistan, there are four seasons of the year to live. In different regions of Kurdistan, different climates are seen.<sup>862</sup>

This paragraph follows with a long list of geographical characteristics of Kurdish territories. In general, the geography of Kurdistan is explained to have very rich in

<sup>859</sup> 9-GEO, p. 28; *Ibid.*, p. 38; in another page it is expressed as Kurdistan “is bordered by Iran to the east, Turkey to the west and north, Iraq to the south, Syria to the southwest, and Georgia and Armenia to the northeast.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>860</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>861</sup> The mountains of Kurdistan are enlisted categorically based on the division of Başûr, Bakur, Rojhilat, and Rojava. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 32; For the names of mountains in Rojava, please see *Ibid.*, p. 87; In another textbook, mountains are seen as part of significant features and symbols of Kurdistan. Please, see 7-KL, p. 111.

<sup>862</sup> 9-GE, p. 30.

minerals and other underground resources,<sup>863</sup> and it is depicted as to be a rich region with underground resources with oil, coal, iron and agricultural fields however as it is said to have been occupied by four neighboring states, its economy has not progressed.<sup>864</sup> The forests covers a wide area of Kurdistan, however “most of them were cut down and burned by the invaders.”<sup>865</sup> Moreover, the illustration of Kurdistan to be a region with rich water resources, leads to the claim that “These characteristics of Kurdistan have established it as a stable region and a suitable place for life in the Middle East.”<sup>866</sup> Indeed, Kurdistan is “located in a very strategic place,” as it is considered to locate in three corners and three continents. These continents are Asia, Africa and Europe. “The place where all three continents meet is Kurdistan.”<sup>867</sup> Hence, Kurdistan plays the role of the central region in the Middle East, that’s why “in history, the first economic and social struggle was carried out for the first time on the territory of Kurdistan.”<sup>868</sup>

Regarding the population of Kurds, the population number, although “invader states concealed the population of Kurds,”<sup>869</sup> is explained to be 45-50 million,<sup>870</sup> and for Rojava, “although there is no statistics,” is explained as 5 million.<sup>871</sup>

## 5.5. Meaning

Precisely, territory is different from ordinary lands such as geographical features or geographic extension of human activities. Apparently, that is what deemed in

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<sup>863</sup> 12-SOC, p. 51.

<sup>864</sup> 9-GEO, p. 30.

<sup>865</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>866</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>867</sup> 6-SS, p. 6.

<sup>868</sup> 9-GEO, p. 30, and p. 56; 5-KL, p. 35; 11-KL, p. 30.

<sup>869</sup> It is stated that “Population is displayed in lowest number not to give any rights” to Kurds. Please, see 9-GEO, p. 53.

<sup>870</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>871</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

textbooks.<sup>872</sup> Culture is seen a social construction of territory.<sup>873</sup> That's why, it's believed that the rich lands of Mesopotamia provided first settlements of human being,<sup>874</sup> and as Kurdistan is a homeland with rich water resources, "these characteristics of Kurdistan have established it as a stable homeland and a suitable place for life in the Middle East."<sup>875</sup>

### 5.5.1. National Identity

The significant elements of nations are respectively accepted as the territory, history, and the most importantly language.<sup>876</sup> The nations are considered to have survived against the occupiers by the help of literature and the language. In this sense, culture, language, and the literature are indicated as a way to protect the identity against the nation-state imperialists.<sup>877</sup> Although "Kurdistan as a homeland has been occupied for more than hundred years," the richness of Kurdish language is considered to protect its identity.<sup>878</sup>

Accepting Kurds to have "a good conscience," the construction of identity process starts with Hurrians, rises with the Medes until reaches an identity in the Kurdish ethnicity which have certain characteristics such as courage, honesty, and ethics.<sup>879</sup> In this regard, the period of Medes is considered as the most significant period in Kurdish history for the national identity of the Kurdish society since important social

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<sup>872</sup> As such, natural features of homeland become subject of literary. For instance, please see 2-KL, p. 75.

<sup>873</sup> 7-CE, p. 24; for the culture-territory relation, this quotation is remarkable: "The geography of Kurdistan, the Kurdish people, who have the oldest history and civilization, who have always opposed the civilized culture, have made it a home for the resistant culture. This is why the system is always hostile to the Kurds." Please, see 9-CE, p. 84.

<sup>874</sup> 7-HI, p. 41.

<sup>875</sup> 9-GEO, p. 41.

<sup>876</sup> 8-KL, p. 134.

<sup>877</sup> 9-KL, p. 9.

<sup>878</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>879</sup> 9-CE, p. 63.



and ideological developments took place during this period<sup>880</sup> as, during this period, it is the first time that the whole of Kurdistan and the Aryan communities are believed to form an intellectual unity.<sup>881</sup>

In this context, in line with the argument of Kaufmann and Zimmer "...nature in general, and specific landscapes in particular, are depicted as forces of moral and spiritual regeneration capable of determining the nation and giving it a compact, homogenous, unified form,"<sup>882</sup> the emergence of the Aryan culture, the birth place of which is called as "blessed Crescent" and displayed as to spread from India to Europe, is explained to have been determined by the relationship with nature as simply was put "Living together with nature has given birth to a culture called the Aryan culture."<sup>883</sup>

Meanwhile, the etymology of the words Kurd, and Kurdistan is defined according to the other civilizations' definition and perceptions.<sup>884</sup> For instance, it is explained that the words Kurd, and Kurdistan was put forth by Seljuks after arrival of Islam.<sup>885</sup> Similarly, the empire of Iran is considered to have an important place in the construction of Kurdish identity. The name Iran, as a concept, means the land of the Aryans, and as in Aryan, it means people who have farming culture. Because the Aryan culture started in the Neolithic revolution with agricultural activities and the domestication of herbs, it is defined with this word. Therefore, it is said that the early Kurds also appeared in this way, and the word "arî" as a concept is basically used to describe these groups.<sup>886</sup>

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<sup>880</sup> 10-HI, p. 127; That's why it is stated that "Although Kurds were way from the urban life, it doesn't mean they didn't build any civilization." Please, see 9-CE, p. 8.

<sup>881</sup> 10-HI, p. 127; Kurdish culture is defined on the Aryan culture. Please, see 4-SS, p. 4.

<sup>882</sup> Kaufmann and Zimmer, "In Search of the Authentic Nation Kaffman," p. 487.

<sup>883</sup> 4-SS, p. 121; Here, Aryan culture is compared to the Semitic culture. Accordingly, people who came from the desert developed Semitic culture, which was based on hunting and herding, in Southern Mesopotamia. This culture is considered as the opposition of Aryan culture, and it is said that the former became the basis of civilization, state and class. Please, see 4-SS, p. 121.

<sup>884</sup> 6-SS, p. 70.

<sup>885</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>886</sup> 12-HI, p. 114.

From Rousseau and onwards, romantic nationalism has highlighted the “agrarian existence and village-type settlements” where the society as a living organism may find “the identity through communion with nature.”<sup>887</sup> In the same vein, the social culture of the Kurds is starting from the communes and groups of sedentary life and thus they have an identity,<sup>888</sup> and it is stated that “the world maintains its existence on the culture of the village and agriculture.”<sup>889</sup>

Leaving many grievances on the lack national feeling for an independent Kurdistan in history,<sup>890</sup> it is thought that tribal interests were overcoming the national identity. For instance, in the Ottoman Empire period, the tribal and clan system of Kurdistan was based on obedience to the Ottoman Empire, so when the leader of the tribes saw that the rebellions were going against their family interests, they stopped to fight.<sup>891</sup> The division that existed within the emirates was the main reason for the failure of the uprisings; Each principality rebelled on its own against the Ottomans. This is because there was no national feeling for an independent Kurdistan.<sup>892</sup> Later, the Treaty of Lausanne is seen to have deepened the disunity among the Kurds since “the occupying states also have one mentality against the Kurdish people, that is the mentality of genocide and annihilation.”<sup>893</sup>

Some points regarding the construction of national identity are particularly expressed. First and foremost, Rojava is considered to have been a great place of

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<sup>887</sup> Williams and Smith, “The National Construction of Social Space,” p. 505.

<sup>888</sup> 9-CE, p. 9.

<sup>889</sup> *Ibid.*, because it is considered that “the most important features of this social culture are, based on small groups, they live together and use the land as much as they can and start farming for their livelihood.” Please, see *Ibid.*

<sup>890</sup> 12-HI, p. 49.

<sup>891</sup> 9-HI, p. 43; 12-HI, p. 49. The feudal and tribal system that was spread in Kurdistan. Please, see 12-HI, p. 49.

<sup>892</sup> 12- HI, p. 149; Lack of national identity construction is explained in detail: “It has been evident in all the riots, due to the division of the national feelings of the Kurdish people, a joint struggle has not been carried out.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 41. “One of the reasons for the destruction was the Kurds themselves. Tribal wars and conflicts, reconciliation, putting tribal interests and personalities ahead of public interests.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>893</sup> 9-HI, p. 71.

forming Kurdish national identity through protecting language, culture, and ethics<sup>894</sup> because the settlement of intellectuals in Rojava led to important steps in self-organization. It had a great impact on the people of Rojava in the formation of national feelings, the preservation of language, culture, and morality.<sup>895</sup> In this sense, secondly, Khoyboun is particularly referred to have built national identity among Kurds.<sup>896</sup> Thirdly, among other poets, the poems of Cegerxwîn appear in textbooks for the construction of national identity on territories of Kurdistan.<sup>897</sup> Finally and more importantly, the arrival of Ocalan in 1979 to the region (Rojava Kurdistan) is considered to have create a large consciousness among Kurds.<sup>898</sup>

This consciousness seems to create a national pride and identity. In one of the textbooks, it is said that “Kurds are more superior than other nations in every part of Kurdistan in the cultural sense.” For instance, they speak the language of the state they live in better than the people that belong these nation-states.<sup>899</sup> In another book it is stated that “Just as the Kurds have influenced the Middle East, the Kurdish clothing has also influenced the Middle Eastern clothing.”<sup>900</sup>

It is claimed that the issues regarding national identity of Kurds have been underestimated by different actors in historical process. For instance, the arrival of Islam had negative influences on eliminating the development of Kurds to advance their literature, culture, and science.<sup>901</sup> In another anonym rhyming couplets, it is said that “the enemy has forced the people who was a nation, to migrate.”<sup>902</sup> The

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<sup>894</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>895</sup> 12-HI, p. 141.

<sup>896</sup> 9-HI, p. 121.

<sup>897</sup> 8-KL, pp. 23-24; the poem is titled as “Who We Are.”

<sup>898</sup> 12-HI, p. 141.

<sup>899</sup> 9-CE, p. 26; In this regard, it is stated that “In Turkey, people who speak Turkish best, in Syria, people who know Arabic best, in Iran, people who see Persian as their mother tongue, there are many approaches like this.” Please, see 9-CE, p. 26.

<sup>900</sup> 4-SS, p. 34.

<sup>901</sup> 3-KL, p. 8.

<sup>902</sup> 9-KL, p. 17.

prohibition of Kurdishness in Kurdistan after “Dersim massacre”<sup>903</sup> is evaluated from same perspective. Similarly, it is stated that one of the “dirty” goals of the Gulf War was to bring Kurds under influence and “to neutralize the contemporary and democratic identity of Kurds.”<sup>904</sup> Finally, the practices of Kurdish organizations and individuals who were dealing with the problem, are criticized since they could not handle and evaluate the “Kurdish problem correctly and properly.” Their solutions are not considered to underestimate the issues the problems regarding the national identity of Kurds: “These reformist organizations and backward nationalists, Kurdistan as; Islamic problem and the solution to the problem, with wishes such as roads, water, electricity and schools were introduced and taken over.”<sup>905</sup>

### 5.5.2. Nationalism

“Understanding one’s natural rights and historical knowledge”<sup>906</sup> is crucial for nationalism. In this sense, there are many historical references in textbooks. First and foremost, a sense of an ethnic and historical pride is obvious in the claim that “We are from Ari people. The Ari people lived on this land.”<sup>907</sup> In this context, Kurds are primarily associated with the region of Kurdistan, emphasizing their distinct cultural and national identity through a poem of Cegerxwîn titled as “Who We Are.”<sup>908</sup>

Then, it is explained that “Nationalism has been a key factor in the separation of peoples in the Middle East,” as “the existence of Kurds often perceived as a threat.”<sup>909</sup> The insurgencies against the marginalization of Kurds are underscored to have significant moments in Kurdish nationalism. In this sense, it is considered that “the first rebellion of sheikhs marked the initial process of Kurdish nationalism.”<sup>910</sup>

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<sup>903</sup> 9-HI, p. 95.

<sup>904</sup> 12-HI, p. 132.

<sup>905</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>906</sup> 7-CE, p. 81.

<sup>907</sup> 3-SL, p. 78.

<sup>908</sup> 6-KL, pp. 101-102.

<sup>909</sup> 9-HI, p. 26.

<sup>910</sup> 12-HI, p. 56.

The uprising of Sheikh Ubaydullah Nehri in 1880 is noted for its significant national characteristics, distinguishing it from other revolts.<sup>911</sup>

Kurdistan is depicted as a “distinctive territory” over which there has been a big fight,<sup>912</sup> and it is viewed as the source of material and historical values, as expressed in the verse: “In the gardens of Kurdistan/ There are many serious values.”<sup>913</sup> In this context, Botan is illustrated as to have “made its presence known in the fire of Mesopotamia, carried the beauties of the holy land of the divine mother in its arms, the deep traces of which the culture of the divine mother can be found.”<sup>914</sup> A martyr’s martyrdom situation is explained that he sacrificed his life for these “holy lands.”<sup>915</sup> The mount of Cudi is depicted to have been the shelter of the Kurdish community and has always protected its existence, culture and traditions.<sup>916</sup> In the similar manner, other sacred places such as Lalesh, “the place of Yazidi circumambulation,”<sup>917</sup> and Riha<sup>918</sup> is mentioned and explained that they have been invaded for their distinct status.

As part of nationalism, patriotism find a great place in textbooks. In this regard, Zoroastrian philosophy is seen as an influential philosophy to create, for the first time in Kurdistan, a consciousness based on patriotism during the era of the Med Confederation.<sup>919</sup> A piece of “suggestions” by Qazi Mihemmed, the founder of Mahabad Republic, is completely related with national feelings nurturing nationalism.<sup>920</sup> The role of Khoyboun to revive the nationalism in Western Kurdistan

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<sup>911</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>912</sup> 9-KL, p. 46.

<sup>913</sup> 5-KL, p. 30.

<sup>914</sup> 8-KL, p. 33.

<sup>915</sup> 5-KL, p. 39.

<sup>916</sup> 8-KL, p. 34.

<sup>917</sup> 9-CE, p. 71.

<sup>918</sup> 11-HI, p. 102.

<sup>919</sup> 7-HI, p. 105; 12-WS, p. 48.

<sup>920</sup> 7-KL, p. 41.

is also highlighted.<sup>921</sup> In this sense, the writings of Osman Sebrî, Celadet Bedirkhan, Cegerxwîn, Kamîran Bedirkhan, Sureya Bedirkhan, Dr. Nûredîn Zaza, Nûrî Dêrsimî, etc., are believed to have invigorated the revival of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>922</sup>

The first chapter of the third class is based on a poem that starts with glorifying Kurdistan: “Long live, long live Kurdistan.”<sup>923</sup> Again, some other poetic verses teaching patriotic feelings to the second-year students at primary school are as follows:

First letter Kurdistan  
No more dreams  
The day came  
Long live Kurdistan<sup>924</sup>

Defense of the territory and sovereignty of a nation is a significant part of the nationalism. There are many points in the textbooks inviting young people to join the forces defending the homeland.<sup>925</sup> However other aspects of nationalism such as the awareness of the knowledge of rights and history, and education is also strongly emphasized. For instance, Celadet Bedirkhan’s realization of the need for science and education following the failures of rebellions<sup>926</sup> reflects a nationalist perspective. In this sense, education is seen as vital to pursue national goals. Celadet’s belief in the importance of learning the Kurdish language to foster nationalism and unity,<sup>927</sup>

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<sup>921</sup> 9-HI, p. 121.

<sup>922</sup> *Ibid.*, there are also other names such as Vedat Aydın who is noted as one of the patriotic figures who made significant efforts for the Kurdish nation. Please, see 9-KL, p. 42.

<sup>923</sup> 3-KL, p. 8.

<sup>924</sup> 2-KL, p. 42; In the similar vein, there are many verses. Another example is the poem dictating students patriotic feelings through verses like: “I have land and homeland/I am very strong and skilled.” Please, see 6-KL, p. 10.

<sup>925</sup> For instance, please see 9-KL, p. 75; Another example is the involvement of Khoyboun in and support for the Agri Rebellion and Sheikh Said’s rebellion. Please, see 6-KL, p. 123, and the words of Sheikh Said himself is quoted: “My natural life is coming to an end. We sacrificed our lives for the lives of our people. I never regret it. I am very happy because our descendants will not be ashamed of themselves in front of our enemies.” Please, see 9-HI, p. 85; 12-HI, p. 93.

<sup>926</sup> 6-KL, p. 123.

<sup>927</sup> *Ibid.*

and viewing “the pen as a weapon for the cause”<sup>928</sup> highlights the role of language in nationalist movements. For the protection of Kurdish national identity and values, the strive of Kurdish nationalist Cegerxwîn is emphasized.<sup>929</sup>

Nationalism generally involves an emotional attachment to a homeland. In this regard, the call to love one’s homeland<sup>930</sup> is a basic nationalist sentiment. For the first-year students, love of the country is highlighted owing to its national characteristics.<sup>931</sup> Both the love and dependence of people for their homeland are emphasized by stressing a deep connection to the land where people were born and raised.<sup>932</sup> For the upper levels, emotional attachment finds more deep meanings. For instance, in a poem, there are strong words indicating high emotions for land such as sacrificing one’s life etc.<sup>933</sup> In the same manner, in a poem titled “Sigh for Kurdistan” emotional attachment through many aspects such as prominent places like Mount Subhan are adorned, and the nexus is created that that’s why “martyrs have sacrificed their live for Kurdistan.”<sup>934</sup>

In general, there is a recognized need “to work to diminish the sorrow of the homeland.”<sup>935</sup> That’s why there are strong references such as “The religion of our youth is nationalism, it keeps us away from obliqueness and laziness”<sup>936</sup> to invoke nationalist sentiments.

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<sup>928</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>929</sup> 3-KL, p. 101.

<sup>930</sup> 7-CE, p. 76.

<sup>931</sup> 1-KL, p. 119.

<sup>932</sup> 7-CE, p. 68.

<sup>933</sup> 7-KL, p. 83.

<sup>934</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148; There are plentiful examples indicating emotional attachment to homeland. Two remarkable ones are an exiled Kurd's (Uthman Sabri) emotional attachment various parts of homeland in a poem titled ‘The Situation of Homeland,’ Please, see 8-KL, p. 150; and the geographical features of Xabûr are attached with emotional characteristics in the poem of “Xabûr” written by Cegerxwîn. Please, see. 7-KL, p. 71.

<sup>935</sup> 8-KL, p. 28.

<sup>936</sup> 11-KL, p. 16.

### 5.5.3. Homeland

Theoretically, the concept of homeland is defined as such:

In fact, the homeland is not in the sense of the geography that is defined by the borders of the state and is identified with one language, one flag, one nation and one culture. Just as there are no boundaries in people's minds, there are no boundaries in the culture and society. Because of these facts, every piece of land that is lived on becomes a country.<sup>937</sup>

Here and in other passages, human population and cultural identity are articulated as significant factors which make territory a homeland.<sup>938</sup> Some of these factors are explored through the following subtitles.

It should be remarked that one dimension of homeland conceptualization is strong a primordial attachment to the homeland as it is claimed that “people and society love and depend on the land where they were born and grow up.”<sup>939</sup> In this respect, it is seen a necessity to recognize the homeland in order to love it.<sup>940</sup> Kurdistan is articulated as the homeland of all Kurds,<sup>941</sup> and it “belongs Kurds,”<sup>942</sup> and its hinterland contains the area, which is also called “Mezra Botan,” that the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates flow.<sup>943</sup> Also, It is displayed as a beautiful place with its various characteristics.<sup>944</sup>

Another issue related with homeland is directly relevant to the idea of Symmons-Symonolewicz: “The common elements shared by both national and ethnic

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<sup>937</sup> 7-CE, p. 64, 66, and 69; Another similar approach regarding the concept of homeland can be seen in this definition: “What includes people, mothers, fathers, friends, minds and the environment in which they live is the territory of the homeland.” Please, see 5-SS, p. 53.

<sup>938</sup> 1-KL, p. 120.

<sup>939</sup> 7-CE, p. 68.

<sup>940</sup> 3-SL, p. 88; The chapter of another textbook is completely about recognizing the homeland. Please, see SL-3, p. 78.

<sup>941</sup> 7-KL, p. 41; 1-KL, p. 118.

<sup>942</sup> 9-KL, p. 46.

<sup>943</sup> 3-SL, p. 78.

<sup>944</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3; For instance, the historical places such as Mem û Zîn is stated to create a condition for people even to connect relation with their love and the territories of homeland. Please see 8-KL, p. 34.



consciousness are the sense of unity and solidarity, especially in facing other groups, as well as territorial and cultural ones.”<sup>945</sup> There is a call to all Kurds (speaking different dialects of Kurdish) to come together in Kurdistan<sup>946</sup> as it is defined the home of all Kurds,<sup>947</sup> and this belief is strengthened by poetic verses:

The story of both Medes and Mîtans  
Owner of a heavy load  
We are all brothers and sisters  
Soran, Kûrmanc, and Zaza  
Say it together  
We are the children of Kurdistan<sup>948</sup>

I think one of the dimensions of the common homeland emphasis is related to the attempt to get support from other Kurdish actors living in different countries. This is evident in 12<sup>th</sup> degree History book. “Rojava Kurdistan” is claimed to be place of the all the revolutions and rebellions of the Kurds in the other three parts as it has become the place of organizing, settling, and helping. To directly quote from the text:

Even though it has not developed a revolution within itself, it has become a place for members of rebellions in other parts of Kurdistan. When the insurgents of other parts of Kurdistan were struggling against the invaders' attacks, they went to Rojava Kurdistan to self-organize, and to obtain financial assistance in this part of our homeland.<sup>949</sup>

As a latent meaning, there is a demand from other Kurdish actors to help Rojava, as a part of greater homeland of Kurdistan. Another point is that the nation-state is considered to establish a homogenous homeland conceptualization:

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<sup>945</sup> Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, “National Consciousness and Social Theory,” *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, Vol. 7, 1980, p. 687, quoted in David B. Knight, “Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 72, No. 4, 1982, p. 524.

<sup>946</sup> 6-KL, p. 134.

<sup>947</sup> 7-KL, p. 41.

<sup>948</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>949</sup> 12-HI, p. 141.

Throughout history, the tribes that have relied on a common language and cultural roots have developed as an advanced form and have found a common place for themselves as a region and a homeland. The concepts of region and homeland should be understood as a culture. Many clans, tribes and even other peoples can live together. Nation-state fascism has applied the understanding of the same (homogeneous) identity to the people.<sup>950</sup>

Despite all challenging circumstances such as the exploitations, invasions, and massacres, Kurds have not left the idea of an independent homeland.<sup>951</sup> It will be “place of residence after salvation from enemy.”<sup>952</sup> In this sense, a poem of “a martyr” titled as “my homeland” calling for fighting against the enemy<sup>953</sup> to recapture the homeland.

In various textbooks, question-answer parts of the chapters strengthen the idea of the fact that Kurdistan is homeland of Kurds. The following quotation is just one of the examples:

2. What is Kurdistan famous for?
3. Why does Kurdistan attract many foreign civilizations?
4. Geographically, where is Kurdistan located?
5. Write the names of some rivers and lakes in Kurdistan.
6. How is Kurdistan a country in terms of agriculture?
7. Why are the eyes of the occupying forces on our country?<sup>954</sup>

New words are also taught to the first-year student via the word of the homeland.<sup>955</sup> For instance, to the word of “homeland” is taught when teaching the letter of “w,”<sup>956</sup> and the word of “Kûrdistan” is taught while teaching the letter of “û.”<sup>957</sup>

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<sup>950</sup> 11-SOC, p. 11.

<sup>951</sup> 12-KL, p. 99. In this passage, the invader is displayed as Türkiye.

<sup>952</sup> 8-KL, p. 38.

<sup>953</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>954</sup> 5-KL, p. 37; In the same manner, please see also 2-KL, p. 62; 11-SOC, p. 96; 6-KL, p. 100.

<sup>955</sup> 5-KL, p. 56.

<sup>956</sup> 1-KL, p. 120.

<sup>957</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

## 5.6.. Perception, Resistance, Liberation, and Governance

As mentioned in the conceptual framework, the perception regarding occupied territories, resistance and liberation, and governance are respectively crucial practices of non-state actors in context of their territorialization strategies. The same trajectory is prevailing for the PYD based on the data and information I drew from school textbooks.

### 5.6.1. Occupied Territories

The territorially bounded image of Kurdistan is constructed in relation to its external invasion in almost all periods, respectively Sumer, Babylonians, Akkad, Alexander Great<sup>958</sup> in ancient periods;<sup>959</sup> Roman and the Sassanian Empires,<sup>960</sup> Persian,<sup>961</sup> the Moghul,<sup>962</sup> Seljuk Empire,<sup>963</sup> Ottoman,<sup>964</sup> Safavid,<sup>965</sup> and Islamic<sup>966</sup> “invasion” historically; British dividing policies,<sup>967</sup> French mandate,<sup>968</sup> and Soviet Union authority<sup>969</sup> in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>970</sup> and Turkish,<sup>971</sup> Syrian,<sup>972</sup> Iran,<sup>973</sup>

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<sup>958</sup> 7-HI, p. 92; 6-HI, p. 89.

<sup>959</sup> 5-SS, p. 23.

<sup>960</sup> 6-SS, pp. 90-91; 11-HI, pp. 32-33; 8-HI, p. 20, and p. 25.

<sup>961</sup> 6-SS, p. 88; 8-HI, p. 20.

<sup>962</sup> 6-SS, p. 68; 8-HI, pp. 68-70; 11-HI, p. 109, and p. 112.

<sup>963</sup> 8-HI, p. 52.

<sup>964</sup> 11-HI, p. 130; 11-KL, p. 30.

<sup>965</sup> 11-HI, p. 54, p. 92, p. 125, p. 135; 11-KL, p. 30; 8-HI, p. 77.

<sup>966</sup> 11-KL, p. 24; 8-HI, pp. 31-34, pp. 45-46; 11-HI, p. 49, p. 55, and p. 59; 6-SS, p. 97; Islam is considered to have two sides: “On the one hand, it created the culture of rebellion; on the other hand, it has become an authoritarian power.” Please, see 6-SS, p. 93.

<sup>967</sup> 12-HI, p. 125, and p. 142; 9-HI, p. 39, p. 48, p. 110, and p. 127; 12-HI, p. 39, p. 42, p. 46, p. 47, p. 68, p. 118, p. 123, and p. 127.

<sup>968</sup> 12-HI, p. 68, p. 136, and p. 137; 5-SS, p. 24, and p. 56; 9-HI, p. 122.

<sup>969</sup> 9-HI, p. 102; 12-HI, p. 70.

<sup>970</sup> 12-HI, p. 46.

<sup>971</sup> 11-SO, p. 88, and p. 94; 8-HI, p. 63; 5-SS, p. 24; 12-HI, p. 96, pp. 99-103, and p. 144; 9-HI, p. 79, p. 108, and p. 132; 9-KL, p. 16; 9-CE, p. 83.

<sup>972</sup> 3-KL, p. 90; 9-HI, pp.123-124; 12-HI, p. 130, and pp. 137-138; 9-CE, p. 83.

<sup>973</sup> 7-KL, p. 145; 12-HI, p. 114, and p.119; 9-HI, pp. 104-107; 9-CE, p. 83.

and Iraq<sup>974</sup> “occupation” presently, which is a significant part of the historical narratives, and part of the discourse. This discourse significantly reproduces the historical narrative of conflicts and thereby meaning related to the boundaries and territories.<sup>975</sup>

In this context, specific agreements and treaties dividing Kurdistan are frequently mentioned. The first agreement is between Roman and Sassanian Empires, which divides Kurdistan into two parts and the city of Dara<sup>976</sup> becomes the border. The east of Dara remains under the rule of the Sasanians, the west of the city of Dara remains under the rule of the Roman Empire.<sup>977</sup>

As a later treaty, Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin is not seen only physical and geographical division, but also having cultural and ideological repercussions.<sup>978</sup> To quote directly from the textbook:

This division was not only physical and geographical, but also cultural and ideological, because the most effective part of the Kurdish culture was cut off. In other words, the brain of the Kurdish community was divided.<sup>979</sup>

The other agreements, Sykes-Picot,<sup>980</sup> Armistice of Mudros,<sup>981</sup> San Remo Conference,<sup>982</sup> Ankara Agreement,<sup>983</sup> Cairo Conference of 1921,<sup>984</sup> Treaty of

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<sup>974</sup> 12-HI, pp. 127-131; 9-HI, p. 115; 12-WS, p. 34.

<sup>975</sup> 9-KL, p. 46.

<sup>976</sup> Today, a village of Nusaybin, Mardin.

<sup>977</sup> 6-SS, pp. 90-91.

<sup>978</sup> 8-HI, p. 91; 6-SS, p. 71; 11-SO, p. 92, and p. 97.

<sup>979</sup> 8-HI, p. 91; 11-HI, p. 143.

<sup>980</sup> 9-HI, p. 64; 12-KL, p. 81; 3-KL, p. 3. 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement is also claimed to divide cultural unity through division of the literature as Some parts of Kurdistan started to use the Arabic scripts, others Latin scripts.

<sup>981</sup> 9-HI, p. 62.

<sup>982</sup> 12-HI, p. 121.

<sup>983</sup> 12-HI p. 70, p. 74, p. 79, and p. 136; 9-HI, p. 121.

<sup>984</sup> 12-HI, p. 71; 9-HI, p. 66.

Lausanne,<sup>985</sup> Sadabat Pact,<sup>986</sup> and the Algerian Agreement<sup>987</sup> are explained in detail. The Treaty of Lausanne is accepted as the official document of the division of Kurdistan after the Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin as Kurdistan is being divided into four parts and the Kurdish people fall under the hands of four rulers, so this division is perceived to deepen the division among Kurds.<sup>988</sup>

One of the exception of treaties is the Treaty between Kurdish governor Idris Bitlisi and Yavuz Sultan Selim against the Safawid power. Accordingly, Kurdish governor is entitled to limited autonomy in Kurdish regions.<sup>989</sup> As a result, the treaty is not represented to be unfavorable. The other exception is Treaty of Sevres,<sup>990</sup> which is displayed as to establish an autonomous Kurdistan,<sup>991</sup> as can be seen below in figure 11. Even for this agreement, it is noted that “even though a Kurdish state would have been established according to the Sevres agreement, some regions of Kurdistan (Mardin, Urfa, Antep) went under French mandate of Syria.”<sup>992</sup>



**Figure 14.** Map of the Treaty of Sevres<sup>993</sup>

<sup>985</sup> 9-HI, p. 69, and pp. 70-71; 6-SS, p. 71.

<sup>986</sup> Sadabat Pact (1937) is also accepted as equivalent of Qasr-e Shirin Treaty, since it is considered to consolidate the division of Kurdistan, the division of Kurdish society, and paved way for the invasion and occupation of Kurdistan. Please, see 12-HI, p. 115.

<sup>987</sup> It was signed between Iran and Iraq in 1975. Please, see 9-HI, pp. 12-13.

<sup>988</sup> 9-HI, p. 71.

<sup>989</sup> 8-HI, p. 82.

<sup>990</sup> 12-HI, p. 73; 9-HI, p. 65.

<sup>991</sup> 9-HI, p. 74.

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>993</sup> 9-HI, p. 65.

The significance of Treaty of Sevres is explained that “an independent Kurdish state is written in a diplomatic agreement historically.”<sup>994</sup>

The rationale behind the constant occupation is explained that Kurdistan is located between significant imperial states, and having rich underground resources, and agriculture.<sup>995</sup> It is believed that location and wealth has caused Kurdistan to become a war zone.<sup>996</sup> Other reasons are referred as the geostrategic place of Kurdistan to be a bridge between Asia, Europe, and Africa.<sup>997</sup>

Ideologically, Capitalism is seen as a force that divides the lands of Kurdistan and to curb the development of Kurds.<sup>998</sup> Comprehensive details are outlined as follows. The societies in the geography of the Middle East, where Kurdistan is centrally located, have been in a deep crisis since the 19th century, with the source being capitalist innovation.<sup>999</sup> Thus, the period of capitalism was marked by severe challenges and profound changes for the Kurdish people and their land.<sup>1000</sup> During the capitalist era, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kurdish society underwent a fundamental change with the Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916, which divided Kurdistan between four states.<sup>1001</sup> As a result of the arrival of capitalist nation-state ideology, the Kurds faced heavy oppression from the nation-states of Turks, Arabs, and Persians.<sup>1002</sup> As a concrete example, The British, in an attempt to influence their control, collected and gathered oversized information about Colemerg, ranging from the number of animals to the impact of tribes.<sup>1003</sup> To sum up, the capitalist era is

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<sup>994</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>995</sup> 11-HI, pp. 123-125; 12-SO, p. 49.

<sup>996</sup> 11-SO, p. 92.

<sup>997</sup> 5-KL, pp. 35-36; 6-SS, p. 71.

<sup>998</sup> 9-HI, p. 26.

<sup>999</sup> 11-SO, p. 93.

<sup>1000</sup> 12-HI, p. 29.

<sup>1001</sup> 11-SO, p. 93.

<sup>1002</sup> 12-HI, p. 76.

<sup>1003</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27; The detailed demographic, economic, and social data is argued to be used to maintain control over the region; These points are strengthened through question-answer parts at the beginning

seen an era of isolation for the Kurdish people, leading to discussions about whether Kurds exist and resulting in their suppression, oppression, and denial.<sup>1004</sup>

### 5.6.1.1. Displacement

It's claimed that there have been certain forced displacement and resettlement policies against Kurds. The first de-humanization policy is considered to have taken place in Kurdistan during the wars between the Sassanids and the Roman Empire.<sup>1005</sup> Later, the Ottoman Empire usurped the lands of Alawite Kurds.<sup>1006</sup> In early Republic years in Turkey, the goal of the state in Dersim is demonstrated as 'to occupy and depopulate' the region with certainty.<sup>1007</sup> In coeval age, the aim of states is indicated as to Arabize, Persianized, and Turkify the Kurds by evacuating Kurdistan through energy dams.<sup>1008</sup> Similarly, the aim of the Arab Belt policy of Syria is considered to de-humanize border territories from Kurds.<sup>1009</sup> Meanwhile, it is stated that during the operations between 1983-1989, thousands of civilians, including women and children, disappeared.<sup>1010</sup> In Iraq, instead of the Kurdish people who were evicted from their places, Arab people are asserted to have settled as 'with this method, the number of resident Kurdish people was reduced. In particular, this method has been used in the city of Kirkuk.'<sup>1011</sup>

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or end of the chapters. For instance, "1. How did the English think about Kurdistan? 2. What were the contents of the reports about the Kurdistan community? 3. What was the period of capitalism like for the Kurdish people?" Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>1004</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27; The proposed solution to this suggested resistance: "The Kurdish problem has now become a dead end, where Kurds either must give up all universal rights, human rights, and democratic standards or carry out an unprecedented resistance. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>1005</sup> 6-SS, p. 91.

<sup>1006</sup> 11-HI, p. 118.

<sup>1007</sup> 12-HI, p. 104.

<sup>1008</sup> 12-SO, p. 51.

<sup>1009</sup> 9-HI, pp. 123-124; 12-HI, p. 138; it is asserted that Kurds were evicted from border territories, and Arab people were taken to these territories in Syria.

<sup>1010</sup> 12-HI, p. 131.

<sup>1011</sup> *Ibid.*

### 5.6.1.2. Burning

Burning the Kurdish territories along with its surface inhabitants is exhibited as a strategy of occupied powers. Accordingly, Kurdistan was burned and destructed by Timur's powers in 1402,<sup>1012</sup> 132 villages were burned during the Koçgiri rebellion,<sup>1013</sup> and the gang Topal Othman, under the rule of the Turkish state, killed people and burnt their villages.<sup>1014</sup> On 13.11.1960, the burning of Amûd Cinema occurred, where nearly 300 children burned.<sup>1015</sup> Moreover, during the Enfal massacre by the Iraqi Baath, 185,000 people were killed via chemical weapons and 4,000 villages were burnt.<sup>1016</sup> Furthermore, the forests of Kurdistan are claimed to have been burned by invaders.<sup>1017</sup>

### 5.6.1.3. Demographic Changes

Other replacement, and demographic changes are also pointed out. For example, in order to protect the northeast of Iran from Uzbek attacks, tribes such as Shadi, Zaferani, Keyuwani, and Chekni were sent to Khorasan and Gushan in Eastern Kurdistan by the Safawids.<sup>1018</sup> "Because in those times both the army Britain was in Iraq and France was in Syria and these two states were governed by Turks who began to demolish where Kûrdayetî took place," after the Lausanne Treaty, as a result of this, migration occurred in Turkey, and many people moved to the south and west of Kurdistan.<sup>1019</sup> More recently "koteki is an asylum type, what the Turkish state is doing in Afrin—the time of evacuating the residents of Afrin from their

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<sup>1012</sup> 11-HI, p. 112.

<sup>1013</sup> 9-HI, p. 77.

<sup>1014</sup> 12-HI, p. 85.

<sup>1015</sup> 9-HI, p. 123.

<sup>1016</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>1017</sup> 9-GEO, p. 49.

<sup>1018</sup> 8-HI, p. 88.

<sup>1019</sup> 3-KL, p. 87.



properties and lands, and settling the inhabitants of the inner Syrian regions like Ghuta and Idlib instead of them.”<sup>1020</sup>

#### 5.6.1.4. Exile

Like Palestinian ghourba (dispersion) and Jewish galout (exile),<sup>1021</sup> there is an exile and dispersion narrative for Kurds. Accordingly, the wars, and thereby massacres in the territories of Kurds at the beginning of the 19th century forced them to leave their homeland.<sup>1022</sup> Then, the narrative inaugurates the phenomenon with the rise of nationalism among Kurds. In that sense, it is stated that suppression of the Koçgiri rebellion, 2000 villagers were exiled.<sup>1023</sup> The order of the Ottoman Empire in 1922 to exile many Kurdish families, among them Bedirkhanian family, is questioned and, the reason is indicated as the patriotism of these families.<sup>1024</sup> The process is told to continue in following years. For instance, the escape of thousands of people from Turkey to Syria after the 1925 Sheikh Said rebellion is narrated with reference to an exile discourse.<sup>1025</sup> Moreover, the expulsion of people of Dersim from the region after 1938<sup>1026</sup> is explicated.

In later decades, it is claimed that the exile became a more systematic practice. Many Kurdish people, because of their national consciousness, are exiled from their

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<sup>1020</sup> 9-GEO, p. 99.

<sup>1021</sup> Oren Yiftachel, “Territory as the Kernel of the Nation: Space, Time and Nationalism in Israel/Palestine,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 7, No.2, 2002, p. 217.

<sup>1022</sup> 3-KL, p. 54.

<sup>1023</sup> 9-HI, p. 77.

<sup>1024</sup> 6-KL, p. 122; Exile of people after the Mutkî rebellion, and the exile of the Bedirkhan family during the transition from the empire to the republic many times respectively by Abdulhamid, Atatürk, and later by the Kemalists, and exile of the Beks who acted with Bedirkhan Beg to different places are displayed as exile examples. 12-HI, p. 44; 3-KL, p. 17; 3-KL, p. 93; 12-HI, p. 97; 6-KL, p. 122.

<sup>1025</sup> 12-HI, p. 136.

<sup>1026</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105; In this sense, it is stated that they made the Dersim massacre and exiled all remarkable names from Kurdistan, such as Kor Huseyn Paşa, Şêx Fehîmê Erwasi, Şêx Seîdê Nûrisî, Birahîmê Heskê Têlî. 12-HI, 105; 9-HI, p. 87; “Turkish authoritarianism” is asserted to lead to the exile of Kurdish intellectuals, please, see 3-KL, p. 90.

homeland, and thousands of people have been displaced from their villages and cities.<sup>1027</sup> Additionally, it is stated that “due to the pressures of the authorities, most of the artists and intellectuals continued their lives in foreign countries,”<sup>1028</sup> and as a result, it is explained that “The efforts of Kurdish intellectuals to develop and protect the Kurdish language and literature were hindered.”<sup>1029</sup>

To sum up, the rationale behind the exile is stated that the more the Kurds demanded rights the more they were dispersed from their lands,<sup>1030</sup> and there is a strong emphasis that Kurds were exiled from their ‘ancestral lands’ by Iraqi,<sup>1031</sup> Syrian,<sup>1032</sup> and Turkish<sup>1033</sup> governments.

#### **5.6.1.5. Massacre**

To control over territories of Kurdistan, it is argued that occupying powers have strongly used the dynamics of “massacres,” “genocide,” and “annihilation.”<sup>1034</sup> Relevant information is provided as follows. After the fall of the Russian and Ottoman empires, the wars in Kurdistan led to the slaughter and massacre of Kurdish people.<sup>1035</sup> In the *Geliyê Zilan* massacre following the Mount Ararat rebellion in 1930, it is asserted that nearly 15,000 people were killed by the Turkish Republic.<sup>1036</sup> Following the Sheikh Said Rebellion, the Turkish state is said to attempt another

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<sup>1027</sup> 9-KL, p. 16.

<sup>1028</sup> 6-KL, p. 110.

<sup>1029</sup> 3-KL, p. 52.

<sup>1030</sup> 6-KL, p. 10; In this regard, such a demand and its result are exemplified: “The culture and literature of the Kurdish people faced genocide, in addition to the demographic changes made by the Ottomans on the Kurds, which caused Kurdish writers to leave the country or be exiled.” Please, see 3-KL, p. 17.

<sup>1031</sup> 12-KL, p. 131.

<sup>1032</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>1033</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>1034</sup> 12-HI, p. 80.

<sup>1035</sup> 3-KL, p. 86.

<sup>1036</sup> 9-HI, p. 89; 8-KL, p. 82; 12-HI, p. 100.

massacre.<sup>1037</sup> “Kemalist Türkiye’s” authoritarianism against the Alawis is considered to manifest in the Dersim massacre of 1937-38, where thousands of people, including children, were killed.<sup>1038</sup> “The genocide process in Dersim” is explained with the oft-quoted words of Nureddin Pasha: “Just as I eliminated those who said ZO (the meaning of this is the Armenian words), now I will kill the who says LO (the meaning of this is the Kurdish words.)”<sup>1039</sup>

Iran is explained to have slaughtered many people—“including children, men, and women”—and burned their settlement areas following the suppression of the Nahri Rebellion.<sup>1040</sup> The Ba’ath regime of Iraq is expressed to perpetrate many massacres between 1976-83, “slaughtering many lives, including those of animals and people.”<sup>1041</sup> Baath massacres in Iraq, such as Halabja and Anfal, are particularly highlighted.<sup>1042</sup> For instance, in the Enfal massacre by the Iraqi Ba'ath regime, 185,000 people were killed via chemical weapons, and 4,000 villages were burnt.<sup>1043</sup> In the Halabja massacre on March 16, 1988, approximately 5,000 Kurdish people were killed.<sup>1044</sup> Following “the fall of South Kurdistan’s movement in 1975,” a series of massacres against the Kurdish community continued for years.<sup>1045</sup> In this sense, in 1989, a massacre in the Zaxo region resulted in April 14 being accepted as the day of remembrance of the martyrs.<sup>1046</sup> In the context of uprisings such as Qamişlo in Syria in 2004, the death of 12 people is defined as genocide and martyrdom.<sup>1047</sup> It is

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<sup>1037</sup> 4-CE, p. 15.

<sup>1038</sup> 9-CE, p. 78; 9-HI, p. 87, and pp. 92-93; 12-HI, p. 105; 12-WS, p. 76.

<sup>1039</sup> 12-HI, p. 86; 9-HI, p. 77.

<sup>1040</sup> 9-HI, p. 49.

<sup>1041</sup> 12-HI, p. 130.

<sup>1042</sup> 9-HI, p. 115; 7-KL, p. 45.

<sup>1043</sup> 9-HI, p. 116.

<sup>1044</sup> 12-HI, p. 132.

<sup>1045</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131; Rising Kurdish nationalism in South Kurdistan, “with the development of a democratic and contemporary movement,” is displayed as a primary reason for these massacres.

<sup>1046</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>1047</sup> 9-KL, p. 21.

explained that the massacres did not only target the Kurdish community but also affected other nations living in Kurdistan, such as Jews, Turkmen, Baluch, and non-Sunni Kurds.<sup>1048</sup> Yazidis are also expressed to have suffered many atrocities and massacres.<sup>1049</sup> The massacre against the Yazidis in Shengal in 2014 by ISIS is given as a recent example.<sup>1050</sup> In general, it is considered that “Kurds were left without status. Precisely, the imperialism that was going on in the Middle East system developed on the destruction of the Kurds. Therefore, the history of the Kurds in the last 90 years is filled with alienation, killing and destruction.”<sup>1051</sup>

## **5.6.2. Resistance, Defense, Liberation**

The concepts of the resistance, defense, and liberation are complementary as defined below.

### **5.6.2.1. Resistance and Defense**

In general, the emergence of insurgencies is evaluated from a class-based perspective: “Raperin started with the emergence of classes. The concentration of production has brought with it the system of domination and slavery. Classism created inequality among groups and individuals,” and as a result, it is claimed that, the resistance culture emerged.<sup>1052</sup> It’s explained that Kurdistan has been one of the basic centers of civil resistance through protecting their freedom and existence by resisting against occupying powers.<sup>1053</sup> Against all kinds of government, such as the classist government and even the government of religion and the nation-state, “the people's resistance has always been carried out in its own way, on the territories of Kurds”<sup>1054</sup> as it is asserted that “Among the Kurdish people, the most important

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<sup>1048</sup> 8-HI, p. 84; 11-HI, p. 118; 3-KL, p. 54.

<sup>1049</sup> 9-CE, p. 69.

<sup>1050</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>1051</sup> 12-HI, p. 76.

<sup>1052</sup> 10-HI, p. 64.

<sup>1053</sup> 12-HI, p. 46.

<sup>1054</sup> 9-CE, p. 87.

tradition is the resistance they have shown against injustice and slavery.”<sup>1055</sup> In this respect, freedom demands of Kurds is pointed out to go back to the era of the Huris, Gutis, and the Medes,<sup>1056</sup> and Kurds are pointed as to become conscious about their oppressed position under the Sassanid Empire,<sup>1057</sup> as it is argued that “in Kurdistan, against oppression rebellion; against injustice opposition to slavery; freedom against exploitation; and oppression the spirit of resistance has always been there.”<sup>1058</sup> In this regard, it’s appreciated that over the years, the Kurdish people have made incredible resistances to protect their existence and gain their rights.<sup>1059</sup>

Cultural resistance is also suggested as a form of resistance. In “their most fearful historical process,”<sup>1060</sup> cultural activities “became the source of the Kurdish people's revolution against the occupation.”<sup>1061</sup> The following quotation is based on this belief:

Therefore, many Kurdish clerics and elders from the 19th century onwards have a Kurdish literary culture. The development of this situation shows that in Kurdistan, now is the time for people's uprisings against the occupation and the culture of the Kurdish people should be developed and opportunities for the emergence of art and literature should be created. This century has been the beginning of the development of literature and uprisings of the Kurdish people.<sup>1062</sup>

In general, the glorification of territory defense plays a crucial role in the construction of “Kurd” who is characterized as ready to fight to reclaim land with his unwavering devotion. One of the most prevalent forms of resistance among

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<sup>1055</sup> 7-CE, p. 60.

<sup>1056</sup> 9-CE, p. 87.

<sup>1057</sup> 8-HI, p. 25.

<sup>1058</sup> 12-HI, p. 96.

<sup>1059</sup> 7-CE, p. 81, 9-KL, p. 83.

<sup>1060</sup> 9-CE, p. 88.

<sup>1061</sup> 12-KL, p. 18.

<sup>1062</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Palestinians is called *sumud* or “steadfastness in hanging on to the land, the place, the homeland.”<sup>1063</sup> Here the equivalent of *sumud* is “*serhildan*:”

*Serhildan* is not understood only in military sense but also its cultural dimension is emphasized: Therefore, many Kurdish clerics and elders from the 19th century onwards have a Kurdish literary culture. The development of this situation shows that in Kurdistan, now is the time of people's uprisings against the occupation and the culture of the Kurdish people should be developed and opportunities for the emergence of art and literature should be created. This century has been the beginning of the development of literature and uprisings of the Kurdish people.<sup>1064</sup>

In brief the resistance seems to acquire meaning against the motto of “Imaginary Kurdistan is hidden in this place,”<sup>1065</sup> and presently the current situation displayed as “in Western Kurdistan, the Kurdish people, with the help and unity of all nations, are resisting these forces that do not want the Kurds to have rights and live freely.”<sup>1066</sup>

#### **5.6.2.1.1. Non-Kurdish Rebellions**

The rebellion tradition is being universalized by providing coeval and historical examples. For instance, it is stated that “Against the heavy oppression of the Roman Empire, people's protests, revolts and resistance started in many places. Some of these resistances are of slaves, some of them are religious resistances, some of clans and another part of women.”<sup>1067</sup> Indeed, 1948 Indian revolution against England colonialism,<sup>1068</sup> 1959 Cuban revolution,<sup>1069</sup> Algerian revolution against French imperialism in 1962,<sup>1070</sup> Chinese revolution against the Japanese, English, and

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<sup>1063</sup> Oren Yiftachel, “Territory as the Kernel of the Nation,” p. 236.

<sup>1064</sup> 12-KL, p. 9.

<sup>1065</sup> 9-HI, p. 90.

<sup>1066</sup> 11-SO, p. 95.

<sup>1067</sup> 11-HI, p. 20.

<sup>1068</sup> 9-HI, p. 21.

<sup>1069</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>1070</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

French occupation, exploitation,<sup>1071</sup> South African revolution under the leadership of Mandela,<sup>1072</sup> Vietnamese revolution against the long-standing (1858-1976) colonial situation by different powers<sup>1073</sup> are specifically mentioned purpose of whose are indicated “to liberate themselves from the government and oppressive forces and to establish independent states.”<sup>1074</sup>

#### **5.6.2.1.2. Historical Kurdish Rebellions<sup>1075</sup>**

All 19<sup>th</sup> century rebellions are widely found in the textbooks. These are the Zaza tribe riots in Sewas in 1820, 1830-1833 rebellion of Yezidi Kurds, the resistance of the confederation of the tribes of Milan in 1834;<sup>1076</sup> between the years 1834-1849, the people’s uprising in Bedlis, Heyderan rebellion in 1879,<sup>1077</sup> the Baban Rebellion (1806-1851),<sup>1078</sup> the Bedîrkhan Beg Rebellion (1842-1847),<sup>1079</sup> Soran Rebellion (1830-1837),<sup>1080</sup> the emergence of which are indicated as the Ottoman Centralization policies.<sup>1081</sup>

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<sup>1071</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>1072</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>1073</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>1074</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>1075</sup> Theoretically, rebellion is defined as such: “In any case, it is rebellion against the authority. Every outburst and rebellion against the government and the state is a rebellion. When the society is in crisis from many aspects (cultural, ethnic, economic...), it organizes protests. If this protest is organized, prepared and has a plan, it can be a revolution and be successful. On the contrary, rebellion, no matter how justified, results in failure.” Please, see 11-SO, p. 76.

<sup>1076</sup> 12-HI, p. 47.

<sup>1077</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>1078</sup> 9-HI, p. 32.

<sup>1079</sup> 12-HI, p. 42.

<sup>1080</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>1081</sup> 12-HI, p. 32; 9-HI, p. 31; shortly, these attempts are explained as 1) the increased centralization attempts after the loss of territories of the Ottoman, 2) taxation, and 3) compulsory military. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 32. Also, it is noted that “Although 19th century rebellions started with the mottos of “independence” and “Kurdistan,” when the interests of the family and dynasty were threatened, it was brought to an end, and when opportunities were given to them, they stopped the rebellions.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 50, for further information, please see *Ibid.*, p. 115. For the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1855-1880) rebellions, it is explained that “tensions in the society, small peasant uprisings occurred in most of

Early 20th Century Rebellions are also widely found in the textbooks. Accordingly, Azadi rebellion is explained as the first rebellion after the establishment of Turkish Republic.<sup>1082</sup> The establishment of Azadi against “Turkish exploitation” is seen a significant point in Kurdish resistance.<sup>1083</sup> The rebellion of Sheikh Said, whose influence extended to both Western and Southern Kurdistan, is further exemplified to display widespread opposition to Turkish control.<sup>1084</sup> To quote directly from the text: “The Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925, followed by the Khoyboun Association's support of the 1927 Uprising, demonstrated sustained efforts to challenge the Turkish state's invasion of Kurdistan under Ataturk's leadership.”<sup>1085</sup>

The rebellion in Southern Kurdistan also finds a great place. According to this, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first rebellion against Ottoman rule in Kurdistan was organized by Evdirehman Pasha Baban in the region of Sulaymaniyah.<sup>1086</sup> Following the World War I, it is remarked that, following the attachment of Southern Kurdistan (SK) to Iraq as a result of the San Remo Conference, many rebellions emerged.<sup>1087</sup> The rebellions of Şêx Mehmûdê Berzencî during different periods are remarkably explained.<sup>1088</sup> Beginning from the 1940s and onwards, the rebellions of Barzani is also noted.<sup>1089</sup>

### **5.6.2.1.3 Rebellions in Rojava and the PKK**

Late 20th and Early 21st Century Rebellions are also largely mentioned. Accordingly, the first rebellions started against the French rule in Rojava

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Kurdistan. The goal of these riots was not to build an independent Kurdistan, but the reason was dissatisfaction with life.” Please, see 9-HI, p. 51.

<sup>1082</sup> 9-HI, p. 80; for other 19<sup>th</sup> century rebellions, please see 9-HI, p. 75, p. 87, and p. 134; 12-HI, p. 96, and p. 97.

<sup>1083</sup> 9-HI, p. 79.

<sup>1084</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>1085</sup> 3-KL, p. 87, 12-HI, p. 88.

<sup>1086</sup> 12-HI, p. 33.

<sup>1087</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>1088</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122-125.

<sup>1089</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126-132.



Kurdistan.<sup>1090</sup> The PKK's struggle is depicted as such: "In the 1990s, it entered the areas of public rebellion, and this resistance grew until it reached all four corners of Kurdistan. With this resistance, Kurdistan, which had been darkened, gradually became brighter."<sup>1091</sup> Furthermore, the slaughter of Vedat Aydın by the Turkish state is asserted to invoke the beginning of a "serhildan."<sup>1092</sup> The PKK is seen as the freedom movement of Kurdistan Liberation as "it joined the struggle for the freedom of the people of Kurdistan in 1984."<sup>1093</sup> The establishment of the PKK is explained, and it is stated that the manifesto of the PKK is the way of Kurdistan Revolution.<sup>1094</sup> Furthermore, the PKK is defined as a Kurdish liberation movement, and Sakine Cansız is portrayed as a part of this movement.<sup>1095</sup> Additionally, the rise of the PKK is contextualized through "oppressive (full of massacres and genocides)" Turkish political history.<sup>1096</sup>

Previous rebellions in Rojava are also explained. It is asserted that "the authoritarianism of French rule led to many rebellions in Rojava."<sup>1097</sup> In this context, the Beyandur rebellion in 1923,<sup>1098</sup> and the later Amûd rebellion is exemplified.<sup>1099</sup> Additionally, the slaughter of 35 people ("martyrdom") after the funeral of 3 people killed during the match in 2004 is said to encourage the beginning of the rebellion in all cities of Western Kurdistan,<sup>1100</sup> and "although not successful, created a historical ground for the 2012 North Syrian Revolution."<sup>1101</sup>

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<sup>1090</sup> 9-HI, p. 121.

<sup>1091</sup> 7-KL, p. 111.

<sup>1092</sup> 9-KL, p. 43.

<sup>1093</sup> 9-KL, p. 109.

<sup>1094</sup> 12-HI, p. 145.

<sup>1095</sup> 12-WS, p. 77.

<sup>1096</sup> 9-HI, p. 132.

<sup>1097</sup> 12-HI, p. 136.

<sup>1098</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1099</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>1100</sup> 9-HI, p. 125.

<sup>1101</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 5.6.2.1.4. Martyrdom

The concept of territorial attachment, more specifically, homeland attachment is frequently presented as an explanation of why individuals are willing to sacrifice their lives to gain, hold on defend a territory.<sup>1102</sup> At the end of a chapter titled “Martyr Peyman,” there are six interconnected questions triggering the understanding of sacrificing of people for the defense of homeland:

1. What does a person depend on the most?
2. Why is the homeland seen as a lovely mother?
3. What do you think homeland means?
4. Evaluate the role of martyr Peyman in society.
5. According to your opinion, why did martyr Peyman work in education?
6. Write the names of several lifeguards who have worked for the homeland.<sup>1103</sup>

The argument of Özsoy for the PKK to use the martyr’s body and blood to saturate and consecrate the soil as a practice for homeland making<sup>1104</sup> is prevalent also for the PYD. In this sense, the story of a dead woman warrior is glorified as she sacrificed her life for defending her homeland.<sup>1105</sup> In this regard, there are interesting identifications for the warriors who fight for the homeland defense. For instance, they are defined as “the children of fire and the sun” as they defend the Serê Kaniyê region against the invaders at the beginning of Rojava revolution.<sup>1106</sup> A martyr’s letter involving general views about the territory of Kurdistan is subject of a chapter.<sup>1107</sup> Moreover, it is asserted that it has been martyrs who reinvigorated the

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<sup>1102</sup> H. E. Goemans, “Bounded Communities: Territoriality, Territorial Attachment, and Conflict,” in Miles Kahler and Barbara F. Walter eds., *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 26.

<sup>1103</sup> 5-KL, p. 55; At the beginning of this chapter, there are also four interconnected questions triggering the understanding of sacrificing of people for their homeland defense. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>1104</sup> Hişyar Özsoy, 2010. *Between Gift and Taboo: Death and the Negotiation of National Identity and Sovereignty in the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas, p. 58.

<sup>1105</sup> 5-KL, pp. 53-54.

<sup>1106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>1107</sup> 9-KL, pp. 83-85.

freedom of Kurdistan.<sup>1108</sup> In a poem titled “My Homeland” written by a “nonfatal martyr” under the image of the “YPJ,” the condition for Kurdistan to be a homeland is written as to defeat it from the enemies.<sup>1109</sup>

#### **5.6.2.1.5. Political Figures**

Dr. Qasimlo is depicted as a political figure who dedicated himself to the survival of Kurdistan from imperialism and occupation.<sup>1110</sup> Similarly, Îsa Hiso, the founder of the PYD, is acknowledged for having a significant place in the political landscape of Western Kurdistan.<sup>1111</sup> Likewise, Qazî Mihemed, the founder of the Mahabad Republic, is celebrated for his attempts to create an independent Kurdish state.<sup>1112</sup>

#### **5.5.2.1.6. The Role of the Women in Resistance**

It is stated that “Self-defense remains a vital and urgent issue for women, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where women are still sold as slaves in markets and subjected to reproductive slavery.”<sup>1113</sup> In this context, it is claimed that, this spirit of resistance and patriotism continues to define Kurdish women.<sup>1114</sup> Hence, it is asserted that the role of women is indicated as remarkable in all areas of life, both in social and military aspects, and therefore women are considered to have become a symbol of resistance in the history of the Kurdish people,<sup>1115</sup> and it is claimed that they have demonstrated remarkable courage and dedication to their people and homeland.<sup>1116</sup>

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<sup>1108</sup> 8-KL, p. 33.

<sup>1109</sup> 8-KL, p. 38; The relationship between a martyrdom and defence of homeland takes a great place in textbooks. For further information, please see 9-HI, p. 127, p. 128; 12-WS, p. 76, and p. 77; 5-SS, p. 36, p. 37, p. 38, p. 39 and p. 40; 7-KL, p. 128, and p. 129; 5-KL, p. 52, p. 54, and p. 55; 12-HI, p. 145; 9-KL, p. 20, p. 29, p. 70, p. 83, p. 99, and p. 109; 8-KL, p. 33, and p. 38.

<sup>1110</sup> 8-KL, p. 139.

<sup>1111</sup> 9-KL, p. 109.

<sup>1112</sup> 7-KL, p. 144.

<sup>1113</sup> 12-HI, p. 70.

<sup>1114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24

<sup>1115</sup> 9-HI, p. 134.

<sup>1116</sup> 9-KL, p. 29; Name by name, the women and their associated resistances are explained: Qedemxêr (9-KL, p. 29), Besê, the wife of the leader of the Dersim rebellion, Seyid Riza (12-WS, p. 30), Leyla

### 5.6.3. Liberation

There is a letter of Qazi Mihemed inviting Kurds to liberate their territories and establish a Kurdish state,<sup>1117</sup> however the concept of “liberation” is particularly used for the events in Syria. In this sense, after uprisings, some territories were taken from the control of the Syrian government, and this process is defined as “liberation of territories.”<sup>1118</sup> Accordingly, “The region was liberated from the Ba’ath regime on the 19th of July, 2012, and subsequently, the Democratic Autonomy was established.”<sup>1119</sup> In the same manner, On July 19, 2012, the city of Kobanê, and the day after that, the city of Afrin and its surroundings were also “liberated” and on July 21, 2012, all the areas of Cizîr were liberated from Qamishli and Haseke were “liberated.”<sup>1120</sup> The “liberation” of Kobanê and Girê Spî from the ISIS attacks and occupation in 2014 is also mentioned.<sup>1121</sup>

When mentioning the rebellions, their unconstructive results are also discussed. In this sense, the failure of the rebellion of Şêx Êbeydûlahê Nehrî is believed to destruct the national existence, and the freedom of the Kurds, and the experience of the Mahabad Republic, “despite its contemporary and popular characteristics,” not to escape the negative results of other rebellions.<sup>1122</sup>

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Qasim in her “devotion to defend her homeland against the invaders,” (9-HI, p. 139), in 1914, Zarîfe’s independent Kurdistan attempts (12-WS, p. 31, 9-HI, p. 36), Dayîka Gûlnazê in the 1927 rebellion, (9-HI, p. 135) Kecha Nexedê in the front ranks of the Nexede and Mehabad revolution (12-HI, p. 29), Rindêxan in the Sason rebellion (9-HI, p. 134, 12-WS, p. 128), Gûlnaz Xanim in the Ararat Revolt (12-HI, p. 29), Hafse Xana Neqîp in the establishment of the Mahabad Republic (12-HI, p. 27), Xanzade Sultan in the region of Soran-Herîre against Iranian forces (12-WS, p. 25), Xatûna Zadîne capturing Kelha Dimdim (12-WS, p. 24), and Xatû Şahnaz played a crucial role in defeating the Iranian forces from the Ardalan region (12-WS, p. 25).

<sup>1117</sup> 7-KL, p. 144.

<sup>1118</sup> 5-SS, p. 25.

<sup>1119</sup> 9-HI, p. 127.

<sup>1120</sup> 5-SS, p. 26.

<sup>1121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27; for the same theme, please see 10-HI, p. 124, 8-KL, p. 113, 9-HI, p. 128.

<sup>1122</sup> 12-HI, p. 115, and p. 138; For a similar example: “When the city of Mehabad fell into the hands of Simko's forces, some of the soldiers damaged people's homes, creating tension and alienation. Particularly, the killing of a Nestorian priest led to a counter-step in the approach of the Kurdish people.” Please, see 12-HI, p. 116; and 9-HI, p. 70.

In general, the era of capitalism is depicted an era of tyranny and oppression for the Kurds, and this sense it is explained that “Kurds would either give up all universal rights, human rights, and democratic standards, or they will carry out an unprecedented resistance.”<sup>1123</sup> In this sense, the resistance in Kobane against the ISIS<sup>1124</sup> and the resistance of Sakine Cansız against “racist Turkish exploitation”<sup>1125</sup> are given as notable examples.

#### **5.6.4 Territorialization Strategy and Governance**

Territorialization strategy and the practice of governance is constructed as essential component of the above-mentioned concepts and practices.

##### **5.6.4.1. Territorialization Strategy**

There is a strong belief that the first territorialization attempts occurred in Kurdistan. According to this belief, the early human groups settled on this territory (Mesopotamia);<sup>1126</sup> On the floors of Mezra Botan caves from the Mesolithic period (20,000-12,000 years B.C.) pictures of people who placed grass blades in front of their faces and rhythmic movements were found and there is a belief that the theater began here;<sup>1127</sup> the first villages were constructed, the first tools were made and the first agriculture was done on the territory of Mesopotamia;<sup>1128</sup> the first

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<sup>1123</sup> 12-HI, p. 28; It is stated that: “Kurds are humanitarian and peace-loving, but with kindness and the invaders will not leave Kurdistan without a war.” Please, see 6-KL, p. 104. Moreover, it is explained that “Today Kurds-not only for themselves but also for all peoples of Northern Syria, have been defending the homeland against the gangs.” Please, see 9-CE, p. 89.

<sup>1124</sup> 5-SS, p. 27.

<sup>1125</sup> 12-WS, p. 76.

<sup>1126</sup> 7-HI, p. 41.

<sup>1127</sup> 12-KL, p. 35; It is stated that “Kurds have presented agriculture and rural culture to humanity.” Please, see 7-CE, p. 25.

<sup>1128</sup> 7-HI, p. 41; First village in the world is referred the one in Amed – Erxenî – Çayonû nearly in 11000 B.C. Please, see 10-HI, p. 40; Agriculture is believed to have developed in Kurdistan for the first time in the world: “Humans first planted wheat, corn and rice. All three products were cultivated in Riha around 10,000 years BC.” Please, see 10-HI, p. 39; The first temple was built in Xerabreşk in Riha nearly in 12000 B.C. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 43.

institutionalism was experienced in Neolithic age in Mesopotamia,<sup>1129</sup> the culture and tradition of the New Stone Age society, which has left its mark on history, has spread its original branch in the Kurdistan region;<sup>1130</sup> and animals were first domesticated in the Kurdistan-Palestine line nearly in 11000 B.C.<sup>1131</sup>

I think, based on this confidence that “because the Kurdish people's history and culture have formed the basis of humanity,”<sup>1132</sup> the new territorialization policy has been practiced. This policy has been termed by ‘Rojava Revolution,’<sup>1133</sup> and referred as “the revolution of Kurdistan.”<sup>1134</sup> It is explained that, the revolution followed ‘the third line policy,’<sup>1135</sup> which is explained as “this line is not related to the regime or the armed forces that call themselves the opposition, but it is related to the management of society and the protection of that area.”<sup>1136</sup>

First and foremost, the revolution is seen “a historic opportunity for the Kurdish people,” because it is seen an opportunity in which ‘the Kurds reached the level of gaining their freedom.’<sup>1137</sup> Secondly, it has enabled to give rights to women in ‘all

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<sup>1129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40; Some features of the Neolithic Age are enlisted as follows: “Humanity began to settle down, the agricultural revolution happened, institutionalization occurred in science and knowledge, the domestication of animals was developed, and the efficiency of mining and stones was done.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>1130</sup> 7-CE, p. 25.

<sup>1131</sup> 10-HI, p. 40.

<sup>1132</sup> 7-CE, p. 53.

<sup>1133</sup> 2-SL, p. 98, 9-GEO, 85; The opinion of Marx and Lenin regarding revolution is quoted: “The revolution occurs through the organization of the lower class, especially the workers and farmers (proletariat). It is necessary to destroy the current state and replace it with a state under the rule of the proletariat,” and it is stated that to make such a revolution is difficult to establish in practice. Please, see 11-SO, p. 75. In this framework, definition of revolution provided as such: “All social changes are not at the same level and value. Some changes are accumulated by formation (multiple aggregation), after a certain level the existing social structure change fundamentally (how aggregation). These quantitative and qualitative social changes are called revolutionary changes.” Please, see 11-HI, p. 75.

<sup>1134</sup> 9-KL, p. 75.

<sup>1135</sup> 9-GEO, p. 85, 9-HI, p. 127.

<sup>1136</sup> 9-GEO, p. 85.

<sup>1137</sup> 11-SO, p. 94.

institutions and departments of the Autonomous Administration.”<sup>1138</sup> Thirdly, it built “a democratic life system and education in the mother tongue have paved the way for the development of literature, art, etc. by ending tyranny of Syrian state.”<sup>1139</sup> Finally, having liberated Kurdish regions, the aim of Rojava Revolution is defined as “to protect the territorial integrity of Syria and establish a democratic and federal Syria.”<sup>1140</sup> All these strategies are accepted as a part of developing “a democratic nation.”<sup>1141</sup>

Ocalan is seen as the pioneer of this strategy. According to him, “the nation-state have distanced the society from science, art and truth and left them without self-defense, these are one of the most basic elements of the social problem.”<sup>1142</sup> His gender-equal approach is quoted: “These first steps to be taken, as is often believed, are not special steps taken between two people, they are global first steps towards a socialist, democratic society without implementation,”<sup>1143</sup> and it is believed that “...The women's movement for freedom, equality and democracy, which relies on this science, is clear that it will take the lead in solving problems.”<sup>1144</sup> Based on these quotations, his territorialization strategy revolves around the paradigm “to create a free person, and free society.”<sup>1145</sup>

“Coexistence” is displayed as one of the basic pillars of “democratic nation and democratic society.” In this context, Jineolojî is the starting point for Jineolojî to research and build its science.<sup>1146</sup> It is a woman’s science that can be an option,

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<sup>1138</sup> 9-HI, p. 128.

<sup>1139</sup> 12-KL, p. 3.

<sup>1140</sup> 9-GEO, p. 86.

<sup>1141</sup> 11-SO, p. 95; Here in the same page, it is stated that “many existing hegemonic and ruling systems and organizations do not want to think develop a democratic nation, because this idea poses a threat to their interests. That's why they always oppose the people's revolution.”

<sup>1142</sup> 12-WS, p. 71.

<sup>1143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>1144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>1145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>1146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48; In this context, Jineolojî is seen as “the name of the development of the theory of free coexistence and the creation of its sociology.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 38; and “for the development of

involve every part of the supporters of democratization and freedom of society and transform these involvements into democratic will and action.”<sup>1147</sup> In this sense, Jineolojî is seen to create a new social science that will “revolutionize social sciences,” and will examine the history of coexistence in Rojava.<sup>1148</sup>

The suppression of women throughout the history is articulated as “the history of civilization, at the same time, the history of loss and loss of woman.”<sup>1149</sup> The way to overcome the system of slavery around women has been developed, it brings out the resistance and resistance of women in history.<sup>1150</sup> Jineolojî, in order to create this change and transformation, “must develop itself with an educational consciousness of each independent field and one with other fields, in a connection.”<sup>1151</sup> The extensive research of Jineolojî does focus on Kurdistan cultures, how they defined free coexistence and how they lived.<sup>1152</sup> Another goal of Jineolojî is explained to create a proper economy under the control of women, because “the person who gives the most work is a woman, and giving work is freedom.”<sup>1153</sup> It is claimed that as soon as the field of economics reaches the perspective of Jineolojî, “hunger, deprivation and unemployment must remain in history,” because the ones who built the economy are women.<sup>1154</sup> To sum up, Jineolojî is considered to create a gender-equal middle East, to take up and discuss questions related to coexistence, and to discuss the current situation of children in the family and the level they should get.<sup>1155</sup>

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research methods according to women and to serve the development of thoughts and activities of freedom.” *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>1147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>1148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>1149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103; The slavery of woman is explained as such: “Because the culture of patriarchal authority, women are subjected to unlimited oppression and surveillance such as the man sees his slave, his wife, his son and his property.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>1150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>1151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>1152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>1153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>1154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>1155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.



#### 5.6.4.2. Old Kurdish Administrations

Old independent Kurdish states are referred in textbooks. As a result, the information regarding Big Loristan,<sup>1156</sup> Small Loristan,<sup>1157</sup> the Marwani state,<sup>1158</sup> the Medes,<sup>1159</sup> and Mahabad Republic<sup>1160</sup> is presented. Specifically, Ayyubis,<sup>1161</sup> Buweyhîs,<sup>1162</sup> Merwanîs,<sup>1163</sup> Şedadîs<sup>1164</sup> are explained as the experience of the rules of Kurds during Islamic period. Autonomous Kurdish administrations are also introduced. In this way, Babanan tribe played an influential role in the history of Kurdistan from 1500 to the fall of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1165</sup> At the beginning of the 19th century, a big part of the South Kurdistan was under rule of the Babanan dynasty, and the capital city was Silemaniye.<sup>1166</sup> It is stated that, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kurdish regions experienced significant changes as “the autonomy of the Kurds was lost and the Ottomans replaced the Kurdish princes with their begs and pashas.”<sup>1167</sup> Meanwhile, Dêrsîm region had not been invaded “by any foreign power until 1938” as it had been ruled by two Dêrsîm tribes; “a kind of autonomous region.”<sup>1168</sup>

Kurdish quasi-state administrations are also mentioned. These are Babanan dynasty,<sup>1169</sup> the Emirate of Soran,<sup>1170</sup> Bedirkhan Beg dynasty in Cizîr,<sup>1171</sup> and the

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<sup>1156</sup> 11-HI, p. 88.

<sup>1157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>1158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>1159</sup> 10-HI, p. 120.

<sup>1160</sup> 12-HI, p. 118.

<sup>1161</sup> 8-HI, p. 54.

<sup>1162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>1163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51; 11-HI, p. 83.

<sup>1164</sup> 8-HI, p. 54.

<sup>1165</sup> 12-HI, p. 35.

<sup>1166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>1168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>1169</sup> 9-HI, p. 32; 12-HI, p. 35.

<sup>1170</sup> 9-HI, p. 36; 12-HI, p. 38

<sup>1171</sup> 12-HI, p. 43.

Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq.<sup>1172</sup> After the suppression of the rebellions in the 19th century; the governance went to under leadership of Sheikhs. Sheikhdom developed in Kurdistan through the Qadiri and Naqshbandi sects.<sup>1173</sup> It shows that 25 districts of Kurdistan accepted be ruled by the Ottoman Empire following the treaty with Idris Bitlisi.<sup>1174</sup>

It is claimed that Kurdish society lived independently during the Middle Ages through building a governance model called “begîtî.” Meanwhile, it is stated that the Kurdish rulers also established relations between the Kurdish community and the central states. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid Empire remained silent, and used them for their interests.<sup>1175</sup>

### 5.6.4.3. Critique of Nation-state

There is a strong critique for the sovereign-state governance model that the states themselves are believed to have become sources of conflict as they have competed with each other.<sup>1176</sup> The rise of state-system, in particular in the Middle East, is seen the source of many problems such as the curtaining the ethnic identities.<sup>1177</sup> Particularly, it is believed that “the nation-state have distanced the society from science, art and truth and left them without self-defense, these are one of the most basic elements of the social problem.”<sup>1178</sup> In this sense, it is believed that the woman’s sense of patriotism has been exploited by statism and nationalism and has

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<sup>1172</sup> 9-HI, p. 116.

<sup>1173</sup> 9-HI, p. 46; 12-HI, p. 53.

<sup>1174</sup> 8-HI, p. 82; In another textbook, it is noted that it the Ottoman Empire had responsibility against the Kurdish Emirates: “When there were attacks against the Kurdish nobility, the Ottomans would protect them, and the Kurdish emirates would be organized as independent regions, the Ottomans wouldn’t interfere in their internal affairs. (schools, courts).” Please, see 11-HI, p. 134.

<sup>1175</sup> 11-SO, p. 93.

<sup>1176</sup> 12-SO, p. 95.

<sup>1177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81. In this respect, it is added that “The states and authorities are based on dynasties and families in the Middle East,” and are based on the mentality of the top-down state ruling. Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>1178</sup> 12-WS, p. 71.

been linked to statism and nationalism.<sup>1179</sup> Based on these considerations, the transition to the questioning the stateless model of governance is discussed: “Why can't we think about a stateless social structure? More importantly, why can't we remove the shadow of the state from the institutions we call civilian institutions?”<sup>1180</sup>

The root of this model is found in the past:

Usually, the mother-in-law is the master of clan planning. In another way, one can say that the mother's sovereignty is the first. The Neolithic village revolution is the second big stage in this process. This revolution took place 12,000 years ago.<sup>1181</sup>

Accordingly, it is believed that the rules of society in the sphere of economy in Neolithic age was based on the ecological rule, the rule of democracy and the rule of responsibility.<sup>1182</sup>

#### **5.6.4.4. Governance**

It is believed that The Kurdish people, in a short period of time, organized themselves and built their own institutions in 2012.<sup>1183</sup> The new governance model is introduced as “Democratic Self-Governance of the nation, the state, the states religious and military, does not approve of centralization of power and administration,” and “Democratic Self-Governance is based on democracy, pluralism and open to all peoples<sup>1184</sup> and cultures.”<sup>1185</sup> Communal economy, ecological industry, and democratic nation are introduced as pillars of alternative governance model against “the modern capitalist governance model.”<sup>1186</sup> There are seven

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<sup>1179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>1180</sup> 12-SO, pp. 9-10.

<sup>1181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>1182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>1183</sup> 5-SS, p. 26.

<sup>1184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>1185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34; Democratic system is to be believed to give the opportunity to many identities. Please, see 11-SO, p. 12.

<sup>1186</sup> 12-SO, p. 65; The democratic nation is seen as opposite to the “fascist organization of the nation-state,” and defines as “to eliminate divisions in society and organizes societies in a democratic way

autonomous regions is Northeastern Syrian administration which are Cizîr, Firat, Efrîn, Minbîc, Tebqa, Reqa, and Dêrazor,<sup>1187</sup> however it is stated that the practice of canton-system is not applied to Minbic, Tabqa, and Dêrazor.<sup>1188</sup>

A democratic governance model is appreciated since it is seen non-unilateral and non-hierarchical.<sup>1189</sup> According to the number of inhabitants, a commune<sup>1190</sup> or council is established. Everyone in the village is a member of the community and has the right to participate in the discussion, take decisions and implement them. Every community has a management<sup>1191</sup> in co-chairship whose logic is explained as follows:

This is necessary for an equal and fair society. For thousands of years, women have been excluded from society. Women are not allowed to speak about the society or join an organization and work, because women are half of the society, it is necessary for women to participate in life and create life.<sup>1192</sup>

It is expressed that the democratic self-governance system is “implemented directly through democracy,” and “Democracy also takes place through communes and councils.” Any other form of administration other than democracy is said not to be accepted.<sup>1193</sup> The concept of the Democratic Nation is proposed as an alternative to the nation-state. It emphasizes the freedom of identity and diversity, fostering a connection between individuals and society without the intermediary role of the

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and aims to include every class in this system.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 66; and moreover, it is stated that “there is not only one type of democracy model as imposed by Capitalism. Modern democracy which represents and therefore follows the trajectory of demands of people is an alternative to a single democracy approach.” Please, see *Ibid.*

<sup>1187</sup> 5-SS, p. 30; 9-HI, p. 128.

<sup>1188</sup> 5-SS, p. 34.

<sup>1189</sup> 12-SO, p. 97; It is seen non-hierarchical because it is seen non-hierarchical because “the solution to social problems is provided not through the state, but through its social organizations in a society where the rules are based on conscience, and direct democracy is implemented communities, councils, cooperatives and academies.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>1190</sup> For a detailed explanation of the commune system; please see 5-KL, p. 22.

<sup>1191</sup> 5-SS, p. 34.

<sup>1192</sup> 3-SL, p. 82.

<sup>1193</sup> 5-SS, p. 34.

state.<sup>1194</sup> While the purpose of the system is explained, the goals<sup>1195</sup> are believed to be managed only through establishment of a Democratic Syria and an independent Kurdistan.<sup>1196</sup>

For a gender-equal governance, there seems a strong emphasis on co-existence of men and women. Therefore, the emphasis is on achieving equality women through Jineolojî through which “of the history of women’s exploitation to economic, social, mental, and intellectual exploitation, its place will be enlightened, and all other issues of history and the daily society will be enlightened in all its aspects.”<sup>1197</sup> Moreover, it is stated that “coexistence is one of the basic theories of a democratic nation and democratic society, and it will also be the starting point for Jineolojî to research and build its science.”<sup>1198</sup> Furthermore, it is a “woman’s science that can be an option, involve every part of the supporters of democratization and freedom of society, and transform these involvements into democratic will and action.”<sup>1199</sup> Additionally, men and women, if they have built and lived social life together in very difficult conditions of nature, even today they can build and live in a free, equal, and democratic way. In this context, the right politics is defined as being “hidden in its definition: no group of concepts can explain the vital interests of society, except for freedom, equality, and democracy.”<sup>1200</sup> Therefore, against Capitalism, a connection should be built between economic activities, territory, and agriculture. The most suitable area for this aim is seen “villages to develop communities, and Jineolojî will provide very important help in the development of this economic perspective.”<sup>1201</sup>

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<sup>1194</sup> 12-SO, p. 66.

<sup>1195</sup> The goals are: “Building a common homeland, the coexistence of all peoples and beliefs in forms of Democratic Nation, a democratic constitution, women’s freedom, protection of the nature, a social economy, freedom of culture and language.”

<sup>1196</sup> 5-SS, p. 29.

<sup>1197</sup> 12-WS, p. 51.

<sup>1198</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>1199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>1200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>1201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

Coexistence (between men and women) relationships are evaluated to be decisive in the daily life of ordinary people.<sup>1202</sup> The pillars of coexistence are delineated as follows:

1. Struggle against dominant and authoritarian forces.
2. Eliminating sexist social life in all areas.
3. Rejecting materialistic approach to women.
5. The creation of a woman who is the basis of freedom<sup>1203</sup>

And the rationale behind this practice is explained as “ecological co-existence is not based on the continuation of the race and reproduction, according to the (acceptable) ideal of universal humanity, it takes into account the existence of other living beings in the universe.”<sup>1204</sup>

The details of democratic economy model are also explained. In this sense there are two major elements: cooperatives and joint economic activities.<sup>1205</sup> Democratic and communal economy is explained as an anti-capitalist economy: “In order for the society to continue its life, the basic needs to be met, all the actions and relationships in this context should be included in the economy.”<sup>1206</sup> Communal economy, with the emergence and development of agricultural products, has been based on the exchange of products and in this way, it is said that the society met its needs.<sup>1207</sup> In this sense, it is remarked that agriculture plays a major role in the new economy model, whose purpose is explained as “to build a healthy economic body that can serve the products of the north and east of Syria.”<sup>1208</sup> Finally, one of the goals of the economy is to create a proper economy under the control of women as it is written that “because the person who gives the most work is a woman, and giving work is freedom.”<sup>1209</sup>

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<sup>1202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>1203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>1204</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>1205</sup> 12-SO, p. 54.

<sup>1206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70; The model of Kolhoz in Soviet Union is also explained. Please, see 12-SO, p. 57.

<sup>1207</sup> 9-GEO, p. 108.

<sup>1208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1209</sup> 12-WS, p. 90.

The institutions of the new governance model are referred for various reasons in textbooks. For example, the commune-based new governance can be articulated as follows: “We organize our society through communes and councils, where there are many residents, there is a council. But where there are few inhabitants, there is a commune. The place of the community is called the community.”<sup>1210</sup> A petition sample remarking the function of the municipality of Dêrik is displayed.<sup>1211</sup> Kurdish Language and Literature Institute is mentioned as to develop Kurdish language.<sup>1212</sup> Moreover, the defense activities of the YPG finds a great place.<sup>1213</sup>

A detailed explanation of new authority rules over certain territories in various pieces,<sup>1214</sup> and it’s emphasized through question-answer parts an put below:

1. In this picture, why are the people gathered together?
2. Do you have meetings like this in the village or neighborhood where you live?
3. What is the name of your community and why was it given this name?
4. In your region, how are necessities obtained and how are life problems solved?<sup>1215</sup>

#### **5.6.4.4.1. The Dichotomy of Rojava vs Syria**

When displaying the maps of Syrian mountains,<sup>1216</sup> underground resources,<sup>1217</sup> population,<sup>1218</sup> agriculture,<sup>1219</sup> and climate types,<sup>1220</sup> Northeastern Syria is not

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<sup>1210</sup> 3-SL, p. 82; The function of the commune-system is explicated in this way: “It’s responsible for all the problems of his neighborhood or village; It solves the problems of his neighborhood/village, if the problem is big, the solution is discussed with the city council; Problems of service work are resolved with the municipality the mission of the commune is introduced.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>1211</sup> 7-KL, p. 68.

<sup>1212</sup> 3-SL, p. 105.

<sup>1213</sup> 5-SS, p. 26; 9-HI, p. 128.

<sup>1214</sup> 5-SS, pp. 26-30.

<sup>1215</sup> 5-KL, p. 21.

<sup>1216</sup> 9-GEO, p. 65.

<sup>1217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>1218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>1219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>1220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

displayed a distinct territory. This fact is seen in other cartographic representations of Syria as seen in the maps below:

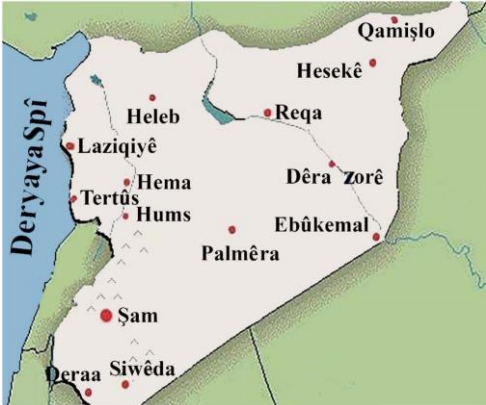


Figure 15. Cities of Syria<sup>1221</sup>



Figure 16. Map of Syria<sup>1222</sup>



Figure 17. Map of Syria<sup>1223</sup>

<sup>1221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>1222</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>1223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63



The border of Syria is defined between “Kurdistan (Northern Kurdistan, according to today's maps) is located in the north, Iraq in the east, Jordan in the south and Jerusalem, Lebanon and the Mediterranean Sea in the west.”<sup>1224</sup>

Although they are not always fixed, and their stability change over time, boundaries are fundamental prerequisite for territorial existence.<sup>1225</sup> Boundaries delineate that an area/homogeneity, which is an essential aspect of territoriality. In this sense, Grosby thinks that sociological homogeneity is a crucial element of territoriality.<sup>1226</sup> In this sense, the lack of sociological homogeneity is reflected in discourse: “Although Kurdistan is homeland of Kurds, other ethnicities live in there,”<sup>1227</sup> and it is stated that Kurds, Arabs, Syrians, Kildans, Turkmen, Circassians, etc. are different nations and together live in their regions.<sup>1228</sup> In this sense, multinational, multilingual, and multireligious diversity in Kurdistan finds a great place in textbooks.<sup>1229</sup>

Although Kurds fought for Syrian independence against French rule, it is stated that ‘the policies of the new authority were based on fascism and genocide against Kurds.’<sup>1230</sup> This historical context underlines the feeling out forth in the phrase “Şam şekir e, lê welat jê şîrîntir e,”<sup>1231</sup> which metaphorically describes Kurdistan as the true homeland instead of Syria.<sup>1232</sup> Despite these adversities, the aim of the Rojava Revolution, “having liberated Kurdish regions,” is defined as “protecting the

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<sup>1224</sup> 9-GEO, p. 64.

<sup>1225</sup> Steven Grosby, “Territoriality: The Transcendental, Primordial Feature of Modern Societies,” *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1995, p. 144.

<sup>1226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>1227</sup> 6-KL, p. 23.

<sup>1228</sup> 2-SL, p. 95.

<sup>1229</sup> 12-HI, pp. 130-131; 3-SL, p. 78, p. 90, p. 92, and p. 97; 11-HI, p. 35, p. 55, p. 72, and p. 78; 2-SL, p. 93, p. 95, and p. 100; 4-SS, p. 39, p. 45; 9-GEO, p. 53; 6-KL, p. 116; 8-KL, p. 8, and p. 23; 8-HI, p. 35, and p. 47.

<sup>1230</sup> 9-HI, p. 123.

<sup>1231</sup> “Damascus is appealing however homeland is more cherished.”

<sup>1232</sup> 6-KL, p. 110.

territorial integrity of Syria and establishing a democratic and federal Syria.”<sup>1233</sup>  
However, another perspective highlights the aim as “both a democratic Syria and an independent Kurdistan.”<sup>1234</sup>

As a geographical region or territory, “Syria” is referenced significantly less frequently than “Kurdistan.” One of the ninth grade geography chapters is theoretically devoted to the geography of Syria, but focuses primarily on the geography of the “Western Kurdistan.”<sup>1235</sup> More importantly, Western Kurdistan is seen an independent territory and Qamişlo is accepted as the capital city of it.<sup>1236</sup> Territorial integrity of Syria is not accepted until it is established as a federal democratic country.<sup>1237</sup> That is why Arab regions- Tabqa, Raqqa and Manbij- are in focus as well as Kurdish regions through the territorial roadmap:

The administrative system of Northern and Eastern Syria consists of seven autonomous regions. They are also:

1. Cizira region
2. Euphrates region
3. Afrin region
4. Manbij Region
5. Tabqa Region
6. Raqqa Region
7. Deir Ezor Region.<sup>1238</sup>

In this regard, the fragmentation of Kurdistan into four distinct geopolitical entities is widely contested,<sup>1239</sup> and Amed is seen as the capital city of Kurdistan.<sup>1240</sup>

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<sup>1233</sup> 9-GEO, p. 86.

<sup>1234</sup> 5-SS, p. 34.

<sup>1235</sup> 2-SL, p. 95.

<sup>1236</sup> 9-KL, p. 19.

<sup>1237</sup> 9-GE, p. 86.

<sup>1238</sup> 4-SS, p. 30.



**Figure 18.** An Exercise Displaying that There are Four Parts of Kurdistan<sup>1241</sup>

Rojava is accepted as one part of Kurdistan.<sup>1242</sup> The borders of Rojava are defined “From the north, it is northern Kurdistan. To the east is Iraq. To the south are the Euphrates River, the hills of Aleppo and the plains of Idlib. To the west is the White Sea,”<sup>1243</sup> and it is defined to locate between “the latitudes 35°-37°30' “ north hemisphere and the longitude lines 34°30'-42° east of Greenwich.”<sup>1244</sup> Moreover, Qamişlo is defined as the capital city of Rojava Kurdistan.<sup>1245</sup>

The natural, historical, and economic significance of Rojava is underscored by its abundant surface and underground resources, including substantial oil reserves and major rivers, as well as its extensive natural and artificial forests. Historically, Rojava is described as part of Upper Mesopotamia, one of the earliest human settlements, further emphasizing its profound importance in the region.<sup>1246</sup> Moreover, Rojava is considered to have been a place of Pankurdism as it is stated that all Kurdish movement of other parts of Kurdistan found themselves place for progress here in Rojava.<sup>1247</sup>

<sup>1239</sup> 5-KL, p. 57; 3-KL, p. 113.

<sup>1240</sup> 6-KL, p. 118.

<sup>1241</sup> 5-KL, p. 44.

<sup>1242</sup> 1-KL, p. 146.

<sup>1243</sup> 9-GEO, p. 86.

<sup>1244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1245</sup> 9-KL, p. 19.

<sup>1246</sup> 9-GEO, p. 86.

<sup>1247</sup> 12-HI, p. 141; 9-HI, p. 120.

## 5.7. Other Remarkable Discursive Practices

### 5.7.1. Place Names

Of course, “just as literature may be a means of mapping the places represented in a given literary work, the places themselves are deeply imbued with a literary history that has transformed and determined how these places will be read or mapped,”<sup>1248</sup> and “Just as the old became national heroes, irrespective of their historical role, so the monuments and geographical features of the land become national monuments and features; they are endowed with a new content, carry novel abstract meanings and ignite hitherto unknown passions and sentiments.”<sup>1249</sup> In this sense:

Every continent has its own great spirit of place. Every people is polarized in some particular locality, which is home, the homeland. Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars: call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality.<sup>1250</sup>

Place names are “as mnemonics for the historical actions of humans that make places singular and significant.”<sup>1251</sup> The definition of Claude Lévi-Strauss displays the significance of place names: “Space is a society of particular places as people are landmarks within the group. Places and individuals alike are designated by proper names, which can be substituted for each other in many circumstances common to many societies.”<sup>1252</sup> Place names are among the long-standing national symbols since they can endure the largest time among other elements of civilization, so they constitute significant feature of territorial and national identity<sup>1253</sup> as “Every mature

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<sup>1248</sup> Tally. *Spatiality*, p. 80.

<sup>1249</sup> Williams and Smith, “The National Construction of Social Space,” p. 514.

<sup>1250</sup> D.H. Lawrence. *Studies in Classic American Literature*, New York: Vintage, 1961, p. 17, and Tally. *Spatiality*, p. 81.

<sup>1251</sup> Botolv Helleland, “Place Names and Identities,” *Oslo Studies in Language*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2012, p. 110.

<sup>1252</sup> Lévi-Strauss, C. *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 168, and Helleland, “Place Names,” p. 107.

<sup>1253</sup> Arseny Saparov, “The Alteration of Place Names and Construction of National Identity in Soviet Armenia,” *Cahiers du Monde russe*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2003, p. 179.

nation has its symbolic landscapes. They're part of the iconography of nationhood, part of the shared set of ideas and memories and feelings which bind a people together."<sup>1254</sup> The naming and renaming of places in accordance with (new concrete realities) the historical and religious significance reflects the dominant political group's deep attachment to land. For instance, In Israel-Palestinian issue, abandoned villages of Palestinians have been vanished from the maps, and they were replaced with Hebrew names. Indeed, new Israeli settlements have been called with specific events and people from ancient or modern Jewish history.<sup>1255</sup> The management of national landscape is especially having a significance for the ethnic groups that have not lost their national identity since national toponymy is often an evident that the particular territory belongs the particular ethnic group,<sup>1256</sup> which is also emphasized in the following quotation:

The existence of these names clearly defines the territory of that ethnic group and is one of the most important expressions of the national identity. The use of national toponymy ensures historical continuity, preservation of cultural traditions of a nation. [...] The native toponymy acquires special meaning for small stateless nations as it alone identifies their national territory.<sup>1257</sup>

In this context, altered Kurdish place names are extensively documented.<sup>1258</sup> For example it is explained that the names of Kurdish villages and places were changed with Arabic ones in Syria.<sup>1259</sup> These changes are exemplified as Kobanê became Eynulereb, Tirbespiyê became Elqehtaniye, Çilaxa became Elcewadiye, Serê Kaniyê became Rasuleyn, etc.<sup>1260</sup> In Türkiye, it is also expressed that the same policy has been applied. In this regard, it is explained that the name of Bazîd was changed to

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<sup>1254</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1255</sup> David Newman, "The Resilience of Territorial Conflict," pp. 98-99.

<sup>1256</sup> Saparov, "The Alteration of Place Names," p. 179.

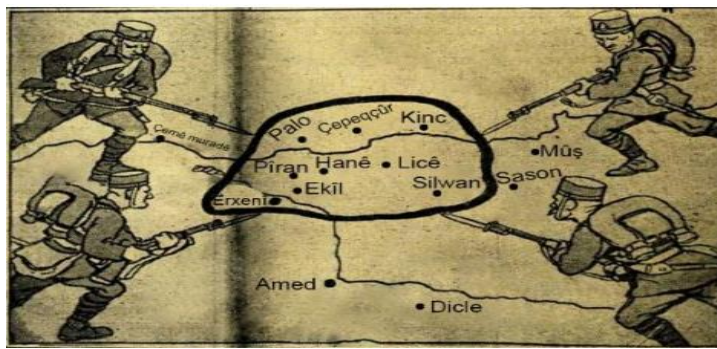
<sup>1257</sup> E. M. Pospelov, "Natsional'naiapohukaSSSR i toponimiiia," in *Toponimikaimezhnatsional'nye otnosheniia* (Moscow: AN SSSR, Moskovskii filial Geograficheskogo obshchestva SSSR, 1992): 3, cited in Saparov, "The Alteration of Place Names," p. 179.

<sup>1258</sup> 9-HI, p. 124.

<sup>1259</sup> 12-HI, p. 138.

<sup>1260</sup> 3-KL, p. 91.

Doxu beyazıt as changing other names of villages and cities of Kurdistan.<sup>1261</sup> The changed the name of Dêrsîm to Tunceli through Tunceli law on 25 May 1935 is largely mentioned.<sup>1262</sup> Based on this claim, place names are used in their Kurdish nomenclature.<sup>1263</sup> Moreover, the name of places, such as borders, carry significant geopolitical implications also on maps. First, they help to revive the imagined geographies in the minds.<sup>1264</sup> Secondly, they serve as powerful tools to generate territorial claims and legitimize geographical identities.<sup>1265</sup> The discourse of place naming reflects not only social and political dynamics of power but also territorial control.<sup>1266</sup> Here, for the sake of argument, just one of themes is evaluated. The first, in figure 20, depicts the suppression of Sheikh Said rebellion. Turkish soldiers are depicted as surrounding the area with their weapons. All names of places are indicated in Kurdish.1267



**Figure 19.** Suppression of Sheikh Said Rebellion<sup>1268</sup>

<sup>1261</sup> 11-KL, p. 60.

<sup>1262</sup> 7-KL, p. 80, 9-HI, p. 92, 12-HI, p. 103.

<sup>1263</sup> For instance, please see 9-GEO, p. 42. Here Elâzığ, Malatya, Diyarbakır, Adıyaman, Urfa and Antep are called with their Kurdish names.

<sup>1264</sup> J. Hagen "Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe," p. 491, and Culcasi, "Cartographically Constructing Kurdistan within Geopolitical and Orientalist Discourses," *Political Geography*, Vol.25, 2006, p. 687.

<sup>1265</sup> Culcasi, "Cartographically Constructing Kurdistan," p. 687.

<sup>1266</sup> J. Hagen, "Redrawing the Imagined Map of Europe," p. 491.

<sup>1267</sup> The suppression of the rebellion is considered a pivotal moment, marking the onset of a period characterized by conspiracy, misfortune, massacre, and betrayal. Consequently, it is widely believed that both British and Jewish diplomacy played a role in assisting the Turkish Republic in suppressing the rebellion. Please, see 9-HI, p. 86.

<sup>1268</sup> 9-HI, p. 84.

## 5.7.2. Territorialization of History

Ancient history, the priority, and the perception of cradle of civilizations are three remarkable points the fact of territorialization of history is shaped and constructed.

### 5.7.2.1. Ancient History

As Yiftachel explains the national time conception, namely the interaction of time/space, holds a significant place in Israel/Palestine. In this context, in their national narratives, the “when” provides each side to prove their temporal priority claims in their present territorial wishes.<sup>1269</sup> The connection of time and space is viewed significant in various chapters of textbooks. For example, the history of a Kurdish village<sup>1270</sup> is explained within this perspective:

It has been a place of self-defense and settlement for clans and communities from the Paleolithic Age to the Neolithic. According to the research, the remains of Shanidar are arriving 65 thousand years B.C.<sup>1271</sup>

Accepted as the ancestors of Kurds, the region the Huris ruled is depicted as Kurdistan villages in 6000 B.C.<sup>1272</sup> Not to reiterate the topic but to strengthen the fact that ancient history is a feature employed to figure Kurdistan as a homeland, it is necessary to quote another passage:

Girê Moza is in Rojava Kurdistan, in the city of Amûd. This place was established in the Hurrian civilization in 4000 BC. Some scholars say that Girê Moza was built as an Akkadian city. The Akkadian queen got married the king of Girê Moza and the city was built for them. However, Girê Moza is older than the Akkadians. Some researchers also say that Gire Moza was a place of worship. It played the role of a sacred religious place during the Mitanni period.<sup>1273</sup>

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<sup>1269</sup> Oren Yiftachel. *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006, p. 52.

<sup>1270</sup> 10-HI, p. 9.

<sup>1271</sup> 7-HI, p. 26; the similar information regarding the point is also provided in 10-HI, p. 27, pp. 35-36; 4-SS, p. 114.

<sup>1272</sup> 10-HI, p. 99.

<sup>1273</sup> 3-SL, p. 28.

As mentioned above, Neolithic age is believed to be developed in Kurdistan, and Kurdistan is claimed to be called Upper Mesopotamia,<sup>1274</sup> historically. Meanwhile, culture is seen as social construction of soil;<sup>1275</sup> and the culture and tradition of the New Stone Age society, “which has left its mark on history,” is claimed to have spread its original branch in the Kurdistan region.<sup>1276</sup> Likewise, other regions of Northern Syria as well as other cities of Kurds in Iraq, Türkiye<sup>1277</sup> and Iran are placed within an ancient historical context in various texts.

### 5.7.2.2. Indigeneity

Kurds are viewed as the first inhabitants of Kurdistan, and it is assumed that they did not come there from another place. Rather, it is other nations came to live on that region.<sup>1278</sup> This view is so exaggerated that the word Mesopotamia is used as a synonym of Kurdistan:

Kurdistan or Mesopotamia is defined as the “cradle of humanity” by anthropology and geography. In history, the Kurdish community is recognized as one of the oldest Aryan communities. Also, Upper Mesopotamia became one of the geographies that hosted the “New Stone Age Revolution.” The Kurdish community has become one of the foremost communities that have developed this revolution.<sup>1279</sup>

In the same perspective, it is asserted that “The Kurds are one of the peoples of the Aryan culture, and the land of Mesopotamia and the Middle East is the place where this culture spread.”<sup>1280</sup>

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<sup>1274</sup> 7-HI, p. 30.

<sup>1275</sup> 7-CE, p. 24.

<sup>1276</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 25.

<sup>1277</sup> 6-KL, p. 115-117; 6-SS, p. 78; 3-SS, p. 87; 5-KL, p. 79; 10-HI, p. 38, and p. 45; 7-HI, p. 96.

<sup>1278</sup> 3-SL, p. 79.

<sup>1279</sup> 11-SO, p. 92.

<sup>1280</sup> 9-CE, p. 8.



### 5.7.2.3. Cradle of Civilizations

Anthony Smith remarks that, attributing distinctive qualities to the homeland and considering it with respect as the cradle of the nation is a secular practice of maintaining pre-modern forms of sanctifying historical places and ancestral lands.<sup>1281</sup> School textbooks contain an excess perspective of this one since the homeland is not defined only as the cradle of a specific nation, namely Kurds, but also it is seen as the kernel of some other civilizations.<sup>1282</sup> For instance, the heritage of the Medes is accepted as to become significant,<sup>1283</sup> and their culture is believed to have been intertwined with Kurdish culture. Another point is that, based on Herodotus, it is expressed that “Persians and Greeks<sup>1284</sup> are students of Medes, they learned the Aryan<sup>1285</sup> culture of the agricultural revolution from Medes,”<sup>1286</sup> as it is believed that the Aryan culture developed in Mesopotamia and “spread like the waves of the sea all over the world.”<sup>1287</sup> So this algorithm shows that Kurds and their homeland are accepted to be source of civilizations.

Based on this belief, it is argued that the confederations and states of Mîtani,<sup>1288</sup> Urartu,<sup>1289</sup> Medes, Marwani and many city civilizations (no more information) were

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<sup>1281</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “The Sacred Dimension of Nationalism.” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2000, pp. 806-807.

<sup>1282</sup> 6-KL, p. 115, 9-CE, p. 84; Because “the geography of Upper Mesopotamia was greatly affected by the domesticated grasses and climatic conditions to transition to a nomadic life.” Please, see 11-SO, p. 71.

<sup>1283</sup> It’s believed that Medes played a significant role in the transition of Middle Eastern civilization to Asia and Europe. Please, see 10-HI, p. 127.

<sup>1284</sup> Cultural development in Greece is connected to the progress in Kurdistan. Please, see 7-HI, p. 111.

<sup>1285</sup> 12-HI, p. 114. It is believed that “Aryan language group” has emerged in Mesopotamia, then, as a culture, has spread to India and the coast of Europe. It is believed that the origin of the Aryan language is Indo-European, but this opinion is not correct; its origin is from the Kakil area. Please, see 10-HI, p. 54.

<sup>1286</sup> 7-HI, p. 111, 12-HI, p. 114.

<sup>1287</sup> 7-HI, p. 44; 9-CE, p. 8.

<sup>1288</sup> It’s claimed that Confederacy of Mîtanis was established in the Northwest of Kurdistan at the beginning of 1.600 B.C. Please, see 6-SS, pp. 75-76 and 7-HI, p. 94, and the capital of the Mitani confederation was a city called Washukani (Serê Kaniyê now in Roajava) in the Riha plain. Please, see 10-HI, p. 110.

<sup>1289</sup> Kurds are also thought to contribute the Urartu civilization by agriculture, and farming. Please, see 10-HI, p. 110.

established by the Kurds.<sup>1290</sup> This belief is emphasized in other passages as quoted below:

Our homeland, Kurdistan, is the place and land of people of Kurdistan, it is an ancient homeland with historical remains and ancient wealth. It has done many things for humanity. It has great importance. This territory is the source of human development. Therefore, it attracts the attention of many foreign civilizations.<sup>1291</sup>

For the first time in the world, agriculture is claimed to emerge in Kurdistan as “humans first planted wheat, barley and pea in 10.000 B.C in Urfa;”<sup>1292</sup> the oldest villages in the world is again claimed to be discovered by archaeologists which are located in Çayönü Ergani in “Northern Kurdistan” which was built around 11,000 BC;<sup>1293</sup> the ruins of Xirabreşk in “Southern Kurdistan” reach 12000 B.C as it is seen the first temple in the world.<sup>1294</sup>

Because soil, water, protection, and tradition of natural society were lived in balance in Kurdistan, the Neolithic Revolution is believed to develop in Kurdistan,<sup>1295</sup> and as a result, it made changes in all the life forms of the world.<sup>1296</sup> One of these changes is referred as the emergence of Semitic culture which spread from the Great Desert to the east of Arabia and to the north of the desert,<sup>1297</sup> and also Sumers are claimed to have taken the heritage of Neolithic Revolution in Mesopotamia.<sup>1298</sup> The other

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<sup>1290</sup> 9-CE, p. 8, 6-KL, p. 115.

<sup>1291</sup> 5-KL, p. 35.

<sup>1292</sup> 7-HI, p. 30, 7-CE, p. 24.

<sup>1293</sup> 7-HI., p. 31.

<sup>1294</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34, and p. 114. For other first villages in Kurdistan please, see *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>1295</sup> 9-GEO, p. 56; To directly quote from another textbook: “The New Stone Age was first developed in Upper Mesopotamia on the slopes of Taurus and Zagros between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The basis of this culture is Kurdish culture. At first, we can say, the place called Mesopotamia, the climatic conditions are suitable for life.” Please, see 7-CE, p. 24, 11-SO, p. 70. It’s considered to be sparked by agriculture, livestock farming and making equipment and supplies. Please, see 12-SO, pp. 41-42.

<sup>1296</sup> 7-HI., p. 9.

<sup>1297</sup> 10-HI, p. 57.

<sup>1298</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

change is referred is the emergence of “knowledge and technology” which has been created in New Stone Age spread to Egypt, India, and China.<sup>1299</sup> Moreover, making an analogy, it is claimed that there is a similarity between the river of the Nile and the rivers of Tigris, and Euphrates, “As the Nile River was the lifeline of ancient Egypt, so were the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to the civilizations of Sumer.”<sup>1300</sup> Other civilizations are believed to emerge from Kurdistan. For instance Kevana Zêrîn (“known as Toros-Zagros mountain line”) is referred to become the first place of commune which later spread to the world because its climate and seasons were suitable.<sup>1301</sup> Then, Aşûrs are mentioned to have lived in upper Mesopotamia near the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates in 2000 B.C.<sup>1302</sup> Other civilizations are the Nayiri, which “started from the source of Tigris and Euphrates”<sup>1303</sup> and founded in today’s Adiyaman, the Komagene civilization is claimed not remarkable solely for Kurds but also for all human being.<sup>1304</sup>

Northeastern Syria is also mentioned to have been a significant place in the socialization of human being that ‘historians and archaeologists have named this region as the “Golden Arch.”<sup>1305</sup> It is claimed that a 8000-thousand year<sup>1306</sup> great civilization was there in Til Helef,<sup>1307</sup> since leadership became the center of this culture, and the first institutionalism was experienced in this culture.<sup>1308</sup> Some of the places where the culture of Til Helef spread are mentioned as North Africa, Egypt,

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<sup>1299</sup> 11-SO, p. 86.

<sup>1300</sup> 8-HI, p. 28.

<sup>1301</sup> 9-CE, p. 9, 10-HI, pp. 49-50; however, it's noted that first types of people spread from Africa.

<sup>1302</sup> 10-HI, p. 76.

<sup>1303</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>1304</sup> 11-HI, p. 27, 10-HI, p. 55.

<sup>1305</sup> 5-SS, p. 23.

<sup>1306</sup> 8-KL, p. 113.

<sup>1307</sup> 9-CE, p. 9, 10-HI, p. 55, 3-SL, p. 86; Til Helef is recognized as a Neolithic site, noteworthy for its evidence of early urban planning. Excavations at this location have revealed that the village was constructed according to a specific plan, with the residential structures consisting of two-room houses. For a more detailed account, please, see 5-KL, page 42.

<sup>1308</sup> 10-HI, p. 40.

Iran, India, China and Europe.<sup>1309</sup> Finally, it is mentioned that the gender-based profession, which provided direct democracy life in the form of communal and equal life, was experienced in 12-11 thousand years B.C. in the Paleolithic Age in Upper Mesopotamia.<sup>1310</sup>

### 5.7.3. Symbols

The Nowruz is commonly perceived as symbol of the emancipation or liberation of territories.<sup>1311</sup> In a chapter, subject of which is Nowruz, this quotation expresses this dimension clearly:

The resistance that was developing under the rays of the new day, in the 90s, entered the areas of public rebellion and this resistance grew, until it reached all four corners of Kurdistan. With this resistance, Kurdistan, which had been darkened, gradually became brighter. This day is hidden under the black veil, now its veil once again, like a spring flower, it raised its head and its fragrance spread to all areas of the world.<sup>1312</sup>

Within this framework, numerous images depict the celebration of Nowruz. One such image is provided below:



**Figure 20.** Nowruz Celebration <sup>1313</sup>

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<sup>1309</sup> 7-HI, p. 45.

<sup>1310</sup> 11-SO, p. 70.

<sup>1311</sup> 3-KL, p. 107.

<sup>1312</sup> 7-KL, p. 111, and 10-HI, p. 124.

<sup>1313</sup> 8-KL, p. 120; For more images Please, see 8-KL, p. 119; 6-SL, p. 85; 2-SL, p. 96; 9-KL, p. 116; 6-KL, p. 105.

Another symbol is Kurdish flag. In a chapter glorifying Ararat rebellion, Kurdish flag is depicted as a symbol of salvation of Kurdish territories.<sup>1314</sup> Indeed, as a picture, it can be seen in various pages. For instance, it is seen on the headstone of a martyr below:



**Figure 21.** Kurdish Flag over a Grave of a ‘Martyr’<sup>1315</sup>

#### 5.7.4. Maps

Having already drawn the framework of the significance of the mapping practices as a political act, I will not mention about details again. However, quoting from Benedict Anderson will serve as a reminder of the role of the maps shaping homeland conceptions.

Dutch colonial logo-maps [of West New Guinea] sped across in the colony, showing a West New Guinea with nothing to its East, unconsciously reinforced the developing imagined ties . . . [W]hat brought the often-quarrelling young West Papuan nationalists together, especially after 1963, was the map. Though the Indonesian state changed the region’s name from West Nieuw Guinea, first to Irian Barat (West Irian) and then to Irian Jaya, it read its local reality from the colonial-era bird’s-eye atlas . . . [T]he state itself, and through it the Indonesian population as a whole, saw only a phantom “Irianese” (orang Irian) named after the map.<sup>1316</sup>

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<sup>1314</sup> 5-KL, p. 59.

<sup>1315</sup> 9-KL, p. 70.

<sup>1316</sup> Benedict Richard O’Gorman Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1991, pp.176-78.

I should remark that iconography of boundaries is particularly produced and reproduced through education in geography and history. Some of textual manifestations of the iconography involves the drawings, paintings, songs, poems, and various memorials. However, the most challenging research objects are maps, which are reflections of power and representation practices of a long-standing institutionalization.<sup>1317</sup> In that sense, maps and figures take a large space in school textbooks of the PYD. Before evaluating these, it would be proper to write the historical background of homeland conceptions of Kurds.

Cartography has been a contentious site between the Kurds and governments.<sup>1318</sup> Sharaf Khan, the prince of Bitlis principality, who wrote *Sharaf-nâme* in order to prove that Kurds had a governance tradition,<sup>1319</sup> also drew the map of Kurdistan by identifying it as “the land of Kurdish dynasties,” and homeland for four branches of Kurds: “Kurmanjs, lurs, Kalhurs and Gorans.”<sup>1320</sup> As far as my research indicates, it’s the first cartographic framework of Kurdistan drawn by Kurds themselves although the borders of Kurdistan were defined verbally rather than a cartographic image by him:

...and the beginning of the vilayet of Kurdistan is from the coast of Hormoz Sea which is situated on the shores of the Indian Sea, and from there continues on a straight line until it ends in the vilayet of Malatiyeh and Mar'ash, and in the north of this line there are the vilayets of Fars, 'Iraq-e 'Ajam and Azerbaijan and Lesser and Greater Armenia, and on its south side lies 'Iraq-e 'Arab and Mosul and Diyarbakr.<sup>1321</sup>

Nevertheless, prior to the 1930s, the mapping of Kurdistan was carried out by non-Kurds/outsideers. Europeans had extensively mapped Kurdistan’s boundaries and its various features since the nineteenth century. Moreover, Cartographers under the rule

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<sup>1317</sup> Paasi, “Boundaries as Social Processes,” pp. 76-77.

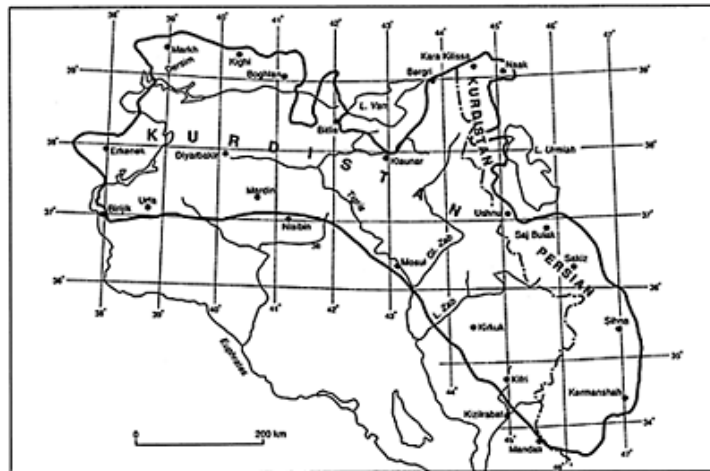
<sup>1318</sup> Amir Hassanpour, "The Making of Kurdish Identity: Pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century Historical and Literary Discourses" in Abbas Vali eds., *Essays on the origins of Kurdish Nationalism*. California: Mazda Publishers, 2003, p. 116.

<sup>1319</sup> *Ibid.*, p.112

<sup>1320</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.114-115

<sup>1321</sup> *Ibid.*

of imperial rulers had incorporated the region in their maps. The sole exception was the map created by Sharif Pasha<sup>1322</sup> in 1919, during the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>1323</sup>



**Figure 22.** Sharif Pasha's Map of Kurdistan<sup>1324</sup>

It was in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Kurds noticed the power of cartography, as such they gradually produced maps.<sup>1325</sup> Due to the underdeveloped nationalist consciousness, only a limited number of Kurds had a comprehensive knowledge about the borders of Kurdistan.<sup>1326</sup> As Theresa points out, the maps are projection of an expected feature which many Kurds have in their minds and emotion.<sup>1327</sup>

The imagination of a united Kurdistan that depicts Kurdistan as a single part is widely emphasized not only through words but also through maps in textbooks. Following figures are manifestation of this understanding.

<sup>1322</sup> Sharif Pasha was “a former diplomat, and a former leader of the Ottoman liberal opposition, mandated by the organization overtly advocated Kurdish independence. He presented the “Claims of the Kurdish Nation” to the Peace Conference in Paris.” Please, see Hamit Bozarslan “Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey: From Tacit Contract to Rebellion (1919-1925)” in *Essays on the origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, Abbas Vali ed. California: Mazda Publishers, 2003, p. 168.

<sup>1323</sup> Maria T. O’Shea. *Trapped Between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004, p. 143.

<sup>1324</sup> Theresa, p. 145.

<sup>1325</sup> Maria T. O’Shea. p. 144.

<sup>1326</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>1327</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.



Figure 23. Map of United Kurdistan<sup>1328</sup>

Following the question of “What do you see below?” There is a similar map, however this time Amed is displayed with a red star emoji, referring it as the capital city of Kurdistan.

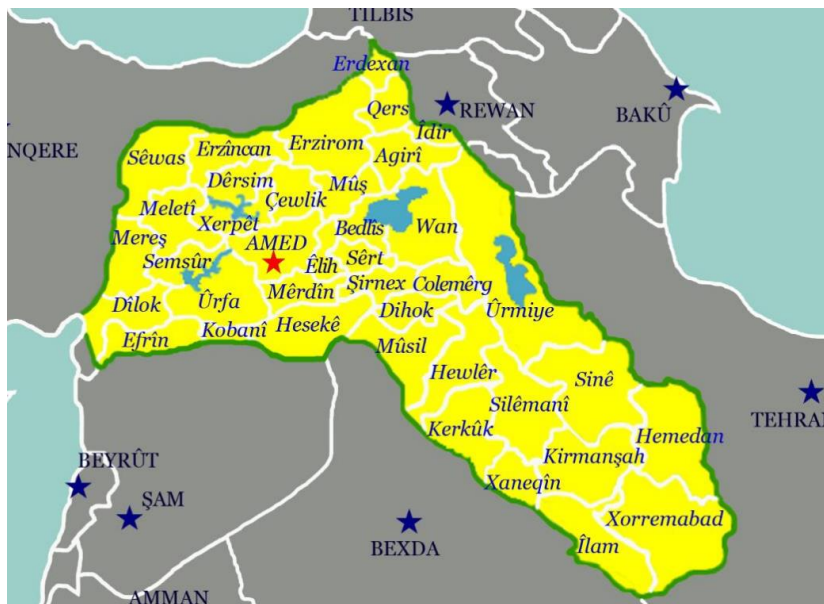


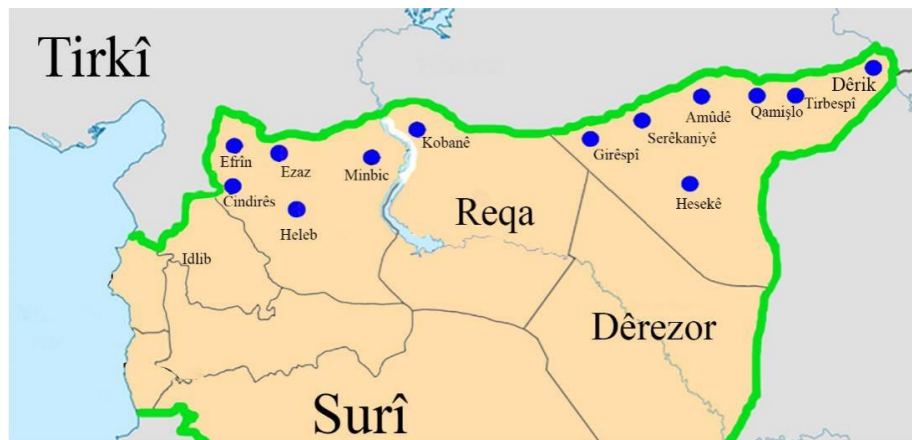
Figure 24. Kurdistan Map Displaying Amed as Capital City<sup>1329</sup>

<sup>1328</sup> 9-GE, p. 28.

<sup>1329</sup> 2-SL, p. 82.



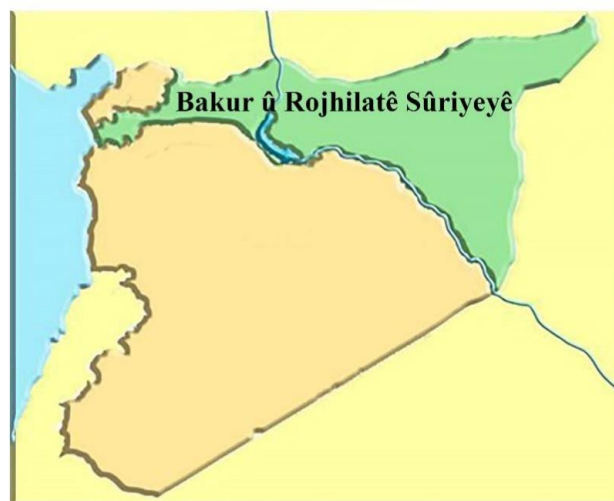
In the following page, this time there is a question to request student to find 'Rojava Kurdistan' in Syrian map:



**Figure 25.** Cartographic Representation of Syria <sup>1330</sup>

These maps show that the current partitioned territories belong to a Greater Kurdistan historically.

Apart these, the maps of Rojava are widely available. In the first map, it is displayed as Northeastern Syria.

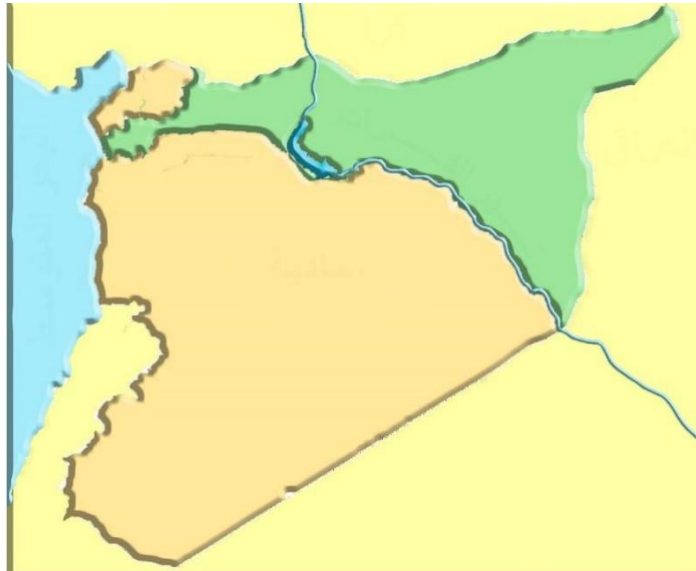


**Figure 26.** Map of Northeastern Syria <sup>1331</sup>

<sup>1330</sup> 2-SL, p. 83.

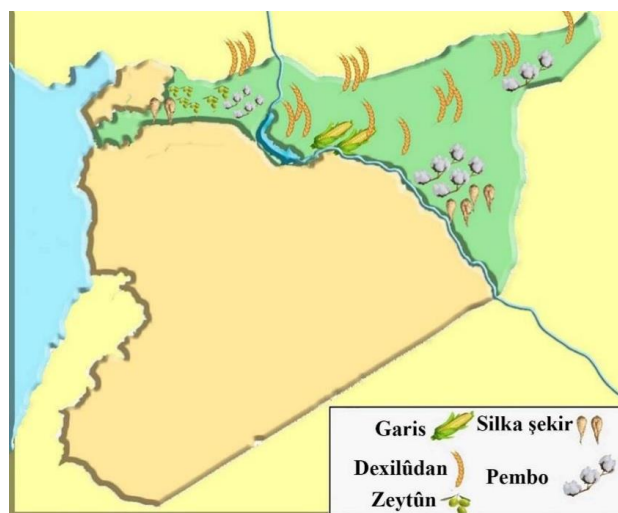
<sup>1331</sup> 9-GEO, p. 83.

Based on this map, it is stated that Northeastern Syria is composed of three regions: Cizîr, Ferat û Efrîn. However, as can be seen below there is not any demarcation showing these regions.



**Figure 27.** Three regions: Cizîr, Ferat û Efrîn <sup>1332</sup>

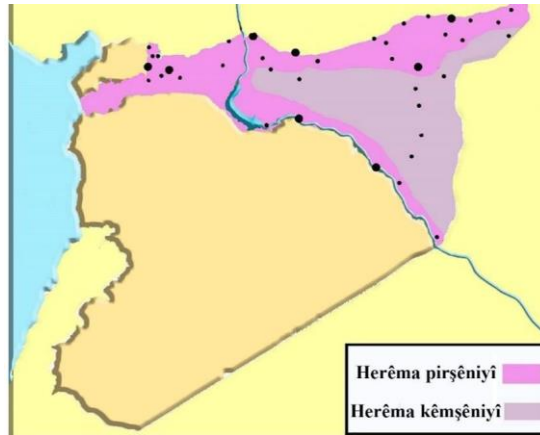
The following two maps, respectively agriculture, and population, are demarcated through the same map.



**Figure 28.** Agriculture Map of Rojava <sup>1333</sup>

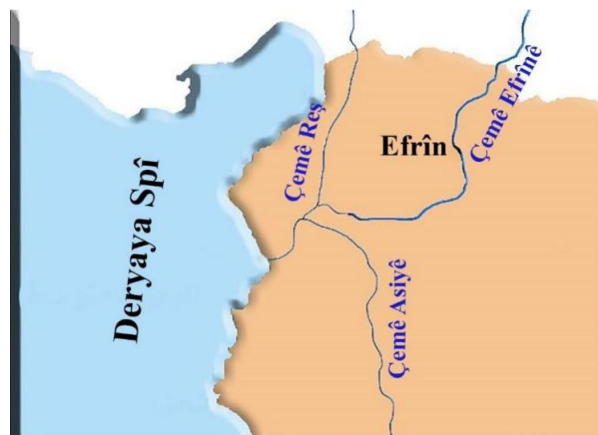
<sup>1332</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>1333</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.



**Figure 29.** Map of Population Levels in Rojava<sup>1334</sup>

Oren Yiftachel remarks an argument for Israel/Palestine issue, that is “the sharper the territorial struggle, the greater emphasis on the ‘where’ instead of when is.”<sup>1335</sup> This argument can be applied to the PYD’s territorial claims. The more the PYD sought territorial claims the more territorial claims caused different claims by various powers among neighboring countries. At that point, the existence of various maps in the school textbooks validates Yiftachel’s argument. In this sense, the maps are reflection of territorial aspirations consolidating the borders of territorial claims. Among three regions of Rojava, only Efrîn is the only represented in two maps distinctly. In the first map (figure 30), it is displayed while showing the rivers of Rojava.



**Figure 30.** Rivers of Rojava<sup>1336</sup>

<sup>1334</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>1335</sup> Oren Yiftachel, “Territory as the Kernel of the Nation,” pp. 216-217.

<sup>1336</sup> 9-GEO, p. 95.

In the following map, there is a detailed map of Efrîn.



Figure 31. Map of Efrîn<sup>1337</sup>

### 5.7.5. Poetic Space and Emotional Attachment

Territory holds significance to an ethnicity not merely due to physical possession or “objective” features like climate, terrain, or location, although these factors have influence on ethnic conceptions. Its relevance lies in “alleged and felt symbiosis between a certain piece of earth and its community.”<sup>1338</sup> Here the poetic and symbolic aspects carry more weight than everyday attributes, and “land of dreams” becomes more important than any concrete terrain.<sup>1339</sup> More importantly, poetic space is significant as it lays ground for political claims:

<sup>1337</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>1338</sup> Anthony D. Smith. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 28.

<sup>1339</sup> *Ibid.*

The physical characteristics of the land, its variegated landscape, its flora and fauna and its deserts have become potent factors coloring greatly the poetry of Israel. In truth one may say that the land of Israel in its fullness was reclaimed poetically long before it was reclaimed politically.<sup>1340</sup>

Poetry is considered to be a literary genre demarcating who Kurds are and thereby creating a new stage in construction of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>1341</sup> In this sense, it is stated that “Although our homeland has been occupied for more than hundred years, the richness of Kurdish language provided to protect its identity,”<sup>1342</sup> and indeed it is explained that “dengbêjî and poems reveal and protect Kurdish culture.”<sup>1343</sup>

The belief of all the classical authors, thinkers, or scholars such as Melayê Cizîrî,<sup>1344</sup> Ehmedê Xanî,<sup>1345</sup> Pertew Begê Hekarî,<sup>1346</sup> Bekir Beg,<sup>1347</sup> Fixan Hamo,<sup>1348</sup> Nalî,<sup>1349</sup> Mele Mensûrê Girgaşî,<sup>1350</sup> Şêx Riza Talabanî,<sup>1351</sup> Qedrîcan,<sup>1352</sup> Seydayê Tîrêj,<sup>1353</sup>

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<sup>1340</sup> Quoted in Barbara McKean Parmenter. *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004, p. 20.

<sup>1341</sup> Yüksel, p. 176.

<sup>1342</sup> 9-KL, p. 105.

<sup>1343</sup> 4-SS, p. 38.

<sup>1344</sup> 11-KL, p. 34.

<sup>1345</sup> 11-HI, p. 144; 11-KL, p. 30, and p. 31; 7-KL, p. 74.

<sup>1346</sup> For his poem criticizing Turkish invasion starts with the verses “Turkish soldiers were visible from the surroundings...” Please, see 11-KL, p. 75.

<sup>1347</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>1348</sup> Fixan Hamo's didactic poem is as follows: “The homeland is like a paradise/ Protect it like lions, become men Two hundred groups will not leave us, unite! / Then, it was a desire to see my pain.” Please, see *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>1349</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>1350</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>1351</sup> Şêx Riza Talabanî's poem mentioning that formerly Kurdish independent administrations provided Kurds not to be obliged to Persian, or Ottoman. Please, see 12-KL, pp. 27-29.

<sup>1352</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109; 3-KL, p. 113.

<sup>1353</sup> For a patriotist poem of him, please see 12-KL, p. 113. For another poem of Seydayê Tîrêj promoting the independence of Kurdistan through making a nightingale talk, please see 8-KL, p. 102.

Celadet Bedirkhan,<sup>1354</sup> Hecî Qadir,<sup>1355</sup> Qenatê Kurdo<sup>1356</sup> regarding territory is presented as territorial ideals since most of them expressed dissatisfaction with the partition of Kurdish territories and aspired for a unified Kurdistan.<sup>1357</sup> Hence, their writings cover a significant part of these books. Among these authors, the poems of Osman Sebrî<sup>1358</sup> and Cegerxwîn<sup>1359</sup> take a crucial place.

In a chapter, subject of which is Melayê Cizîrî, it is asserted that “one can say that Mela is still burning like a lamp in the heart of Kurdistan with his poetry and thoughts,”<sup>1360</sup> and “his patriotism and passion still illuminate the path of the Kurds.”

It will be convenient to cite well-known “Kîne Em?” poem of Cegerxwîn as it was included in one of the textbooks:

Kurd of Kurdistan  
Of revolutions and volcanoes  
I brim with boundless energy  
A blaze of fire and flames

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<sup>1354</sup> 9-KL, p. 48. The efforts of Celadet Bedirkhan to spread Kurdish alphabet to all parts of Kurdistan is appreciated. Please, see 12-KL, p. 94. For a poem of Bedirkhan glorifying many Kurdish regions with their natural beauties through a poem, please see 7-KL, p. 120. For another poem of Celadet Bedirkhan indicating the flag of Kurds as a symbol of four parts of Kurdistan, please see 3-KL, p. 47.

<sup>1355</sup> 3-KL, pp. 10-12. Koyî is considered as the second pioneer of Kurdayetî next to Khanî. Please, see Amir Hassanour, “The Making of Kurdish Identity: Pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century Historical and Literary Discourses,” in Abbas Vali eds., *Essays on the origins of Kurdish Nationalism*. California: Mazda Publishers, 2003, p. 130. For the sociology and history of this period, please see *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>1356</sup> 3-KL, p. 70.

<sup>1357</sup> 9-KL, p. 106, and p. 121; 12-HI, p. 141.

<sup>1358</sup> 3-KL, p. 69; 2-SL, pp. 12-13; 8-KL, p. 20.

<sup>1359</sup> 8-KL, p. 148. For the poem of Cegerxwîn that gives herald regarding the arrival of independence of homeland, please see 3-KL, p. 85; The poem of Cegerxwîn connecting relationship between the resurrection of the spring to the resurrection of the Kurdish independence, please see 9-KL, p. 116; In another poem, Cegerxwîn states that he wants Kurdish people to have education, knowledge and free themselves from the “oppression of the old brain of sheikhs, clerics, and landlords and promote innovation against invasion of all rulers-whether state.” Please, see 12-KL, p. 103. Cegerxwîn's poem showing a sorrow for “the pains of Kurdistan” as a homeland, please see 3-KL, p. 48. Another poem of Cegerxwîn pointing the construction of national identity on territories of Kurdistan, please see 8-KL, p. 23. Another poem of Cegerxwîn inviting Kurds to fight for the independence of Kurdistan, please see 9-KL, p. 46.

<sup>1360</sup> 11-KL, p. 34.

We are the legacy of ancient giants  
The Kardu's towering might  
We are the Sobars, the Nayri, the Mitans  
The very sons of Karduks and Gutis  
We are the Meds and Gutis  
Hurris and Gutis  
We are the Kirmanji, Kelhor, Loran, and Goran  
Above and below, we are the Kurds

For thousands of years  
Our beloved Kurdistan  
Torn and tattered  
In the cruel grip of captors!<sup>1361</sup>

Kurdish nationalism and superiority are highlighted and most importantly Kurds are attributed to Kurdistan, no other territory.<sup>1362</sup> Following the poem, there is a question-answer section regarding poem by questioning points regarding united Kurdistan.<sup>1363</sup> Likewise, this can be seen in all quoted articles and poems in this manner.

In fact, among all other historical figures, the ideas of Cegerxwîn are significant as for him homeland is the geography where Kurds live. As a matter of fact, in many of his poems, Cegerxwîn draws a political map by giving the names of the mountains, plains, rivers, villages, towns and cities covered by the homeland he defines as Kurdistan.<sup>1364</sup>

The geographical features are attached with emotional characteristics, which makes geography meaningful in the sense of territoriality. Following quotation, again verses belong to Cegerxwîn, is exactly an example of this case:

O Xabur, Xabur, O Xabur, Xabur  
As I wish, very long and deep

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<sup>1361</sup> 6-KL, pp. 101-102.

<sup>1362</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1363</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>1364</sup> Ömer Faruk Yekdeş, 2008. *Nâzım Hikmet ve Cegerxwîn'de Aşk Şiirinin İdeolojisi*. Unpublished master dissertation, Bilkent University, Ankara, p. 90.

Your mercy, “khum khum”, and “lew, lew”  
 You don't remember, you don't sleep, you don't sleep  
 Always screaming, yelling, gasping  
 But no one knows what you want?  
 Your goal is strength, progress  
 Your place is narrow, it should be wide  
 Waves, shouts, and screams  
 You need freedom like me  
 The chest of this earth tore you hard  
 I don't know why you don't go upstairs.  
 You, like me, if they were Kurds  
 This strength of yours was becoming a pain.<sup>1365</sup>

Xabur is a river and the poet's emotional attachment makes it sensible in the context mentioned above. Emotional attachment to various parts, in particular natural characteristics, of homeland can be seen through the following two poems:

This stream, that mountain and this garden  
 Where does this youth and branch come from?  
 You have become a stage for love  
 I am a hundred times a sacrifice for you<sup>1366</sup>

My homeland is lively.  
 It is famous for its deep valleys and high mountains.  
 The homeland is our place, we love it very much.  
 In our homeland, there are four seasons.<sup>1367</sup>

Ehmedê Xanî, who is accepted as the pioneer of Kurdish nationalism,<sup>1368</sup> is also widely quoted. Xanî considered the political (i.e., establishment of a Kurdish state) and literary (i.e., writing in the native language) tasks indispensable. According to him “A prestigious literary language, together with a sovereign king, was the hallmark of a civilized and independent Kurdish nation.”<sup>1369</sup> Xanî disdained the rule of both the Ottoman and Iranian empires, defining the Ottoman rule over Kurdistan

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<sup>1365</sup> 7-KL, p. 1.

<sup>1366</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>1367</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>1368</sup> Amir Hassanpour, “The Pen and the Sword: Literacy, Education and Revolution,” in P. Freebody & A. R. Welch eds., *Kurdistan. Knowledge, Culture and Power: International Perspectives on Literacy as Policy and Practice*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993, p. 39.

<sup>1369</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.



as “ruins in the hands of the owl,” and considering it a “shame” to abide by Ottomans and Persians.<sup>1370</sup> As Hassanpour argues, Xanî believed that the position of Kurds could be improved through the intellectual efforts of poets and educators. In this respect, he contributed significantly through his magnum opus, *Mem û Zîn*.<sup>1371</sup> Khani assessed Kurds as a “subjugated people,” and the historical and social context of the time shaped his “agenda of liberation.”<sup>1372</sup>

In 1639, after the sign of treaty of Qasr-e Shirin, the division of Kurdistan into two parts is seen to cause conflicts and confusion among Kurds. “This situation has left a big mark on Xanî’s cultural and patriotic ideas. These events become the basis of Xanî’s thoughts.”<sup>1373</sup> Following verses are reflection of these thoughts that take place in one of the textbooks:

Arabs and Persians are surrounding them  
Kurds were dispersed on four corners  
Both groups are Kurdish tribes  
They have made the arrow a target for mischief<sup>1374</sup>

As such, Xanî’s feelings of patriotism regarding Kurdistan occupy a very large space in textbooks.<sup>1375</sup>

## 5.8. Conclusion

As Doty remarks, one of the most essential features of discourse is its role to naturalize. Naturalization is achieved through ‘presupposition’ that establishes a foundation of assumed truths.<sup>1376</sup> As I explained, the presupposition regarding territoriality is acquired and reflected through its meaning; national identity,

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<sup>1370</sup> Hassanpour, “The Making of Kurdish Identity,” p. 119.

<sup>1371</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>1372</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>1373</sup> 11-KL, p. 55.

<sup>1374</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>1375</sup> 11-KL, p. 30 p. 53, and p. 55; 11-HI, p. 144; 8-HI, p. 92.

<sup>1376</sup> Roxanne Lynn Doty. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Ann Arbor Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 10.

nationalism, and homeland, and its practices; resistance, defense, liberation, and governance over 'occupied territories.' Indeed, all these acquire meaning in various discursive practices respectively, territorialization of history, symbols, maps, and poems.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

*“Liberty and power, and that  
Light-winged joy  
That is the folly of  
forgetfulness,  
These do not come in the  
unguarded  
Moods of quiet.”<sup>1377</sup>*

The educational system may not possess the authority to say the last word on any matter. However, its significance lies in the fact that the relevant authorities find it a useful means to introduce their political propensities. In this respect, I have argued that the textbooks are a significant ground to construct the concept of territoriality for the PYD.

In the last chapter, I examined the selected textbooks to address the question of *how the content and framework of territoriality is constructed through the discourse of education at primary, secondary and high school levels*. In this conclusion chapter, I want to answer my research question with concrete statements based on the findings I discussed in the last chapter. To do this, I will follow the structure outlined both in the chapters of conceptual framework and findings.

In fact, anyone who has been interested in Kurdish issue comprehends that culture and territory have been two central issues for all Kurdish political movements. This is apparently valid for the PYD as the data collection of textbooks demonstrates. In

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<sup>1377</sup> Herbert Read. “The Retreat.” *Poems of the Great War: An Anthology 1914-1918*, edited by Christopher Navratil, Philadelphia: Running Press, 2014, p. 211.

this regard, culture and territory is seen two remarkable concepts to construct national identity. In the same vein, Kurdistan is accepted a distinct region through which nationalist pride is nurtured. The stories of wars, violence, threats based on the exploitation of Kurdistan plays a crucial role in identity formations.

I argue that, since nationalism has negative connotations resulting from the practices of nation-states, the emphasis is muchly on national identity and patriotism. Again, anyone who has been interested in Kurdish issue recognizes that, in the imagine of Kurds, Kurdistan is not simply a political project that can be articulated just an independent state, rather it is nearly a utopia in which a better life is projected. This idea is certainly prevalent in textbooks since Kurdistan, as a homeland, is seen a place of residence after salvation of enemy.

Kurdistan has become a utopia because the ideological divisions between Kurds have increased. As a result, rather than a territorial unity, Kurdish language has become the only indicator of unity among Kurds. Therefore, language-based unity has been prevalent in homeland conceptualization in the textbooks. Briefly, rather than a simple geographical fact, homeland conception is constructed by both political and cultural dynamics.

In this semantic framework, like all other nationalist (and some non-state actors) discourses, the past is a constitutive element to understand the present conflicts. In this sense, originating from the past and continuing in the present age, the fundamental assumption is Kurdistan has been occupied. As all textbooks present a comprehensive information regarding the historical existence of Kurdish identity, and as a national identity having an ancient connection with Kurdistan territories. In this sense they completely reject the occupation of Kurdistan territories.

Hence, the historical narrative written in textbooks for drawing a framework for imperialism inaugurates with a colonialism critique. The view transmitted through these passages try to indoctrinate the opinion that the territorial problem that Kurds face is rooted in colonialism. In this regard, the considerable emphasis is placed on the great powers, and four regional states that the illegally have violated the

territories of Kurds through treaties, and agreements. Within this framework, three treaties and agreements are particularly mentioned: Treaties of Qasr-e Shirin, Sykes-Picot, and Sadabad Pact. These treaties, accepted as significant issues, are given much floor to discuss turning points in the partition of Kurdistan. Based on this belief, the territories of Kurdistan are associated with involuntary displacement, exile, emigration burning and massacres because of the practices of occupied powers. In this regard, the imagination that Kurdistan that has constantly been occupied and continues to be occupied, engender several concepts which are resistance, liberation, and governance.

Certainly, the glorification of resistance is seen significant to construct the national identity of Kurds who are seen constant protectors of their territories. To do this, the rebellions of contemporary and historical non-Kurdish movements are exemplified. However, the emphasis is inherently on the Kurdish practices. In this sense, historical rebellions of Kurds, the insurgency of the PKK, and the role of the women in resistance are bedrocks to construct the ‘serhildan,’ the equivalent of resistance in Kurdish terminology. More importantly, the resurrection of the dead, who sacrificed lives for territory, through martyrdom plays a significant role to establish a relationship between identity and territory. Indeed, the memory of themselves has become a resistance practice.

It’s a well-known fact that the PYD has a deep and subtle connection with the PKK. As a result, there is not significant divergence between their territorial strategies. In the past century, there have not been any serious attempts of Kurdish political movements to establish a united Kurdistan. The exception has been the PKK. However, emerging as a national liberation movement fighting for the independence of Kurdistan, the PKK shifted its paradigm from the national liberation to a more democratic notion of socialism. In fact, it’s serious mistake to consider non-state actors as unchanging organizations following the trajectory of a single doctrine. They can experience change in their principles. I argue that it is within this context that the concept of liberation is rarely mentioned compared to the others such as resistance, and governance.

In fact, to hold a territory is a matter of interpretation. Even though, its borders may constantly change, a liberated zone is the best evidence indicating that a non-state actor control a territory since it provides the construction of political order. In this regard, the territories taken from Syrian is illustrated as the liberation of territories. Hereafter, the territorialization strategy is highlighted widely.

Drawing on many case studies, I wrote that territorial-oriented non-state actors experience similar processes and challenges while constructing governance system. Although, in practice, the PYD maintains to mimic a Weberian type of the state in many dimensions, there's a certain critique to the prevailing nation-state system in textbooks. In this regard, I observed that opposition to the patriarchy, capitalism, and state are central themes in terms of governance.

Opposition to the patriarchy is seen to create a discourse of gender-equal governance, in which there's a strong emphasis on co-existence of men and women. Thus, the focus is on attaining gender equality through Jineolojî, which aims to illuminate the historical and contemporary dimensions of women's exploitation—encompassing economic, social, psychological, and intellectual facets.

Opposition to the hierarchical capitalist state model, a democratic governance model, which is seen non-hierarchical, is appreciated. In this sense, the emphasis is on its existence to be alternative to the nation-state, and the freedom of identity, and differences. Moreover, information about the structure of this governance model, the commune, council, and the co-chairship, is extensively elucidated. Indeed, it is emphasized that the success of this system can be maintained through establishment of a Democratic Syria and an independent Kurdistan.

I scrutinize also other discursive practices in terms of their relations with territory. The most remarkable one is territorialization of history which is explained through terms of the ancient history, the priority, and the perception of cradle of civilizations. Each term has deep meanings and aspects in terms of identity, nationalism. Not going into details, all these point the same meaning that Kurds first lived here, these are the lands of Kurds.

Compared to the other elements, symbols find a less place. In this sense, the celebration of Nowruz ceremonies, which is seen as the presager of freedom of Kurdistan, find a greater place compared to the images of Kurdish flag. In addition to the symbols, I should remark that, the myth-legend pattern also provides legitimacy to territorial claims based on the imagination of indigeneity, and past glories.

Kurdish language and literature textbooks include stories, poems, reading passages, and quotations from nationalist intellectuals. I analyzed these passages under title of the poetic space. Besides from the role of poetry in constructing Kurdish identity, and nationalism, in textbooks the poetic aspects that are chose, carry not only a geographical aspect to territory but also it constructs a land of dreams. In this sense, the poems of Osman Sebrî, Cegerxwîn, and Ehmedê Xanî has a considerable place.

Maps of the United Kurdistan constructs the Kurdish identity through illustrating the existence Kurds in ‘occupied territories’ historically. In this context, the maps of early Kurdish states, and administrations are also demonstrated. Although the other parts of Kurdistan are mapped distinctively, Rojava maps are extensively displayed. I think it is used to construct the rights of Kurds in these territories against the Syrian state.

Despite as a territorial anomaly, an alternative policy of territorialization known as democratic society is proposed, the emphasis is on to construct a territorial identity based on Kurdistan. In this context, this study observes that the conceptual framework drawn in the third chapter influences the perception and construction of occupied territories, resistance movements, liberation struggles, and governance structures. Analysis of the data reveals that discursive practices such as the territorialization of historical narratives, cartographic representations, and poetic depictions play crucial roles in shaping this trajectory concerning the construction of territoriality.

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## APPENDICES

### A. FIRST PAGES OF THE TEXTBOOKS' TABLE OF CONTENTS



#### NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM</b>	9
MALBATA ZOZANÊ	10
EZ Û MALBATA XWE	11
MALA MIN A PAQIJ	17
DAYIK	22
HEVKARÎ	27
DAPÎRA MIN	33
RÊZGIRTIN DI MALBATÊ DE	38
<b>BEŞA DUYEM</b>	43
ÇÛNA DIBISTANÊ	44
DI REFÊ DE	50
PIRTÛKAXANEYA DIBISTANÊ	55
GOG	60
GULÎSTAN	66
MAMOSTE	72
<b>BEŞA SÊYEM</b>	77

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM:</b> .....	<b>7</b>
LÊVEGER .....	8
ZIMANÊ KURDÎ .....	23
<b>BEŞA DUYEM</b> .....	<b>25</b>
VEGERA DIBISTANÊ.....	26
PAQJIYA DIBISTANÊ .....	31
DEM .....	36
DEMA DIBISTANÊ.....	42
<b>BEŞA SÊYEM</b> .....	<b>43</b>
XWIŞK Ê BIRA .....	44
DAPÎRA MIN .....	50
SERDANA MALA XALÊ MIN.....	55
DAYÎKA MIN .....	60
<b>BEŞA ÇAREM</b> .....	<b>61</b>
BERHEM Ê XWEZAYA WELAT .....	62
DEMSAL.....	67
ZOZAN.....	75
<b>BEŞA PÊNCHEM</b> .....	<b>76</b>
ZAROK Ê HEVKARÎ .....	77
HEVKARIYA XWENDINÊ .....	82
KEVOK Ê NÊÇÎRVAN .....	87
<b>BEŞA ŞEŞEM</b> .....	<b>92</b>
DIBISTAN Ê TENDURISTÎ.....	93
BAKTERÎ .....	99
TRAFÎK .....	106

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM .....</b>	<b>7</b>
SIRÛDA ABC'YÊ .....	8
LÊVEGER.....	9
<b>BEŞA DUYEM .....</b>	<b>19</b>
XWENDEVAN IM.....	20
AREZÛYÊN XWENDEKARAN .....	21
WÊNESAZA BIÇÛK.....	28
XWENDINA ÇÎROKAN.....	37
ZAROK Û LÎSTIN.....	44
<b>BEŞA SÊYEM .....</b>	<b>53</b>
DARA ZEYTÛNÊ.....	54
EM DARAN BIÇÎNIN.....	61
SEWALÊN ME .....	71
PERPERÎK .....	78
<b>BEŞA ÇAREM .....</b>	<b>79</b>
CÛDÎ Û TELEVÎZYON.....	80
XWARINA HEVSENG .....	87
WERZIŞ Û TENDURISTÎ.....	95
CIWANA.....	104
<b>BEŞA PÊNCHEM.....</b>	<b>105</b>
NEWROZ.....	106
EFRÎN .....	113
PARASTINA XWEZAYÊ.....	121
AY LÊ GULÊ .....	130



## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM</b>	<b>7</b>
HEVALTÎ	8
XUNC Û XECOKÊ	14
KOMÎN	21
SIMO, SOFÎ Û MELA	28
TÊKILİYÊN CIVAKÎ	30

<b>BEŞA DUYEM</b>	<b>33</b>
EM WELATÊ XWE NAS BIKI	34
TIL HELEF	40
GUNDÊ MÛRIYAN	47
ŞEHÎD PEYMAN	52
ALA RENGÎN	59

<b>BEŞA SÊYEM</b>	<b>63</b>
ELEKTRÎK	64
ENTERNÊT	70
ENDAZYAR	75
STÊRK	81



**NAVEROK**

<b>BEŞA YEKEM</b>	<b>7</b>
ŞAGIRT IM	8
KITEKIRIN	14
JIYANA SERKEFTÎ	17
DAÇEKÊN HEVEDUDANÎ	23
BERPIRSYARÎ	27
GIHANEK	33
AREZÛ	36
KOMENAV	42
MIROVÊN VÎNDAR	46
CÎNAVÊN LIHEVXISTÎ	52
<b>BEŞA DUYEM</b>	<b>57</b>
TÊKILIYA BI LAWIRAN RE	58
CÎNAVÊN GIRÊKÎ	64
ÇANDINA DARAN	67
CÎNAVÊN PIRSYARIYÊ	73
PAQIJIYA KESAYETÎ	76
LÊVEGER (1)	81
WERZIŞVAN	83

## NAVEROK

BEŞA 1 .....	7
BÊHNVEDANA HAVÎNÊ .....	8
ZIMANÊ DAYÎKÊ .....	11
XWÊNDKAR.....	15
DEMOKRASÎ .....	17
AY LÊ GULÊ.....	22
KELHA FINIKÊ.....	25
ÇÛK Û PÎRÊ.....	28
CÛDIYÊ MIRADAN .....	33
MIN ÇI DÎT Û ÇI NEDÎT .....	36
DELAL Û XOŞEWÎSTÊN MIN .....	41
PENABERIYA DI ŞEVA TIRSNAK DE.....	45
AWAZA MIN.....	48
<b>BEŞA 2.....</b>	<b>55</b>
EKOLOJIYA CIVAKÎ.....	56
FERHAT Û ŞIRÎN .....	60
BEHLÛL .....	63
ŞEREFXANÊ BEDLÎSÎ.....	69
XABÛR .....	71
EHMEDÊ XANÎ .....	74
ÇAND .....	77
KÎVROŞKA JÎR .....	80
WELAT .....	83

## NAVEROK

PERWERDEYA RAST .....	8
DARA Û MAMOSTE .....	10
HEVALTIYA RAST .....	15
COTYAR Û ZEVÎ.....	19
KÎ ME EZ.....	23
MÊŞÊN HINGIV.....	27
TÊKILIYA ÇANDÊ BI ZIMÊN RE .....	31
HERÊMEKE KURDISTANÊ.....	33
WELATÊ MIN .....	38
ŞIVANÊ BILÛRVAN .....	41
REXNEYA LI SER PERWERDEYÊ .....	50
KELHA ELODÎNO.....	56
PEZKOVIYÊN CIWAN.....	62
EZ.....	67
MELAYÊ CIZÎRÎ (1407-1481).....	71
ROVIYÊ STEMKAR.....	76
GELIYÊ ZÎLAN.....	82
DAYÎKA MIN .....	86
GULBIHAR.....	88
DAXWAZNAME .....	94
DÎROK Û SIRÛD.....	97
BILBILÊ DILŞAD .....	102
NAME JI BO DAYÎKÊ .....	105
TILHELEF .....	111
GIRÎNGIYA XWENDINÊ.....	116

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA 1</b> .....	<b>7</b>
GIRÎNGIYA XWENDINÊ.....	8
BINEFŞA NARÎN .....	11
TÊ SOTIN NAYÊ GOTIN .....	16
SERHILDANA 12'Ê ADARÊ .....	19
MIJARA SERBEST .....	24
GOVEND .....	25
QEDEM XÊR .....	29
HÎNDARÎ I.....	30
<b>BEŞA 2</b> .....	<b>33</b>
EZ MAMOSTE ME .....	34
ZEMBÎLFIROŞ.....	38
PÊŞENGÊ SERHILDANÊN GEL .....	42
MIJARA SERBEST .....	46
NALÎN .....	46
CEGERXWÎN .....	47
HÎNDARÎ 2 .....	53
<b>BEŞA 3</b> .....	<b>55</b>
KELEŞÎN .....	56
HIZIRÎN Û BAWERKIRIN.....	62
ROJEK JI ROJÊN BIHARÊ .....	69
CIWAN Û PÊŞENGÎ .....	74
ZOZANÊN FERÊŞÎNÊ .....	78
PEYAMA Ş. ZÎLAN .....	83
HÎNDARÎ 3 .....	89
<b>BEŞA 4</b> .....	<b>91</b>

## NAVEROK

VEBÛNA DIBISTANÊ.....	7
NASKIRINA DIBISTANÊ.....	9
DI DIBISTANÊ DE FÊRÎ ÇI DIBIN?.....	10
DIBISTAN.....	12
EM HEV NAS BIKIN.....	14
REFÊN ME.....	17
PAQLIYA REFÊ.....	18
BIKARANÎNA AMÛRÊN PERWERDEYÊ.....	20
PÊŞÎ GUHDARKIN E.....	22
AXÊVERÊ SERKEFTÎ.....	23
TÊKILIYÊN XWENDEKARAN.....	24
XWENDIN.....	26
LÎSTIN.....	27
PÎVANÊN DIBISTANAN.....	28
JI BO JIYANA BIEWLE, PÎVANÊN TRAFIKÊ PÊK BÎNIN.....	29
ROJÊN DIYAR.....	32
CEJNA DAYÎKÊ.....	35
EZ MEZIN BÛM.....	38
PLANKIRINA DEMA XWE.....	42
ALÎKARÎ.....	44
JIYANA MALBATA ME.....	48
JIYANA TENDURIST.....	51
NEXWEŞXANE.....	54
EM LAŞÊ XWE NAS BIKIN.....	57
EM PÊNC LEBATÊN XWE NAS BIKIN.....	59
EM ALIYAN NAS BIKIN.....	60
DÎTINA ALIYAN.....	62
DEMJIMÊR.....	66
EM MEHAN NAS BIKIN.....	71

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA 1</b> .....	<b>7</b>
XWE NAS BIKIM.....	8
TAYBETIYÊN ME, BANDORÊ LI DERDORA ME DIKE .....	11
HILBIJARTINA HEVALÊN XWE .....	14
ÇALAKIYÊN DIBISTANA ME .....	18
EM BI HEV RE XURT IN .....	20
DERFETÊN XWE BAŞ BIKAR BÎNIN .....	22
PÎŞEYÊN XWE HILDIBIJÊRIN.....	25
<b>BEŞA 2</b> .....	<b>31</b>
JİYAN DI MALA ME DE .....	32
CÎRANTÎ .....	35
NEXŞE.....	37
EM BI HEV RE ALÎKAR BIN .....	39
TEKNOLOJÎ DI MALA ME DE .....	41
BAŞBIKARANÎN.....	44
GIRÎNGIYA ÇÊKIRINA BERNAMEYÊ.....	47
ROJA MAFÊ MIROVAN .....	50
<b>BEŞA 3</b> .....	<b>53</b>
JİYANA TENDURIST.....	54
KIRÎNA BIZANEBÛN .....	57
HER TIŞT DI DEMA XWE DE XWEŞE.....	59
BILA HER DER PAQIJ Û XWEŞ BE.....	63

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA 1</b> .....	<b>7</b>
XWE NAS BIKIM.....	8
TAYBETIYÊN ME, BANDORÊ LI DERDORA ME DIKE.....	11
HILBIJARTINA HEVALÊN XWE.....	14
ÇALAKIYÊN DIBISTANA ME.....	18
EM BI HEV RE XURT IN.....	20
DERFETÊN XWE BAŞ BIKAR BÎNIN.....	22
PÎŞEYÊN XWE HILDIBIJÊRIN.....	25
<b>BEŞA 2</b> .....	<b>31</b>
JIYAN DI MALA ME DE.....	32
CÎRANTÎ.....	35
NEXŞE.....	37
EM BI HEV RE ALÎKAR BIN.....	39
TEKNOLOJÎ DI MALA ME DE.....	41
BAŞBIKARANÎN.....	44
GIRÎNGIYA ÇÊKIRINA BERNAMEYÊ.....	47
ROJA MAFÊ MIROVAN.....	50
<b>BEŞA 3</b> .....	<b>53</b>
JIYANA TENDURIST.....	54
KIRÎNA BIZANE BÛN.....	57
HER TIŞT DI DEMA XWE DE XWEŞE.....	59
BILA HER DER PAQIJ Û XWEŞ BE.....	63



## NAVEROK

LÊVEGER.....	8
PIRTÛKA ZANISTÊN CIVAKÎ.....	9
KES Û CIVAK.....	11
DI CIVAKBÛNÊ DE ROLA SAZÎBÛNÊ.....	13
MAF Û ERKÊN ME.....	15
MAFÊ ZAROKAN.....	18
DI NAV DEWLETAN DE PARASTINA ZAROKAN.....	21
GAV BI GAV BAKUR Û ROJHILATÊ SÛRIYÊ.....	23
BUHARA GELAN Û RAPERÎN.....	25
ŞOREŞA ROJAVA.....	26
PERGALA FEDERASYONA BAKUR Û ROJHILATÊ SÛRIYÊ.....	29
PERGALA RÊVEBERIYA BAKUR Û ROJHILATÊ SÛRIYÊ.....	30
ŞEHÎDÊN ME.....	36
ÇAWA DIJÎN.....	44
ÇANDINÎ -1.....	45
ÇANDINÎ -2.....	48
LAWIRVANÎ.....	51
DARISTAN.....	54
PÎŞESAZÎ.....	56
TÊKILIYÊN ABORÎ Û PÎŞEYAN.....	59
CIHÊ KU EM LÊ DIJÎN.....	64
AVHEWA Û BANDORÊN WÊ LI JIYANÊ.....	67
ŞÊNÎ Û BICIBÛN.....	69
BOBELATÊN XWEZAYÎ.....	72
HERIKANDINA DÎROKÊ YA DIJBER: ŞARISTANÎ.....	78
ŞARISTANIYÊN ANADOLÊ.....	85
ŞARISTANIYÊN HINDÊ.....	88
ZANIST Û TEKNOLOJÎ.....	92
HIN ZANYAR Û TAYBETIYÊN WAN.....	95
XEYALÊN ME.....	100

## NAVEROK

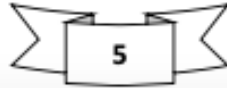
ZANISTÊN CIVAKÎ (1) .....	8
ZANISTÊN CIVAKÎ (2) .....	12
MEZIN BÛM, ERK Û MAFÊN MIN GUHERÎN .....	16
BI ÇANDA XWE DIJÎM Û BI PÊŞ DIKEVIM .....	19
PÊŞBIRYARÊN XWE DIŞKÎNIM .....	22
FÊRÎ DEMOKRASIYÊ DIBIM .....	25
DI DÎROKÊ DE DEMOKRASÎ ÇAWA PÊŞKETIYE .....	28
TAYBETIYÊN DEMOKRASİYÊ.....	31
JIN Û DEMOKRASÎ .....	35
LI KUR DIJÎN .....	40
ROK.....	46
GERESTÊRK(1) .....	48
GERESTÊRK(2) .....	52
GERESTÊRK(3) .....	56
TEVGERA ERDÊ ÇAWA PÊKTÊ .....	59
TEVGERA HEYVÊ ÇAWA PÊK TÊ.....	64
KURD .....	70
WATEYA NAVÊ KURD .....	70
DI DÎROKÊ DE NASÎNA KURDAN(1) .....	75
DI DÎROKÊ DE NASÎNA KURDAN(2) .....	81
BERÎ DAGIRKERYA ISLAMÊ REWŞA KURDISTANÊ .....	88
ISLAMIYET Û KURD.....	93
DI JIYANA ME DE ÇI GUHERIYE .....	100
PIRSGIRÊKA TEKNOLOJIYÊ .....	103
TEKNOLOJIYA ROJA ME .....	106
TEKNOLOJIYA ASÎMANAÎ .....	110
TEKNOLOJIYA BIJÎŞKIYÎ .....	113

NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM</b> .....	<b>7</b>
QIRÊJÎYA QEREBALIXLÎ .....	9
PIRSGIRÊKÊN JÎNGEHÎ (BIYABANÎBÛN).....	14
PIRSGIRÊKÊN ŞÊNIYÎ.....	19
TEQÎNA ŞÊNIYÎ (PIRBÛNA BÊSÎNOR).....	19
<b>BEŞÊ DUYEM</b> .....	<b>25</b>
KURDISTAN.....	27
RÛERDA KURDISTANÊ.....	32
AVHEWAYA KURDISTANÊ .....	38
AVA KURDISTANÊ.....	41
ŞÎNATÎYÊN XWEZAYÎ Û LAWIRÊN KOVÎ.....	49
ERDNÎGARÎYA MIROVÎ.....	53
<b>BEŞÊ SÊYEM</b> .....	<b>61</b>
SÛRIYE.....	63
AVHEWAYA SÛRIYÊ.....	68
ŞÊNÎ.....	73
PÎŞESAZÎ Û GERÎN.....	78
<b>BEŞA ÇAREM</b> .....	<b>83</b>
AVHEWA Û HERÊMÊN AVHEWAYÎ.....	90
ÇALAKIYÊN MIROVÎ LI BAKUR Û ROJHILATÊ SÛRIYÊ (ABORÎ) .....	102
<b>BEŞA PÊNCEM</b> .....	<b>111</b>
EFRÎN.....	113
KOBANÊ.....	116
QAMIŞLO .....	118
AMÛDÊ.....	119

## NAVEROK

<b>DÎROK ÇI YE?.....</b>	<b>7</b>
DÎROK ÇI YE Û ÇIMA EM FÊRÎ DÎROKÊ DIBIN?.....	8
RÊBAZÊN LÊKOLÎN Û DESTGIRTINA ZANISTA DÎROKÊ .....	12
<b>DÎROKA CIVAKA XWEZAYÎ.....</b>	<b>17</b>
DÎROKA GERDÛNÊ.....	18
CIVAKA XWEZAYÎ.....	21
PALEOLÎTÎK (SERDEMA KEVIRÎ YA KEVIN 7,000,000 - 20.000 B.Z) .....	23
MEZOLÎTÎK (SERDEMA KEVIRÎ YA NAVÎN 20.000 -12.000 SAL B.Z) .....	28
NEOLÎTÎK (SERDEMA KEVIRÊ NÛ 12.000 - 4.000 B.Z).....	30
LI MEZOPOTAMIYA ÇEND NAVENDÊN NEOLÎTÎKÊ.....	34
DÎROKA ÇÊBÛNA HOZ Û ÊLAN.....	40
DI CIVAKA XWEZAYÎ DE CIH Û GIRÎNGIYA MEZOPOTAMYAYÊ.....	41
<b>ÇAND Û ZIMANÊN MEZOPOTAMIYAYÊ .....</b>	<b>43</b>
ÇAND Û ZIMANÊ ARYENÎ .....	44
ÇAND Û ZIMANÊ SEMÎTÎKÎ .....	47
<b>PERGALA ŞARISTANIYAN .....</b>	<b>51</b>
ŞARISTANÎ Û ŞARISTANIYA NAVENDÎ .....	52
ŞARISTANIYA SUMERAN (4.000-2.000 B.Z) .....	55
DI DEMA SUMERAN DE ZAYENDPERESTIYA YEKEM.....	58
ŞARISTANIYA EKADAN (2.350-2.150 B.Z).....	61
ŞARISTANIYA BABILAN (2000-550 B.Z).....	63
ŞARISTANIYA AŞÛRAN (2.000-612 B.Z).....	67
ŞARISTANIYA MISIRÊ.....	69
HZ. MÛSA .....	73
ŞARISTANIYA ÇÎNÊ.....	74
ŞARISTANIYA HINDISTANÊ .....	77
ŞARISTANIYÊN EMERÎKAYÊ.....	80
<b>BERXWEDANA GELAN LI DJÎ ŞARISTANIYA NAVENDÎ .....</b>	<b>83</b>



## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞAYEKEM .....</b>	<b>7</b>
ISKENDER Û HELENÎZIM .....	8
IMPERATORIYA ROMAYÊ .....	12
IMPERATORIYA ROMAYÊ Û BERXWEDANA GELAN .....	16
CIVAKA KOMAGENEYÊ .....	19
IMPERATORIYA SASANÊ 224-651 P.Z .....	22
LI HEMBER DESTHILATDARIYA SASANAN MAZDEKÎ .....	25
<b>BEŞA DUYEM .....</b>	<b>27</b>
HZ. MIHEMED .....	28
FELSEFA HZ. MIHEMED .....	31
DERBASBÛNA ISLAMÊ YA NAVA KURDISTANÊ .....	34
ISLAMA DIJBER Û SERDEMA EMEWÎ (661-750) .....	36
SERDEMA EBASIYAN (750-1258) .....	39
LI ROJHILATA NAVÎN PÊŞKETINA HIZIR Û DOGMATÎZMA OLÎ .....	42
TEVGERÊN LI DJÎ ISLAMA DIJBER (1) .....	45
TEVGERÊN LI DJÎ ISLAMA DIJBER (2) .....	47
MÎRNIŞÎNÊN KURD ÊN DI DEMA ISLAMÊ DE (1) .....	50
MÎRNIŞÎNÊN KURD ÊN DI DEMA ISLAMÊ DE (2) .....	54
<b>BEŞA SÊYEM .....</b>	<b>59</b>
ÊRÎŞÊN XAÇPERESTAN .....	60
IMPERATORIYA SELÇÛQÎ .....	63
DAGIRKERIYA MOXOLAN .....	67
ÊRÎŞÊN HOLAKO .....	69
<b>BEŞA ÇAREM .....</b>	<b>73</b>
IMPERATORIYA OSMANÎ .....	74
DEWLETA SEFEWÎ .....	77
PEYMANÊN DI NAVBERA KURD Û OSMANIYAN DE .....	79
PEYMANA IDRÎSÊ BEDLÎSÎ Û YAWÛZ SELÎM .....	82
SERHILDANÊN GEL LI HEMBER OSMANIYAN .....	84
REWŞA ROJHILATÊ KURDISTANÊ DI BIN DESTHILATDARIYA SEFEWIYAN DE .....	88
PEYMANA QESRA ŞÊRÎN .....	91
FERHENGOK .....	94

.....(NAVEROK).....

**KAPÎTALÎZM ..... 7**

KAPÎTALÎZM .....	8
RAPERÎNÊN GELAN LI DIJÎ MODERNÎTEYA KAPÎTALÎST .....	14
ŞOREŞÊN RIZGARIYA NETEWÎ LI DIJÎ NÛJENIYA KAPÎTALÎST .....	18
BANDORA KAPÎTALÎZMÊ YA LI SER ROJHILATA NAVÎN Û KURDAN .....	25

**SERHILDANÊN BI PÊŞENGIYA MÎR Û ŞÊXAN.....29**

PEYWENDIYÊN KURD Û OSMANIYAN DI SEDSALA 19 'AN DE .....	31
SERHILDANA SORAN.....	36
SERHILDANA BEDIRXAN BEG (1842-1847).....	39
SEDEM Û ENCAMÊN TÊKÇÛNA MÎRNIŞÎNAN.....	43
BERXWEDANÊN BI RÊBERIYA ŞÊXAN.....	46
ALAYÊN HEMÎDÎ Û DIBISTANÊN ÊLAN.....	51
ÎTÎHAD Û TEREQÎ.....	54

**PÊŞKETINÊN KU DI SEDSALA 20'AN DE LI CÎHANÊ RÛ DANE Û REWŞA KURDISTANÊ .....59**

ŞERÊ CÎHANÊ YÊ YEKEM (1914-1918) .....	60
PEYMANÊN NAVNETEWÎ YÊN LI SER ROJHILATA NAVÎN Û KURDISTANÊ .....	64
REWŞA KURDAN PIŞTÎ ŞERÊ CÎHANÊ YÊ YEKEM.....	68

**BAKURÊ KURDISTANÊ..... 73**

RAPERÎNA KOÇGIRIYÊ.....	74
KOMELEYA AZADIYÊ.....	79
SERHILDANA ŞÊX SEÎD.....	82
SERHILDANA AGIRIYÊ.....	87
KOMKUJIYA DÊRSIMÊ.....	92
ŞERÊ CÎHANÊ YÊ DUYEM.....	97

**REWŞA ROJHILAT Û BAŞÛRÊ KURDISTANÊ ..... 101**

KOMARA MEHABADÊ .....	102
TEVGERA KURD LI ROJHILATÊ KURDISTANÊ .....	106
BAŞÛRÊ KURDISTANÊ.....	110
RÊJÎMA BAESÊ LI BAŞÛRÊ KURDISTANÊ.....	115

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA 1.....</b>	<b>7</b>
DÎROK.....	8
ZANISTÊN GIRÊDAYÎ DÎROKÊ .....	11
RÊBAZÊN LÊKOLÎN Û DESTGIRTINA ZANISTA DÎROKÊ.....	15
<b>BEŞA 2.....</b>	<b>21</b>
ÇÊBÛNA GERDÛNÊ .....	22
CIHÊ JIYANA DESTPÊKÊ .....	26
DÎROKA CIVAKA XWEZAYÎ .....	29
PALEOLÎTÎK .....	32
MEZOLÎTÎK Û NEOLÎTÎK .....	38
BERHEMÊN ŞOREŞA NEOLÎTÎKÊ LI KURDISTANÊ .....	43
DÎROKA ÇÊBÛNA HOZ Û ÊLAN .....	49
<b>BEŞA 3.....</b>	<b>53</b>
ÇAND Û ZIMANÊ ARYENÎ.....	54
ÇAND Û ZIMANÊ SEMÎTÎKÎ .....	57
<b>BEŞA 4.....</b>	<b>61</b>
ŞARISTANÎ .....	62
ŞARISTANIYA SUMERAN .....	66
EKAD Û BABIL .....	71
ŞARISTANIYA AŞÛRIYAN .....	76
ŞARISTANIYA MISIRÊ .....	79
ŞARISTANIYA ÇÎNÊ .....	84
ŞARISTANIYA HINDISTANÊ .....	88
ŞARISTANIYÊN AMERÎKAYÊ.....	92
<b>BEŞA 5.....</b>	<b>97</b>
HÛRÎ.....	99
ÎLAM Û GÛTÎ .....	102
LÛLÛ Û KASÎT .....	106

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM.....</b>	<b>7</b>
ISKENDER .....	8
HELENÎZİM .....	12
ROMA .....	16
ROMA Û BERXWEDANA GELAN (1) .....	20
ROMA Û BERXWEDANA GELAN (2) .....	23
IMPERATORIYA SASANÎ (226-651 P.Z.) .....	32
SERHILDANA MAZDEK .....	37
<b>BEŞA DUYEM .....</b>	<b>41</b>
DEMA ISLAMÊ .....	42
DEMA ÇAR XELÎFEYAN .....	48
DERBASBÛNA ISLAMÊ YA NAVA KURDISTANÊ.....	53
DEMA EMEWIYAN (661- 750) .....	57
DEMA EBASIYAN (750-1258) .....	62
EBÛ MUSLIMÊ XURESANÎ.....	67
<b>BEŞA SÊYEM .....</b>	<b>71</b>
TEVGERÊN LI DIJÎ ISLAMA DIJBER (1) .....	72
TEVGERÊN LI DIJÎ ISLAMA DIJBER (2) .....	76
TEVGERÊN LI DIJÎ ISLAMA DIJBER (3) .....	80
MÎRNIŞÎNÊN KURD (1).....	83
MÎRNIŞÎNÊN KURD (2).....	88
MÎRNIŞÎNÊN KURD (3).....	92
<b>BEŞA ÇAREM.....</b>	<b>95</b>
IMPERATORIYA SELÇÛQÎ.....	96
SEFERÊN XAÇPERESTAN .....	102
DAGIRKERIYA MOXOLAN.....	108
SERDEMA OSMANIYAN .....	114



# NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA 1</b>	<b>7</b>
KAPİTALİZM	8
RAPERÎNÊN GELAN (1)	13
RAPERÎNÊN GELAN (2)	16
ŞOREŞÊN RIZGARÊYANETEWÎ (1)	20
ŞOREŞÊN RIZGARÊYANETEWÎ (2)	23
BANDORA KAPİTALİZMÊ LI ROJHILATA NAVÎN Û KURDAN	27
<b>BEŞA 2</b>	<b>31</b>
REWŞA KURDISTANÊ DI SEDSALA 19'AN DE	32
SERHILDANA BABANAN (1806- 1851)	35
SERHILDANA SORANAN (1830-1837)	38
SERHILDANA BEDIRXAN BEG (1842-1847)	42
DI SEDSALA 19'AN DE SERHILDANÊN GEL	46
SEDEM Û ENCAMÊN TÊKÇÛNA MÎRNIŞÎNAN	49
LI KURDISTANÊ TÊKÇÛNAMÎRAN Û BERXWEDANÊN BI RÊBERITIYA ŞÊXAN	53
SERHILDANA ŞÊX ÛBEYDULAHÊ NEHRÎ	56
ALAYÊN HEMÎDÎ Û DIBISTANÊN ÊLAN	59
<b>BEŞA 3</b>	<b>63</b>
ŞERÊ CÎHANÊ YÊ YEKEM	64
TÊKÇÛN Û HILWEŞÎNA OSMANIYAN A DI ŞERÊ CÎHANÊ YÊ YEKEM DE	68
PEYMANÊN KU LI DLÎ KURDAN HATINE	70
ÇÊKIRIN (1)	70
PEYMANÊN KU LI DLÎ KURDAN HATINE	73
ÇÊKIRIN (2)	73
REWŞA KURDANA PIŞTÎ SALA 1920'AN	76
ŞERÊ RIZGARÊYANETEWÎ Û AVAKIRINA KOMARÊ	79
<b>BEŞA 4</b>	<b>83</b>
RAPERÎNA KOÇGIRÎ	84
KOMELEYA AZADIYÊ	88
SERHILDANA ŞÊX SÊD	91
SERHILDANÊN DÎN ÊN DI DEMA KOMARÊ DE	96
SERHILDANA AGIRIYÊ	99

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM: ÇAND Û SINC.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Çand çi ye?.....	8
Sinc çi ye? .....	11
Çêbûn û pêşketina çandê.....	15
Sinc û rêgezên wî .....	18
<b>BEŞA DUYEM: DI DÎROKÊ DE ÇAND Û SINC .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Di civaka xwezayî de çand û sinc .....	22
Di serdema Neolithic (Kevirî ya Nû) de pêşketina çand û sincê .....	24
Di şaristaniyê de çand û sinc .....	26
Çand û sincê nûjen .....	30
<b>BEŞA SÊYEM: ÇAND Û CIVAK.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Têkiliyên mirov û civakê .....	34
Têkiliyên di navbera çand û ziman de .....	38
Nasnameya çandî -1.....	41
Nasnameya çandî -2.....	44
Nêzikatiyên li hemberî derdor û giyaneweran .....	47
<b>BEŞA ÇAREM: RÊGEZÊN SINCÎ .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Rêzgirtin .....	52
Rêzgirtina baweriyên civakî.....	57
Hezkirin -1 .....	63
Hezkirin -2 .....	68
Hezkirin -3 .....	73
Berpirsiyarî.....	76
Di civakê de bêmafî û mafdayîn .....	80

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM: ÇAND Ê SINCÊ GELAN.....</b>	<b>7</b>
ÇAND Ê SINCÊ KURDAN.....	8
ÇAND Ê SINCÊ SIRYANAN .....	11
ÇAND Ê SINCÊ EREBAN .....	14
ÇAND Ê SINCÊ ERMENAN.....	16
<b>BEŞA DUYEM: TÊKILIYÊN ÇAND Ê SINCÊ.....</b>	<b>19</b>
ENCAMÊN KU ÇAND DERRIXE HOLÊ.....	20
DI ÇANDÊ DE HUNER.....	24
CIVAKBÛN Ê SINC.....	27
DI CIVAKÊ DE RISTA SINCÊ.....	30
TÊKILIYA SINCÎ BI BAWERİYÊ RE.....	33
SINCÊ AZADIYÊ .....	35
<b>BEŞA SÊYEM: DI DÎROKÊ DE ÇAND Ê SINC.....</b>	<b>39</b>
DI DEMA PALEOLÎTÎKÊ DE ÇAND Ê SINC.....	40
DI DEMA PALEOLÎTÎK DE ŞÊWAZÊ JIYAN, ÇAND Ê SINCÊ CIVAKÎ.....	42
DI DEMA NEOLÎTÎKÊ DE ÇAND Ê SINC.....	45
AVABÛNA PERGALA JIN-DAYÎKÊ .....	48
ÇAND Ê SINC DI ÇÎNAYETIYÊ DE.....	51
ÇAND Ê SINC DI DEWLETÊ DE .....	56
<b>BEŞA ÇAREM: DI CIVAKA KURDAN DE ÇAND Ê SINC.....</b>	<b>61</b>
ÊL Ê SINCÊ KURDAN.....	62
ZERDEŞTÎ Ê SINCÊ AZADIYÊ .....	64
ÇANDA Ê SINCÊ EZDAYETIYÊ .....	68
ELEWÎTÎ Ê ÇANDA KURDAN A BERXWEDÊR.....	74
DI QONAXA ÎSLAMIYETÊ DE REWŞA BAWERÎ Ê ÇANDA ELEWÎTIYÊ ..	77
PÊVAJOYÊN PIŞAFTINA ÇANDÎ .....	80
DI PERGALA KAPÎTALÎZMÊ DE PIŞAFTIN .....	83
ÇANDA BERXWEDAN Ê XIYANETÊ.....	87

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM .....</b>	<b>7</b>
RISTA WÊJEYÊ.....	8
TÊKILIYA DI NAVBERA DÎROKA WÊJEYÊ Û DÎROKA GIŞTÎ DE.....	10
WÊJE Û JIYANA CIVAKÎ .....	12
DIBISTANÊN WÊJEYÎ.....	15
WÊJEYA CIVAKÎ.....	18
SÛDWERGIRTINA JI WÊJEYA CIVAKÎ.....	21
CUREYÊN ÇÎROKA KURDÎ.....	24
<b>BEŞA DUYEM .....</b>	<b>29</b>
MELAYÊ CIZÎRÎ.....	33
FEQIYÊ TEYRAN.....	37
MELAYÊ BATEYÎ.....	44
BEKIR BEGÊ ERZÎ.....	49
EHMEDÊ XANÎ .....	53
MIRADXANÊ BAZÎDÎ.....	60
ŞEREFXANÊ BEDLÎSÎ.....	64
SELÎM SILÊMAN .....	68
ŞÊX NÛREDÎNÊ BIRÎFKANÎ.....	71
PERTEW BEGÊ HEKARÎ .....	74
SIYAHPÛŞ .....	76
<b>BEŞA SÊYEM.....</b>	<b>81</b>
CELALE XANIMA LORISTANÎ.....	82
FATIME LOREYA GORANÎ .....	84
XATU MEY ZERD.....	86
YAY HEBÎBEYA ŞAREZÛRÎ.....	89
<b>BEŞA ÇAREM .....</b>	<b>93</b>
MELAYÊ MENSÛRÊ GIRGAŞÎ .....	94
NALÎ ŞAREZÛRÎ.....	97

## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA YEKEM .....</b>	<b>7</b>
REWŞA WÊJEYA KURDÎ DI SEDSALA 18 Û 19' AN DE .....	8
HACÎ QADIRÊ KOYÎ.....	10
PÊŞKETINA WÊJEYA KURDÎ DI SEDSALA 19' AN DE.....	17
MESTÛRE ERDELAN-KURDISTANÎ.....	20
ŞÊX RIZA TALABANÎ.....	25
TEWFÎQ SILÊMANÎ-PÎREMÊRD.....	30
ŞANO.....	34
DIBISTANA NATURALÎZM.....	40
WEFAYÎ.....	41
<b>BEŞA DUYEM .....</b>	<b>51</b>
DI SEDSALA 20' AN DE BANDORA GUHERTINÊN RAMYARÎ Û CIVAKÎ LI SER WÊJYA KURDÎ.....	52
DÎROKA WÊJEYA KURDÎ LI YEKÎTIYA SOVYETÊ.....	55
WÊJEYA KURDÎ YA NÛJEN LI YEKÎTIYA SOVYETÊ.....	57
EREBÊ ŞEMO.....	61
ROMAN.....	64
QENATÊ KURDO.....	69
CASIMÊ CELÎL.....	73
ORDÎXANÊ CELÎL.....	76
CELÎLÊ CELÎL.....	79
EMÎNÊ EVDAL.....	82
<b>BEŞA SÊYEM .....</b>	<b>85</b>
REWŞA KURDAN PIŞTÎ HILWEŞANDINA IMPERATORIYA RÛSÎ Û OS- MANÎ.....	86
WÊJEYA KURDÎ PIŞTÎ ŞERÊ CÎHANÎ YÊ YEKEM LI ROJAVAYÊ KURDIS- TANÊ.....	90
CELADET ELÎ BEDIRXAN.....	93
KAMÎRAN ELÎ BEDIRXAN.....	96
CEGERXWÎN.....	101
OSMAN SEBRÎ.....	105
QEDRÎCAN.....	108
SEYDAYÊ TÎRÊJ.....	112
MÛSA ENTER.....	115
<b>BEŞA ÇAREM .....</b>	<b>119</b>
FRANZ KAFKA.....	120
NECÎB MEHFÛZ.....	123
<b>BELAVKIRINA WANESAN LI SER SALA XWENDINÊ ....</b>	<b>125</b>

## NAVEROK

<b><u>BESA YEKEM: JIYANA CIVAKÎ</u></b>	<b>7</b>
JIYANA CIVAKÎ	8
NASNAMEYA CIVAKÎ	11
HIŞMENDIYA CIVAKÎ	13
PÎROZIYÊN CIVAKÎ	16
RASTIYA CIVAKÎ	19
<b><u>BESA DUYEM: TEORÎ Û QADÊN CIVAKÎ</u></b>	<b>25</b>
RÊBAZÊN LÊKOLÎNÊ DI CIVAKNASIYÊ DE -1	26
RÊBAZÊN LÊKOLÎNÊ DI CIVAKNASIYÊ DE -2	29
TEKNÎKÊN LÊKOLÎNÊ DI CIVAKNASIYÊ DE	32
QADÊN CIVAKNASIYÊ	36
TEORIYÊN CIVAKNASIYÊ	39
TEORIYA PEYWERIYÊ	42
TEORIYA KARVEDANA SEMBOLÎ	46
<b><u>BESA SÊYEM: ÇÊBÛN Û TÊKILIYÊN CIVAKÎ</u></b>	<b>49</b>
ÇÊBÛNA CIVAKÎ	50
TÊKILIYÊN CIVAKÎ	54
STATÛYA CIVAKÎ	58
RISTÊN CIVAKÎ	61
NIRXÊN CIVAKÎ	64
KOMÊN CIVAKÎ	68
<b><u>BESA CAREM: GUHERÎNA CIVAKÎ</u></b>	<b>73</b>
GUHERÎNA CIVAKÎ	74
TÊGEHÊN KU BI GUHERÎNÊ RE TÊKILDAR IN	74
TEORIYÊN DERBARÊ GUHERÎNA CIVAKÎ DE	81
HÊMANÊN GUHERÎNA CIVAKÎ	85
AMÛRÊN RAGIHANDINÊ Û GUHERÎNA CIVAKÎ	90
GUHERÎNÊN CIVAKA KURDISTANÎ	91

# Naverok

BEŞA YEKEM: SAZIYÊN CIVAKÎ.....	7
SAZIYÊN CIVAKÎ.....	8
SAZÎ-1.....	12
SAZÎ-2.....	16
SAZIYÊN CIVAKASIVÎL.....	19
MALBAT.....	26
RÊXISTINA MALBATÊ YAROJA ÎRO.....	29
MALBAT Û XIZMATÎ.....	32
GIRÎNGIYA HEVKARIYÊ DI MALBATÊ DE.....	35
BEŞA SÊYEM: ABORÎ DI DÎROKÊ DE.....	39
ABORÎ.....	40
DI ŞARISTANIYA DEWLETÊ DE ABORÎ.....	45
ABORÎ LI KURDISTANÊ.....	49
ABORIYA DEMOKRATÎK Û KOMÎNAL.....	53
KOMÎN Û KOPERATÎF.....	57
BEŞA ÇAREM: ŞARISTANÎ Û NÛJENTÎ (MODERNÎTE).....	61
ŞARISTANÎ.....	62
NÛJENTÎ.....	65
CIVAKA EKOLOJÎK Û PÎŞESAZÎ.....	69
BEŞA PÊNCHEM: QEYRAN Û PIRSGIRÊKÊN CIVAKA ROJHILATANA VÎN.....	73
QEYRAN Û PIRSGIRÊKÊN CIVAKA ROJHILATANA VÎN.....	74
PIRSGIRÊKA JINÊ.....	78
PIRSGIRÊKA GEL, ETNÎSÎTE Û HOZAN.....	81
PIRSGIRÊKA OL Û RÊOLAN (MEZHEB).....	84
PIRSGIRÊKA BAJAR Û JÎNGEHÊ.....	87
PIRSGIRÊKA MALBATÊ.....	91
PIRSGIRÊKA DESTHILATDARÎ Û DEWLETÊ.....	94
PIRSGIRÊKA SINC, RAMYARÎ Û DEMOKRASIYÊ.....	97
PIRSGIRÊKA ABORIYÊ.....	100
PIRSGIRÊKA BÎRDOZIYÊ.....	103
BELAVKIRINA WANESAN LI SER SALAXWENDINÊ.....	107



## NAVEROK

<b>BEŞA 1</b> .....	<b>7</b>
PÊVAJOYA SOSYALÎZMÊ.....	8
ROLA JINÊ DI ŞOREŞÊN EMERÎKAYA LATÎN DE .....	13
ROLA JINÊ LI BAŞÛRÊ EFRÎKAYÊ .....	17
LÊGERÎNA AZADIYÊ YA HAY GÎN.....	19
(JINA ERMENÎ).....	19
JINÊN KURDISTANÎ -1 .....	24
JINÊN KURDISTANÎ - 2 .....	28
<b>BEŞA 2</b> .....	<b>37</b>
RASTAVAKIRINA HEVJIYANA AZAD .....	38
HEVJIYANA AZAD 2 .....	44
AVAKIRINA RONAKBÛNA JINÊ.....	51
ŞOREŞA DI ZANISTÊN CIVAKÎ DE .....	55
PÊŞXISTINA RÊBAZA LÊKOLÎNEKE LI GORÎ RASTIYA JINÊ .....	58
BIGIHÎNIN SERFIRAZIYÊ .....	63
GIRÎNGIYA PARASTINA CEWHERÎ JI BO JINÊ .....	69
JIN, TA DAWIYÊ HEYÎNEKE NIRXDAR E .....	73
<b>BEŞA 3</b> .....	<b>79</b>
ETÎK Û ESTETÎK.....	80
ABORÎ.....	87
DEMOGRAFYA.....	92
EKOLOJÎ.....	97
DÎROK .....	101
TENDURISTÎ.....	105
PERWERDE.....	110
POLÎTÎKA.....	115
<b>BELAVKIRINA WANEYAN LI SER SALA XWENDINÊ .....</b>	<b>121</b>



## B. IMAGES ILLUSTRATING CHILDREN ENGAGING WITH TEXTBOOKS



## C. CURRICULUM VITAE

ABDULLAH ÖZTÜRK

### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU International Relations	2014
BS	METU International Relations	2009
High School	Ağrı Naci Gökçe High School (FLI)	2004

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2019-Present	Mardin Artuklu University Department of Political Science and International Relations	Research Assistant
2011-2019	METU Department of International Relations	Research Assistant
2010 -2011	Mardin Artuklu University Department of International Relations	Research Assistant

### LANGUAGES

Turkish, Kurdish, English, and Arabic

## D. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

### İNŞA SÜRECİNDE TERİTORYALİTE: OKUL DERS KİTAPLARI ÜZERİNDEN BİR PYD ANALİZİ

Bu tez bir devlet dışı aktör olan PYD'nin teritoryal algısını incelemektedir. Bu bağlamda, PYD yönetiminde ilkokul, ortaokul ve lise düzeyinde okutulan eğitim ders kitapları aracılığıyla ilgili aktörün teritoryaliteyi nasıl inşa ettiği analiz edilmektedir. Eğitim ders kitaplarında teritoryalite kavramının eleştirel analizinin PYD'nin teritoryal yol haritasına ilişkin bilgi verdiği inandırılmaktadır. Bu amacı gerçekleştirebilmek için, çalışma metodolojik olarak nitel içerik analizi yöntemini kullanmaktadır. Bu yöntem, bilimsel bir konunun materyallerinin ayrıntılı bir şekilde açıklanmasını, kodlama sistemi aracılığıyla anlamının kavranmasını ve yorumlanmasını sağlamaktadır. İnşacı bakış açısına dayanan bu tez, teritoryaliteyi kimlik, milliyetçilik ve vatan kavramları çerçevesinde ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, işgal edilmiş topraklar algısı, direniş, kurtuluş ve yönetim kavramlarının inşası incelenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, tarihin teritoryalleşmesi, haritalama ve şiirsel mekân gibi söylemsel uygulamaların, teritoryalite kavramını bu şekilde inşa etmeye yönelik olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Aslında, Suriye Kürtleri, akademik araştırmaların nadiren odak noktası olmuştur. Ancak, Mart 2004'te Suriye'nin Kürt nüfuslu bölgelerinde meydana gelen ayaklanmaların ardından bu konuda çeşitli çalışmalar yayımlanmıştır. Ne var ki, bu çalışmalar, Suriye'de 2011 yılında başlayan ayaklanmalara kadar, özellikle PYD'nin önemli bir aktör olarak ortaya çıktığı döneme kadar sınırlı bir artış göstermiştir. Bu bağlamda, ayaklanmalar, akademik literatürün artmasına teşvik edici bir rol oynamıştır. PYD, bu çalışmalarda ya bir kahraman ya da bir kötü adam olarak temsil edilmektedir. PYD'yi kahraman olarak nitelendiren mevcut literatürün bir kısmı, onu sol eğilimli bir devrimin habercisi olarak sunmaktadır. Buna karşın, literatürün diğer bir kısmı ise PYD'yi PKK'nin bir uzantısı olarak görmekte ve ona daha eleştirel bir

yaklaşım benimseyerek onu bir terör örgütü olarak adlandırmaktadır. Elbette, herhangi bir ideolojiyi destekleyen bu tür yanlı çalışmaların istisnaları bulunmaktadır, ancak bunlar azınlıkta kalmaktadır.

Devlet-merkezli uluslararası ilişkiler dünya görüşüne göre, devlet dışı aktörlerin incelenmesi pek elverişli değildir. Çoğu çalışma, devlet dışı aktörlerin rolünü yeterince vurgulamamıştır. Bu doğrultuda, birçok akademisyen ya devlet dışı aktörlere herhangi bir özerklik tanımaz ya da dar bir biçimde etnik çatışmalara odaklanır. Bu durum, PYD'yi inceleyen akademisyenlerin araştırmalarında da belirgin hale gelmiştir. Her iki yaklaşım da önemli olmakla birlikte, her biri anlayışımızı sınırlar. Bilakis, her devlet dışı aktörün kendi doğal dinamikleri olduğuna inanıyorum. Bu dinamikleri anlamak için, hareketlere özerklik tanıyan ve onların kendi seslerinden, bilgilerinden ve anlamlarından öğrenerek ve dinleyerek araştırma yapan eleştirel bir bilimsel çalışma gereklidir.

Bu kapsamda, bu tezin amacı, PYD hakkındaki akademik literatüre katkıda bulunmaktır. Az incelenmiş bir devlet dışı aktör olan PYD'nin teritoryal algısını, özellikle iç kaynakları üzerinden inceleyen kapsamlı bir çalışma mevcut değildir. Bu boşluğu doldurmak amacıyla, PYD'nin yerel bağlamında teritoryalite anlayışını ve bu anlayışın kendi kaynaklarında nasıl yankı bulduğunu araştırmayı hedeflemekteyim. Bu tezin araştırması, PYD'nin genişlemesinde teritoryalitenin rolünün ne olduğuna dair bir soruyla başlamıştı. Bu soru, PYD'nin söylemini okul ders kitapları aracılığıyla incelemeye yönlendirmiştir. Bu bağlamda, tezin araştırma sorusu, PYD yönetiminde ilkokul, ortaokul ve lise düzeylerinde eğitimin söylemi aracılığıyla teritoryalitenin içeriği ve çerçevesinin nasıl inşa edildiğidir. Bu bağlamda, inceleme için okul ders kitaplarını tercih ediyorum çünkü ders kitaplarının önemi, diğer kaynaklar arasında, yeterince anlaşılammış hareketlerin özelliklerine ışık tutmasıdır. Sonuç olarak, bu tezin ana önemi, önceki araştırmacılar tarafından sıklıkla göz ardı edilen birincil kaynakları kullanması ve PYD'ye ideolojik eksenli bir analiz yapmaktan kaçınmayı amaçlamasıdır. İkinci olarak, bu çalışma, eğitimin içeriğinin hem teritoryalite kavramını inşa ettiğini hem de PYD'nin teritoryalite politikaları hakkında önemli bilgiler sağladığını göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Bu

bağlamda, eğitimde territorialite kavramının analizi, eğitim sistemi ve parti politikaları arasındaki etkileşimleri ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu tez temel olarak altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümü olan birinci bölümde, çalışmanın bağlamını ve arka planını açıklayarak amacını ve araştırma sorusunu tanıtlıyorum. Ayrıca, çalışmanın önemine dair dikkate değer noktaları öne sürüyorum.

Çalışmanın metodolojik çerçevesini belirleyen ikinci bölümde, bu çalışmada kullanılan metodolojiyi özetliyorum. Bu bölüm, çalışmamda kullanılan metodolojiyi açıklamayı ve bu metodolojinin tezdeki bulguların nasıl elde edildiğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. İlk olarak, araştırma felsefesi ve nitel araştırma yönteminin tercih edilmesinin gerekçesi açıklanmaktadır. Daha sonra, veri toplama ve örnekleme yöntemleri tanıtılmakta, veri analizine ilişkin prosedür ayrıntılarıyla ele alınmaktadır. Son olarak, çalışmanın güvenilirliği ve sınırlılıkları tartışılmaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın araştırma felsefesinin ontolojik konumu, territorialite kavramının geometrik bir alan olarak anlaşılmaktan ziyade, anlamlı bir yapı olarak ele alındığını belirtmektedir. Territorialite, insan eyleminin bir ürünü olarak kabul edilmekte ve politik, kültürel ve tarihsel olayların bu yapının önemini anlamada etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, çalışmanın ontolojik pozisyonu yapılandırmacıdır. Yapılandırmacı paradigma temel alınarak gerçekleştirilen bu araştırma, farklı yapıların incelenmesini, eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirilmesini ve yeni yapıların ortaya çıkmasına olanak sağlanmasını amaçlamaktadır. Ontoloji, epistemoloji üzerinde bir etkiye sahiptir; çünkü epistemoloji, “Ne bildiğimizi nasıl biliyoruz?” sorusu aracılığıyla bilgi edinme yöntemi olarak tanımlanır. Pozitivizm ve yorumlayıcı yaklaşım, araştırma faaliyetlerinin epistemolojik varsayımlarını sağlayan iki ana araştırma paradigmasıdır. Pozitivizm, gerçeğin “orada” var olduğunu ve bunu keşfetmek için evrensel yasalar ve nedensellik uygulayan bir bakış açısını savunur. Öte yandan, yorumlayıcı perspektif, aynı zamanda yapılandırmacılık veya sosyal yapılandırmacılık olarak da adlandırılır, insan faaliyetini, bulunup ölçülebilecek fiziksel bir malzeme yerine, yoğunlaştırılabilecek, yorumlanabilecek ve değerlendirilebilecek bir “metin” olarak anlar. Bu, yorumlayıcı okuluna mensup olanların, bilginin dil kullanımı ve etkileşim yoluyla toplumsal olarak inşa edildiğine

inandıkları anlamına gelir. Bu yöntem, herhangi bir metnin anlaşılabilmesi için kültürel ve tarihsel bağlamların eşzamanlı olarak dikkate alınmasını gerektirir ki, tezdeki esas yaklaşım şekli budur çünkü bu durum çalışmanın subjektif doğası ile ilgilidir. Subjektiflik, kişisel değerlendirmeler ve önyargılardan kaynaklanan bir sınırlama olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bununla birlikte, tezimin araştırma paradigması sosyal yapılandırmacıdır; bu da bağlamsallaştırılmış çoklu gerçekliklerin yorum yoluyla keşfedilmesi fikrini kabul eder. Elbette, tüm düşüncelerimi bir kenara bırakarak ve tüm analizleri veri setiyle uyumlu bir şekilde gerçekleştirdim. Ancak, konuyla ilgili deneyimim araştırmanın analizini zenginleştirdi.

Veri toplama prosedürleri, nitel araştırmanın gerektirdiği içerik analizi yöntemini içermektedir. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, PYD'nin ders kitapları aracılığıyla toprak temsilini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu nedenle, teritoryalite kavramını içeren on bir kavram belirlenmiştir: welat (vatan), cîh (yer), herêm (bölge), erd (arazi), ax (toprak/arazi), xak (toprak), başûr (Güney), bakur (Kuzey), rojhilat (Doğu), rojava (Batı) ve Kûrdistan. Belirlenen kavramları içeren materyaller dikkatle incelenmiş ve belirli temalar geliştirilmiştir. MAXQDA yazılımı, bu araştırmanın kodlarının etkili bir şekilde atamasına ve ilgili verilerin kavramlar, konular ve temalar açısından düzenlenmesine olanak tanımıştır.

Veri analiz prosedürü, nitel içerik analizine (NIA) dayanmakta ve araştırma sorusuna yanıt verecek şekilde tasarlanmıştır. Veri toplama ve örnekleme prosedürlerine özel bir dikkat gösterilmiş ve amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak 27 ders kitabı seçilmiştir. Bahsedilen ders kitapları kümesini seçmemin ana nedeni, ders kitaplarına atfedilen, yerleşik bir siyasi ve sosyal düzeni meşrulaştırma ve ulusal kimlik inşa etme rolü, özellikle tarih, coğrafya, sosyal bilgiler ve vatandaşlık bilgisi ders kitapları için oldukça önemlidir. Bu kitaplar, öğrencilerin kendilerini bir topluluğun üyesi olarak tanımlarını sağlayan resmi ve meşru bilgileri sunar. Bu ders kitapları, içeriklerin ayrıntılı bir raporuyla ve müfredattaki tüm konuların listesiyle özetlenmiştir. Kategoriler sistemi, içerik analizinin temel aracıdır ve kodlama süreci analiz edilen her birimi içermelidir. Bu bağlamda, kategoriler sisteminin açık, eksiksiz ve yeterli tanımları yapılmış ve MAXQDA kullanılarak analiz edilen her birimin kodlara tahsisi kolaylaştırılmıştır.

İçerik analizinin temel aracı olan kategoriler sistemi, analiz edilen her birimi kapsayan kodlama sürecinde büyük önem taşır. Bu bağlamda, birden fazla kategoriye ayırım yapılabilir ve kategorilerin operasyonel tanımları açık, eksiksiz ve yeterli olmalıdır. Kategoriler sistemi, kodlama sürecine başlamadan önce oluşturulmalı ve her kategori, metinsel örneklerle desteklenerek daha fazla metinsel analizin tahsisini kolaylaştırmalıdır. MAXQDA gibi yazılımlar, analiz edilen her birimin kodlara tahsisini kolaylaştırmakta ve bu süreci daha verimli hale getirmektedir. Kategoriler sistemleri, belirli araştırma sorularıyla ilişkili olup, bu nedenle araştırma soruları ve onlardan türetilen argümanlar temelinde oluşturulmaktadır. Bu çerçevede, kodlamada odak noktam, üçüncü bölümde çizdiğim kavramsal çerçevedir.

Bu bölümde, çalışmanın güvenilirliği dört kavram üzerinde yoğunlaşarak tartışılmakta ve ana sınırlama tanıtılmaktadır. Bu sınırlamanın önlenmesine yönelik adımlar da ele alınmaktadır. Çalışmanın güvenilirliği, kullanılan metodolojinin açık ve sistematik bir şekilde tanımlanmasıyla sağlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, ders kitaplarının seçimi ve analiz süreci detaylı bir şekilde açıklanmış, verilerin yorumlanması sırasında dikkatli bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, ikinci bölüm nitel araştırma tarafından yönlendirilen bu tezin metodolojisini açıklanmıştır. Araştırma felsefesi, veri toplama ve örnekleme prosedürlerinin ayrıntılı bir açıklamasıyla NİA'nın uygulanabilirliği incelenmiştir. Veri toplama prosedürüne değinilirken on bir tema tanıtılmış ve amaçlı örnekleme kullanılarak 27 ders kitabı seçilmiştir. Çalışmanın güvenilirliği ve sınırlılıkları da tartışılarak, araştırmanın sağlam temellere dayandırılması amaçlanmıştır.

Tezimin kavramsal çerçevesini oluşturan üçüncü bölümde, öncelikle teritoryalitenin etimolojisini ve önemini tanıtarak başlıyorum. Devlet dışı aktörlerin geniş bir yelpazesini dikkate alarak teritoryal anomalileri inceliyorum. Teritoryalite kavramını kimlik, milliyetçilik ve vatan kavramlarıyla bağlantıları üzerinden araştırıyorum. Bu bağlamda, “işgal edilmiş topraklar” algısının yaygın olduğunu düşünüyorum ve bu nedenle direniş ve kurtuluş pratiklerini ve bu süreçleri takip eden yönetişimi inceliyorum. Son olarak, tarihsel anlatılar ve anılar aracılığıyla teritoryalitenin söylemsel pratikler, öncelik söylemi, haritalama, şiirsel mekân, şarkılar ve eğitim alanındaki rolünü inceleyerek teritoryaliteyi nasıl inşa ettiğine odaklanıyorum.

Dünya politik alanının ulusal toprak bölünmesinin alternatif biçimleri, sadece düşüncemize özgü değildir; somut aktörlerin teritoryal politikalarıyla yeniden üretilir ve fiilen gerçekleştirilir. Cemgil'in de belirttiği gibi, esasen teritoryal stratejileri, hayatın üretim ve yeniden üretim stratejilerinin bir parçasıdır. Herhangi bir insan pratiği aynı zamanda bir teritoryal mücadelesidir. Birden fazla yeniden üretim stratejisinin varlığı, her zaman birden fazla mekânsallaştırma stratejisinin var olduğu anlamına gelir. Bu durum, teritoryal stratejilerinin rekabetine yol açar ki gelişmekte olan dünyadaki her devlet için yaklaşık üç teritoryal iddialı olduğu gözlemlenmiştir.

Teritoryal “anomal varlıklar” arasında “bağımlı bölgeler, mikro-devletler, uluslararasılaştırılmış ve kiralanmış bölgeler, devletsiz uluslar ve de facto devletler” yer almaktadır. Aslında, alternatif teritoryalite biçimleri her zaman var olmuştur. Devlet merkezli bölgeleştirmeden kaçınma çabaları, örneğin, sınır rejimlerinin evrimi, Westphalia veya Westphalia sonrası oluşumlar altında egemenlik biçimleri veya öngörülen deterritorializasyon süreçleri şeklinde devam etmektedir. Bu tür teritoryal güçler, Agnew'in “politik otoritenin sadece devletlerle sınırlı olmadığını ve bu otoritenin bu nedenle yalnızca bölgesel olarak var olmasının gerekmediğini” belirten iddiasını doğrulamaktadır.

Devlet dışı aktörleri tek bir kategori altında birleştirip teritoryalitenin anlamını göstermek zorlaşmaktadır. Araştırma konum olan PYD'yi merkeze alarak, teritoryalitenin anlamını keşfederken, ulusal kimlik, milliyetçilik ve vatan terimlerine odaklanarak geniş bir devlet dışı aktör yelpazesini sınıflandırmaya çalıştım. Modern teritoryalite biçiminde kimlik, teritoryal olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Teritoryalitenin maddi unsurları, teritoryalitenin bilgisi ve korunması üzerinde ana etkiye sahiptir. Bu olgu, devlet dışı aktörlerin yönetim uygulamaları incelenirken detaylı olarak açıklanmıştır.

Devlet dışı aktörler için milliyetçilik ve toprak sahipliği, belirli bölgelerin duygusal, tarihsel ve kültürel önemi üzerinden yakından bağlantılıdır. Milliyetçi ideolojilerin oluşumu, toprak iddialarını meşrulaştırmayı, kolektif eylemi harekete geçirmeyi ve dış güçler ile çatışmalara yanıt vermeyi içerir. Bir bölgeyi vatan olarak görmek, en güçlü tarihsel iddiayı oluşturur. Vatan kavramı hem önceliği hem de sürekliliği



kapsar ve toprağı ulusun kimliğinin vazgeçilmez bir parçası olarak ifade eder. Dolayısıyla vatan, grup kimliğinin ve ulusal kimliğin nihai sembolüdür. Ulusal kimliğin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak sıklıkla görülen toprak, bir devletin varlığını ve özerkliğini pekiştirir. Birçok toprak, bir devlet veya halkıyla olan tarihi bağları nedeniyle önemli görülmektedir, özellikle önemli kültürel ve dini olayların merkezi olduğu durumlarda. Bu durum, Toft'un da belirttiğı gibi etnik çatışmalarda da belirgindir. Dolayısıyla, bir ulusun üyeleri, toprakları ulusal kimliklerinin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak görerek onunla derin bir bağ kurabilirler ve bu da herhangi bir uzlaşmayı önler.

Teritoryal boyut, sosyal toplulukların anlamlı ulusal kimlik söylemleri oluşturabilmesi için bir gerekliliktir. Ulusun güvenlik, çevresel, kültürel ve diğer söylemlerinin sınırlandırılması, teritoryalizasyonu hem milliyetçiliğın hem de ulusal kimliğin toprak ve teritoryalite ile bağlantılı olması, sınırların anlamını vurgular; bu sınırlar, genellikle, teritoryalitenin kapsayıcı ve dışlayıcı biçimlerini iletmekte kullanılır ve bu da ilgili sosyal topluluğun bütünleşmesinde bir çeşit sosyal tutkal haline gelir.

Devlet dışı aktörlerin temel stratejik uygulamaları üç ana başlık altında toplanabilir: teritoryanın işgal edilmiş olarak algılanması, direniş, kurtuluş ve yönetişim. Teritoryanın işgal edilmiş olarak algılanması, direniş ve kurtuluş aşamalarına zemin hazırlar. Bu aktörlerin direniş ve kurtuluş uygulamalarını analiz etmek, ilgili otoritelere yönelik politikalarını anlamayı sağlar. Direniş ve kurtuluş uygulamalarının sonucu olarak yönetişim uygulamalarını incelemek, bu aktörlerin kontrol ettikleri toprakları ve nüfusu nasıl yönettiklerini ortaya koyar.

Belirli koşullar, devlet dışı aktörleri yönetişime teşvik eder. Bu, sınırlı devletli alanlarda görünüşte eksik veya yetersiz olan koşullar, bir devletin hiyerarşi gölgesinin eşdeğerleri gibi işlev görür. En basit haliyle yönetim, “bir aktör tarafından alınan kararların ikinci bir aktör tarafından itaat edilmesi beklenen” ve “sosyal etkileşimlerin hem devlet hem de devlet dışı aktörler tarafından kontrol edilmesi” anlamına gelir. Yönetişimden “toplucu bağlayıcı kurallar üretmek ve uygulamak veya kolektif mallar sağlamak için çeşitli kurumsallaşmış sosyal koordinasyon

modları” anlamını kastediyorum. Devlet dışı aktörler için “egemenlik” yerine neden “yönetişim” kavramını tercih ettiğimi açıklamalıyım ki, yönetim “kavramsal olarak yararlı bir araç” olup, siyasi meselelerin incelenmesinde devlet merkezli yaklaşımları ortadan kaldırmak ve devlet dışı aktörlerin rolüne dikkat çekmek için kullanılmaktadır. Çok sayıda çatışmalı toprak iddiaları, toprakların kendiliğinden verilmediğini gösterir. Dolayısıyla, çağdaş devletler, ırklar veya sınıflar arasındaki gerginlikler, “belirli toprakları yönetme hakkı” üzerine kurulmuştur ki, Suriye savaşı Kürtlerin “eylem kapasitesini” inşa etmelerine zemin hazırlamıştır

Bazı akademisyenler, sosyal inşanın dilbilimsel yönlerini vurgulayarak, mekânın anlatsal bir yapı olduğunu ve sınırların bir tür metafor olduğunu iddia etmişlerdir. Yapılandırmacı okul, teritoryalitenin maddi olmayan değerlerini ele alır ve çeşitli duyguları sosyal bir yapı olarak konumlandırır. Yapılandırmacı teoriye dayanarak, bu çalışma dilin sadece eylemleri temsil etmekle kalmayıp, aynı zamanda eylemleri inşa ettiğine inanır. Daha fazla detaya girmeden, bu bölümde, çalışmamın kavramsal çerçevesi sunulmaktadır. Yapılandırmacı yaklaşım tarafından yönlendirildiği için, öncelikle yapılandırmacılık merceğinden bakarak teritoryalite kavramına genel bir bakış sunuyorum. Teritoryalitenin etimolojisini ve önemini ele alıyorum. Teritoryal anomalilere dikkat çekiyorum. Devlet dışı aktörler literatürüne dayanarak, teritoryalitenin anlamına, yani ulusal kimlik, milliyetçilik ve vatan kavramlarına odaklanıyorum. Bu kavramların “işgal altındaki topraklar” algısına sahip olduklarını savunuyorum. Direniş ve kurtuluş pratikleri ve yönetim süreci izlenmektedir. Anlatılar ve anılar aracılığıyla tarihin teritoryalleştirilmesi, toprakta öncelik söylemi, haritalama, şiirsel mekân, şarkılar ve eğitim alanı gibi çeşitli söylemsel uygulamalara odaklanıyorum. Şunu da ifade etmeliyim ki, tanınan devletlerin sınırları içinde nüfuslu alanların kontrolünü ele geçiren tüm siyasi aktörlerin oluşturduğu teritoryal meydan okuyucular kümesiyle ilgilenmekteyim.

Dördüncü bölüm ile ilgili bilgi vermeden önce şunu eklemeliyim ki Westphalia devlet sistemi’nin Orta Doğu bölgesine uygulanması, bu devletler için meşruiyet ve sınırların tartışmalı hale gelmesine neden olmuştur. Westphalia devlet modeli ile Arap devletlerinde pan-Arabizm ve pan-Islamizm gibi transnasyonel kimliklerin teşvik edilmesi arasındaki gerilim, ya da İsrail örneğinde devletin dünya Yahudilerini

temsil etme ihtilafı, hiçbir zaman çözülmemiştir. Aynı şekilde, ulus-devlet modeli dini, kabilevi ve etnik kimliklerle uyumlu olmamıştır. Bu bağlamda, Suriye iç savaşı, bir devletin egemenliği ve nihayetinde şiddet kullanımında tekelleşme sağlama konusundaki başarısızlığına yanıt olarak yeni yönetim biçimlerinin ortaya çıkmasına önemli bir örnek teşkil etmiştir.

Bu kapsamda, dördüncü bölümde, teritoryalite ve etnik kimlik arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanarak Suriye'deki Kürtlerin kısa bir tarihini sunuyorum. Kuzey Suriye'deki PYD yönetimini anlamak için Kürt hizipçiliği, Baas rejimi, Suriye muhalefeti, komşu devletler ve ulus ötesi Kürt politikaları gibi dinamiklere değinilmiştir. Bu bilgiler, PYD ve eğitim sisteminin tarihi bir boşlukta ortaya çıkmadığını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, bu bilgiler, beşinci bölümde okul ders kitaplarından elde edilen bulgularla kavramsal çerçeve arasında bir bağlantı kurulmasını sağlamaktadır.

Kürtler, eğitim ve medya gibi araçlar yoluyla belirli Suriye-Arap kültürel ve siyasi baskılarına maruz kalmış olsalar da kültürel miraslarını korumayı başarmışlardır. Bu, sınıf, yerellik ve aşiret gibi farklı gruplara bağlı olmalarına rağmen, bir Kürt topluluğu hissi içerisinde de belirgindir. Kürt kültürü, devletin Araplaştırma politikalarına rağmen canlılığını korumuştur ve bu, Kürt partilerinin çabalarının bir sonucudur. Örneğin, KDPS, Kürt dilinin Latin alfabesiyle öğretilmesini savunmuş ve Şeyh Said ile Mustafa Barzani gibi mitlerle, Cegerxwin, Osman Sabri, Bedirhan kardeşler ve Ehmedê Xanî gibi kültürel ve entelektüel figürlerle Suriye Kürtlerinin milliyetçi fikirlerini geliştirmiştir.

1990'lardan itibaren Kürt siyasi partileri, hizipçilik, liderlerin kişisel çıkarları ve devletle tavizler elde edememe gibi sebeplerle popülerliklerini kaybetmiştir. Bu sorunlar 2000'li yıllarda da devam etmiştir. Diğer taraftan Azadî, Yekîfî, Kürt Gelecek Hareketi, KDP-S ve PYD gibi çeşitli hareketlerin üyeleri, mezhepsel çatışmayı körükleme, milli duyguyu zayıflatma, yasal olmayan örgüte üyelik ve isyan suçlamalarıyla karşı karşıya kalmıştır. PKK krizinin yankıları da Suriye siyasetinde etkili olmaya devam etmiştir. Kürt partilerinin yasal çerçevede faaliyet göstermesi anayasal olarak mümkün olmasa da Kürt meselesinin Suriye'de yeniden canlanmasında çeşitli faktörler etkili olmuştur: Sınır ötesi Kürt hareketlerinin

Suriye'deki hareketler üzerindeki etkisi, PKK ile Suriye devleti arasındaki kopuş, 2000 yılında Hafız Esad'ın ölümüyle oluşan yeni ortam ve Irak'ta Kürtlerin fiili özerkliğinin oluşması.

PYD'nin teritoryal yol haritasının belirsizliğini koruduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu konuda yukarıda belirtilen farklı bakış açıları mevcuttur. Aslında durumu daha karmaşık hale getiren, ilgili karar alıcıların siyasi söylemleridir. Bu bağlamda, Öcalan'ın 1999 yılındaki mahkeme savunması birçok Kürt için şaşırtıcı oldu çünkü bu savunma, bağımsız bir devlet ve toprak egemenliği elde etmeye yönelik anti-sömürgeci silahlı mücadele etrafında şekillenen PKK'nın ilk siyasi vizyonunu önemli ölçüde dekonstre etti. Bu doğrultuda, Ahmed Hamdi Akkaya, PKK ideolojisi doğrultusunda, sivil toplumu yeniden inşa etmeyi amaçlayan kurumsal bir planın, toprak yaratma ve devlet kurma stratejisinin önüne geçtiğini ileri sürmektedir; bu da PKK'nın önceki yaklaşımının aksine, bağımsız bir Kürdistan kurma hedefinden vazgeçildiğine işaret etmektedir. Ancak durum Akkaya'nın önermesiyle tam olarak örtüşmemektedir. PKK ile benzer ideolojik kalıplar sergileyen PYD, Kürt demografisi nedeniyle PYD'nin varlığının avantajlı olduğu etno-milliyetçi teritoryaliteden sadece faydalanmakla kalmamış, aynı zamanda dördüncü bölümde açıklanacağı üzere maksimalist genişlemeci hedefler de gütmüştür. Bu şekilde, Dinç'in ifade ettiği gibi, Rojava genellikle yeni bir ulusal olmayan, devletsiz yönetim modeli olarak tasvir edilse de Kürt hareketi liderlerinin portreleri, bayraklar ve topraklar aracılığıyla her zaman hatırlatmalar yapmaktadır. Tekrar vurgulamak gerekirse, PKK örneğinde olduğu gibi PYD'nin teritoryalite ilgili siyasi rotası belirsizliğini korumaktadır. Allsopp ve Willgenburg'un ifade ettiği üzere, on yıllık fiili yönetim bu belirsizliği gözler önüne sermektedir.

Bu belirsizlik içerisinde, teritoryalizasyon politikasının ana hatları şu şekilde ifade edilebilir: Rojava bu stratejinin uygulanacağı bir bölge haline gelmiştir. Öcalan'ın fikirlerine dayalı olarak PYD kontrolündeki bölgelerde özgürlükçü belediyeler konfederasyonu oluşturulmuştur. Teritoryalizasyon stratejisi, kanton temelli teritoryal düzenlemeler ve yalnızca kadınlara ait mekânlar kurmayı içerir. Bu strateji, kadınları güçlendirmenin yanı sıra toplumsal mekânın dokusunu değiştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, yerel kooperatif temelli kendi kendine yeterli ekonomik

birimler oluşturulmuştur. Bu düzenlemeler, teoride demokratik özerkliğin toprak bütünlüğüne dayalı bir ulus-devlet önermediğini göstermektedir.

Her ne kadar bir devletin tüm kurumları ve işlevleri geliştirilmiş olsa da siyasi söylem modern devletin retorik ve terminolojisini taklit etmeyecek şekilde yapılandırılmıştır. Anayasa yerine sosyal sözleşme terimi getirilmiştir. Bu isim, onu genellikle devletlerin temel normunu tanımlayan bir anayasadan ayırır. Devlet kavramı ve özellikle ulus-devlet kavramı, sosyal sözleşmenin önsözünde Rojava halkının krizlerinin ve sorunlarının kökeni olarak sunulmuştur. Ancak, çeşitli aktörler ve alternatif teritoryal stratejileri, demokratik konfederalist teritoryal stratejilerinin tam olarak uygulanmasını engellemektedir. Örneğin, ulus-devlet paradigmasını reddetmesine rağmen, Suriye vatandaşı olmayan hiç kimse bir kantonun üyesi olamaz ve demokratik özerkliğin tabandan uygulamalarına katılamaz. Ayrıca, demokratik özerklik mevcut devletlerin meşruiyetini sorgulamaz. Savaş bittiğinde ve Suriye devleti gücünü yeniden konsolide ettiğinde, kanton hükümetlerinin devlet içinde “ikili bir güç yapısı” olarak sürdürüleceği düşünülmektedir.

PYD, Kürtçe eğitim veren çok sayıda okul kurarak yerel eğitimi yeniden yapılandırmıştır. Bu çaba, Kürt dilini teşvik etmeye yönelik önemli bir kültürel faaliyet dalgasını tetiklemiştir. Yirminci yüzyıl boyunca, Kürtler kendi kaderlerini tayin etme ve kimliklerini ifade etme hakkı için mücadele etmişlerdir. Kürtlerin rolü ve devletlerle etkileşimleri yeni bir olgu olmasa da Ortadoğu'daki güncel değişiklikler bu durumu daha fazla kişinin dikkatine sunmuştur. Suriye Kürtleri hakkında pek az şey yazılmışken, 2009'da yayınlanan Jordi Tejel'in kitabı önemli bir istisnadır. Tejel, PKK-PYD'nin Suriye'deki Kürt siyasi arenasında etkisini sürdüremediğini yazmıştı. Ancak, o zamandan bu yana PYD Kürt nüfuslu bölgeleri yönetmektedir fakat Suriye'deki Kürt özerkliğinin kırılganlığı, Afrin'in ele geçirildiğinde uluslararası toplumun sessiz kalmasıyla belirgin hale geldi. Afrin ve çevresinin kaybı, PYD'nin dış destek olmadan ve sınırlı mali bütçe ile ayrılıkçı hareketini sürdürmekte zorlandığını vurguladı çünkü PYD saldırı yeteneklerinden yoksundu. ABD, Türkiye ile askeri bir çıkmazı göze almadı ve Afrin, ABD için stratejik bir öncelik olarak görülmedi. Moskova, PYD'nin katkısıyla ABD'nin varlığından memnun değildi. Suriye rejimi DFNS'nin özerkliğini tanımadı. Ayrıca,

Türk muhalefeti Astana ve Cenevre'deki müzakere görüşmelerine katılımını engelledi.

Ancak, PYD'nin teritoryal stratejisinin sonuçsuz kalmadığı görülmektedir. PYD'nin “demokratik toplum” açısından kimlik seçimlerinin ve temsil fikirlerinin ne ölçüde değiştiğine dair merak uyandıran sorunun peşinden gidildiğinde, Nisan ve Haziran 2016 arasında yapılan bir ankette katılımcılara kimliklerini tanımlamaları istendiğinde, %91,6'sı ‘Kürt,’ %63,8'i ‘Müslüman,’ ve %41,6'sı ‘Suriyeli’ olarak yanıt vermiştir. Coğrafi kimlikler açısından ‘Rojava’ %52,7, ‘Kürdistan’ %42,2 ve ‘Suriye’ %18,3 oranında tercih edilmiştir. Görüşmecilerin %52'si, Mart 2011'den bu yana kişisel ve grup kimliklerinde etnikleşme lehine bir değişim olduğunu belirtmiştir.

Devlet merkezli literatüre dayanarak, devlet dışı aktörlerin okul ders kitaplarında analiz edilmediği görülmektedir. Hansen'in açıkladığı gibi, ders kitapları tarihsel olarak ortaya çıkan ve etrafındaki sosyokültürel uygulamalara göre değişen dinamik bir kategorinin sonucudur. Günümüzde, ders kitapları okullarda bilgi kaynaklarından biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Ders kitabı çalışmalarına rehberlik eden varsayım, ideolojilerin, uygulamaların veya sosyo-politik-kültürel düzenlerin sadece ders kitaplarının “metinleri” tarafından değil, aynı zamanda kelimelerin, imgelerin ve maddeselliğin “aracılık” örneklerine nasıl uyumlandırıldığıyla şekillendiğidir. Bu bağlamda, beşinci bölümde, kavramsal çerçeveyi takip ederek, seçilen ders kitapları aracılığıyla teritoryalitenin nasıl inşa edildiğini daha ayrıntılı alt başlıklarla inceliyorum. Eğitim sistemi, herhangi bir konuda son sözü söyleme yetkisine sahip olmasa da ilgili makamların bunu kendi siyasi eğilimlerini tanıtmak için yararlı bir araç olarak görmesi nedeniyle büyük bir öneme sahiptir. Bu bağlamda, bu bölümde ders kitaplarının PYD için teritoryalite kavramını inşa etmekte önemli bir zemin olduğunu savunuyorum.

Müfredatta bireysellik ve eleştirel düşünceye yer verilmekle birlikte, müfredatın ana ilkesi, değerleri değerlendirmek veya değiştirmek yerine aktarmak ve benimsetmektir. Hükümetlerin siyasi ve ideolojik eğilimlerini yaymak için okul ders kitapları aracılığıyla eğitim sisteminin rolü büyüktür. Bu bağlamda, ders kitaplarının

hem sadakatleri teşvik etmek hem de siyasi mobilizasyon için bir zemin olarak kullanılarak milliyetçiliği teşvik etmek temel bir ilkedir. Eğitimin teritoryal boyutu önemlidir çünkü bu teritoryal alanlar, toplulukların ve hareketlerin tüm toplum için yeni bir örgütlenme inşa etmelerine olanak tanır.

Ders kitaplarının genel olarak siyasal, ekonomik ve kültürel etkinliklerin, mücadelelerin ve uzlaşmaların sonucu olarak gerçek çıkarları olan gerçek insanlar tarafından düşünülen, tasarlanan ve yazılan; pazarlar, kaynaklar ve güç dengelerinin siyasal ve ekonomik kısıtlamaları içinde yayımlanan eserler olarak görüldüğünü belirttim. Fonksiyonları, yapı, temsil, yönlendirme, motivasyon, farklılaşma, uygulama ve değerlendirme açısından tanımlanır. Diğer hiçbir sosyalleşme aracı, gençlerin neye inanması gerektiği konusunda tek tip, onaylanmış ve hatta resmi bir versiyon sunma kapasitesine sahip olan ders kitaplarının rolünü oynayamaz. Bu nedenle, ders kitapları genellikle belirli bir inanç sistemini dayatmak ve mevcut düzenin meşruiyetini teşvik etmek için araçsallaştırılır. Bu anlamda, müfredat, hiçbir zaman rastgele metinlerde ve sınıflarda ortaya çıkan tarafsız bilgi topluluğu değildir. Aksine, okullar için bilginin seçimi ve organizasyonu, belirli sınıfların ve sosyal grupların çıkarlarına hizmet eden ideolojik bir süreçtir. Okul ders kitaplarının analizi, araştırmacıya belirli bir toplumun sosyal ve siyasal parametreleri, endişeleri ve korkuları ile ulus inşa etme, kimlik oluşturma ve toplumsal değişim süreçleri hakkında değerli içgörüler kazandıran bir pencere veya bir ayna sunar.

Bulgular bölümünde, seçilen ders kitaplarını inceleyerek teritoryalite kavramının hem içeriğinin hem de çerçevesinin ilkökul, ortaokul ve lise düzeylerinde eğitim söylemi aracılığıyla nasıl inşa edildiği sorusunu ele aldım. Araştırma sorumu, son bölümde tartıştığım bulgulara dayalı somut ifadelerle yanıtlamak istiyorum. Bu çalışmayı gerçekleştirmek için hem kavramsal çerçeve hem de bulgular bölümlerinde açıkladığım yöntemi takip edeceğim.

Kürt sorunuyla ilgilenen araştırmacılar, kültür ve teritoryalitenin tüm Kürt siyasi hareketleri için iki temel unsur olduğunu fark eder. Bu durum, ders kitaplarındaki verilerin de gösterdiği gibi, PYD için de geçerli görünüyor. Bu bağlamda, kültür ve teritoryalite, ulusal kimliği inşa etmede önemli kavramlar olarak öne çıkmaktadır.

Aynı şekilde, Kürdistan, milliyetçi gururun beslenmiş olduğu ayrı bir teritory olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Kürdistan'ın sömürülmesine dayanan savaş, şiddet ve tehdit hikayeleri, kimlik oluşumlarında kritik bir rol oynamaktadır.

Bu bağlamda, milliyetçiliğin ulus-devlet uygulamalarından kaynaklanan olumsuz çağrışımları dikkate alındığında, ulusal kimlik ve yurtseverlik üzerindeki vurgunun önem kazandığını savunuyorum. Kürt sorunu üzerine çalışan araştırmacılar, Kürtlerin tahayyülünde Kürdistan'ın yalnızca bağımsız bir devlet olarak değil, aynı zamanda daha iyi bir yaşamı yansıtan neredeyse bir ütopya olarak algılandığını kabul etmektedir. Bu perspektif, ders kitaplarında da yaygın olarak yer almakta ve Kürdistan'ın, bir vatan olarak, düşmanın baskısından kurtulmuş bir ikamet yeri olarak görülmesini yansıtmaktadır.

Vatan, basit bir coğrafi gerçek olmaktan ziyade, politik ve kültürel dinamikler tarafından şekillendirilen bir teritoryal; dolayısıyla vatan kavramı, “net bir şekilde tanımlanabilir bir kimlikten ziyade inşa edilmiş ve hayal edilmiş bir yer olarak” görülebilir. Kürdistan'ın bir ütopya olarak algılanması, Kürtler arasındaki ideolojik bölünmelerin artmasıyla daha da pekişmiştir. Bu durum, Kürt dilinin, Kürtler arasındaki birliğin tek göstergesi haline gelmesine yol açmıştır. Bu nedenle, ders kitaplarında vatan kavramsallaştırması genellikle dil temelli birlik üzerinden inşa edilmiştir. Kısacası, vatan kavramı basit bir coğrafi olgudan öte hem siyasi hem de kültürel dinamikler tarafından şekillendirilmiştir. Bu semantik çerçevede, milliyetçi söylemler ve bazı devlet dışı aktörler tarafından kullanılan geçmiş, mevcut çatışmaları anlamak için kurucu bir unsur olarak görülür. Geçmişten kaynaklanan ve günümüzde devam eden temel varsayım, Kürdistan'ın işgal edilmiş olduğudur. Bu nedenle, tüm ders kitapları, Kürt kimliğinin tarihsel varlığı ve Kürdistan topraklarıyla kadim bir bağlantısı olan ulusal kimlik hakkında kapsamlı bilgi sunarak, Kürdistan topraklarının işgalini tamamen reddetmektedir.

Bu nedenle, emperyalizmi anlamak amacıyla tarihsel anlatının ders kitaplarında bir sömürgecilik eleştirisiyle başladığı görülmektedir. Bu anlatılar, Kürtlerin karşı karşıya olduğu toprak sorununu sömürgecilik bağlamında ele almayı amaçlar. Bu çerçevede, büyük güçlerin ve Kürtlerin topraklarını antlaşmalar ve anlaşmalar



yoluyla hukuksuz bir biçimde ihlal eden dört bölgesel devletin rolü vurgulanmaktadır. Özellikle, Kasr-ı Şirin Antlaşması, Sykes-Picot Anlaşması ve Sadabad Paktı gibi üç ana antlaşma üzerinde durulmaktadır. Bu antlaşmalar, Kürdistan'ın bölünmesinde dönüm noktası olarak kabul edilen olaylar arasında yer almakta ve bu nedenle geniş bir incelemeye tabi tutulmaktadır. Bu perspektiften hareketle, Kürdistan topraklarının işgalci güçler tarafından uygulanan politikalar sonucunda yer değiştirme, sürgün, göç, yakma ve katliam gibi süreçlerle ilişkilendirildiği görülmektedir.

Sürekli işgal altında bulunan ve bu durumun devam ettiği Kürdistan'ın tahayyülü, direniş, kurtuluş ve yönetim gibi çeşitli kavramları doğurmuştur. Direnişin yüceltilmesi, Kürtlerin topraklarının koruyucuları olarak gördükleri ulusal kimliklerinin inşası açısından kritik bir önem taşımaktadır. Bu bağlamda, çağdaş ve tarihsel Kürt olmayan hareketlerin isyanları örnek olarak sunulmakta, ancak vurgu esas itibarıyla Kürt pratikleri üzerinde yoğunlaşmaktadır. Bu anlamda, Kürtlerin tarihsel isyanları, PKK'nin ayaklanması ve direniş içerisindeki kadınların rolü, Kürt terminolojisinde direnişin karşılığı olarak kabul edilen “serhildan”ın inşası için temel unsurları oluşturur. Ayrıca, toprak uğruna hayatlarını feda eden ölümlerin şehitlik kavramı aracılığıyla diriltilmesi, kimlik ve toprak arasındaki ilişkiyi kurmak açısından önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, hatıraları direniş pratiği haline gelmiş olan şehitler, kolektif hafıza ve kimlik inşası süreçlerinde merkezi bir konumda yer almaktadır.

Bu kavramsal çerçevenin anlaşılması, Kürt siyasi hareketlerinin stratejik ve ideolojik evrimlerinin analizine olanak tanır. PYD'nin PKK ile derin ve ince bir bağlantısı olduğu iyi bilinen bir gerçektir. Bu bağlamda, toprak stratejileri arasında önemli bir farklılık bulunmamaktadır. Geçtiğimiz yüzyılda, Kürt siyasi hareketlerinin birleşik bir Kürdistan kurmak için ciddi girişimleri olmamıştır. İstisna olarak PKK, Kürdistan'ın bağımsızlığı için savaşan bir ulusal kurtuluş hareketi olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Ancak, PKK'nin paradigması zamanla ulusal kurtuluştan daha “demokratik bir sosyalizm” anlayışına kaydırılmıştır. Bu durum, devlet dışı aktörlerin değişmeyen örgütler olarak düşünülmesinin yanlış olduğunu ortaya koyar; çünkü bu aktörler ilkelerinde değişiklikler yaşayabilirler. Dolayısıyla, kurtuluş

kavramının direniş ve yönetim gibi diğerk kavramlarla kıyaslandığında daha nadir anıldığını savunuyorum.

Bir toprağın elinde tutulması, esasen bir yorum meselesi olarak değerdendirilebilir. Sınırların sürekli olarak değışmesine rağmen, kurtarılmış bir bölge, siyasi düzenin tesisini sağladığı için devlet dışı aktörlerin bu toprağı kontrol ettiğini gösteren en güçlü delildir. Bu bağlamda, Suriye'den alınan topraklar, bu toprakların kurtarılması olarak sunulmuştur. Akabinde, teritoryalite stratejisi geniş bir şekilde vurgulanmıştır.

Birçok vaka çalışmasını incelediğimde, toprak odaklı devlet dışı aktörlerin yönetim sistemlerini inşa ederken benzer süreçler ve zorluklarla karşılaştığını gözlemledim. PYD, uygulamada birçok açıdan Weberci bir devlet modelini taklit etmeyi sürdürse de ders kitaplarında hâkim ulus-devlet sistemine yönelik belirgin bir eleştiri yer almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, patriarkaya, kapitalizme ve devlete karşı muhalefetin yönetim açısından merkezi temalar haline geldiğini tespit ettim.

Patriarkal düzenlere karşı muhalefet, erkekler ve kadınlar arasındaki eşitliği vurgulayan bir cinsiyet eşitliği yönetim söylemi oluşturmuştur. Bu bağlamda, odak noktası, kadınların ekonomik, sosyal, psikolojik ve entelektüel düzeylerdeki sömürsününün hem tarihsel hem de çağdaş boyutlarını aydınlatmayı amaçlayan Jineolojî aracılığıyla cinsiyet eşitliğine ulaşma çabasıdır.

Hiyerarşik kapitalist devlet modeline karşı alternatif olarak, hiyerarşik olmayan demokratik bir yönetim modeli öne çıkmaktadır. Bu model, ulus-devlete karşı bir alternatif sunarak kimlik özgürlüğüne ve farklılıklara vurgu yapmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu yönetim modelinin yapısı, komün, konsey ve eş başkanlık gibi unsurları kapsamlı bir şekilde ele alınmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, modelin etkinliğinin, Demokratik bir Suriye'nin ve bağımsız bir Kürdistan'ın kurulmasıyla sürdürülebileceği üzerinde durulmaktadır.

Bu demokratik modelin temellendirilmesi ve uygulanabilirliğini diğerk söylemsel uygulamalar açısından da inceliyorum. Özellikle, kadim tarih, öncelik ve medeniyetlerin beşiğı gibi terimlerle açıklanan tarihin teritoryalleşmesi dikkat

çekicidir. Bu terimler, Kürtlerin tarihsel ve kültürel bağlamda bu topraklarda ilk yaşadıklarını vurgulayan bir kimlik ve milliyetçilik anlayışını yansıtmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, bu tarihsel ve kültürel toprak algısı, Kürtlerin bu bölgelerdeki varlıklarını ve haklarını güçlendiren bir temel oluşturmaktadır.

Diğer unsurlarla kıyaslandığında, sembollerin temsil oranı görece olarak daha düşüktür. Bu bağlamda, Kürdistan'ın özgürlüğünün sembolü olarak kabul edilen Nevruz törenlerinin kutlanması, Kürt bayrağı gibi sembollere kıyasla daha belirgin bir yer tutmaktadır. Ayrıca, mit ve efsane örüntülerinin, yerlilik ve geçmiş zaferler üzerinden kurulan toprak iddialarına meşruiyet sağladığını vurgulamak gerekir.

Kürt dili ve edebiyatı ders kitaplarında, öyküler, şiirler, okuma parçaları ve milliyetçi aydınlardan alıntılar gibi çeşitli metinler yer almaktadır. Bu metinleri 'şiirsel alan' başlığı altında inceledim. Şiirin, Kürt kimliğini ve milliyetçiliğini inşa edici rolü, ders kitaplarında seçilen şiirsel unsurların yalnızca coğrafi bir boyut taşımakla kalmayıp aynı zamanda bir rüyalar diyarı inşa ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Osman Sebrî, Cegerxwîn ve Ehmedê Xanî'nin şiirleri özel bir öneme sahiptir.

Birleşik Kürdistan haritaları, Kürtlerin tarihsel olarak 'işgal edilmiş topraklarda' varlığını vurgulayarak Kürt kimliğini pekiştirmektedir. Erken dönem Kürt devletlerinin ve yönetimlerinin haritalarına da yer verilen bu kitaplarda, Kürdistan'ın diğer kısımları belirgin bir şekilde haritalandırılmıştır. Buna karşın, Rojava haritaları kapsamlı bir şekilde sergilenmektedir. Bu durum, bu bölgelerdeki Kürtlerin Suriye devletine karşı haklarını savunmak amacıyla kullanıldığını düşündürmektedir.

Haritacılık, Kürtler ve hükümetler arasında tartışmalı bir alan olmuştur. Örneğin, Bitlis Prensi'nin prensi olan Şeref Han, Kürtlerin bir yönetim geleneğine sahip olduğunu kanıtlamak amacıyla Şerefnâme'yi yazdı. Aynı zamanda, "Kürt hanedanlarının toprakları" olarak tanımladığı ve Kürtlerin dört kolu olan "Kurmançlar, Lurlar, Kalhurlar ve Goranlar" için bir vatan olarak belirlediği Kürdistan'ın haritasını çizdi. Araştırmalarım göre, bu, Kürtler tarafından çizilen ilk

Kürdistan haritacılık çerçevesidir. Ancak, bu sınırlar kartografik bir görüntü yerine sözlü olarak tanımlanmıştır.

Bununla birlikte, 1930'lara kadar Kürdistan'ın haritalanması, Kürt olmayanlar/yabancılar tarafından yapılmıştır. Avrupalılar, on dokuzuncu yüzyıldan itibaren Kürdistan'ın sınırlarını ve çeşitli özelliklerini kapsamlı bir şekilde haritalamışlardır. Ayrıca, imparatorluk hükümdarlarının yönetimi altındaki kartograflar, bölgeyi haritalarına dahil etmişlerdir. Tek istisna, 1919'da Paris Barış Konferansı sırasında Şerif Paşa tarafından yaratılan haritadır. 1930'ların sonları ve 1940'ların başlarında, Kürtler haritacılığın gücünü fark ettiler ve bu nedenle yavaş yavaş haritalar üretmeye başladılar. Ancak, az gelişmiş milliyetçi bilinç nedeniyle, sadece sınırlı sayıda Kürt, Kürdistan sınırları hakkında kapsamlı bir bilgiye sahipti. Theresa'nın belirttiği gibi, haritalar, birçok Kürdün zihinlerinde ve duygularında bulunan beklenen bir özelliğin yansımasıdır. Sonuç olarak, Kürdistan'ın birleşik bir şekilde hayal edilmesi, sadece kelimelerle değil aynı zamanda ders kitaplarındaki haritalarla da geniş bir şekilde vurgulanmaktadır.

Bölgesel bir anomali olarak, demokratik toplum olarak bilinen alternatif bir bölgeselleştirme politikası önerilmesine rağmen, vurgu, Kürdistan'a dayalı bir teritoryal kimlik inşa etmeye yöneliktir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, üçüncü bölümde çizilen kavramsal çerçevenin işgal edilen toprakların, direniş hareketlerinin, kurtuluş mücadelelerinin ve yönetim yapılarının algılanmasını ve inşasını etkilediğini gözlemlemektedir. Verilerin analizi, tarihsel anlatıların bölgeselleştirilmesi, kartografik temsiller ve şiirsel tasvirler gibi söylemsel uygulamaların, bölgeselliğin inşasıyla ilgili bu yörüngeli şekillendirmede önemli roller oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Doty'nin belirttiği gibi, söylemin en temel özelliklerinden biri, bazı şeyleri doğal ve sorgulanmaz hale getirme rolüdür. Bu, varsayılan doğruların temelini oluşturan 'ön varsayımlar' aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilir. Örneğin, toprak bütünlüğü ile ilgili bir ön varsayım, belirli anlamlar ve uygulamalar yoluyla kabul edilir ve yansıtılır. Bu da ulusal kimlik, milliyetçilik ve vatan gibi kavramların yanı sıra direniş, savunma, kurtuluş ve 'işgal altındaki topraklar' üzerinde yönetim gibi konularda kendini

gösterir. Tüm bunlar tarih, semboller, haritalar ve şiirler gibi çeşitli söylemsel pratiklerde anlam kazanır. Bulgular kısmındaki analizlerim tam olarak bu varsayımı pekiştirmektedir.

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